IDENTITY FORMATION OF FOREIGN RESIDENTS: A STUDY OF INDIVIDUALS IN MIDDLE TO LATE ADULTHOOD IN HOKKAIDO, JAPAN

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ABSTRACT

Christopher Frey, Advisor

An increasing number of people are relocating to foreign countries due in part to the influence of globalization, internationalization, and enhanced vocational opportunities abroad. By 2025, the workforce is expected to be the first generation of workers anticipated to live overseas due to improved employment opportunities and ease of travel (HR Grapevine, 2013). This increase will affect the lives of a large number of adult workers who reside in an Asian context such as Japan. This qualitative collective case study includes interviews with eight foreign participants from what is commonly referred to as “Western” countries who have lived in Hokkaido, Japan for five or more years. This study describes the identity formation and/or development process of these participants, who range in age from thirty-one to seventy-seven years old, and the influence this cultural context has on their adult identity development.

This research applied the prevalent Japanese discourse of Nihonjinron and the cultural belief of the binary of uchi and soto to determine how and to what extent foreigners are accepted into Japanese society and/or culture. In addition, acculturation theories such as Sam & Berry’s Acculturation Strategies and Benet-Martínez & Haritatos (2005) Bicultural Identity Integration (BII) were implemented to indicate the individual changes to the identity of each participant due to their time in Japan. The results of this research suggest that Japan pushes foreigners and outside elements away from its culture and society, but it also requires them to reinforce Japanese identity. This dynamic resulted in participants often feeling between Japanese culture and their own respective culture while some defended their culture of origin. Alternatively, other participants changed in order to interact with Japanese society and enjoy the benefits of living in Japan.
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**Figure 1.** Acculturation Strategies in Ethnocultural Groups and the Larger Society

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This qualitative study explores the experiences and identity formation of eight adult participants, between the ages of thirty-one to seventy-seven, from ‘Western’ countries who have resided in Japan for five or more years. A case study approach was implemented to ascertain the level of acceptance of foreigners by Japanese society as well as the acculturation of participants through several questions relating to each participant’s extended residency in Japan. The questions of this research include individual participant’s impressions of Japan, involvement in Japanese culture, their identity in Japan, connections to Japanese society, employment, home country, and their use of technology. The prominent discourse in Japan, called *Nihonjinron*, is compared to Sam & Berry’s (2006) acculturation categories, Benet-Martínez & Haritatos (2005) Bicultural Identity Integration (BII), and Erikson’s Adult Stages of Development to assess the level of acculturation of each participant in Japan, and how well these participants can be accepted into Japanese society and/or culture.

**Justification of the Study**

This study focuses on individuals from ‘Western’ countries such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and other countries in Europe who have relocated to Japan. These individuals relocated to Japan for a variety of reasons including employment and academic study. There is an increasing number of people who have relocated to different countries, and this number is thought to increase as globalization increases. Robertson & Gaggiotti (2007) state, “globalization is driving a more international economy and a more mobile workforce” (p. 209). As of 2010, approximately 214 million people (or three percent of the world’s population) had relocated and lived outside their home country, and only 10.5 million of these people were refugees (Migration, 2010). This number is expected to rise as the next
generation (dubbed generation Y) is anticipated to relocate internationally due to companies’ expansion to other countries. HR Grapevine (2013) estimates that the workforce by 2025 will be the first generation to have been reared with international travel, and there will be an expectation for people to live overseas for enhanced employment opportunities. The increase of people relocating to a foreign country is becoming more commonplace, and this study may help elucidate a number of issues generation Y may be subject to especially those individuals who remain in one country for five or more years. Robertson & Gaggiotti (2007) assert that an enhanced mobile and international workforce could result in “accelerated cultural constructions of the ‘other’” wherein foreigners will be regarded as exo-group members in the cultures in which they relocate (p. 209).

The focus of this research includes adults from early to late adulthood. Kroger (2000) states that middle adulthood, or ages forty-five to sixty-five, is a recent phenomenon and “research on the role of the larger social and cultural context on adult development is scarce” (p. 162). As a result, this research delivers valuable information on an area of human development that is currently lacking research.

This study attempts to explore and develop explanations of identity formation of individuals from what is commonly referred to as ‘Western’ nations (United States, Canada, Europe, and New Zealand), who have resided in Japan for five or more years. The research is based on four main questions as follows:

1. What are the impacts of living in Japan for five or more years on the identities of foreign residents?
2. What aspects of Japanese culture do participants identify as most salient to/most important in shaping their identity in Japan?
3. How do participants define, construct, and live a meaningful life (via family, profession, and socially) in the Japanese context?

4. Using the definition of identity as a process of an individual or actor’s actions within the Japanese cultural context via socialization, how does an individual’s actions reflect Japanese cultural practices?

**Organization of Chapters**

This thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter includes the introduction, justification of the study, and the organization of the thesis. Chapter II reviews pertinent research on relevant literature related to the focus of the study. This chapter first establishes the legitimacy of Japanese cultural ideas and discourse through Nihonjinron writing, and then examines the impact of this discourse as it pertains to foreigners’ experiences in Japan. Next, identity theories and acculturation theories are described to impart a rich and expansive foundation of relevant knowledge that will interact with sequential chapters.

Chapter III explains the methodology implemented in this qualitative study. This chapter begins with a description of the case study approach and its advantages in this research. This chapter then describes the recruitment of participants, the research procedure, its compliance with the Humans Subjects Review Board (HSRB), the data collection process via semi-structured interviews, the credibility and validity of this study, and the codes developed from the interviews with participants. This chapter concludes with a brief description of the limitations of this study and the statement of researcher bias.

Chapter IV organizes the codes developed in the previous chapter and places them into two overarching themes. This chapter commences with a basic description of each of the participants involved in this study for context. The first theme develops, explores, and
corroborates common experiences of the participants’ feelings of estrangement from Japanese culture or society in some form or another due to their foreign status. The second theme begins by reporting the individual experiences of each participant in Japanese culture and society in order to establish a frame of reference for their potential acculturation levels. This theme then develops the acculturation levels via sub-themes as it pertains to the information presented in the literature review in chapter II.

Chapter V addresses the research questions and attempts to answer those questions through the information afforded by the previous chapters. This chapter explores and synthesizes the experiences each participant divulged and compares it to the theoretical framework.

Chapter VI concludes this thesis with a summary of the findings and analysis. In addition, the implications of this research will be stated. A number of suggestions for future research will be reported to increase the knowledge of identity studies of adult development in foreign cultures. Lastly, personal concluding remarks on this thesis will be documented.
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter focuses on reviewing pertinent information for this thesis including *Nihonjinron*, the most prominent thought pattern in Japan. Another portion of this research describes Erikson’s stages of adult identity formation in addition to other identity concepts. The information detailed in this chapter has been organized into smaller sections to enhance background information on a variety of Japanese conceptions and traditions that are still present in contemporary Japan as well to provide a précis of important concepts and theories on identity. The information contained within this chapter will deliver a foundation of knowledge that will be implemented throughout this thesis.

*Nihonjinron*

*Nihonjinron* is a Japanese term that, when translated to English, can mean discussions of the Japanese, theories of the Japanese, discussions of Japanese identity, or alternatively the study of being Japanese (Yoshino, 1992; McVeigh, 2004; Dale, 1986; Maher & Macdonald, 1995). The translation of *ron* in *Nihonjinron* is usually equated with the word theory but it does have a wider range of meanings in Japan, many of which are considered unclear (Befu, 2001). There are several alternative terms synonymous with *Nihonjinron* such as *Nihon bunkaron* (theories of Japanese culture), *Nihon Shakairon* (theories of Japanese society), and *Nihonron* (theories of Japan); however, the most common vernacular term for this concept is known simply as *Nihonjinron*. *Nihonjinron* is an ill defined term because it refers to a massive wealth of written material involved in almost every aspect of Japanese thought that pertains to Japanese identity from ecology and economics to psychology and language (McVeigh, 2004). *Nihonjinron* works are usually found in a written form, but it can also be found on television, lectures, and in some cases, college/university courses (Befu, 2001). *Nihonjinron* has been a topic of interest to
researchers and authors who have found that it is representative of common ideas in Japanese culture. In order to understand aspects of Japanese culture, the beliefs behind Nihonjinron, and its place in Japan, must be discussed.

Nihonjinron concepts consist of a set of supposedly unique characteristics that separate Japanese people from any other ethnic or cultural group, and promote ideas and concepts of Japanese identity in various forms (Befu, 2001; McVeigh, 2004). These distinctions of the uniqueness of Japan and its inhabitants are made with a sense of contradistinction when compared to others (Lie, 2001). Nihonjinron is known as a prescriptive definition of the quintessential Japanese nature that most prominently reflects a modern sense of Japanese nationalism (Dale, 1986). The prescriptive nature of Nihonjinron then sets the standard for a model of appropriate behavior among Japanese (Befu, 2001). Befu (2001) asserts that Nihonjinron can be characterized as a modern Japanese moral textbook and its ideas are “promoted as source material for Japanese cultural and national identity” or more simply, it is the knowledge that any intelligent Japanese person should possess (p. 80). Furthermore, Nihonjinron is a tool used to establish and re-establish Japanese cultural and national identity depending on circumstance. Nihonjinron serves as a model for Japanese people to follow and it functions as a portion of Japanese identity.

The Legitimacy of Nihonjinron

Nihonjinron is a very popular form of writing in Japan, and it is widely accepted by Japanese people. Due to its popularity in Japan, Nihonjinron has even been referred to as a minor national pastime (Yoshino, 1992; Befu, 1993, as cited in McVeigh, 2004). Some of these works are so popular that they are reprinted and sell millions of copies (Befu, 2001). Researchers and academics as well as businessmen, journalists, and critics have also published
material under the same heading. Additionally, the contributors are usually well-educated and influential individuals and are sometimes referred to as the “thinking elite” in Japanese society (Yoshino, 1992). However, scholarly and peer-reviewed publications in the Nihonjinron genre are generally difficult to locate and are not easily accessible to the public. As a result, Nihonjinron should not necessarily be valued as academic research and/or have a scholarly status (Yoshino, 1992; Befu, 2001). The majority of works in this genre is based on personal intuition and “cover the whole range of Japanese culture, using as their illustrative materials everyday episodes, contemporary news, travelogues, [and] folklore material” (Yoshino, 1992, p. 3; Befu, 2001). As a result, there is a lack of rigorous methodology and scholarly research and more of a concentration on recycled Japanese ideologies (a framework of ideas and thought that is used to explain and make meaning in a society and which provides a sense of the world) that are frequently cited as scientific (Dale, 1986; Yoshino, 1992; Befu, 2001; Anderson & Hayes, 1996). According to Yoshino (1992), the works of Nihonjinron are used as a tool to support and maintain a dominant ideology rather than being legitimate research. The impact of Nihonjinron is ingrained in Japanese society as Yoshino (1992) states that not only is Japanese society stabilized by dominant ideology, but also that Nihonjinron serves such an ideology. The legitimacy of Nihonjinron has proven to be dubious, and the ideologies Nihonjinron establishes are subject to change in light of how Nihonjinron publications lack scholarly material due to their lack of rigorous methodology and its concentration of recycled Japanese ideologies.

**Nihonjinron as Discourse**

Nihonjinron is not accepted as fact, but rather as a prescriptive definition for what it is to be Japanese. Due to this, Nihonjinron may be considered a form of discourse. Discourse is comprised of a set of statements that represents knowledge and that constructs ideas and supplies
a system of beliefs and guiding principles (Hall, 1997). People and nations are not born into a certain identity but are created, constructed, negotiated, and it is otherwise “imposed upon them through societal discourses” (McMahill, 2000 as cited in Burgess, 2004, p. 16). *Nihonjinron* takes the role as the dominant discourse in Japan. According to Befu (2001), *Nihonjinron* is accepted by approximately half of Japan’s population and has no rival in terms of an overarching worldview. It is the primary paradigm of Japanese identity. The myth of Japanese racial and cultural homogeneity is the best example of a prescriptivist discourse that is maintained through mass media, academic writings, scholars, and journalism (Stronach, 1995 as cited in McVeigh, 2004). As a result, *Nihonjinron* is an institutional apparatus, because it represents a sense of truth and a prescriptive definition for who and what is Japanese (Hall, 1997).

Discourse has found a medium through the writings of *Nihonjinron* because it can be easily altered and it has been subject to change such as the noticeable refinement in Japanese writing before and after World War II. Prior to WWII, Japan thought of itself as multi-ethnic because of its expanding empire (Befu, 2001). In comparison, post WWII discourse establishes Japan as unique and as a people who have been “homogenous since time immemorial” (Oguma, 2002, p. 319).

*Nihonjinron* is also a form of cultural nationalism, which “aims to regenerate the national community by creating, preserving or strengthening a people’s cultural identity when it is felt to be lacking, inadequate, or threatened” (McVeigh 2004; Yoshino, 1992, p. 1). Yoshino (1992) states that cultural nationalism also views the nation as a product of its own unique history and its culture as “a collective solidarity endowed with unique attributes” which are some of the major points in *Nihonjinron* thought (p. 1). According to Aoki (1990), *Nihonjinron* is a “variant of the universal discourse of modern nation-states” and is similar to all nationalist discourses
because it is fundamentally a form of mythology (as cited in Lie, 2001, p. 150). Perhaps the most prominent myth of Japan is that it is comprised of a homogenous race (Befu, 2001). *Nihonjinron* discourse establishes Japan as a homogenous society that is free from a number of inequalities such as diversity, different cultures, classes, and ethnic divides that characterizes most other advanced countries in the contemporary world (Lie, 2001). Several researchers have demonstrated that Japan is a multiethnic country with an indigenous Ainu population in Hokkaido and ethnic Koreans who have lived in Japan for generations, but the myth of homogeneity is still retained (Befu, 2001). *Nihonjinron* can be best categorized as a form of discourse because it has been able to establish different beliefs over time such as its transformation of a being multi-ethnic during WWII and its contrary beliefs postwar.

**Pre-War and Postwar Nihonjinron**

World War II had a profound influence on the foundation of *Nihonjinron* thought and attitude. Although the most crucial aspects of *Nihonjinron* were present and known before the twentieth century, it is “often written about as a post-war-phenomenon” (Oguma, 1995 as cited in Burgess, 2004, p. 5).

Japan thought of itself as a melting pot and the mixed nation theory flourished due to its growth from the annexation of Taiwan (1895) and Korea (1910) (Befu, 1993; Oguma, 2002; Takeshi & Mangan, 1997). Thus, Japan’s pre-war belief system was based on being multiethnic and Japan was able to be simultaneously superior as well as able to assimilate other ‘incomplete Japanese’ from its expanded empire (Lie, 2001). Furthermore, Japan viewed itself as strong and able to absorb outside forces in the name of expansion, but it also viewed itself as a product of many nations and embodied the unification of Asia (Oguma, 2002). Additionally, the pre-war ideology promoted and inflated the idea that Japan was superior to other world powers, such as
the United States and China, until Japan surrendered unconditionally in 1945. This loss destroyed pre-war sentiments and ideals and, as a result, any pre-war ideology was delegitimized and Japan fell into a state of depression and ‘soul searching’ due to the lack of identity (Befu, 2001; Lie, 2001). The pre-war years are still viewed as a dark age in Japanese history even in contemporary Japan (Oguma, 2002; Takeuchi, 1982 as cited in Lie, 2001). As Befu (2001) states, after Japan’s defeat, it “was no longer able to exploit effectively the most important symbols expressing national identity and nationalism: the imperial institution, the national flag, the national anthem [and emblem], and national monuments and state rituals [such as Shintō]” (p. 87). The ideals of post-war Nihonjinron resembled the pre-war discourse of identity in some regards because both versions believed that Japanese society is “uniquely unique” but post-war beliefs lacked the imperial system and exhibited a low amount of state involvement (Mouer & Sugimoto, 1986, Befu 2001; as cited in Burgess, 2004). The significance and popularity of Nihonjinron in postwar Japan is the consequence of the inability for Japan to identify with any pre-war symbols; in other words, Nihonjinron replaced the national symbols with Nihonjinron identity and ideology (Befu, 2001; Yoshino, 1992).

After Japan was defeated, Taiwan and Korea were relinquished and Japan was distanced from its former ideology and adopted a new understanding of “Japaneseness” to counter “the threat posed by the West and China” (Oguma, 2002, p. xxiv). Japan was defined as a homogenous island nation and a society comprised of culturally, ethnically, and nationally Japanese people who shared a common language. Homogeneity was accepted in part because it included an orientation towards peace and was a backlash against the imperial era and militarism. The belief in a homogenous society became popular because any heterogeneous notion was associated with a painful memory of the past (Oguma 1995 in McVeigh, 2004).
Furthermore, this change also led to Japan embracing an isolationist policy and withdrawing from as many international disputes as possible (Oguma, 2002).

Japanese zeitgeist immediately after WWII held a negative view of Japan as inferior to others. Dale (1986), asserts that when Japan feels strong, it is able to absorb outside influences and when Japan is felt as weak, it cannot. Furthermore, Befu (1993) states that Nihonjinron is subject to either negative or positive views based primarily on Japan’s status compared to other nations. For example, “when Japan is in a weak position vis-à-vis the reference group [China or the United States], for […] economic, or other reasons, Nihonjinron engages in negative self-evaluation” (Befu, 1993 as cited in McVeigh, 2004, p. 198). However, Japan’s increased economic power promoted positive sentiments in Nihonjinron in the 1970’s and this lead to a movement away from any feelings of Japan being culturally inferior (Yoshino, 1992; Lie, 2001). Befu (2001) states that Nihonjinron in the 1970’s credited Japan’s economic success with the unique state of Japan as the reason for said success. Japan also adopted the economic and governmental systems of ‘Western’ cultures because they were viewed as the best method to become advanced (Lie, 2001). Furthermore, Japan embraced the ‘Western’ systems of economics and democracy because this symbolically negated any feudal sentiments that pre-war Japan possessed and dismissed a hierarchical organization such as the Emperor system (Nakane, 1973). As Japan’s economy became a challenge to other nations, the shame Japan experienced was lost and traditional perspectives were embraced no doubt because Japan felt strong and believed that the reason for economic success was due to the superiority of Japanese beliefs (Dale, 1986). Japan started to become introspective as its international status improved and its economy flourished while a “self-consciousness about how the Japanese were viewed overseas increased” which lead to an unprecedented boom in Nihonjinron theories and works (Oguma,
The search for a Japanese ‘soul’ would eventually be a reaction to the same Westernization that Japan had wanted to participate in to become modern (Lie, 2001). Yoshino (1992) describes two sub-varieties of *Nihonjinron* during the post-WWII era. One variety describes *Nihonjinron* as a “rescuer of Japanese identity threatened by Westernization” while the second variety provides a cultural explanation of Japan’s economic success (Yoshino, 1992, p. 195). Regardless of what ideologies Japan manufactured before the end of WWII, there are many similarities between modern and pre-war *Nihonjinron*. *Nihonjinron* has been prone to important changes but it still remains a strong force in Japan and it is thought to be an even stronger force in postwar Japan (Befu, 2001; Burgess, 2004). *Nihonjinron* thought also maintains that the success of Japan is due to it being comprised of racially/ethnically Japanese people.

**Japanese Nationalism, Race, and Ethnicity**

*Nihonjinron* thought believes that being Japanese can only be achieved by being genetically Japanese through blood. As a result, it is pertinent to examine the notion of being Japanese through *Nihonjinron* thought. Nationalism, race, and ethnicity present an intricate relationship in Japanese self identity and these terms are usually considered one and the same as there is no clear criteria to differentiate who belongs to which nationality, race, or ethnicity in Japan (Lie, 2001). *Nihonjinron* literature often includes the term *tan’itsu minzoku*, which refers to racial, ethnic, and national homogeneity. This term speaks of the “homogeneity of the Japanese” people without specifying whether one is referring to their racial or cultural features (Yoshino, 1992, p. 25). Davies & Ikeno (2002) have stated that Japanese society has an affinity and tolerance for ambiguity to the extent that “it is considered by many to be characteristic of Japanese culture” (p. 9). Because of this acceptance of ambiguity, the terminology of race,
ethnicity, and nationalism are juxtaposed amongst themselves and must each be studied in turn to understand any relationship.

**Japanese Nationalism**

Nationalism can be defined as “the belief that a large number of people share some (often ultimately [indefinable]) essence that requires political sanction and rules” (McVeigh, 2004, p. 31). Japanese nationalism continues to stay focused on the “uniqueness of Japanese ethnicity” and this nationalism is a function of culture and race (Lie, 2001 p. 113). Furthermore, Japan is a country that is confident in its own nationality and culture (perhaps due its long cultural history) and it has been preserved so that “nationality, citizenship, ethnicity, and cultural identity are largely meaningless distinctions for most Japanese. Being […] Japanese means identifying similarly with all such terms” (Pempel, 1998 as cited in McVeigh, 2004, p. ix). The discrimination and distinction of who is Japanese and who is an outsider sustains ethnic and national distinctions in such a way that it is difficult to differentiate nation and/or ethnicity because they are thought to be almost the same entity (Lie, 2001).

Modern nation-states such as Japan have a nationalist ideology that is used to protect political boundaries against outsiders and, at the same time, it contributes to internal mollification (Lie, 2001). Nationalism is best produced when there is an enemy or an ‘other’ where identity is then measured against (McCrone, 1998 as cited in McVeigh, 2004). The sense of nationalism is strong in Japan because there is a keen ‘us versus them’ mentality that is stressed in day-to-day life that results in the promotion of Japanese nationhood (Maher & Macdonald, 1995; McVeigh, 2004). This nationalism then supports social solidarity and this usually increases national development (Lie, 2001). Furthermore, cultural homogeneity is thought to enhance efficiency at a national level through both political and economic
management and has been a strong force in the sense of Japanese ethnic national identity especially when Japan attributed its economic success to its cultural traditions and values (Befu, 2001; Maher & Macdonald, 1995; Tai, 1999 as cited in McVeigh, 2004). When Japan celebrates the positives of being Japanese, it is ultimately a form of worship of Japanese society and “since the society and the nation are isomorphic in Nihonjinron, worship of the society is ipso facto worship of the nation” (Befu, 2001, p. 113).

**Japanese Race**

Race is a term with a variety of meanings. However, Scupin (2003) states that race is not a biological fact but a cultural construction and it “is in reality a kind of ideology, a way of thinking about, speaking about, and organizing relations among and within human groups” (p. 12). Categorizing a group of people into a race is not recognized as valid today and it does not involve any real biological characteristics or human origins (Scupin, 2003). Race is a concept that has remained unclear in Japan possibly because it is a cultural construction and has an ideology that supports it (McVeigh, 2004). Japanese individuals revere themselves as a distinct racial group and their culture is just as important to their identity (Yoshino, 1992). Yoshino has stated three beliefs that are present in modern racial Japanese ideology; (1) being part of a distinct racial group through Japanese blood, (2) having a racially homogenous nation of pure Japanese blood, (3) and the denial or disregard of other groups (Yoshino, 1992 as cited in McVeigh, 2004). Among these categories, bloodline lineage is considered to be the most important (Fukuoka, 1993 as cited in McVeigh, 2004).

Japanese nationals associate “tradition, heritage, pastness, values, and language with physical appearance” and these people often mistake shared physical traits with things that are learned such as culture (McVeigh, 2004, p. 191). Culture is the constructed process and product
of shared values, beliefs, customs, practices, and worldview of a group of people (Kubow & Fossum, 2007; Pai, Adler, and Shadiow, 2007; Maher & Macdonald, 1995). Physical traits are an indispensable ingredient that forms nation-ness and cultural thinking patterns and behaviors are almost synonymous with the same physical traits that define an individual as Japanese (McVeigh, 2004). Race is constructed and tends to be defined only by the members who perceive a racial boundary. *Nihonjinron* asserts that Japan is comprised of an extremely unique racial group in part because of a unique culture and “the imagined concept of Japanese blood” (Lie, 2001; Yoshino, 1992, p. 24). Oguma (2002) asserts that Japanese culture is thought to be the “purest of pure cultures” with the blood of one homogenous culture (p. 318). Befu (2001) asserts that Japanese blood is the epitome of Japanese culture. In other words, Japanese people can only possess Japanese culture because only they have Japanese blood (McVeigh, 2004).

### Japanese Ethnicity

Ethnicity is “a complex of interrelated factors” that includes nationality, language, religion, socioeconomic status, cultural values, and traditions (Pai et al., 2006, p. 239). Furthermore, ethnicity may also be associated with the past, be prone to historical understandings made mythological and include norms about ideal human relationships (McVeigh, 2004). Yoshino (1992) states that ethnicity can also be understood as a “symbolic boundary process or [the process of] organizing significant differences between us and them” or an in-group versus an out-group (p. 11). The members of an ethnicity are “concerned with the boundary not to maintain the boundary *per se* but to perpetuate their culture, religion, and race” (Yoshino, 1992, p. 72). The role of ethnicity is associated with a deep attachment to a specific culture which is represented by Primordialist theories, but ethnicity can also be instrumental because it can be used as a tool or political instrument that is subsequently exploited by the nation’s leaders.
Lastly, Constructivists theorize that ethnic identity is something fluid and created depending on historical circumstances and it is not given but manufactured, as is the case of Nihonjinron thought (Sokilovskii & Tishkov, 1996 as cited in McVeigh, 2004). Japan has developed a specific ethnic national culture in order to build a “racialized national culture” (Weinder, 1995, p. 447 as cited in McVeigh, 2004).

Japanese beliefs referring to ethnicity can be elaborated upon with what is described as ‘ethnicism’ or discrimination based on culture (Bacal, 1991 as cited in McVeigh, 2004). This type of ethnic discrimination is very similar to racism or as a “culturalization of racism” (Oommen, 1994, p. 87 as cited in McVeigh, 2004, p. 203). The best example of ethnicism involves ‘returnees’ or Japanese citizens who have returned to Japan after living abroad for an extended amount of time. Although these returnees are still racially Japanese they are frequently described as not being “solidly Japanese” or as having been contaminated by foreign forces and, as a result, do not fit in as they once had (McVeigh, 2004). Returnees face challenges readjusting and returnees are often denied a promotion for longer than those who have continuously remained in Japan (Nakane, 1973). Similarly, Japanese students who have returned from studying abroad retain a stigma that they are unusually aggressive and are perceived as unreliable by potential employers (Christopher, 1984). Christopher (1984) describes an incident where a highly ranked politician with the potential to become Japan’s Prime Minister was denied precisely because of his acquaintances “with foreign ways and extensive contacts with foreigners” which is viewed as a handicap (p. 185). A Japanese proverb encapsulates Japanese thought on those individuals who lack Japanese culture whether it is a returnee or someone who operates independently of the group; “The nail that sticks up gets pounded down” (Christopher, 1984, p. 53). This proverb speaks of the importance of being on the inside of Japanese culture.
and the negative ramifications of being perceived as an outsider or as someone who does not fit in.

Being Japanese is contingent on blood and genetics and *Nihonjinron* thought does not distinguish between the terms nationality, race, and ethnicity. It appears that the only way to be Japanese is to simply be Japanese and identify as such through having Japanese genetics, nationality, and culture. This ‘all or none’ attitude is also found in other areas of Japanese culture such as the distinction between what is inside and what is outside.

**The Binary of Uchi and Soto**

The division of *uchī* and *soto* (translated as in and out) is important in Japanese culture and “finds great resonance in everyday Japanese life and language” (Nakano, 1983, p. 329-331 as cited in Lie, 2001, p. 148). Japanese society is composed of boundaries that are prevalent throughout all of Japanese society such as keeping a boundary between ethnic Japanese from foreigners (Maher & Macdonald, 1995). Japanese culture clearly distinguishes between the categories of *uchī* and *soto* groups in daily life and place people in either an insider or outsider group (Davies & Ikeno, 2002). Lebra (2004) defines the concept of *uchī* as something near, familiar, or inside while the concept of *soto* can refer to the opposite being something outside or foreign. Lebra (2004), argues that *soto* is less well defined and acts more as a “category for loose ends” (p. 66). This inside and outside dynamic serves another function as it separates but also strengthens the boundary of what is Japanese and what is not (Lie, 2001). *Soto* is a “vast category of otherness” that can refer to another individual who exhibits a noticeably different quality such as a different ethnicity, race, behavior, culture, or any physical differences that are not familiar (Lebra, 2004, p. 146). This outsider category of *soto* contains individuals who are Japanese as well as those who are foreign and not Japanese (Lebra, 2004). In fact, any individual
who is not a part of the inside (uchi) is known as a gaijin or literally “outside person” indiscriminately (Christopher, 1984, p. 182; Davies & Ikeno, 2002). The category of soto is symbolic of a spectrum with different layers around the self’s uchi world with family members comprising the closest soto group and with cultural or racial foreigners being the most distant layer (Lebra, 2004). Even immediate family can be considered soto because “the sibling is the beginning of a stranger” and family is not always within the uchi realm (Nakane, 1973, p. 142). The soto zone is determined by the perception of the stranger as ‘other’ but this category is also reserved for those who are considered a misfit or enemy or otherwise someone who is “clearly threatening” (Lebra, 2004; Hendry, 1995, p. 83). Davies and Ikeno (2002) assert that the distinction between soto and uchi is easily apparent in Japan because of the obvious exclusivism towards other groups of people. In addition, the common practice of removing ones shoes before entering a building is also characteristic of soto and uchi because the home is the epitome of the inside while everything outside is foreign and polluted (Hendry, 1995). In many cases, this exclusivism can refer to the indigenous Ainu people in Hokkaido or other minority groups such as the ethnic Koreans or the Burakumin. The distinction between uchi and soto in modern Japan is still widespread because people are still grouped into either category. Those who are outsiders will often be ignored in order for Japanese people and society to “live more easily in harmony” (Davies & Ikeno, 2002, p. 219).

The metaphor of uchi and soto is present in Japanese culture and functions in all social interactions in Japan to some degree (bachnik & Quinn, 1994; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lebra 1976; Nakane, 1970 as cited in Whitsed & Volet, 2011). Makino (2002), states that uchi/soto constructs for Japanese society have “metaphorical extensions like in no other language” and “have cultural, social, and cognitive implications that underlie key concepts of [Japanese]
culture” (as cited in Whitsed & Volet, 2011, p. 158). The *uchi/soto* metaphor indiscriminately places all foreigners in a separate group most likely because adherence to the *uchi/soto* binary does not allow for any social manners to be developed that is appropriate for strangers in Japanese culture (Nakane, 1973). Smith and Mackie (2000), assert that distinctions hinder the interaction between in and out groups “and the presence of outsiders may cause in-group members to close ranks” (p. 219 as cited in Whitsed & Volet, 2011, p. 158). As a result, Japan is known by foreigners to be reserved and not sociable because of a lack of experience with foreigners in a *soto* group (Nakane, 1973). This binary of inside versus outside acts to distance or even separate others who exemplify some form of distinction. In addition, one does not have to be a foreigner to be considered an outsider, as is the case of the Burakumin.

**The Burakumin**

The *soto/uchi* dynamic is so pervasive, that even ethnic Japanese people can be considered aliens in their own country. The Burakumin can illuminate the exclusionary tactics that Japanese society/culture may use to distance unwanted others. The Burakumin are a group of approximately two million people who are hereditary outcasts in Japanese society. The term Burakumin means ‘the people of the hamlets’ and reflects the impoverished and socially segregated ghettos these people reside in that are referred to as *buraku* or *dōwa chiku* (assimilated areas) in postwar Japanese rhetoric (Christopher, 1984; Fukuoka et al. as cited in Lie, 2001; Hane & Hane, 2003). Additionally, Burakumin people are also referred to as *Eta* or *Hinin*. The Burakumin are ethnically and linguistically indistinguishable from other Japanese people and share the same features that define a Japanese individual. However, these people are discriminated against socially and economically and do not possess the full basic rights to which they are entitled (Christopher, 1984; Maher & Macdonald, 1995). Lie (2001) states that the
designation of the Burakumin as a separate ethnic group is questionable because Japanese society equates ethnicity with race and the Burakumin are considered to be the same race. Oguma (2002) asserts, “The issue of Burakumin is not one of ethnicity. The Burakumin [are] widely regarded as an alien nation” despite whatever ethnicity they are labeled (p. 102).

The Burakumin are often thought to be different because of their origins. One popular hypothesis in Japan suggests that the Burakumin are descendants of slaves or prisoners of war brought from Korea (Christopher, 1984; Hane & Hane, 2003). Another hypothesis believes that the Burakumin are segregated from society because of distinct cultural differences such as the tradition of meat eating and the nature of their traditional vocations (Lie, 2001). The Burakumin have been historically associated with “defiling occupations such as burying the dead and tanning the hides of animals,” and butchering (Christopher, 1984; Hendry, 1995, p. 82). This unclean work made the Burakumin polluted in both the Shintō and Buddhist perspective because anything close to the proximity of death is considered toxic (Boyd & Williams, 2005; Hane & Hane, 2003; Hendry, 1995). The Burakumin are aliens in their own country despite a lack of exhibiting any ‘real’ differences that would exclude them. The Burakumin are considered to be social outcasts due to exhibiting some differences, and arguably less than foreigners may be thought to possess.

**Foreigners In Japan**

Another example of an outsider (or soto) group is foreign people in Japan. The presence of foreigners often results in the creation of a boundary that foreigners are not allowed to trespass. A foreigner can be described as an individual who is not a citizen of or the same nationality of the state in which they reside. Foreigners are said to represent their country of origin and are considered to be on the periphery of society and they are labeled as a permanent other in the
society they live. Sarup & Raja (1996) assert, “The foreigner blurs the boundary; “the stranger is an anomaly, standing between the inside and the outside, order and chaos, friend and enemy” (p. 8). According to Befu (2001) and Lie (2001), Japanese society is notorious for opposing insiders against outsiders. For example, a survey completed by the Japanese government in 1980 reported that sixty-four percent of the polled population conveyed they would not associate with foreigners and “had no intention of doing so” while only four percent of those polled were involved in some way with a foreigner (Christopher, 1984, p. 182). In addition, a survey conducted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2008 reported that over seventy percent of Japanese tourist-friendly hotels and inns that have not allowed foreign guest to stay at their hotels have no intention of changing the policy in the future. The ministry reports that these hotels do not feel they are suited for foreigners to use (Chapman, 2008). Japan has always been able to select and implement practices of other cultures that are most suitable for Japan; however, “this absorption of foreign elements requires an actively conscious marking of the boundary, which in turn makes it possible to continue to absorb actively further elements” (Donald Keene (u.d.) as cited in Dale, 1986; Yoshino, 1992, p. 123). This limit on foreign adoption and borrowing is due to a “perceived symbolic threat to Japanese society” because anything foreign is a “threat to social integrity and solidarity of the Japanese body politic” and the more Japanese Japan is, the more successful and modern it is and vice versa (McVeigh, 2004; Moore, 1997, p. 294). Furthermore, foreigners are seen as a threat to the ideology of Japan being racially homogeneous and purely Japanese (Befu, 2001). Non-Japanese are often thought of as a perpetual foreigner and have no signs of mastering Japanese behaviors, attitudes, or life-styles that define Japan and its people (Lie, 2001). For example, foreigners who have gained exceptional grasp of Japanese receive some degree of media attention and are derogatorily
referred to as “talking dog foreigners” because “like a dog that speaks they are doing something unnatural” (McVeigh, 1997, p. 191). Despite the arguably discriminatory practices or so called “soft racism” or “racism with a smile,” non-Japanese have been discriminated against based solely on being foreign because they have somehow trespassed a sacred boundary that separates foreigners from Japan (McVeigh, 1997; Lie, 2001). The inside and outside dynamic proves to be invested in a boundary making process that keeps “Japaneseness” inside and foreigners outside. This boundary also assumes that foreigners cannot possess Japanese traits such as the knowledge and use of Japanese.

**Japanese Language**

The attitudes related to the use of Japanese illustrate the status of this language in Japanese culture. *Nihonjinron* thought creates and/or reinforces the view that only Japanese people can use Japanese and that this language is as unique as Japan and its people. The origins of Japanese, as well as the attitudes of those who speak it, maintain another boundary that foreigners are not supposed to trespass. Language is at the core of *Nihonjinron* thought and it said to be the very crucible of Japanese identity (Befu, 2001; Dale, 1986). Furthermore, Japanese supposedly embodies the unique qualities of Japan and its inhabitants because “the Japanese language is natively spoken only by the Japanese in Japan” and what is unique about the people is also unique about the language (Befu, 2001, p. 35). *Nihonjinron* reinforces an attitude that places Japanese as a unique language unlike any other language in existence. For example, Japanese is thought to be distinctly different from every other language and it has an inner essence, or a soul/spirit, that makes the language difficult as well as unique at the same time (Miller, 1982). Additionally, Befu (2001) states that linguists place Japanese as part of the Altaic language group. In comparison, Japanese linguists believe that Japanese is a unique language wherein a
“Malayo-Polynesian (Austronesian) language and an Altaic language mixed, not only lexically but syntactically” and produced a unique language (Befu, 2001, p. 40). This mixing is unheard of for non-Japanese linguists, but this concept has been accepted amongst Japanese linguists and Japanese scholars have continued to develop it as if it were fact. Many Nihonjinron authors attest that because Japanese is so difficult, translation is near impossible to grasp to those who are not Japanese (Yoshino, 1992). Miller (1982) mirrors the sentiments of Nihonjinron when he states that “Japanese […] is so uniquely difficult that it is all but impossible for anyone to learn it, whether Japanese of foreigners” (p. 20). This extreme example speaks to the belief that Japanese, and thus Japan, can not be understood by anyone but Japanese people.

The modern Japanese writing system is comprised of kanji (Chinese characters) and two phonetic scripts, hiragana and katakana, that are both known together as kana (Gottlieb, 2005). There are a total of forty-six modern kana signs in both hiragana and katakana. Both of these systems are distinct with katakana being more angular in nature and hiragana being more rounded. Both hiragana and katakana are used in tandem with kanji characters to show things that the kanji alone cannot such as pronunciation, grammatical inflections, postpositions, and the copula as well as pronouns that are only written in kana (Coulmas, 1999, Gottlieb, 2005). Furthermore, Coulmas (1999) states that “content morphemes are typically written in kanji, whereas grammatical endings are indicated with means of hiragana [while] katakana are used for emphasis, sound symbolism, and other ancillary functions to writing” (p. 47). Today, there is a total of 1,945 Chinese characters included in the official List of Characters for General Use and these characters have over 3,300 recognized readings (different phonetic elements and semantic meanings). However, literacy in Japanese requires the knowledge of approximately 3,000 and 5,000 kanji to read a Japanese newspaper (Coulmas, 1999; Unger, 1992, 1996 as cited in Carroll,
Kanji is still in use today because it is intimately linked to the body of knowledge that is definitive of group membership and they “evoke the values such as tradition, heritage, erudition, history, and spiritual resonance” (Carroll, 2001, p. 173; Unger, 1987 as cited in Carroll, 2001). In addition, if kanji were not used, many words would lose meaning based on sound alone, and it would be impossible to read any great works of Japanese literature or history and would deprive future generations of their cultural heritage (Christopher, 1984).

Japanese is perceived as a difficult language, but it is not impossible to learn despite what Miller (1982) previously stated. Japanese is one of the most important facets of Japanese identity and it is believed to be just as unique as Japan is. Japanese has proven to be a crucial symbol in the establishment of Japanese nationalism and in the case of Japan, language is known as “the spiritual blood of the nation” (Coulmas, 1999, p. 406; Kedourie, 1966, as cited in Maher & Macdonald, 1995). The term language in Japan is confused with the complex writing system that has functioned as the marker of cultural identity and views such identity as something that is static and unchanging (Gottlieb, 2005). Because of this, there is an importance of retaining the ‘national’ language of Japan to preserve cultural identity (Safran, 1992). This linguistic nationalism has centered on a shared language as well as the concept of genetic determinism that assumes that language is tied to shared blood, which then creates an exclusive ethnic community of speakers (Miller, 1982). In addition, individuals who are not considered Japanese are not supposed to exhibit ownership of the language because there is “a perfect isomorphism between speakers of the Japanese language and bearers of Japanese culture” (Befu, 1993, p. 112 as cited in McVeigh, 2004, p. 197). Some form of a barrier is created between exo-group members and those who are ethnically Japanese because Japanese is a tightly guarded and exclusive property of Japanese people (Dale, 1986; Tai, 1999 as cited in McVeigh, 2004). Due to either racial or
linguistic determinism (“a language shapes the way of thinking of its speakers”), *Nihonjinron* authors have gone as far as to state that the brains of Japanese speakers are different than others and there are uniquely Japanese ways of thinking and behaving (Coulmas, 1999, p. 407; Tsunoda, 1978 as cited in McVeigh, 2004, Yoshino, 1992). *Nihonjinron* thought places Japanese as the spirit of Japan and thus whatever is special about Japan is also reflected on the language. Japanese proves to separate ethnic Japanese people from exo-group members based on knowledge of this language. However, *Nihonjinron* reserves the use of Japanese for Japanese people. This results in another form of separation between Japanese people and foreigners based on language. Despite this, body language also proves to be another obstacle that separates Japanese people from others.

**Japanese Communication: Forms of Language**

Language is usually the vehicle for understanding, but body language also proves to create another barrier. It is common for Japanese people to try to avoid verbal communication completely and instead use a form of body language called *haragei* that is usually translated as visceral communication, but can also be translated as belly language. Japanese communication relies on *haragei* surprisingly often because of an attitude best summarized by the proverb that ‘words are the root of all evil’ (Christopher, 1982, p. 43; Yoshino, 1992, p. 43-44). It is thought that due to the racial homogeneity present in Japan, as well as the identical social and cultural conditioning of the Japanese people,

It is often possible for one Japanese to determine the reaction of another to a particular situation simply by observing the second man’s facial expressions, the length and timing of his silences and the ostensibly meaningless grunts he emits from time to time (Christopher, 1984, p. 43-44). *Nihonjinron* thought sets another boundary through body
language. As a result, exo-group members are again perceived as outsiders who cannot understand Japanese communication.

**Internationalization**

Japan’s policies and the manner in which it allows for internationalization speak to its acceptance of outside elements. Bytheway (2010) describes internationalization as “the historical process of integration […] and conforming to established intra-national standards of modern, industrialized (and ‘Western’) economies” (p. 434). In Postwar Japan, internationalization has focused on establishing relationships and responding to external demands primarily with ‘Western’ countries and usually to accommodate others, particularly the United States, in order to establish greater international status. However, Japan does not embrace this internationalization, but rather takes an “arm’s length approach” because it allows for a sense of separation from the West while still pursuing global interaction (McConnell, 2000, p. 17; McConnell, 2002). In ‘folk nations’ such as Japan where there is a boundary present that separates those of a different language, race, and ethnicity, any global integration is based on economics. Japan imports important ideas and technology but would rather train an elite group of Japanese to “act as go-betweens with the outside world, educate a general population to digest foreign languages and foreign ideas from a distance, and on occasion even importing a few technicians and teachers” (McConnell, 2000, p. 24). Japan remains behind an impenetrable wall from the rest of the world and uses social controls and national traditions to prevent any changes despite the importation of foreign ideas and the desire for internationalization (McVeigh, 2004). Japan is able to reinforce Japanese identity and nationalism and internationalization becomes “more [of] a device for continued anxious self protection than for a fresh outward engagement with the rest of the world (Hall, 1998, p. 173 as cited in McVeigh, 2004, p. 278). For example,
former Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone sought to promote internationalization by ‘Japanizing’ the world by bringing foreign faculty and students to Japan specifically to learn about Japanese culture and language (Stronach, 1995 as cited in McVeigh, 2004). In the end, internationalization “imports diversity” and is

Welcomed in Japan as long as it is pretty, cute, and superficial, [...] it does not yet imply substantial changes such as altering domestic institutions and structures that conform to world standards or accepting foreign peoples, cultures, and institutions as equals” (Storonach, 1995, p. 56 as cited in McVeigh, 2004, p. 279). Additionally, there is a direct correlation between an increase in international relationships and the increase in Nihonjinron sales (McConnell, 2000). This speaks to how Japan promotes its identity that then acts as a barrier when the distance between Japan and the rest of the world is decreased. This boundary can also be viewed through government programs that bring in foreign teachers.

The JET Programme

As previously mentioned, Japan tends to import aspects of internationalization, and the JET Programme can attest to this. The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme (JET) was a gesture of goodwill from the Japanese government to the American delegation in 1986 with the goal of promoting a mutual understanding and international perspectives between Japan and several other countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia (McConnell, 2000; McConnell 2002). The JET Programme was created in response to American pressure to integrate and internationalize Japan and was a symbolic gesture of good will by Japan. At the infancy of the JET Programme, it was sometimes compared to “the second coming of the black ships (kurofune raishū), drawing a parallel with Commodore William Perry’s uninvited opening of Japan to Western trade in 1854” (McConnell, 2002, p. 166). There have
been some changes to the JET Programme over the years such as the addition of several other countries, but the majority of its recruits are recent college graduates from English speaking countries with the United States being predominantly represented. This program would show how determined Japan was to accept outside forces and was “seen by outside critics as its litmus test of internationalization” and was thought that it would fundamentally change Japanese culture (McConnell, 2000, p. 7; McConnell, 2002). Furthermore, the program would also increase foreign understanding of Japan to the foreign teachers recruited. It is assumed that internationalization will erase the line between the individual and Japanese society; however, this compels Japan and its people “to draw a sharper line than ever before between themselves and outsiders” (Befu, 1938, p. 226 as cited in McConnell, 2000, p. 116). Sadako (1992) states that when a nation is presented with intrusion from an outside force, a society may decide to contain or accommodate the intrusion. In this case, Japan allowed foreign influence become a tool to serve its own interests (McConnell, 2000). McConnell (2000) asserts that Japan’s perspective of the JET Programme was not as a way to integrate foreigners into Japan, but rather a way of keeping foreigners at a polite distance while accommodating ‘Western’ demands. For example, only eighteen percent of 167 domestic Japanese companies wishing to hire foreigners were aware that the JET Programme existed through their own government whereas eighty-three percent of twenty-three foreign companies and embassies reported a knowledge of the JET Programme and its personnel (Kameda, 2014). Although Japan is currently planning to expand the JET Programme over the next three years, it would appear that Japanese society treats foreigners with great warmth and hospitality because they are not expected to remain or integrate into Japan and so the goal is for JET participants to enjoy their stay (Christopher, 1984; McConnell, 2000). This so called “litmus test” results in a superficial relationship between
Japan and foreigners. In addition, attempts at internationalizing Japan have resulted in Japan drawing an even sharper line between what is Japanese and what is not.

Identity

The term identity is difficult to define because there are multiple sets of identities (in some cases several hundred per person) for an individual that is influenced by time and place. These identities are full of contradiction, ambiguities, and are fragmented (Merton, 1957 as cited in MacKinnon & Heise, 2010; Sarup & Raja, 1996). Furthermore, identity is “a dynamic structure that responds to situational stimuli, incorporates new elements, rearranges, adjusts, and stabilizes temporarily before encountering new stimuli and undergoing further revisions” (Hewitt, 2003, p. 111 as cited in MacKinnon & Heise, 2010). Identity may be described as a psychosocial entity that emerges out of the complexities of socialization and is a product of individual factors unique to the individual along with experiential factors derived from social forces (Bailey & Gayle, 2003; Whitbourne, 1986). The term psychosocial refers to the system that takes the psychoanalysis of both biological formulations and cultural environment into consideration (Erikson, 1959). The process of socialization is a factor of identity because it is an interactive process by which people learn to conform to social norms, becoming members of society in a particular cultural context with varying degrees of success (Bailey & Gayle, 2003). An individual is able to define his or her personal identity through unique self-descriptions, personal narratives, or by an autobiography that involves the person’s construction or life story because it is idiosyncratic of identity (Thotis & Virshup, 1987; Owens, 2003; and Hewitt (2003) all as cited in MacKinnon & Heise, 2010). Hostein and Gubrium (2002) state “one’s past-one’s life history or biography-is itself constructed in the process of self-construction as people engage in biographical work” (p. 169 as cited in MacKinnon & Heise, 2010). The use of a narrative can
act as the basis of identity and can be used as a tool to understand not only societal demands but psychological processes as well (McAdams, 1988 as cited in Kroger, 2000). Identity proves to be an abstract concept and it is influenced by socialization, but identity is best illustrated through personal stories.

**Identity Formation and Aging**

Identity formation is a lifelong process that has neither a beginning nor an end in adolescence and is socially and historically constructed (Kroger, 2000; Erikson, 1968). Any identity formed is a social construction based on a myriad of factors such as ethnicity, media, class, religion or nation, but the subject is not necessarily defined by those criteria (Sarup & Raja, 1996). Erikson (1968) states that the identity formed in late adolescence provides “the basis for resolving future psychosocial tasks” for all stages of adulthood (p. 144). Identity is a product of social discourse and individuals define themselves based on how others perceive them as well as what identities his or her host culture allows (Kroger, 2000). Middle adulthood (ages forty-five to sixty-five) is a recent phenomenon and researchers have found that it is a crucial point for identity re-evaluation and/or transition because an individual is able to assume new roles with others in addition to finding more autonomy and freedom which then allows for personal rediscovery of important identity elements that may have been forgotten (Kroger, 2000; Galinsky, 1993 as cited in Kroger, 2000). As a result, people by middle adulthood are known to have a greater range of identity-defining roles compared to any other age (Kroger, 2000).

**Applying Erik Erikson**

Erik Erikson developed a psychosocial approach to identity development that “illustrated how the social world exists in the psychological apparatus of each person” (Hoare, 2002 p. 4; Kroger, 2000). Erikson’s approach has wide cultural applicability because he viewed identity to
be both within the individual and within the culture of said individual (Kroger, 2000; Erikson, 1970 as cited in Kroger, 2004). In addition, Erikson’s perspective on identity is “multidimensional and extensive in its scope and coverage” and includes social and moral influences involved in identity formation (Kroger, 2004, p. 11). Individuals are actively involved in a process of “fitting the environment to one’s needs and to the needs of others in society” (Hoare, 2002, p. 97). Erikson established a developmental and social approach involving all levels of the self, from ego conflicts to the individual’s ‘embeddedness’ in a specific cultural and historical context (Côté, 1993 as cited in Schwartz, 2001). Erikson developed eight qualitatively different stages of development that each person experiences once in their lifetime but never again in the same form (Kroger, 2004). Erikson’s stages are linear and each developmental stage builds on the previous one and provides the foundation for the next stage of development (Loevinger 1987). Erikson considers three stages of identity development to occur in adulthood: Intimacy versus Isolation, Generativity versus Stagnation, and Integrity versus Despair (Atalay, 2007). These stages each represent a unique step in adult development.

**Erikson’s Stages of Adult Identity Formation: Intimacy versus Isolation.** Erikson’s stage of Intimacy versus Isolation marks the end of adolescence and is the first stage in adulthood. The adult becomes more sociable in this stage and has a sense of personal identity that originates from the previous stage of development. Furthermore, confidence is established which allows for intimacy and relationships through interacting, sharing, and being devoted to others (Atalay, 2007). Those individuals who have a healthy level of confidence and identity are able to be involved in meaningful friendships and/or relationships with a significant other (Kroger, 2004). An individual who does not have a healthy sense of identity avoids intimacy, and people who have a strong sense of individual identity have strong, intimate relationships.
with others (Winefield & Harvey, 1996 as cited in Kroger, 2000). If an adult at this stage of development has not developed a strong sense of identity he/she is in isolation and has “only stereotyped and formalized interpersonal relations” and may repeat hectic attempts and fail to find intimacy with partners (Erikson, 1968, p. 167). This stage of adult development is primarily concerned with establishing meaningful relationships and those who are unable to accomplish this are said to be in Isolation.

**Generativity versus Stagnation.** The next stage of adult Eriksonian identity is Generativity versus Stagnation. This stage is realized when the individual fully takes his/her place in society and establishes maturity (Atalay, 2007). This stage is the most active phase because the participant is primarily concerned “with establishing and guiding the next generation” but this does not necessitate parenthood (Erikson, 1993, p. 264; Kroger, 2004). Kroger (2000) expresses that Generativity also includes work and other projects that will “eventually outlive the self” because vocation is especially important and gives the most satisfaction (p. 174; Galinsky, 1993 as cited in Kroger, 2000). Furthermore, Erikson (1993) states that an individual “who, through misfortune or because of special genuine gifts in other directions, do not apply this to their own offspring” can still contribute to future generations (p. 264). On the other hand, adults who have children may not achieve Generativity (Kroger, 2004; Erikson, 1950, as cited in Atalay, 2007). In comparison, individuals who are self-absorbed are known as being Stagnant (Evans, 1967, as cited in Atalay, 2007). This stage of development is experienced when an individual establishes a niche in society as well as a desire to guide the next generation through either parenthood or vocation. Individuals who do not successfully reach this stage are said to be stagnant because they are self-absorbed.

**Integrity versus Despair.** Integrity versus despair is the last stage of adult Eriksonian
identity development and it is also the most difficult stage to define. Integrity embodies the previous stages and is reached with the successful conclusion of each positive trait in the previous developmental stages (Evans, 1967 as cited in Atalay, 2007; Kroger, 2004). The individual who has reached this stage experiences a peaceful sense of her life span and has the ability to accept her mortality and death as well as “to address sobering questions such as the meaning of one’s existence” (Atalay, 2007; Kroger, 2004, p. 33). Additionally, Kroger defines integrity as being “characterized by the wisdom of mature judgment and a reflective understanding of one’s own accidental place in the historical scheme of things” (2004, p. 32). In comparison, individuals who are in Despair have regrets about the path their life has taken and search for a way to achieve a more satisfying conclusion even though it may be impossible to ‘start over’ (Atalay, 2007; Kroger, 2004). The last stage of development is reached when the individual feels at peace with her life and is able to positively reflect on past experiences. Those who do not reach this stage will continue to attempt a better conclusion to their life.

**Collective Identity**

The type of society in which one lives can influence individual identity. Japan embodies many characteristics most commonly associated with a collectivist society. Collectivist societies are more prone to interdependent self-concepts between the individual and the group rather than a clear distinction between the individual and society (Fukushima, Sharp, & Kobayashi, 2009; Sugimura & Mizokami, 2012). Collectivism “grants priority to group identity [and] shared in-group beliefs and cooperation with in-group members” and places value in relationships with other society members and especially family (Fukushima, Sharp & Kobayashi, 2009, p. 439). In addition, there is powerful social pressure for people to value culturally specific norms and obligations as well as conformity (Fukushima, Sharp & Kobayashi, 2009). Sugimura &
Mizokami (2012), argue that there is an “indigenous Japanese perspective of the self” that involves an emotional relation to others such as being attuned to others’ feelings and emotions (p. 125). Japan has its own unique form of collectivism that emphasizes harmony and shuns disruption because “a person cannot be considered as a set of individual characteristics, but rather is inseparable from the power and meanings of social relationships” (Robertson, 2005, p. 384; Sam & Berry, 2006). Japan has a form of collectivism that emphasizes harmony and social relationships with in-group members.

**Work and Vocation Identity**

Employment plays an important role during adulthood and the vocation of an individual has a noticeable relationship to the sense of identity (Anderson & Hayes, 1996). Vocation can be either intrinsic (having an inherent interest or personal meaning) or extrinsic (work as a means to an end). Work that is considered intrinsic is directly involved in the worker’s identity especially during adulthood, and it will be central to his/her personal evaluation of competence and sense of self (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965, Katz & Kahn, 1978 as cited in Whitbourne, 1986). This identity process via employment is a form of assimilation because the individual is “imposing his or her own identity onto the work experience” (Whitbourne, 1986, p. 104). The behavior of co-workers has an influence on someone’s personal identity because the co-workers’ “actions and reactions to the individual can serve as a frequent, if not potent, source of information about how desirable and undesirable the worker’s personality and habits [are]” (Whitbourne, 1982, p. 152). On the other hand, vocation can simply be a means to an end because it can provide extrinsic benefits such as money, status, and/or other desirable benefits. Individuals in this category have less of their identity affected by or involved with their work experiences and view their employment as “just a job.” Some individuals may preserve their identity by downgrading the importance of
their work and simply enjoy the quality of life and the level of comfort and enjoyment their position affords (Whitbourne, 1982). Vocation can act as a significant part of adult identity. While some individuals may invest a portion of their identity in work, others may preserve their identity by demoting the significance of their employment and enjoy the benefits their employment provides.

Identity and Gender

Gender is an important subject in identity theories because there are numerous identity theories that focus predominately on males while excluding females. Females respond to environments differently than males, and women organize and perceive these environments differently as well. There have been debates over whether males and females develop in a similar manner or if they develop distinctly from each other. Research on developmental gender difference entered literature and research in the 1980’s and such research has remarked upon the numerous contrasting differences between male and female identity (Anderson & Hayes, 1996; Bruch & Morse, 1972; Helson & Moane, 1987; Rose & Pardes, 1989). For example, several studies have found that “women develop and gain a sense of identity within a context of connections with others” and women’s identity is based around maintaining relationships (Anderson & Hayes, 1996, p. 10). Regardless, men and women who are part of similar cultural groups tend to have more similarities than differences in developmental theories (Anderson & Hayes, 1996).

Identity Control Theory and Emotions

Emotions can provide a means for self-identification because the self is constituted and powered by emotion (Burke and Stets, 1999; Wiley, 1994, as cited in MacKinnon & Heise, 2010). Identity Control Theory (ICT) emphasizes how the emotions of an individual help
motivate the process of self-verification. Emotion is able to reflect the degree of compatibility between the meaning of an individual’s identity and the social context in which this meaning is held. Individuals react to where they are placed by others in society and a favorable role performance of a positive identity is comprised of positive emotion while a lack of identity verification garners negative emotions (Burke and Stets 1999; Cast & Burke 2002 as cited in Stets, 2005). In addition, identities that are emotionally positive will be repeated while negative identities/emotions are less likely to be repeated because an individual’s identity is not supported by other people or the society (Stryker, 1987 as cited in Stets, 2005). ICT is often compared to a thermostat because it regulates a certain temperature and if there is a change to this temperature, adding or subtracting degrees will restore the discrepancy. Similarly, ICT is also a balance between negative and positive elements that requires a response to maintain balance. During 

identity change, an individual’s control system can “produce behaviors that elicit new interpersonal feedback” by developing new self-perceptions and/or cognitive reshaping (Anderson & Mounts, 2012, p. 92). In comparison, if attempts at cognitive reshaping fail to restore balance, the identity standard may change. As a result, the individual may discount feedback in order to defend his/her own sense of self-perception and/or identity standard. This process where identity is retained is called identity defense (Anderson & Mounts, 2012). Identity Control Theory asserts that an individual will change due to the positive or negative feelings one receives from others or from society. An individual can respond to negative feedback and change a portion of her identity or she can discount negative feedback and participant in identity defense where there is no change to identity.

Levels of Acculturation

The level of acculturation an individual has reached can influence identity. Acculturation
can be defined as the process of adapting and/or or adopting aspects of a different culture and reshaping the original patterns of one’s encultured self to some degree (Pai et al., 2006; Sam & Berry, 2006). Identity changes due to acculturation are present in individuals who start to identify or practice two or more different cultural attitudes and/or behavioral sets (Shiraev & Levy, 2010 as cited in Bang & Montgomery, 2013). There are two main forms of acculturation, immigration-based and globalization-based. Immigration-based acculturation is when an individual “physically relocates themselves from one culture to another and negotiate[s] identification with their ethnic culture and host culture, while acquiring necessary components of the language, customs, and worldview of their new cultural environment” (Chen, Benet-Martínez, Lam, & Bond, 2013, p. 61). In comparison, globalization-based acculturation occurs when an individual retains his/her home culture but still develops a bicultural identity due to some form of cross-cultural contact that is then integrated into their ethnic culture creating a global identity. It is difficult to manage and integrate two separate cultural identities, and it proves to be a complex challenge as the individual may feel conflicted integrating new elements into their identity (Chen et al., 2013). Sam and Berry (1990, p. 1018 as cited in Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005) state that ethnic minorities who are acculturating respond to two separate issues:

(1) The extent to which they are motivated or allowed to retain identification with the culture of origin, now the non-majority culture; and (2) the extent to which they are motivated or allowed to identify with the mainstream, dominant culture.

Sam and Berry (2006) hypothesize four different orientations (figure 1) based on the two issues previously mentioned: integration (high in terms of host culture and high on ethnic culture), assimilation (high, low), separation (low, high), and marginalization (low, low) (Chen et al., 2013, p. 62; Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005).
Integration is representative of the individual maintaining and valuing her original culture but also having regular intergroup interactions. Furthermore, the individual maintains the integrity of her original culture but can simultaneously seek to participate and be a member of a larger social network in an ethno-cultural group (Bang & Montgomery, 2013; Sam & Berry, 2006). Assimilation is when the individual does not wish to maintain her original cultural identity and instead seeks to interact with (and possibly assimilate into) another culture. Separation is exemplified when the individual values her respective original culture, and wishes to avoid interaction with others. Lastly, marginalized individuals have neither the desire to maintain their original identity or be involved with relations or intergroup interactions with others (Bang & Montgomery, 2013; Sam & Berry, 2006). Phinney (1996) states that Sam &
Berry’s taxonomy demonstrates that “acculturation is not a linear process, but rather a multidimensional process” that includes the individuals’ original ethnic culture as well as the society in which she lives (p. 922). Individuals are able to use strategies in different areas of their lives such as seeking economic assimilation with employment while maintaining linguistic integration in society by being bilingual (Liebkind, 1999). Acculturation is a multidimensional process that is contingent on the host culture’s attitudes towards inclusion or exclusion. Four categories were developed that reflect the level of acculturation an individual may experience and they include: Integration, Assimilation, Separation, and Marginalization.

**Bicultural Identity Integration**

Bicultural Identity Integration (BII) is another method of assessing acculturation. A rising percentage of individuals have internalized two or more cultures due to enhanced globalization and an increasingly diverse and mobile world and these individuals can be described as bicultural or multicultural. These individuals can simultaneously have two or more cultural orientations and can shift between these cultural lenses through a process called cultural frame switching in response to cultural cues (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martínez, 2000). Bicultural Identity Integration is a “framework for investigating individual differences in bicultural identity organization, focusing on biculturals’ subjective perceptions of how much their dual cultural identities intersect or overlap” and places individuals into either a compatible or oppositional category (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005, p. 1019).

People with high BII have acculturated to some degree to their own culture of origin, as well as their mainstream identity in a host culture, and find it easy to integrate elements of both cultures in everyday life (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). Individuals who are able to integrate two or more cultures are prone to less acculturative stress and better social perceptions
of themselves and often have additional social networks beyond his/her own ethnic group (Mok, Morris, Benet-Martínez, & Karakitapoglu-Aygun, 2007 as cited in Chen et al., 2013).

Alternatively, some individuals view themselves as involved in a ‘hyphenated culture’ or a ‘third’ culture. Regardless, individuals with high BII see their identities as compatible with each other rather than conflicting or exclusive. In contrast, people who exhibit low BII can identify with different cultures, but experience difficulty incorporating different cultures into one cohesive sense of identity, leading to internal conflict (Gil, Vega, & Dimas, 1994; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Vivero & Jenkins, 1999 as cited in Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). People with low BII are not proficient in the host culture and they cannot use the host culture’s language, and have less of an identity and less competence in that culture (Chen et al., 2013).

Furthermore, individuals with low BII sometimes feel as if they should only choose one culture, and feel unable to have both identities at once (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). Bicultural Identity Integration measures the level of integration of an individual in a host culture.

Individuals with higher levels of BII tend to integrate both cultures easily and often have less acculturative stress and more relationships with people in the host culture. A third or hyphenated culture may develop in some instances. In comparison, individuals with low BII are not as proficient in the host culture and do not develop an identity through the culture.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This chapter will describe and explain the methodology and related fields of information applied to this research. This chapter first presents the main research questions that guided this research, and then explains the rationale for the specific methodology and approach implemented. The selection of the participants is explained and presented along with other pertinent information regarding each participant including his or her country or origin, age, and the amount of time spent in Japan. Next, the research procedure and data collection process is described and details the steps taken to ensure compliance with Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) and the ethical treatment of the participants. Additionally, the credibility and validity of the research is explored and triangulation is established. Next, the data analysis section illustrates the process of coding the interview transcripts into themes. Lastly, the limitations of this study will be specified and the credibility of the research will be defended.

Main Research Questions

To better understand and to elaborate on the experiences and perspectives of the participants, a qualitative methodology was implemented comprised of four main questions with nine, smaller sub-sections dedicated to a specific theme including basic demographic questions, impressions of Japan, involvement in the Japanese culture, personal identity in Japan, connections to Japanese culture/society, employment, home country, the use of technology, and a question about Hokkaido, the participants current place of residency. The main questions that have guided this study are as follows:

1. What are the impacts of living in Japan for five or more years on the identities of foreign residents?

2. What aspects of Japanese culture do participants identify as most salient to/most important in
shaping their identity in Japan?

3. How do participants define, construct, and live a meaningful life (via family, profession, and socially) in the Japanese context?

4. Using the definition of identity as a process of an individual or actor’s actions within the Japanese cultural context via socialization, how does an individual’s actions reflect Japanese cultural practices?

Qualitative Design: Case Study

This qualitative study explores and develops explanations of identity formation of individuals from what is commonly referred to as ‘Western’ nations (United States, Canada, Europe, and New Zealand), who have resided in Japan for five or more years. A qualitative methodology proved to be the most suitable option for this study due to several factors. Most importantly, qualitative methodology focuses on exploring the personal experiences and perspectives of the participants, and is primarily concerned with empowering individuals to contribute personal stories with the goal of understanding the context in which these participants reside (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, this research included identity theories, such as Erik Erikson’s stages of development, that Kroger (2004) states are best explored through a qualitative methodology. Another identifying mark of the qualitative methodology is when the researcher is involved with extensive, personal interaction with the participants in the field. Furthermore, qualitative research depends on the collection of information and materials via the natural setting in order to understand the context of the people being interviewed. This quality of qualitative research was exhibited during my time in Japan, as I was involved in the same environment/context as my participants. Secondly, data collection was achieved through face-to-face interviews and personal involvement in the data collection. The inclusion of interviews
with participants requires the researcher to be the main instrument of data collection in a qualitative methodology. Qualitative methodology hinges on the meaning participants provide that creates an array of unique perspectives of the individuals involved in the research. Lastly, qualitative research depends on “complex reasoning through inductive and deductive logic [that] establishes patterns or themes” (Creswell, 2013, p. 45). In this case, the analysis of qualitative data is inductive while evidence is gathered deductively in order to support the themes of the study (Creswell, 2013).

The paradigm and worldview implemented in this study is social constructivism, or the Interpretivist paradigm. Social Constructivism is the study of the meaning of objects and/or things that are subjective and varied in nature. This paradigm focuses on a naturalistic perspective and interaction between people through such mediums as thoughts, values, and ideas and takes on a practical interest in everyday proceedings and in the context of day-to-day life. An important assumption of the Social Constructivism paradigm is that something does not have any inherent meaning; rather, the meaning is created through social construction. For example, something that is ‘sacred’ is not by nature sacred, but only arrives at that status through social practices. This social construction is a product of cultural factors and how the individual’s life and the cultural norms interact (Creswell, 2013).

The Case Study Approach

The approach implemented in this research is the case study. A case study focuses on a certain case (or cases) or a current process with the goal of increasing knowledge/understanding of a specific problem or issue. Creswell (2013) states several characteristics in a case study are desirable and complement this research. For example, a case study is invested in a contemporary situation in a real-life context, as is the issue of foreigners residing in Japan. In addition, a case
study selects a clear issue of concern such as the identity formation of individuals who have lived in Japan for an extended period of time and the influence this time has had on the identity of an individual. Furthermore, a case study can be geared towards a community such as a school or university, which is where all but one of the participants in this study was recruited (Merriam, 1998). Because of the nature of this research, the collective or multiple case study is the most appropriate form of case study because this is a situation wherein the inquirer purposively finds and selects several people to give depth, perspective, and meaning to one issue (Creswell, 2013).

**Participants.** I was in close contact with the eight contributing participants over a three month time period where I personally interacted with participants in both a personal and professional manner via their workplace. The participants were recruited through purposive snowball sampling. A snowball sample is a method of recruiting participants through recommendations of interviewees (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2011). Also, these individuals were purposively selected based upon their knowledge of Japanese culture, and/or a minimum of five years of residency in Japan as well as being twenty-five years of age or older. In addition, the participants were also individuals who I felt I had established a relationship with during my tenure in Japan. However, one particular participant was chosen because he represented an atypical case that would provide a different perspective. Without exception, the background of the individuals required certain qualities and a snowball sample proved to be the most efficient way to recruit participants.

The identity of each of my participants will remain confidential and pseudonyms will be utilized (refer to Table 1). Most participants were recruited from a private university in Hokkaido, Japan and have lived in Japan for at least five years.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Years in Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luther</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dexter</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>55-65</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>20+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>England, United Kingdom</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lana</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thaddeus</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1. List of participants*

**Research Procedure.** This study was contingent on the approval of the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) at Bowling Green State University. Upon HSRB approval, my research, and the interview process started immediately upon my arrival, continued for the remainder of my tenure in Hokkaido, Japan. I recited an HSRB approved verbal script that included pertinent information about myself, the rights of the participants to withdraw and/or not participate, the promise of confidentiality/anonymity, the interview process, and the purpose of my study before I interviewed any participant. Only after participants verbally confirmed their desire to participate did I provide an HSRB approved informed consent form that required a signature before any interviews took place. This form detailed the interview process and presented the necessary contact information for the HSRB review board at BGSU. An interview schedule was created that took into account the participants’ schedule once the verbal and written consent forms were completed. I provided each participant with the interview questions the day before their scheduled interview, and I requested that they review the questions and make notes where necessary. In some instances, the interviews were completed in only one session, but some
participants required additional sessions to successfully and fully answer all questions.

**Data Collection Process.** The most common data collection in a qualitative case study is through interviews (Creswell, 2013). Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face in an area the interviewee selected that was both private and comfortable. Semi-structured interviews proved to be the best option because they allowed for a basic interview structure, but and also allowed for a certain amount of flexibility to explore other topics and ideas unique to each participant. The interviews were audio recorded on two different devices and the audio files were maintained on a private, password-protected computer to ensure confidentiality.

**Credibility and Validity of Study**

Qualitative research must consider the validity threats to a study in order for there to be any credibility in the description, conclusion, and interpretation of the research (Maxwell, 2013). The goal of a valid qualitative study is to have triangulation, or simply when a researcher implements multiple sources and a variety of different theories to provide and support evidence on a specific theme and/or perspective (Creswell, 2013). Triangulation is an important issue and it was achieved, as multiple sources of research were included in this study that presented historical and contemporary issues. In addition, I frequently engaged in conversation with a professor, Dr. Christopher J. Frey, who has lived and studied in Japan for several years. This professor proved to be a great resource as he provided constant and specific feedback during my experiences in Japan and throughout the thesis writing process. Informal observations of each participant were included in addition to interaction with said participants in a professional manner throughout my time spent in the field. The interactions with participants proved to act as a form of *in member checking*, as the participants were forthcoming with their personal experiences in Japan prior to the interviews that allowed for the participants to expand on their
experiences during their interview. Creswell (2013) defines *in member checking* as a way for the researcher to solicit the participants’ view of the interpretations and findings of a study. *In member checking* proved to be a process that was initiated before the interviews as I observed the participants in their daily lives within their chosen profession. Lastly, the conclusion of every interview included a few minutes where I summarized what the participant said during their interview in my own words. This occasionally resulted in the participant divulging more information or, at the very least, confirming my statements.

Three other measures were implemented to ensure the highest degree of validity in this research, and the subsequent sections will each focus on one specific validity threat including researcher bias, long-term involvement with participants, and ‘rich’ data. There are several different ways to establish validity and triangulation, but the long-term involvement I had with the participants proved to be the most important.

**Long-Term Involvement With Participants**

I was professionally involved with all eight of my participants over the span of three months from June to August 2013. I maintained a presence at the university, where seven of my participants worked, for approximately thirty hours a week, for three months. During this time, I immersed myself in the interviewee’s environment and was actively involved in building rapport with the participants through casual conversation as well as being professionally involved as a volunteer at the university. I was able to know each participant on an individual basis through my presence, both personally and professionally, and was able to observe each participant in his or her day-to-day activities at the university. Becker and Geer (1957) have claimed that long-term participant observation “provides more complete data about specific situations and events than any other method” and allows for alternative ideas and theories to be tested (as cited in
Rich Data

Data is considered ‘rich’ if it is a detailed, diverse, and revealing picture of what is occurring (Becker, 1970 as cited in Maxwell, 2013). Rich data is achieved when there is both a long-term involvement with participants, and a detailed interview that is then transcribed verbatim. In addition, rich data is created when the setting or environment of a participant is described in detail (Creswell, 2013). In my time spent with my participants, I maintained regular contact and built rapport over the span of approximately three months before I began the interviews. In addition, all of my interviews focus on specific questions that my participants answered in detail that was audio recorded and then transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis was managed with the techniques that Creswell (2013) employs and recommends. A foundational approach to data is the data analysis spiral where constant revisions are made to all existing aspects of a study. This spiral implies that the process of data collection, data analysis, and report writing is not linear, but is developed simultaneously.

There are several steps taken in the process of data analysis. The first step that I utilized was to organize the data into audio files. The best example of this is the transcriptions of interviews that contributed to the raw information database. Next, verbatim transcriptions were produced, analyzed, and reviewed multiple times. This review process helped to create tentative ideas and aided in the preliminary categorization of possible codes that is typical in qualitative research. The categorization strategy that was implemented was based, to some extent, on deductive or prior ideas of what is important to this research; however, an inductive approach was also included to capture new insights that were developed through the data (Maxwell, 2013).
Although there was a mixture of deductive and inductive categorization, attention to open coding was the primary consideration. Corbin & Strauss (2007) state that open coding involves reading and subsequently developing coding categories based on the data the participants provide including the terms participants used, or in vivo codes, during their interview (Creswell, 2013). For example, a number of sections in this thesis are titled based on what participants stated and alluded to during interviews. This categorization approach developed similarities or common features of participant’s experiences in Japan. Notes and/or memos were recorded in the margins of the transcripts as the transcriptions were reviewed. These memos were “short phrases, ideas or concepts that occur to the reader” Creswell (2013, p. 183). Writing memos and notes allowed for an identification of codes and major themes as well as for ongoing reflection. Creswell (2013) states that coding is the heart of qualitative data analysis. Codes are built on detailed descriptions that are in situ, or within the context of the person and/or place. The fact that the context has such importance in this study makes the use of a case study the most applicable and logical. In addition, coding is an organizational process that groups information into categories that are then easier to interpret. The developed codes were based on its prior categorization and were also color-coded and then grouped into overarching themes. Refer to Table 2 for the list of codes that were developed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Separated from Japanese society by a wall or barrier</td>
<td>Identity rooted on personal relationships/involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside versus outsiders</td>
<td>Japanese thinking/attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and belongingness</td>
<td>Hokkaido being unique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit on foreign worker contracts</td>
<td>Technology connecting people to home identity/culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining/creating relationships with Japanese people is difficult</td>
<td>JET Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bias of gender/nationality</td>
<td>Incentive for working in Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreigners can’t vote</td>
<td>Foreigners not having a voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity as controllable</td>
<td>Foreigners as noisy or abrasive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect or “grey area” in Japanese relationships</td>
<td>Japan as patriarchal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor discriminatory experiences</td>
<td>Life in Japan is less stressful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing perspectives of home</td>
<td>Involvement or participation in Japanese culture/rituals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging to neither home culture nor Japanese culture</td>
<td>Freedom and autonomy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Codes

**Limitations of Study**

There are several limitations inherent in this study due to its nature as qualitative research as well as other extraneous factors. The most obvious limitations of this research stems from the chosen methodology. Qualitative research is, by nature, not generalizable because it primarily focuses on an in-depth exploration of one specific topic. This limitation is exacerbated by the fact that there were only eight participants involved in this research that once again reflects the fact that this study may not be very generalizable. My personal understanding of my participants is also a possible limitation because I was the primary tool of research. Many of my interviewees possess a wealth of experiences that I may not be able to relate to because of my lack of international experience as well as my age, culture, and gender.

Several extraneous factors also created possible limitations. First, all of the participants have resided specifically in Hokkaido, Japan for the majority of their time in Japan. As a result, the experiences of the participants may be isolated to Hokkaido and may not be relevant to foreigners in other areas of Japan. Another noticeable limitation is that this study has a high ratio of men to women because the study is comprised of two female participants and six male participants. Lastly, this research did not address or focus on any potential cultural differences
between the participants. Many of the participants in this study identified themselves as being either European or of a country that is associated with ‘Western’ values/norms. Unfortunately, being grouped into one or both of these categories does not take into account the full range of the different cultures contained in this research. For example, it would be foolhardy to assume that all people who identify as European have a similar perception of identity or will necessarily have similar experiences in Japan based on their nationality or status.

Even with the number of limitations involved in this study, I believe that my extended personal involvement with my participants as well as my history of being open to, and embracing different cultures has proven to be crucial. Furthermore, the precautions I have taken to suspend my personal bias (such as composing my researcher bias before I arrived in Japan) and judgments before my research in Japan started was a necessary step to enhance the credibility of this study.

**Researcher Bias**

In order to understand my personal interest in this research, and to increase the validity of this study, my personal background and researcher bias must be stated. A researcher should extensively define the inherent values and beliefs he or she possesses in order to remain as ambivalent as possible. The lack of judgment, or at the very least, the suspension of judgment and values, is a necessary piece of conducting research, especially qualitative research because of the role of the researcher as the primary tool of collecting data (Creswell, 2013). The researcher needs to be honest about any personal values or judgments he or she makes as this can lead the researcher into issues such as legitimization problems in the academic community to the point where research conducted is considered void of meaning. The perspective of the researcher needs to be clear and unhindered to the best extent in order to paint a clear vignette of
the research.

I have lived in a city just outside of Columbus, Ohio from fourth grade to my graduation from high school. Upon graduating, I enrolled at Heidelberg University, which is a small liberal arts school in Tiffin, Ohio where I majored in secondary education (grades four to nine). During my freshman year, I took an introduction to Anthropology class that proved to be very crucial in the way that I now view and think about the world. There was an anecdote my professor recalled where her father provided her with two almost identical measuring rulers. On the front of one ruler was the word ‘right’ while the other ruler had the word ‘wrong’ written on it. She was then instructed to flip both rulers over and on the back of both rulers was the same word: ‘different.’ Even today, I constantly remember this story, and I have tried to apply this perspective to my research. The idea that two things that are conceptualized or even placed strictly as inherently good or evil is something with which I do not necessarily agree. Although I do judge some situations with a slightly ‘Westernized’ or Christian mentality, I know there is a place for everything, even those things that are considered evil by some. I believe that ideas that escape my personal understanding are not wrong by nature, but are wrong through misunderstanding.

My first real international experience also shaped my view of the world. When I graduated from Heidelberg University, I participated in a month long teaching program in Tianjin, China where I assisted a professor with teaching English to Chinese adults. Even though the position was only for a month, through this experience, I better understood my views on the world and my place in it. This experience would lead me to graduate school and a program that values diverse cultures and different lifestyles. It was during that time that I realized I have always had an interest in an Asian context and that I wanted to focus my studies somewhere in Asia.

A study into identity requires a search for my own identity as a researcher. Not only are
my conceptions of identity and its formation necessary, but so too are the influences on my perception of what I am studying. I believe that identity is an expansive topic and has several contradictions inherent in its nature. I believe that in some circumstances, Japanese identity and the ‘Western’ construct of identity will both contain missing pieces, but I do not assume these are the same pieces in both cultures. The aspects of identity that concern me are those that have not been studied as in-depth as other life stages. The age range in which I focus are the years primarily from twenty-five to fifty-five, but this range can increase and include individuals who are older than fifty-five. As previously stated, identity is an enigma and dependent on cultural context. I believe that some areas of identity are highly dependent on outside factors especially socialization and cultural influences while other identities can be either retained and/or maintained.

From several sources, I have found a similar motif of assessing identity. Using personal stories as a way to understand identity formation will be a key part of this study. Although I am not sure of a negative stigma about using this methodology/approach, I am open to the possibility that there may be an unfair focus of a narrative approach to identity.

Even though this study will be more interpretive and used to uncover ideas, I already have a few conceptions that are at the forefront of my mind. I do not necessarily expect to find these concepts in my data, but I would not be surprised if they were somehow manifested during interviews. First, there is a sense that foreigners are being categorized as outsiders and placed into a different context than those who are considered Japanese. Second, I am framing much of my perspectives through Erikson’s theories of identity formation. Implementing Erikson’s ideas may prove to be helpful, but they can also be constricting, so I will attempt to use them as a tool and not a crutch for this study. In addition, my own background and sense of identity is from a
‘Western’ context. This can potentially create problems as I continue my research because I may not be as attentive to alternative ideas of identity as I would hope to be. Lastly, I cannot hope to escape the possibility that by conducting a study of Westerners’ concept of identity in Japan during adulthood is not just a way for me to satiate my own fascination about my identity as a foreigner in a foreign land. At the moment, I have plans to spend an extended amount of time in an Asian context. This study has a practical application for me, as I may be involved in the same identity formation as some of my interviewees.
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

Qualitative Themes

This chapter explores and corroborates common experiences, and attempts to develop themes from the information the participants produced. The use of participants’ personal experiences and the direct use of quotations will organize relevant information for each section. In addition, a summary will be produced for each theme to synthesize information. Information about the experiences of adults from ‘Western’ countries who reside in Japan will be developed and then examined through the construction of the themes and sub-themes.

There were two major themes developed from the interviews. The first theme, estrangement and differences, focuses on experiences where participants felt distanced from Japanese culture and/or society. Several participants felt as if they were barred from Japanese culture/society by a wall that they could never penetrate. The second theme, titled acculturation and identity, contains information regarding how participants acclimated to Japanese culture/society. This theme illuminates each participant’s personal level of acculturation taking into account each participant’s behaviors and thoughts on their time spent in Japan. This theme also contained a wealth of information, and so it was organized into smaller sections to fully implement the perceptions of the participants. The descriptions and information the participants contributed in this chapter are evaluated in Chapter Five.

Background information regarding these participants is required in order to understand each participant’s unique and personal experiences while living in Japan. A basic description of each participant will be established.
Participant Details

Brian

Brian is a forty-four year old man originally from Auckland, New Zealand. He has a Bachelor’s degree in Education and describes himself as Caucasian. Brian lived in New Zealand until he was twenty-three years old before he began teaching English in Japan from 1993 to 1998. Brian married a Japanese national in 1994 and has one daughter. Brian moved back to New Zealand with his family in 1998 and remained there until 2000. Brian and his family then returned to Japan so that his daughter could successfully begin Japanese elementary school on time. Brian has been employed as an English teacher and/or tutor in Sapporo.

Craig

Craig is a fifty-four year old man from England, United Kingdom. He describes himself as British. He possesses an Honors degree. After meeting his wife in England, Craig moved to Japan in 2001 with his wife who is from Sapporo, Hokkaido. Craig is an avid fan of football (soccer) and is passionate about being an educator. He has lived with his wife and her family for the past twelve years. Craig is currently an English teacher and tutor in Sapporo.

Dexter

Dexter is a forty-six year old male originally from Liverpool, Nova Scotia in Canada. He first came to Japan through the JET Programme where he taught English for three years. Shortly after, Dexter married his wife who is a Japanese national. He has been married and has lived in Hokkaido for nineteen years. Dexter has a son who is sixteen and a daughter who is fourteen. Dexter is currently a tenured educator at a private university in Hokkaido, Japan, and has lived in Sapporo longer than any other city.

Eric
Eric is a forty-two year old male originally from Poland. He describes himself as being ethnically, culturally, and nationally Polish and has a Master’s Degree in Economics. He moved to Hokkaido to be with his future wife and decided to stay in Japan shortly after his arrival in 2001. Eric has always had a desire to teach English, and has worked as an English teacher and tutor.

Helen

Helen is a female in her late fifties to early sixties who was born in Ashland, Kentucky in the United States. She has spent most of her life in Ohio where she earned her doctorate in Anthropology. Helen describes herself as a conservative, mid-southern, white woman. However, Helen is also a self-proclaimed feminist and characterizes herself as a progressive thinking individual. Helen moved to Japan in order to complete her Doctorate Degree and then stayed to conduct research at a university in Sapporo. Helen later obtained a tenured position at private university in Hokkaido. She has been married to a Japanese national for the past seventeen years.

Lana

Lana is a thirty-one year old female from Italy who received a Master’s Degree in Italy, and in Japan. She describes herself as Latin Italian as well as being “one-hundred percent Italian.” Lana studied Japanese at a young age and she considers it to be her second language. Lana has lived in Japan for five years, and she teaches an Italian language course at a university in Sapporo in addition to being an English tutor.

Luther

Luther is a sixty year-old Irish American man originally from Boston, Massachusetts. He has a Master’s Degree in History and he has been a teacher for most of his professional career.
Luther came to Japan in 1985 through the JET Programme in part because he could not find employment in the United States, but also because he wanted to find lucrative employment as a teacher. Luther moved back to Boston upon completing his contract year in Japan through the JET Programme. He returned to Japan for a full-time teaching position after two years of working at a part-time position in Boston. He has remained in Sapporo since his return to Japan, and is currently a tenured educator at a private university. Luther has lived in Sapporo longer than any other city.

**Thaddeus**

Thaddeus is a seventy-seven year old German missionary for the Catholic Church. He describes himself as Caucasian and has earned a Bachelor’s Degree. Thaddeus has lived in Japan for a total of fifty-two years. Thaddeus was sent to Japan by the Catholic Church, and views his long residence there as a religious calling. He is, and has been, involved with many community-based projects, including Director of a Sapporo Kindergarten for forty years, and the Boy Scouts for thirty-nine years. Thaddeus has also been involved with a program for international students at Sapporo’s universities for the past twenty-five years that strives to cross cultural divides through discussions and shared experiences by traveling around Hokkaido on organized trips.

**Theme One: Estrangement and Difference**

The first subtheme involves situations or examples of either a bias towards one group, or a noticeable distinction that separates foreigners from facets of Japanese society and/or Japanese practices. As long term residents in a modern, developed society that is also frequently described as homogenous and monolingual, participants spoke at length about the divides between themselves and Japanese people. A common metaphor of a ‘wall’ or a barrier is
explored as the first sub-theme. Second, and as an example, the limit on political participation as non-citizens is discussed. The second subtheme, the language barrier, is developed in relation to the division and alienation that some participants felt from Japanese society. Spoken and written Japanese proved to be one of the biggest obstacles for foreigners, and two participants also elucidated that spoken Japanese could be used effectively, but not received effectively by Japanese people in certain situations. The third sub-theme discusses experiences where participants often felt like a perpetual outsider. The fourth sub-theme focuses on how foreign workers felt that they were “disposable employees” due to common practices in foreign worker contracts. Next, the fifth sub-theme, Western privilege, reviews how some nationalities are accepted while other nationalities appear to be less respected and desirable in Japan. The last sub-theme examines how participants believed that they did not have a voice in Japanese matters especially in a work environment.

The Wall

One of the most common metaphors mentioned was a ‘wall’ or an ‘invisible force field’ dividing the participants from feeling fully comfortable and integrated into Japanese society. Without any prompting, the term ‘wall or ‘barrier’ was mentioned by three participants including Lana, Eric, and Thaddeus. Lana stated that it was difficult to break the wall, and she spoke of the difficulty following certain rules that she has had to navigate in her experiences with academia in Japan. While Lana was explaining her thoughts and feelings before she mentioned the term wall, she illustrated her feelings with her hands as she formed one hand into something resembling some sort of rigid barrier and ran her fist of her other hand into it making an audible sound to represent her feelings. Lana also stated that “life in Japan is very easy, it is easy to live here in Japan for foreigners if you accept the walls.” Eric mentioned both the terms wall and
barrier when he described his initial difficulties when he first moved to Japan. He stated that many factors “all kind of accumulated to one large wall between me and Japan.” Thaddeus mentioned that when he first relocated to Japan he felt that there was “a wall of communication” between him and Japanese behaviors and modes of thinking, and he felt as if Japan was Goliath and “I am little David fighting and looking, is there a space I can get in?” Brian referred to “an invisible force field” and he stated that “they [Japanese society] expect you to […] adapt to Japanese society and follow the rules and everything, but you are never going to be […] one of them.” Brian also described the story of a woman employed at Asahikawa University who was fired after she became “too ingratiated into Japanese society” and that being “too integrated is sort of a bit of a deterrent to us long-term foreigners.” Although Craig does not specifically mention there being either a wall or a barrier, he does mention something that appears to resemble the concept. Craig stated that people in Japan are “accepted whether you are accepted all the way into Japanese culture.” Craig further explains “they [Japanese society/culture] accept but whether they accept you into Japanese culture is a different thing.” From these responses, it is apparent that there is some form of separation between Japanese society and foreigners that is palpable especially with foreigners who stay in Japan long-term. As Craig mentioned, foreigners are accepted to a point, but it appears that foreigners are not completely accepted into Japanese culture. This concept appears to be very similar to the binary of *uchi* and *soto* (or in versus out) that Japanese culture maintains. This concept reflects how Japanese society is composed of boundaries such as keeping a boundary between ethnic Japanese from people who are considered ‘others’ (Maher & Macdonald, 1995). In this case, foreigners are placed in the furthest *soto* (outsider) category, and are referred to as *gaijin*, which literally means outside person (Christopher, 1984). Language can also be involved with the process of determining who is
inside versus who is outside.

The Language Barrier

Language was an important consideration with the presence of a barrier, and language appeared to have an influence in this barrier. Craig demonstrated the importance of language and belonging when he stated that “coming here I suppose you are more involved in the culture too, but [...] I suppose you are not one-hundred percent in the culture like I would be back in England and that is maybe because of language difficulties.” Dexter mentioned something similar when he said “without being able to speak Japanese I would be much more of an outsider, and being able to speak Japanese I can become as much as an insider as I am comfortable being.” Furthermore, Dexter said that knowing Japanese “increases your positive experiences” in Japan. Spoken language was not the only aspect of Japanese considered. For example, Eric describes “the language barrier and reading kanji, understanding what people say, reading signs. I think that all kind of accumulates to [...] one large wall between me and Japan.” Even when the participants were able to speak Japanese at an acceptable level, communication issues were commonplace. Thaddeus recalled that when he first gained adequate Japanese language skills he could “talk, but not be understood. So this wall of communication [...] [I] speak Japanese fluently, but they don’t fluently understand. The language was the most difficult.” Luther stated that there is a perception of who should possess Japanese language skills, and that for some Japanese nationals “it was the belief that because I was white I couldn’t understand Japanese.” Helen also expounded on the difficulties of the practical use of Japanese as she stated that “the way you use language [...] is different depending on who you place them in terms of class or in terms of you try to estimate this person.” Luther provided an example of using Japanese as a medium for conversation with someone who was not Japanese.
I have a Cuban friend who doesn't speak English. I learned a little bit of Spanish so we can say a few words, but when I met him I have to speak to him in Japanese, and I have had Japanese friends who have gotten really angry at me because I didn't speak with him in English. They felt that that was a reflection on me thinking their English was bad and so I wouldn't understand. No, it’s not a reflection on you; it’s a reflection on him. He doesn't speak English, the language we have in common is Japanese. So those kind of nationality things are not so; they go by a different set of rules probably than what I was used to in the United States.

Lastly, Brian told of a recent experience where he had to write in Japanese. Brian was aware that his personal use of Japanese was minimal because “even when you fill out the visa forms [...] to get a permanent residence visa and all that, it’s all English.”

Taking into account the variety of experiences, it appears that Japanese is used to create and maintain a certain boundary. Some of this has its origins in the soto/uchi binary because non-Japanese are thought of as permanent foreigners who have little to no hope of gaining or mastering Japanese behaviors, attitudes, or life-styles that define Japan and its people (Lie, 2001). This is most apparent when Thaddeus recounted how he could speak Japanese fluently, but that he wasn’t fluently understood. The status of Thaddeus being a foreigner appeared to make it difficult for Japanese nationals to understand him even when he was speaking correct Japanese. Furthermore, Japanese is said to embody the unique qualities of Japan and its inhabitants because “the Japanese language is natively spoken only by the Japanese in Japan” and what is unique about language is also unique to the people who speak it (Befu, 2001, p. 35). Luther mentioned an experience where two foreigners used Japanese to communicate rather than through the use of English. This action resulted in Luther’s Japanese friends becoming offended
and angry at the language’s inappropriate misuse. There is a predisposition or thought process regarding how, when, and who can use Japanese. In this case, Japanese nationals can only use this language in the presence of other Japanese people. Luther’s experience seems to set Japanese as the property of Japan. Furthermore, it appears that foreigners are infringing on something that is reserved only for Japanese nationals while English provides an acceptable medium for outside contact that Japanese does not. Despite this, Japanese appears to have a permeable barrier because foreigners use it. In contrast, English appears to be the acceptable medium for foreigners as was exemplified by Luther. Brian’s experience also separates Japanese from foreign elements. For example, Brian had to fill out his visa forms in English and not Japanese. This appears to be familiar to Luther’s experience where there is a degree of separation or estrangement with foreign elements and the use of Japanese. It seems that people outside of Japanese culture and society are expected to use English (or alternative languages) in place of Japanese. On the other hand, Japanese is retained for Japanese nationals and not for foreigners who are outsiders. This dynamic of insider versus outsider was a motif found in this research.

The Perpetual Outsider

The term ‘outsider’ was used in one question during the interviews. Six participants (Brian, Eric, Luther, Dexter, Helen, and Craig) provided examples of feeling like an outsider while living in Japan. Brian divulged his thoughts on being an outsider when he said, “you realize how xenophobic they are. Many foreigners come here and try to be Japanese and wear the kimonos and go to the festivals and knock themselves out learning Japanese, but they are always going to be an outsider.” Brian also mentioned how feeling like an outsider was a daily occurrence. Brian recounted a recent example of his tutoring experience to illustrate this feeling.
When Brian is tutoring, he has noticed that his students are friendly towards him, but outside of class they act differently. Brian describes being an outsider as he reflected on a recent situation that had happened the day of the interview and states that:

I’ve got one kid I just saw about an hour ago. The third time I’ve [...] walked towards her, gone to greet her and she totally ignored me. You would think I would have learned the first and second time and wouldn’t even bother with this kid, but for some reason I just sort of felt like greet[ing] her again. Then she got into the class and she would be your best mate. I guess that would be an example of being an outsider.

Luther also provided an in-depth example of feeling like an outsider in Japanese society. Luther also coined the term outsider before the term was included in any question. Luther discussed how he “felt that other people didn’t want me here sometimes” but he also described a time where he felt strongly that he did not belong in Japan.

The strongest time I ever felt it was probably related to work when I first came here. I was working in [my placement] around February and there was a request from the government office in charge of education in the prefectural level to say whether I would renew my contract for the next year with [...] [a] one day or two day deadline and I got really pissed off. For me, it was so ridiculous to suddenly get this demand, [...] no preparation, no hints that it was coming. It was on a weekend so I couldn’t really talk to someone about [...] money or legal work or related changes that might happen. At that moment, it was like no, I just don’t belong in a place like this where they give you a two-day notice to renew your contract.

Luther also described another experience involving how he was kept from eating at a restaurant in Japan. Luther initially visited a restaurant with a Japanese friend who ate with him and they
conversed together in English. When Luther returned again by himself he was turned away because he was told that the restaurant was full due to an event. Luther recalled that:

This happened several times and then I went back with my friend one time [and] a guy, from I think Austria, came into the restaurant alone and [...] the guy in charge of the restaurant went over to my friend and I and in Japanese he said to her basically this restaurant has a policy that we do not allow non-Japanese to come in alone because there may be some troubles; could you please explain this policy to this guy who has just come in the restaurant. And I was just amazed, this idiot had just explained to me, a very frequent customer, why they were turning me away when I wasn’t with my friend.

Luther’s experiences contributed two examples that represent different things to him. The first example, where he was renewing his contract, spoke to his lack of acceptance by Japan while the second example illustrates how either a restaurant or a Japanese national did not want him present in a shared space. Once again, Luther describes a situation where he was not permitted an inside status:

I arrived in Wakkanai [...] on a cold and rainy night with very little gas in the car. I went to a hotel and was going to check in, but there was no room. And so the guy at the hotel called around the other hotels and said [...] here’s a hotel, there’s room. So I talked to the guy on the phone and he said, “Are you a foreigner?” I said yes, my name is [Luther], I think I am a foreigner. He said “oh, I am sorry we cannot accept foreigners unless they are sent by their companies, and I was like [...] you are explaining this to me? You aren’t supposed to explain this to me. You are supposed to just say, “oh I have made a mistake, there is no room.” [...] I’m [...] not welcome in this particular place because I am not [...] Japanese. And it’s not such a big deal, but it was to me; it was just amazing because both
people actually explained the policy without thinking about it to me.

Luther summed up his experiences in Japan with the comment “there’s still lots of discrimination here. In Japan, people will shun you or push you off or not let you in.” Dexter attempts to explain why some Japanese people place foreigners into a different category when he states that Japan is “a fairly homogeneous society. So anybody who looks like they are not [a] typical Japanese in general is going to be treated like an outsider [...] I know that’s just the way it is.”

Dexter stated that he had never expected to be accepted as an insider and had no ill will towards Japanese people or society. In comparison, Luther expressed a wide-range of emotions that was evident in his speech, and the feelings he expressed ranged from incredulousness to anger.

Helen was also aware of being an outsider and stated that:

There are always going to be times when you feel like you are looked at differently because you are not Japanese. You can just be walking along or in the train and you, and this happens now and has happened for twenty years now, you will almost always be stared at and people will talk about you thinking that I don’t know Japanese. And they will say, “Yeah, that’s a white woman” and they will [...] start to talk about how you look. So I would say that happens almost every time I go shopping, that you are still viewed as an outsider. That is still strong in Japan.

Eric appeared to have less negative feelings compared to Luther, and his statement was similar to Dexter’s thoughts and feelings on being an outsider. Eric stated “people don’t treat you like an enemy, like an outsider. I mean, not quite insider but not like somebody who doesn’t belong.”

Craig also appeared to have less apprehension towards being an outsider, and reported that he occasionally felt like an outsider with his only example emanating from one teammate’s distant actions and attitude towards Craig. However, Craig did mention how it was difficult to gain
admittance into a group even if it was a football club.

Brian’s experiences can attest to the binary of inside and outside or uchi and soto. The distinction between uchi and soto in modern Japan is still widespread and commonly practiced because people are still grouped into either category. Those individuals who are not given an insider status will be ignored in order for that individual to “live more easily in harmony” (Davies & Ikeno, p. 219). For example, Brian was completely ignored outside of class, but when he was sharing the same space as his student, he was permitted to become more of an insider. Furthermore, Brian could have been ignored because this particular student had not developed any communication skills to interact with a foreigner who is from such an obvious outside group. Similarly, Luther’s experiences reinforce this idea. For example, Luther received the paperwork to renew his teaching contract at the most inconvenient time possible. In this case, Luther had no one to ask for assistance because the paperwork was given to him on a weekend with a two-day time limit to complete the form. It appears as if he was purposefully ignored. Also, Luther’s experience with the restaurant speaks to how some individuals have no desire to directly confront a foreigner to the point that there was a policy at the restaurant not to allow foreigners who are unaccompanied by Japanese nationals into the restaurant. Luther summarized his thoughts and feelings succinctly when he said, “in Japan, people will shun you or push you off or not let you in” and this appears to be a similar experience for other foreigners. Luther stated how the status of being an outsider could separate foreign individuals from Japanese nationals, and this can include friendships as well.

The creation and maintenance of personal relationships between foreigners and Japanese nationals received a range of thought and concern. Brian was explicit with his comments involving his personal experience with the difficulty of making friendships with Japanese
nationals. Brian recounted an experience he had when he first arrived in Japan. Brian thought he had created friendships at a local record shop he often visited, but he eventually realized that the relationships he thought he established took on the quality of being a “decorate” sort of friendship. Brian stated:

The onus is on you all the time to try to make them feel relaxed because they are always nervous. They are naturally nervous around foreigners. That’s that force field thing again, they can never really let their stuff hang freely. They are always a bit on edge and if [you] try to stop trying to relax them for a minute and try to be yourself they are going to think something’s wrong.

Thaddeus also used the term ‘relax’ when he talked about his Japanese friends. He first discussed how his Japanese friends became tired after social interaction with him. Thaddeus also stated:

Friends where you can really relax where no perceptions […] that is getting rarer and rarer.

People […] they don’t come to eat. I come to see you and to exchange and how you are doing and this is sometimes more the surface of Japan.

Dexter also addressed this topic when he stated “Japanese people always find it more difficult to relax, it’s more [of a] hierarchical society.” This may be due to what Lana stated when she said Japanese nationals “don’t show their feelings. They don’t show what they are thinking, never.”

Helen also provided an example reminiscent of what Lana mentioned. Helen reiterated the example of when her mother died and how her two close friends, who are both Japanese nationals, never mentioned the subject. However, Helen did receive flowers from her two friends with a card that read, “when you look at these flowers please hear the words that we cannot say.” Helen described the impact of this message and said that this incidence was
touching “because they really can’t say [...] we are just so sorry, your mother has passed away [...] , that was not possible for them in this culture even when someone you know very very well for a very long time.” Helen succinctly described how not showing emotion is a cultural practice in Japan.

“Disposable Employees”

Another prominent sub-theme centered on the length of work contracts and being retained by a company or institution for a set amount of time. Three of the participants described this practice in terms of their personal part-time employment experiences while three other participants explained it through his or her attainment of tenure. Brian described this topic more than any other participant due to him never achieving tenure at any position, and being forced to find new employment once his contract(s) expired. Brian produced personal examples such as how a number of English conversation schools “rig [the contracts] for the foreigners so they can call us part time workers [...] so they don’t have to give us any health insurance or pension.” In Brian’s experience, schools started to implement a limit on renewing contracts with foreign teachers so as to avoid supplying foreign teachers with any benefits. Dexter also demonstrated knowledge of this practice when he said:

In many cases, [a contract] finishes after three years and there is no renewal after three years and there is no renewal beyond those years. Although it hasn't happened to me, I can see other non-Japanese being treated almost as disposable employees.

Dexter said he was fortunate to achieve tenure because “recently in Japan there is a tendency for a lot of higher education institutions to hire non-Japanese staff on [a] contract basis.” Luther reinforced this sub-theme as he mentioned, “non-Japanese staff are usually not given tenure. It’s not a hard and fast rule, but it is a tendency; it is pretty overwhelming [...] really all over the
country.” Luther continued with how he was fortunate to achieve tenure because it is unusual, although not unknown, for foreigners to achieve tenure in Japan. In comparison, Luther also stated an experience he witnessed where two Japanese staff members were placed on a two-year contract that is considered unusual because limited contracts are often reserved for foreign workers and not Japanese nationals. Luther’s experience with the JET Programme is reminiscent of what some other participants experienced as well. Luther recalls having a desire to renew his contract with the JET Programme. The governmental office that was responsible for the re-application process provided him with the necessary information to renew his contract only a day or two before the deadline providing Luther with only the weekend to prepare the paperwork. Luther stated that:

“It was ridiculous to suddenly get this demand […] no preparation nothing; no hints that it was coming. It was on a weekend so I couldn’t really talk to someone about any kind of […] money or legal or work related changes that might happen.

Foreigners who have lived and worked in Japan appear to have more experiences with being disposable employees. The schools that hire foreigners have policies that keep foreign teachers from gaining any benefits (outside of part-time pay) and appear to keep these workers on the periphery of society. Luther produced an example where his employer appeared to take action so that he could not renew his teaching contract by providing him with the necessary documents before a weekend with no assistance and with the deadline only two days away. These exclusionary practices were familiar to most participants, and it reflects the perspective of Japanese society towards these workers as being disposable and possibly unnecessary to some extent. These exclusionary practices or tactics may be due to the soto/uchi binary, but also due to Japan’s attitudes of internationalization as well. In fact, Thaddeus claimed, “every foreigner is
an agent of internationalization.” This statement resembles what McConnell (2000) asserts as
Japan takes an “arm’s length approach” to internationalizing (p. 17). In this case, Japan tries to
limit the amount of foreign teachers and imports its diversity. This process of diversifying and
importing English teachers is acceptable as long as it is superficial and does not result in
substantial changes such as “altering domestic institutions and structures that conform to world
standards or accepting foreign peoples, cultures, and institutions as equals” (Storonach, 1995, p.
56 as cited in McVeigh, 2004, p. 279). From the experiences of the participants, it appears that
their involvement is superficial due to being “disposable employees.” Furthermore, Japan
appears to seek out individuals who are from specific countries while holding citizens from other
countries further away in their ‘arm’s length approach’ to internalization.

Western Privilege

Each participant had a different experience with Japanese society based on his or her
nationality. Participants attributed their experiences to the idea that there is a hierarchy of
nationalities that placed the United States, United Kingdom, and other English speaking
countries at the to top of this hierarchy. Countries that do not have English their official
language were often not recognized and were lower in this hierarchy. Five participants (Brian,
Eric, Helen, Craig, and Luther) all agreed that there is a tendency for Japanese nationals to place
foreigners into the category of being American indiscriminately. Both Dexter and Luther
mentioned how appearance is important with this categorization. For example, Luther stated,
“basically, if you are white or black and you are in Japan, everyone assumes you are from the
U.S.” Dexter also stated a similar idea when he said, “I think being white is probably, whether it
should be or shouldn't be, an advantage in Japan and many people will have a positive image of
you.” Brian and Eric had personal experiences where Japanese people assumed they were
American. Brian, who is from New Zealand, stated, “nobody really knows where I am from. They would just say oh, he’s American or something.” Eric mentioned something similar when he voiced how people “don’t really care about Poland. I say I’m from Poland, people say huh? Where is it?” Eric has had some difficulties finding employment teaching English even though he is a fluent English speaker. For example, Eric recalled how he had applied to an English conversation school, and he was not hired because he did not hold a British or American passport. Eric stated, “I think it’s slightly negative, I think people are disappointed that I’m not a native English speaker. They want someone with [...] [a] native English background with [a] British passport [or an] American passport.” Craig also mentions how “it’s easier if you’re from America, Canada, or the U.S., or the U.K.” in terms of attaining employment teaching English.

Luther described the perception of nationality in detail as he stated that:

[The] United States is really popular in terms dealing with nationality. It’s two things with nationality; one thing is my nationality, my passport. There is also the perceived nationality that I would have here if I weren’t from the U.S. I would still be perceived as from the U.S. until I contradicted someone. But there is also a thing in Japan of nationality, of not being Japanese, which is a different kind of issue. It’s not my nationality; it’s my lack of a Japanese nationality.

Luther demonstrates the desire of an American nationality, but also the binary or an inside group versus an outside group when he mentions, “it’s my lack of Japanese nationality.” Helen posed a peculiar idea when she described her Japanese husband’s view on the relationship between Japan and the United States. Helen’s husband perceived Japan as being a colony of the United States because of its military presence. Despite some Japanese individuals having negative feelings towards the United States, Helen states “being an American is a kind of favored position for
many people.”

Lana had a different experience in comparison to the other participants who were not from a native English speaking country. Lana stated that she receives an awed reaction whenever she tells people that she is from Italy. During my contact with Lana, I can attest to how her Japanese students were excited to hear she was from Italy and she received a very warm and excited reaction in comparison to any other foreign teacher. Lana explained that “Japanese people love Italy, they love Italians” and “they love Italian food so it was easy for me to be accepted.” Lana’s opinion is that “Japanese people are very open to foreigners” and that her life in Japan had been easy because some (not all) Japanese people “try to help you stay here in Japan.” Additionally, Lana asserts that “it is easy to teach foreign languages here in Japan, the environment is for foreigners.”

There is evidence that suggests that Japan desires only individuals who represent desirable countries. In this case, English-speaking countries are the most desirable with the United States and the United Kingdom reserving the top of the hierarchy. Even the perception of someone being a foreigner results in that foreigner being placed into the category of American nationality indiscriminately. The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme (JET) can also be used as an example. The JET Programme brings English teachers to Japan to teach in public schools around the country. Teachers with United States nationality have always been predominately represented. Taking this into account, Japan appears to desire certain nationalities that are important to it politically. This results in the perception of many Japanese nationals that any foreigner who enters the country is from the United States regardless of the country of origin. Participants from the United States as well as other countries commented that certain nationalities were either better known or more desired in Japan.
“The Noisy Foreigner” and Gender

The presence of foreigners in Japan received a range of responses from three participants (Luther, Dexter, Brian, and Helen). The terms ‘voice’ and ‘noisy’ were mentioned by Luther, Dexter, and Helen to describe their thoughts and feelings on how foreigners are viewed by Japanese nationals especially in the work environment. Luther described his experience when he first arrived at his new teaching position in Japan when he “got a sense that the foreign teachers [there] had no voice, or very little voice […] and [the teachers] seemed like they expected that no one would listen to them.” Dexter also had a negative and memorable experience regarding how he felt others viewed him at his place of work. Dexter stated that he would regularly become annoyed at his Japanese co-workers because he felt that his co-workers would not be vocal when things were awry. In Dexter’s experience, he felt that when a foreigner would voice his or her opinion he would instantly be known as “the noisy foreigner interfering with the way things are done in Japan.” Dexter elaborated:

I know it’s not really the best thing for the foreigner to speak up because then whoever’s in charge can more easily dismiss it as the noisy foreigner or the foreigner who doesn’t understand the way things are done in Japan being a pain in the butt.

Helen described her experiences as though she were being tamed. In addition, Helen and Brian both submitted the Japanese adage of “the nail that sticks out gets hammered down.” Brian discussed how certain polite Japanese phrases, or “lip service” as he termed it, was quite useful to learn and use in daily life. However, Helen amended this as she said the hammering would not be as strong but it would be a “kind of […] gentle hammer to try to hammer me in.” Helen then agreed that this process was not so much of a hammer, but of a screw slowly becoming tighter so she would fit into Japanese society better.
Another area that appeared to be important was the right to vote in Japanese elections. Craig and Brian both included the topic of voting without prompting. This appeared to be an important consideration with their place in Japanese society. Craig discussed how not being able to vote made him feel like more of an outsider when he stated that “you can’t or even though you got permanent residence, you can’t vote, you have to be a citizen.” Brian also reflected on voting and how that related to an “invisible force field” when he stated, “You can’t vote, we can’t vote. We pay taxes but we can’t vote.”

Helen related her voice as being influenced by her gender and nationality. For example, Helen stated:

There was always something that I wasn’t doing right or something that I shouldn't have done. [...] I felt I was not being female enough; I was not being obedient enough or quiet enough. I was being a typical, stereotypical American, difficult. I think they would, in Japan, say aggressive American woman. I still do get it occasionally here, don’t act so aggressive, [...] be soft and sweet, harmonious. That’s particular for women, it’s important for everyone, but particularly for women.

Helen also described experiences where she expressed her opinions in work meetings. Helen felt that she was considered too noisy for meetings and too aggressive due to nothing more than her gender. Helen even commented that she felt as if people were trying to tame her. The topic of gender prompted diverse reactions from the participants with some individuals being more vocal and/or more cognizant of the subject than others. Among the more notable comments included Brian when he recalled his experiences when he first moved to Japan to teach English. Brian’s first teaching position was at an English conversation school that had a group of fifteen foreign teachers with an almost equal number of men and women. Brian stated, “the women all leave
within a few months, they don’t stay and the guys stay. The foreign women come here and just get disenchanted.” Brian elaborated on this point as he said “[Japan] is such a horrific place for women, especially foreign women.” Brian proposed that the reason for women leaving was due to the fact that “Japanese men are intimidated to hell by big, tough, foreign women.” On the other hand, without exception, all the male teachers at the same school married Japanese women. Brian also mentioned that at least three of his peers who married Japanese nationals in the 1990’s would remain married for approximately twenty years, get divorced, and then came back to Japan to find a new wife. Brian stated that he has kept in contact with these individuals and recently met with them in Japan as one of these individuals was looking for a new Japanese wife.

Gender received the most attention from Helen who is a self-proclaimed Feminist. Helen became more aware of some obvious differences and biases with gender during her previous research in Japan. For example, Helen stated that many mothers and women would announce:

I have a boy and a girl, but I want to make sure the boy has the better education; so send the girl to the two-year college or training school, and the boy […] we will save our money for the boy to go to a four-year university or a better university.

Helen elaborated and stated that this attitude is still common and she would describe it as a normal and “non-contestable” part of Japanese society. Helen has been married to a Japanese national for seventeen years and presented a metaphor for married women in Japanese society. Helen stated, “When a woman gets married the best thing is just to be like air. I mean necessary and there, but not intrusive.”

Being male proved to be another category of discussion and importance. For example, Dexter simply said that Japan was a “patriarchal society” and that being male had its advantages. Luther delved into this topic with more detail:
I’m male so I am treated much better than if I was a women. I mean I get so many benefits, job, salary, [...] ability to move easily in society. I don't have to worry about so many things. There are tremendous rewards for being male in Japanese society and there are tremendous penalties for being female in Japanese society. So in that sense, I get lots of benefits from a really nasty thing.

Luther summarized the general feelings on gender in Japan; being a man is rewarded while females are penalized.

Participants felt as if they were perceived as noisy or annoying due to their status as a foreigner. Dexter succinctly stated that foreigners are seen as interfering with “the way things are done in Japan” and that foreigners can be easily dismissed. However, this issue was reported to be worse for foreign women as Helen said women are desired to be like air, necessary, but not intrusive.

**Summary**

Every participant elaborated on examples of being distanced, separated, or kept from particular aspects of Japanese society and/or culture. Only Dexter came to Japan expecting to be distanced while the remainder of the participants noticed this boundary over his or her time spent in Japan. In addition, some examples of being differentiated were more explicit than others. In the case of Thaddeus, he felt that when he successfully grasped spoken Japanese, others still did not understand him. Craig and Brian gave a more explicit example when they discussed how they could not vote in Japan despite each of their long-term living arrangements. Additionally, worker contracts provided more explicit boundaries as Brian described how these contracts were seemingly designed so that foreign workers could not receive any benefits and they would expire within a set amount of years. Regardless, the most common theme in this section was how life in
Japan created some sort of wall or barrier between the foreign workers and Japanese people in this culture/society. This ‘wall’ as it was described in some fashion whether as an ‘invisible force field’ or being accepted to a point was exemplified through different concepts and events that each participant found personally significant.

**Interview Findings Theme Two: Acculturation and Identity**

The second theme is based on the participants’ involvement in Japanese culture, and any changes that have resulted from living in Japan for an extended period of time. Two categories will be implemented to act as a context to understand each participant’s personal experience of change and/or acculturation. The two fields present include the participant’s involvement in Japanese culture, and changes to behavior or identity that have manifested as a result of this involvement. Each participant will be discussed individually to ensure an in-depth context. Sub-themes will be developed and addressed once each participant’s experience is described. This approach will provide the best option to interact with the common ideas and sub-themes due to the scope of this theme and the amount of personal experience each participant divulges.

**Individual Experiences**

**Brian**

**Involvement in Culture.** Brian described his involvement in Japanese culture as “almost non-existent.” Brian also described his connections to Japanese culture as “tenuous” and mentioned that the marriage to his wife, who is a Japanese national, and his employment in Japan are the only solid connections he has to Japan. However, Brian’s wife only speaks English to him and he stated, “She sort of gave up on me too. She grudgingly realized [...] that forcing me to go out into social circle[s] and go to karaoke and stuff was just a giant pain in the ass for me and it just wasn't pleasurable at all so she just called off the dogs.” Although Brian did admit
that he had observed Japanese New Years celebrations at one time, he does not anymore.

However, Brian does take part in polite rituals such as taking his shoes off at the door and using appropriate Japanese phrases in the work place. Brian’s hobby of collecting records also allows for him to be involved in some aspects of Japanese culture, and he seeks certain records in English and usually sells these records through the Internet. Brian added to his view on his participation in Japan when he said,

I don’t do any […] Japanese hobbies, I don’t eat Japanese food, I don’t read kanji, so I can speak just enough to get me by. [I] don’t really have any Japanese friends that I would consider friends, only foreigners. So [...] really low involvement in Japanese culture.

Brian also elucidated on how he does not identify with many foreigners in Sapporo as he stated “I don’t really identify with many of the foreigners around here though; they are all off at the [bar] spending all their money at the pub on the weekend and I don’t even do that.” Despite this, Brian also asserted that the foreigners who come to Hokkaido are usually different from other foreigners. For example, Brian felt that the foreigners in Hokkaido are generally more relaxed and adventurous.

Changes. Brian felt that Japan allowed for certain things that his life in his home country of New Zealand would not allow. For example, Brian stated that foreigners in Japan have a lot of room to act and behave in different ways that many Japanese nationals would not be allowed to behave. Brian stated,

I suppose I would be a lot more immature here [...] because you can get away with anything. You can pretty much say anything and no one holds you to task for it because you are a foreigner so they expect you to be a bit of a moron.

Brian confirmed that his life in Japan had made him more immature because Japanese people
attribute his actions to him being a foreigner and “he is not one of us, that’s why he is standing on a subway half naked” when he recounted a hot day he experienced in Japan. Brian responded to a question asking about changes to his perceptions and behaviors by responding that Japanese society is “xenophobic” and that he would always be an outsider. However, when Brian had first moved to Japan he possessed a different attitude. For example, Brian learned hiragana and katana in his first three months in Japan when he first arrived, but he “just forgot it all, just never used it, [...] I don’t write anything in Japanese. There’s no cause for it, no call for it. I’m too lazy to study kanji so that’s not going to happen.” Brian appears to have no desire to be involved in Japanese culture or society in any meaningful way taking into account Brian’s experiences and attitude towards his time in Japan.

**Craig**

**Involvement in Culture.** Craig characterized his involvement in Japanese culture as being “connected” due to having a wife who is a Japanese national. In addition, Craig lives with his wife’s family so he is involved with Japanese culture on a daily basis through them. However, Craig stated, “I’m involved in my daily life I suppose because I live with my wife’s family as well, but you [are] kind of not totally in the culture I suppose teaching English.” Additionally, Craig is involved with a football team where he plays with Japanese nationals. He also had a few friends who are Japanese that he met either through his football team or socially. Craig also retained a grasp on Japanese although he believes that his Japanese skills are still lacking. Craig also reported “I have never felt uncomfortable [in Japanese culture] so I always felt quite happy being here.” Craig was also involved with Japanese and ‘Western’ celebrations such as New Years and any event that his wife’s family celebrates with the exception of Halloween because he felt that the Japanese celebration of this is too different from the traditional British
celebration. Although Craig had several connections to Japanese culture, he stated that when he is in his house, he follows a “Western way of living [...] except for sometimes the Japanese way as well.” Craig lives with his wife and her family, and takes part in the Japanese practices they observe, but still has a personal room space that he reserves for himself.

**Changes.** Craig was adamant that he has not changed during his time spent in Japan. He stated,

I don’t think I have changed very much, but maybe other people [think that I have].

Because I lived in the U.K. for a long time, I suppose my attitude is still a little bit British even though it's become, I am aware of [the] Japanese way of doing things so I am very careful how I behave with Japanese people. But I don’t think my way of thinking has changed too much, it's been influenced of course.

Some of the notable changes appear to be very minute. For example, Craig maintained he is more aware of his timekeeping because it is important in Japan. Aside from that, Craig reported that he was generally “very happy” living in Hokkaido and living in Japan “doesn’t change my identity, but it just changes my view on life I suppose. I still think of myself as the same person when I came to Japan. It makes me view life differently.” Craig emphasized that his sense of self and personal identity had remained constant, but that his time in Japan had made him “appreciate and accept different cultures more than perhaps [...] if you lived in one culture all the time.” Craig’s international experience resulted in him respecting different cultures, and having an influence on the way he views life.

**Dexter**

**Involvement in Culture.** Dexter had several connections to Japan including two children who were born in Japan and a wife who is a Japanese national. He also maintains a relationship
to the city of Arimori where he spent his first three years in Japan during his teaching position in the JET Programme. Dexter annually participates in the *Nibuta* festival where he joins a team of people who manage one of the floats at the festival. Dexter reported that he feels very comfortable with these people at the festival and has a good relationship with them. Additionally, Dexter previously played hockey with many Japanese nationals, and he currently curls. Dexter reported as feeling comfortable with his companions and environment. Dexter stated that he is not particularly religious so he does not celebrate many religious events whether Japanese or ‘Western,’ but he often observes any events his wife celebrates such as *Obon* (mid-summer festival for ancestors). Dexter has several connections to Japanese cultural practices and had an on-going relationship with the people he has interacted with through sports and other activities.

**Changes.** Dexter’s first consideration for how he had changed involved timekeeping. Dexter has also been more accustomed to people being polite and respectful, and noticed when people were not behaving this way. Dexter has also included being more polite and respectful with his interactions with other people, and has found favorable results. Dexter emphasized the fact that he feels that he is more open-minded than he used to be which is especially apparent when to visits his home country of Canada.

**Eric**

**Involvement in Culture.** Eric characterized his involvement in Japanese culture/society as a spectator and said, “I am basically a viewer, spectator. I don’t actively participate.” However, Eric stated that he does participate through his wife, who is a Japanese national, and through her family. He recalls joining his wife and her family when they go to different festivals such as *Obon*. Besides being a spectator in these events, Eric also practices some common
culturally accepted behaviors such as saying relevant Japanese expressions. Eric also asserted that he could accept Japanese culture, but that he is not interested in most things involving the culture because he does not listen to Japanese music or watch Japanese movies. Eric stated that he was an observer in Japanese culture and society, but he appeared to be somewhat involved despite his self-proclaimed status as a spectator.

**Changes.** Eric noticed that he has changed considerably due to his time spent in Japan. Eric said that he was “much less angry now, less likely to use anger or be rude [or] impolite.” This may be due to the fact that Eric reported that he was considerably more stressed in Poland than he is in Japan. Eric added that his Polish culture contrasted with Japanese culture because in Polish culture, people are loud and intrusive while Japanese people are harmonious and quieter. In addition, Eric had found that his perspective was much wider compared to most of his students due to his experiences in Europe and in Japan.

**Helen**

**Involvement in Culture.** Helen had a history of connections to Japan and she stated that she is “very active” as she studied Japanese during her schooling and lived with a Japanese family during a one-year home stay in Sendai, Japan. Helen later returned to Japan to take classes at a local university and to complete her doctorate based upon research she conducted in Japan. Helen reported that she knows Japanese fairly well and she conducted and interacted with her class while using Japanese. Helen’s seventeen-year marriage to a Japanese national had also supplied her with a connection to both Japanese culture and society. Furthermore, Helen’s husband was from a traditional family and she celebrates different Japanese festivals with him and his family. Helen reported a very close friendship with two Japanese nationals who were initially classmates and who eventually became close colleagues. Helen described her
involvement as very active and she had also spent many years using Japanese and interacting with Japanese nationals in both a personal and professional way.

**Changes.** Helen described that she was more tolerant than she was before she moved to Japan. Helen was also more aware that harmony is a virtue in Japan and she stated that she had “really toned down.” Helen described this change in her as she states:

I come out of the age of [...] women’s rights, and the Vietnam War. I mean that’s my story so you can imagine [...] all those things. So very anti-war, very pro-women, very pro-against race, all of those fights. So when I came here, I was so used to fighting, but here that is not appreciated. In America [...], that’s kind of appreciated [...] you stand up for that, you believe that and we change things. We stop the Vietnam War and we, well at least we are trying to fight racism and sexism. So I think probably in that way I have changed my behavior. All of that is [...] part of who I was and here that kind of behavior is definitely not viewed the same way. Keeping things stable and continuity and harmony is so much more important than what we think. So yeah, I have shifted, changed.

Helen has significantly changed some of her behaviors due to her time in Japan.

**Lana**

**Involvement in Culture.** Lana reported as if fact that she was involved in Japanese culture. She stated that “people around me, they say that I am half Japanese. So I am involved in Japanese culture. Because they say that I am not the typical Italian.” In addition, Lana mentioned that she had never felt as if she did not belong in Japan. Lana stated that Japanese is her second language and she had been studying it for many years. Lana added that to understand Japanese culture and society, the language must be known. This concept was reflected when Lana said “I speak Japanese, that’s why I can understand Japanese culture.” Lana had formed
many personal friendships with Japanese nationals through her teaching position as a language teacher. Lana also regularly participated in Japanese cultural activities such as festivals and special events, but also celebrated Japanese and Italian events. Lana was adamant about her participation in Japanese culture and society, and said she was often told that she is half Japanese and half Italian, and she believes this as well.

**Changes.** Lana divulged a list of changes to which she had been cognizant. For example, Lana stated “I think in Japanese so my behavior [is] always like I am in Japan.” Lana mentioned that she “became respectful for other people” and that she became “calm, more quiet, and collaborative, [and] respectful for everything that is public.” Additionally, Lana described how she had become more independent and outgoing in comparison to how she was in her home country of Italy. Lana had no doubt that she had changed in a noticeable way and had more respect for everything public and she became more calm and quiet, and had a more open mind due to her experiences.

**Luther**

**Involvement in Culture.** Luther had a unique perspective on his involvement in Japan. For example, Luther stated, “I refuse to believe that I am in Japan” and said that his involvement in Japanese culture/society is that he lives in Japan, and that everyday he is involved “in something related to Japanese culture.” Despite this statement, Luther later added,

I don’t want to acclimate to Japanese culture, I don’t want to acclimate to American culture; I just want to have fun. I just want to do what I want to do. I never really thought acclimating myself as a goal.

Luther again addressed this topic when he sated “I probably think of myself more as being on the outside of things in terms of being peacefully and pleasantly on the outside of things.” Although
Luther had much to say about his seemingly distant involvement in Japanese culture and/or society, he did speak Japanese at a proficient level and had created relationships with many diverse people some of whom were Japanese nationals. Luther appeared to deny his surroundings to a specific point that made him feel more comfortable in Japan.

**Changes.** Luther reported that he had changed some aspects of his demeanor in order to better interact with others in Japan. Luther stated:

> I really tried to fit in as much as possible. And to fit in meant that I had to sort of like adjust how I acted to a certain extent so that I was not obnoxious, and when I went back to the U.S. people said “oh you have gotten calm, you don’t get loud anymore, you are very nice to people around you, what happened?” That sort of calmness or speaking quietly, or on the surface being nice to the people around you is a very traditional Japanese kind of cultural thing.

Luther was adamant that any changes were due to his desire to interact with others and not necessarily because he had acclimated to Japanese culture. Luther elaborated on this thought as he said “I never thought about it as the influence of Japan, I thought of it just as if I wanted to hang out with these friends I had to be really careful that I didn’t get them pissed off at me so I just adjusted in that way more or less.” Luther did acknowledge that he had changed, but he also found it important to note that he would change in certain ways depending on the cultural context. In this case, Luther had become calmer and quieter because it reflects the cultural expectations Japanese culture had for people to follow.

**Thaddeus**

**Involvement in Culture.** Thaddeus had several long-lasting connections to Japanese culture and society. Most notably, Thaddeus had been a kindergarten director for forty years,
and had interacted with his students and the family members of his students. Thaddeus had also been involved with the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts for over thirty-nine years and he started a program where he takes a group of scouts to South Korea and/or the Philippines on a yearly basis. Thaddeus stated, “This interaction, especially with the Boy Scouts, the bonds or links to the community-I can feel it.” Being a priest, Thaddeus also held mass and other religious services in Japanese communities sometimes even visiting the homes of Japanese Catholics individually. Thaddeus stated that most of the people who he interacted with are not Christians, but he reported that many of his friends say, “we are not church people, but the church belongs to us.” Thaddeus also dispensed housing and supplies for immigrants and people who could not afford basic needs. Thaddeus reported that he had twenty people who dispensed housing to or who he sponsored in Japan. Thaddeus also celebrated all of the Japanese cultural celebrations and festivals. Thaddeus was involved with Japanese people and culture/society through many connections.

Changes. Thaddeus stated that he had accepted as many Japanese cultural elements as he was able to understand. This included ideas involved with Shintōism and Buddhism as well as a number of Japanese cultural events. Thaddeus spoke of his acceptance of Japanese practices:

I never was fighting or thinking against them, I always felt that is their culture. I respect it and I found that in the depths [there was] always something which is not only Japanese, but what is also human, and that is [a] connection to my culture.

Thaddeus also stated that his way of thinking had changed and that his life in Japan had “opened a corridor to understanding my own culture more and more.” Thaddeus had accepted Japanese ideas and practices and had incorporated them into his own life in some shape or form. Thaddeus later mentioned, “Being a priest in the order in the Catholic [church] is the main
identity. There is no big change, but the way [of] thinking is broader than maybe the way of the people [...] in Germany.” Taking this into account, it appeared that Thaddeus had changed his perception of the world, but perhaps not elements relating to his main identity.

**Summary**

Seven participants stated they were connected to and involved in Japanese culture to some extent. Brian was the only exception as he reported that he had almost no involvement with Japanese culture or society despite being married to a Japanese national and living in Japan for almost twenty years. The other seven participants were connected to Japan through their vocation, friends, and/or family. Lana reported that her second language was Japanese and she had a number of Japanese friends and was regularly involved in Japanese cultural experiences. Helen, Luther, Dexter, and Thaddeus found their main connection to Japan was through their vocation although Dexter and Helen remarked that they had Japanese friends and family that acted as a connection to Japanese culture as well. Thaddeus and Brian both emphasized their vocation as the reason for their stay in Japan, but Brian was concerned with the money as it allowed him to lead an easier life while Thaddeus stated that his vocation was a religious calling. Craig and Eric both mentioned how their vocation was important, but that their significant other was also an impetus to reside in Japan.

All eight participants reported some change due to their time in Japan. Brian maintained that his biggest change was that he felt free to act anyway he wanted, but he also stated that he is better at making people feel at ease around him. Seven participants remarked that life in Japan had changed their demeanor to being more calm and/or harmonious and four participants mentioned that they were more respectful to others. Thaddeus, Dexter, and Craig stated that their perspectives became wider and Thaddeus maintained that his perceptions and the nature of
his thinking were Japanese. Overwhelmingly, participants stated that the biggest change was how they were calmer, quieter, more respectful, and more harmonious due to their time in Japan. These changes attest to how seven of the participants had changed due to acculturation.

**Acculturation**

Participants described changes to their personal perceptions and behaviors related to the two fields previously addressed. Five sub-themes were developed based on the information presented by the participants. The first sub-theme involved the feeling of not belonging to either their home culture or Japanese culture exclusively, but being in a position somewhere between the two cultures. The second sub-theme examines the changes to behavior that participants reported since living in Japan. The third describes the shift and widening of worldviews due to living in more than one culture for an extended period of time. The fourth involves information regarding how technology has contributed to a sense of identity for some participants. Lastly, the fifth sub-theme compares vocation and its relationship to identity.

**“Somewhere in the Middle”- The Third Culture**

Six participants discussed how they do not necessarily belong to either their home culture or Japanese culture exclusively. However, only Eric and Helen contributed a particular phrasing that the other participants did not. Eric characterized his home as being “somewhere in the middle” due to his feeling that Poland could no longer be a place where he could call home, and Japan not being able to replace the role as his home either. Eric contributed an experience where he saw a gradual change in his feelings towards his native land, Poland, and Japan where he realized there was nothing for him to experience in Poland and his life was now centered in Japan. Eric also had the experience that he was “uprooted” and he stated “I don’t belong here [in Japan], at least not quite, but I no longer belong in Europe, [but] somewhere in the middle.” Eric
jokingly said that he may belong somewhere in Russia as it was halfway between Poland and Japan. In addition, Eric later stated that he sometimes felt like a stranger in Poland as well as in Japan. Furthermore, Eric felt that his friends are now in Japan, and that maintaining friendships with people in Poland was very difficult. Also, Eric was not sure whether he had changed or if the Polish identity had changed since he used to live in Poland. He stated “people are slightly different now; [they have] different values, different attitudes.”

Helen described how her home was “somewhere between the home she feels she has in the United States and her home in Japan. Helen also stated,

People who ask me, after I retire, what will I do? What will your home be? They often ask me that. I still think I will be just rolling around, moving around and I don’t know if [...] I will say that this is my home and this is it. I think I will probably say “well, this is kind of my home, and this is kind of my home [...] so I don’t know if it’s just one home, then I am not sure.

Eric and Helen feel as if they live between two cultures that have, and continue to have, a lasting influence on them. Both participants reported that they were between two cultures because of these influences.

Three participants (Thaddeus, Lana, and Luther) did not use the same phrasing or terminology as Eric and Helen did, but they each described a similar situation where they felt as if they were between cultures. Thaddeus reflected on how he had felt different compared to others in his home country of Germany. When Thaddeus is in Japan, he refers to Germany as home, and vice versa. However, Thaddeus later stated that his home is now Japan although he referred to Germany as his homeland. Thaddeus divulged that when he returned to Germany, “I cannot talk with everyone the same way [...] the language is different and the feelings are
different.” Thaddeus also stated that he felt as if he is a foreigner back in Germany, and compared this feeling to a dried sponge. Thaddeus used a sponge as a metaphor to show how he felt more at home after he has absorbed his German cultural identity that he had forgotten. For example, Thaddeus said,

Feeling back in Germany is a process [of] being a foreigner [and] open again to your background [and] the swallowing up [of] whatever is possible, and then you find yourself again. But going back to Japan, you have a process [that] is the opposite; you have to strip off the stuff [you gained].

Thaddeus’s experiences of him returning to Germany exhibited a ‘re-culturation’ that he presented by the metaphor of the sponge. Thaddeus reported that when he returned to Germany for approximately three months or so, he felt more comfortable and less of a foreigner. When Thaddeus returned to Japan from Germany, he felt that the same process occurs, but first his identity, or his sponge, had to be wrung in order to absorb and re-affirm his identity in Japan. Thaddeus also reported that when he was in Germany he felt different than others and stated that “I cannot talk with them, I cannot follow their way of thinking.” Furthermore, Thaddeus reflected on how he could not understand German movies and said there was a language barrier for him in his first language, and that he also missed cultural ideas in Germany that resulted in him becoming confused. Despite this, Thaddeus admitted that he would feel lonely if he did not have contact with German culture through watching German news broadcasts or reading German publications. Thaddeus may not maintain that he is part of a third culture expressly, but from his explanation, he appeared to neither belong exclusively to neither German nor Japanese culture. Also, Thaddeus reported that he felt as if he needed to squeeze out his German identity in order to acclimate to his Japanese identity and this process was reciprocal. The sponge metaphor
Thaddeus used epitomized the difficulty he feels with his cultural affiliation, and quite possibly his cultural identity.

Lana stated that she felt as if she was half Japanese and half Italian. Lana also asserted that this is due to her involvement in Japanese culture, and many of her friends viewed her as being half Japanese as well. Lana stated that her “opinion is that I don’t want to lose my identity, but I have something Japanese.” Lana also mentioned that she felt a need to return to her home country of Italy at least once a year. Lana stated, “I don’t want to [...] stay here [for] more than one year. I feel I become like a robot, so I need to stay with people who understand my culture.” She also stated “I need to go back to my country once a year because here in Japan my life is [...] decided. I need to escape, I need to relax myself.” Lana felt her life in Japan was routine, and if she continued to remain in this routine in Japan for more than one year she would turn into a ‘robot.’ However, Lana also stated that she often referred to Japan as her home when she is speaking in Japanese. It appeared that Lana was somewhat conflicted on where she considered home to be. On one hand, Lana felt the need to return to Italy for the reason she specified. On the other hand, Lana felt like a stranger when she is was in Italy visiting her family and reported that “now my hometown is just a place where I go for vacation, for because [...] I’m like an outsider there, I’m a stranger.” Lana also said she felt as if she was suffocating when she was around people who talked about more mundane things when she was home. Lana appeared to be involved with both her Italian culture and Japanese culture, but she had a set limit for each. Despite this, Lana reported that her Italian skills had changed most likely due to her long residence in Japan, and she reported that she did not speak Italian as naturally as she had before she came to Japan. Lana presented a situation where she did not feel completely comfortable in either cultural context, and she may be somewhere in between these two cultures. It appeared
that Lana is not exclusively Italian or Japanese, and her statement that she is half Japanese and half Italian appears to remain true.

Luther and Dexter both felt that they did not identify with their home culture or the culture in which they reside. These two participants stated that they had always had the feeling they were outsiders even in their home culture from a young age. Luther reflected on his experiences in the United States when he said:

When I lived in the U.S., mostly the message I got was that I didn’t belong there. And a lot of that was [...] thirty, forty years ago [...] and a lot of it was [for] political reasons involving [the] Vietnam War, being against it and stuff like that. People would just say to me, or I would hear it on the news, [...] that if you don’t support your country, leave it, you don’t belong here. And that was the big message I got when I was in my late teens and early twenties.

Luther stressed that his home was not Japan, but where he works and his apartment where he is able to interact with his friends was a home for him. Luther also stated that he felt he had a home in southern California because he was comfortable in that environment due to many of his friends living there. Luther mentioned that he returns to Boston to visit family and friends about once a year. Additionally, Luther reported that he felt that living outside of the U.S. “is like a huge blessing” and that he had no particular affiliation to being a United States citizen and that he only held a United States passport.

Dexter stated that he did not know what it felt like to be an insider. Dexter described how his parents moved to Nova Scotia, Canada from South Africa. The area Dexter spent his “formative years” proved to create these feelings of being an outsider. Dexter stated:

It was because of my family background. I wasn’t one of the original settlers who had
lived there so long that no one could remember when they originally came to the area. My parents had come from outside so even though I was born there in a lot of ways I was an outsider. So I never had any illusions that I would become an insider partly because I don’t know what it’s like to be a real insider.

Dexter reported that this feeling still applied to his life in Japan. Luther and Dexter exemplified a state of being between two cultures, but perhaps possessing less identifying characteristics of either culture due to negative messages they received in their respective home cultures about their belonging.

Six participants described a certain difficulty of not identifying with one singular culture whether it was the participant’s first culture or the Japanese culture. Furthermore, these participants all felt that they belonged to an area two participants referred to as “somewhere in between” or “somewhere in the middle.” Bicultural Identity Integration (BII) addresses some commonalities with what these six participants discussed. The participants exhibited a level of internalizing their home culture and Japanese culture to some extent. Benet-Martínez & Haritatos (2005), state that some individuals view themselves as being involved in a ‘hyphenated culture’ or a ‘third’ culture just as Eric and Helen asserted. This third culture is the product of an individual identifying with at least two cultures and integrating said cultures into their everyday life. Those individuals who reported that they had social friends who were Japanese nationals tended to have less acculturative stress. For example, Lana demonstrated this concept as she stated that her friends in Japan and Italy say she is either half Japanese or simply ‘Japanese.’ Lana further addressed this concept when she said, “I have something Japanese.” Lana appeared to have a better social perception of herself because reinforced individuals who have a high self-perception also have a high BII. Helen also exemplified this idea, as her close friends often
perceived her as taking on characteristics of someone who was not American, but possibly French or Canadian. Both of these examples attest to how Lana and Helen may be in a third or hyphenated culture that is neither Japanese nor that of their home culture.

Dexter and Luther presented a form of ‘third culture’ that was different from the other participants. Luther stated that he has never felt an affiliation with his home culture in the United States. In fact, Luther stated his passionate distance and aversion to his home culture when he said

When I think about the U.S., [...] I think about [how] I’m a citizen of the U.S. still. That’s where I grew up. I had such an overwhelming sense of sadness and shame because [the] government of the U.S. is really evil. I mean the government does such horrible things in the world especially government and business together. I mean it’s outrageous and they have been doing it, it has been going on for a hundred years or more probably more since the beginning. And when I was living in the U.S. this really strong sense of shame that [...] for example, I would love to visit Vietnam, but I still have this sense of shame that because of what my quote [on] quote country did to the Vietnamese people in the 1960’s and 70’s. It doesn't even matter how [...] Vietnamese people look at the U.S. now. It’s just that [...] I would feel like a Nazi going on a pleasure trip to Israel. It’s that kind of degree of shame and what the U.S. has done.

Luther passionately expressed his lack of affiliation to the United States, and how his feelings towards the United States had been maintained since he was a teenager. Luther also stated, “I refuse to believe that I am in Japan” and “I don’t want to acclimate to Japanese culture, I don’t want to acclimate to American culture.” Luther’s attitudes appear to place him a category that is similar to a third culture, but he also does not value his original culture nor does he want to
assimilate into Japanese culture. Dexter reported a similar experience, but not to the extent that Luther described. Dexter does not have the same animosity towards his home country that Luther had, but he had also felt as an outsider in his home country. In addition, Dexter had always expected to be an outsider in Japan as well. As a result, it appears that both Dexter and Luther are not necessarily part of a ‘third culture,’ but more of a residual culture wherein there is a lingering sense of their respective original culture, but no strong affiliation to it or to that of any other culture.

Two participants (Brian and Craig) appeared to retain their original cultures to a significant degree. Brian stated that Japan was his home as he realized how much time he has spent in Japan compared to his home country of New Zealand. Brian also stated how he had been away from his home country for so long he could no longer call it his home. However, when Brian had returned home, he reported that “all the social mannerisms and stuff […] comes right back. You realize how uptight Japan is. You go to New Zealand and everyone’s laid back.” Brian admitted that he did not participate in most criteria involved in Japanese culture. In addition, Brian also stated that he only creates friendships with other foreigners, and admitted that his wife had stopped any attempts at getting him involved in Japanese culture. It appears that Brian has a low level of BII, because he had difficulty incorporating aspects of Japanese culture into his sense of identity. Furthermore, Brian stated that he had horrible Japanese skills and even less competence in Japanese culture, because Brian chose to maintain his New Zealand culture almost aggressively. Individuals such as Brian have low BII and feel as if they should choose only one culture and are unable to have more than one identity at a time (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). Brian also mentioned that he was more involved in Japanese culture when he first arrived in Japan. This was exemplified through his quick, three-month acquisition of
hiragana and katakana. In addition, Brian reported that he created some friendships with a few Japanese nationals at a record store until he felt that he was not perceived or valued as a real friend. In light of these instances, and the fact that Brian had not made any noticeable changes to his identity, it appears that Brian kept his identity stagnant or had a certain amount of identity defense due to his perception that he would never fit into Japanese culture and/or society in a meaningful way. This may originate from his perception of what degree he is allowed to become ingrained or connected to Japanese culture and/or society (Berry, 1990). It seems that Brian received negative emotional feedback from his ‘friends’ in Japanese culture, as well as from his feelings of being an outsider, and this resulted in Brian defending his own sense of self-perception and identity.

Craig also had similar thoughts on his personal culture and identity in regards to Brian. Craig stated that “I don’t view myself as different” and that he felt that he is a British person living abroad in Japan. On the other hand, Craig was unsure of where his home was, but he also stated that he could call both Japan and the U.K. his home. Craig elaborated when he reported that his home is usually

Japan because this is where I live; I live here with my wife and I enjoy living here, but sometimes the pull of home is quite strong which is back in England particularly when there’s big events on like last year like the Olympics.

Craig was an avid sports fan and reported that he missed many sporting events. Craig had noticed that he feels strange when he returns to the U.K. to visit his family. He states, “It doesn’t quite feel the same as before even though many things are the same. It doesn’t quite feel the same like you totally belong because I have been away for so long.” Craig was able to retain his original culture to a significant degree, and felt that his identity is still as a British person, but he
reported that he was very happy living in Japan. In regards to ICT, Craig feels that he is compatible with Japanese culture and society, and feels no desire to either change or defend the identity he currently possesses.

Six participants reported that they did not feel as if they were a part of their home cultures or part of Japanese culture, but in an area that occupied the space between the two categories. This ‘third culture’ acted as a balancing act between two cultures that four participants exemplified while two other participants (Dexter and Luther) instead appeared to walk a fine line between their two cultures due to their lack of affiliation to either culture. Two other participants (Brian and Craig) retained a large amount of their original culture with Brian defending his home culture while Craig was able to retain his home culture while still interacting with Japanese culture/society in a meaningful manner.

“A Respect for What is Public”

All eight participants stated that their demeanor had changed to some degree due to their residence in Japan. Participants reported that there was a sense of communal responsibility that involved being polite and respecting others, being quiet, and overall contributing to a harmonious environment. This is most likely due to Japan having a unique form of collectivism that emphasizes harmony and shuns disruption (Robertson, 2005). In some cases, this conflicted with the expectations of participants when they either returned to their respective home countries or when they were in cultures outside of Japan. Brian and Craig reported that they had only changed a small amount since living in Japan. For example, Craig maintained that his only change was with his timekeeping. In comparison, Brian noticed a change and stated:

I suppose I would be a lot more immature here [...] because you can get away with anything. You can pretty much say anything and no one holds you to task for it
because you are a foreigner so they expect you to be a bit of a moron.

Furthermore, Brian’s behavior during his classes was never immature *per se*, but he was noticeably more animated than the other English tutors and teachers, and he received some laughs from his students due to his animated behaviors. However, Brian did state that he had become more patient and better at understanding people based on body language. Brian also divulged that when he returns to New Zealand his cultural mannerisms immediately reappeared and that he felt like he had never been away from New Zealand. Craig and Brian appeared to have minimal changes via acculturation compared to the other participants.

The other six participants reported more detailed changes to their actions and behaviors. For example, Dexter stated that he was more aware of his timekeeping. Also, Dexter said he was more respectful and polite to others, and he expected a higher level of politeness and respect from others in return. Dexter also reported that he found people in his home country of Canada ruder than before he moved to Japan. Eric mentioned that ever since he moved to Japan he was less angry and “less likely to use anger or to be rude [or] impolite.” Similarly, Helen reported that she is more tolerant than she was previously and that she has “really toned down” from how she used to be in the United States and that “keeping things stable and continuity and harmony is so much more important” than she previously thought. Lana reflected on this topic and stated “I think in Japanese so my behavior [is] always like I am in Japan.” Lana mentioned that she “became respectful for other people” and that she became “calm, more quiet, and collaborative, [and] respectful for everything that is public.” Luther similarly stated

I really tried to fit in as much as possible. And to fit in meant that I had to sort of like adjust how I acted to a certain extent so that I was not obnoxious, and when I went back to the U.S. people said “oh you have gotten calm, you don’t get loud anymore, you are very
nice to people around you, what happened?” That sort of calmness or speaking quietly, or on the surface being nice to the people around you is a very traditional Japanese kind of cultural thing.

Luther changed his behaviors only because he wanted to interact effectively with others. As a result, Luther was required to apply certain behaviors generally accepted by Japanese culture. Thaddeus maintained that Japanese culture and society “brain washe[s] [people] into the Japanese way of thinking” and that there is a “kind of Japanese shame that by your openness, you can hurt somebody.” Despite this, Thaddeus felt that only changes to his behavior and way of thinking had changed. Thaddeus explains, “Being a priest in the order in the Catholic [church] is the main identity. There is no big change, but the way [of] thinking is broader than maybe the way of the people [...] in Germany.”

Brian and Craig appeared to remain the least changed by their residence in Japan with only minimal differences to their behaviors. In comparison, the rest of the participants had noticed some changes to their behavior such as becoming calm and polite or, as Lana stated, being “respectful for everything that is public.” Despite this, Thaddeus maintained that only his perceptions were prone to change.

**Change of Worldview**

Six participants briefly described how their perceptions and worldview had changed due to their time in Japan. Thaddeus stated that his only change was that he was able to understand different forms of Japanese thinking, but five other participants mentioned a shift in their perceptions in addition to changes in their behavior.

Craig stated that living in Japan “makes me view life differently” and it had made him “appreciate and accept different cultures more than [...] if you lived in one culture all the time.”
Dexter responded to this topic more than any other participant and mentioned his views on this topic several times during his interview. Dexter showed a palpable annoyance with his experiences interacting with people from his home country of Canada who had less experience abroad. He found that many of the people he interacted with in Canada had a “field of vision [that] is narrower, and this cannot be helped.” In addition, Dexter stated that

By spending time outside of your home country, you get a better understanding of your home country, and you can see the problems that might not have been as apparent when you are actually in the situation. You can see [the] kind of mindsets that are getting in the way.

Eric stated a similar idea when he mentioned how his perspectives proved to be wider in scope when compared to most of his students due to his experiences and life in Europe and Japan. Lana stated, “I have [become] more open mind[ed]. There are a lot of cultures different from mine, [...] so [I] appreciate other cultures.” Lastly, Helen reported that her self-perceptions of herself had become clearer as well as her perceptions of her home country.

Luther and Brian did not address this topic in any depth. Luther previously stated that he had never felt like a part of his home culture due to his level open mindedness before he moved to Japan, and referred to his involvement with United States culture as him being “a fly on the wall.” Brian, on the other hand, had exhibited a form of identity defense that may keep him from developing any significant change to his worldview as he had demonstrated. Thaddeus posed an explanation that since his main identity is acting as an agent of religion through the Catholic Church, his behaviors had not necessarily changed, but his perceptions and ways of thinking have. It appears that this increased worldview and open mindedness may have contributed to the feeling of being in a third culture. Luther characterized this state as being “a fly on the wall”
between two cultures in which he had been involved, yet not completely ingrained in either culture. Furthermore, Dexter’s experiences seem to corroborate that there is a perceived difference between those who remain in their home country and those individuals who live abroad.

**Technology as a Valuable Connection**

Each participant responded to a question involving their personal use of technology and how it might have influenced their connection to their home culture. Helen and Lana stated that technology such as electronic mail and Skype allowed them to contact their family and friends with ease. Lana said technology had prevented her from feeling home sick because she was able to connect to her family almost instantly due to electronic mail. Helen briefly mentioned how Facebook and social media helped her stay in touch with her family, but she did not elaborate. Helen also stated that she goes back to the United States an average of three times a year, which was the most frequent of any participant. Luther stated that approximately twenty years prior to the internet and easy access to social media, he felt that he was “cut off a little bit” from others. Luther added that technology allowed him to connect to other people, but he did not mention his home culture specifically. Additionally, Luther stated that his father was not able to use technology so he had limited contact with him. However, Luther did state “technology has kept me connected with a lot of people in a very shallow way, but [in] a very valuable way.” Luther once again demonstrated his reluctance to connect to his home culture as he put no importance on connecting to it, but he did report that he read news reports from the United States as he demonstrated during the interview.

Five participants (Brian, Craig, Thaddeus, Eric, and Dexter) stated how they used technology to stay closer to their home cultures. Brian found technology to be pertinent to his
time in Japan, and it appeared as if technology acted as a sort of anchor for his New Zealand identity. Brian stated that he felt more connected to New Zealand through technology, and that his connection was remarkably easier and less stressful for him than it was previously. Brian also stated,

If the Internet had not come around, I would have become completely “baummy” by now.

I would have just gone back [to New Zealand] you know. It would have been too stressful to stay here without having that connection to your actual identity.

Brian discussed his perspective on people who came to Japan before technology could connect them easily to their home culture. Brian asserted that many foreigners in Japan would “sort of lose themselves” especially people who came to Japan in the 1990’s before the instantaneous connections the internet provided. Brian attributed this connection via technology almost as an anchor for his identity. Brian stated that he would have left Japan if not for this solid connection to his home culture. Additionally, Brian participated in identity defense, and his reliance on technology appeared to leave him with enough of his home culture so that he did not “loose himself” as he saw other foreigners doing before technology became easier to use. Craig responded to this question by answering that technology had influenced his connection to his home culture “too much probably” and that its use allowed him to “keep connections at home strong, but maybe I use the Internet too much to keep in touch with what’s going on.” Craig also stated that “in some ways [technology] makes the connection not weaken.” Thaddeus had similar ideas as he stated that technology made him feel closer to his home culture. Thaddeus also submitted an example of his experiences when he stated:

Sometimes I feel a bit lonely. For example, a lady died a month ago and she paid for me a German newspaper and it came every week, and I was waiting for that. It was a summary,
a good summary of what’s going on in the philosophy and religious also the social aspect [in Germany]. Now, for two months [...] she is dead and she doesn’t pay [for this newspaper]. This newspaper doesn’t come anymore, and I feel really lonely.

Thaddeus also watched the German news every day and reported that it made him feel closer than speaking to German people on the phone. For Thaddeus, the German news was an anchor for his connection to his home culture. Eric and Dexter also mentioned how a connection to their home culture via news was important to them. Eric stated that he was “really hungry the first years when I came [to Japan].” Eric would often seek news publications in Polish at a local university, but he would usually find older publications. However, Eric can now find current publications online and he can also order Polish music and books to his home in Japan. Dexter stated that “I can get a look at Canadian news very very easily whereas before my mother might send me a newspaper or something so I would be reading the news two or three weeks after it happened. It’s real time now, I don’t feel as remote as I did when I first got here.” From the experiences that Brian, Craig, Eric, and Thaddeus described, it seems that each of them exhibited a hunger or craving for elements of their home culture. Eric stated that he had a hunger for Polish publications that resulted in him seeking such publications. Similarly, Craig elaborated that technology made his connection to his identity not weaken and that he devoted time to connecting to his culture via the Internet. Brian credited technology as the connection to his identity and mentioned how he would have returned to his home country of New Zealand if he did not have a channel for connecting with his home culture. Brian appeared to have the most to say on this particular topic, possibly because he had more of a need for a connection to his home culture compared to any other participant. Even Craig, who participated frequently in Japanese culture and society, admitted that he used technology to connect to his home culture “too much”
at times. Based on these comments, it appears that connections to one’s home culture can stave off possible changes via acculturation. Technology appeared to satiate a hunger for home culture with certain participants, and connections via technology can also act as an anchor for identity most notably in the case of Brian, and to a lesser extent, Craig.

**Opportunities Through Vocation**

Participants were asked four questions regarding their personal employment in Japan. Participants elucidated a variety of unique answers. It appeared that all eight participants agreed that employment in Japan was desirable in some aspect.

Brian was direct on what life in Japan allowed for him to do. Overall, Japan permitted a more relaxing and less stressful life for Brian. In addition, Brian stated that his employment in Japan was “completely unimportant, it doesn’t mean a thing. There’s no career strategy or anything.” Brian recounted how his previous full time employment as a teacher at the university level was stressful, but his part-time employment was now significantly less stressful. Brian stated that life in Japan also granted him with enough money “so that I can afford not to be at work sometimes and play my record player and lie on the floor.” Brian also mentioned how he would do “anything [...] if it’s enjoyable enough and not too stressful then I’ll do it. [...] It doesn’t really matter what it is.” However, Brian also recounted how a friend of his, who he worked with in Japan for some time, moved back to New Zealand to be a primary school teacher. This friend worked long hours, and earned less income than Brian. As a result, Brian felt that his career offered the lowest ratio of stress to work possible, and Brian felt that his best employment prospects remained in Japan.

The most important factor for Craig’s work in Japan was based on income and employment. Craig has been a teacher for thirty-two years and it was something he was very
passionate about, and he reported that even in the U.K. he would also like to teach. Craig has always enjoyed being an educator, and he would choose this profession regardless of his location.

The main concern for residing in Japan for Dexter included being able to provide for his family. Dexter was pleased with his income, and believed that it would be difficult to find employment elsewhere that would offer the same salary. Dexter reported that he would prefer to work in geography and environmental management if the opportunity presented itself. However, this option has not been a viable possibility due to monetary considerations. Dexter stated the “the income I am able to get here, as compared to somewhere else, plays a part. Being able to speak Japanese and having a job where I can use Japanese is satisfying.” It appears that Dexter is happy with his position, but money is the most important factor for his continuing employment.

Eric immediately stated that his dream and professional goal was to teach English, which he was eventually able to accomplish in Japan. Although Eric was worried about his future employment prospects in Japan, he reported that he was happy he had been able to accomplish his dream. Eric also mentioned that some of the reason he wanted to teach in Japan was due to the desirable salary. Eric found that living in Japan afforded him a comfortable life, and he summed up his thoughts by saying “I feel like I do what I would like to do. What was my dream, what was my hobby, and became my job so I’m pretty satisfied with that.”

Helen first came to Japan to study at a local university and then later returned to Japan after she finished her doctorate program to teach at a university in Hokkaido. Part of her desire to teach in Japan was due to how difficult it was to find employment at that time in the United States. Helen fortunately attained a job where she could teach Anthropology and Sociology in
Japan, and she decided to stay because of her love for those subjects. Furthermore, Helen stated that “the salary was so much better, [...] unbelievably better than what my colleagues were making.” When Helen was offered tenure within two years of starting her teaching career, she decided to remain in Japan. Helen stated that her position allowed her to be content with both her salary and job security, and she was also able to publish several books and articles and continue to conduct research. Helen reported that “living here really made me [...] grateful that I’ve been able to live here and accomplish a lot of things professionally; that is really great.” It appears that Helen remains in Japan because it affords her a desirable employment opportunity that also allows her to teach the subjects she loves and produce research in her field of study.

Lana found that her life in Japan helped her accomplish her professional goal of being a language teacher. Lana stated that she wanted to teach Italian to foreigners and Japan allowed her to accomplish this “without any problem.” Lana also said “Japan is the best place if you want to teach your language.” Lana also mentioned that teaching at a university in Italy is impossible, but due to Japan’s great number of universities, she had a better chance of finding employment. Lana reported that she came to Japan to teach Italian, but during other interactions, she mentioned her respect for Japanese and how she studied it from a young age. As a result, Lana was able to achieve her professional goals and her personal goals as well.

Luther reported that his impetus for working in Japan originated from enhanced work opportunities as well as an adequate amount of money to pay his student loans. Employment was difficult for Luther to find in the 1980’s and he heard that Sapporo, Hokkaido had desirable teaching opportunities. Luther had more of a desire to teach in a South American country, but only the JET Programme in Japan provided an opportunity for him to both teach abroad and pay his student loans. In addition, Luther had a passion for teaching, and states that he would be
content as long as he was an educator. Luther stated that his position in Japan

Really widens my possibilities and things I can do and my lifestyle because of my salary. So money is one of the biggest things for me in Japan. I don’t have a boss so I have a lot of freedom in this job to develop. I love teaching so I can really explore teaching. I was lucky that I became tenured in Japan; work-wise and salary-wise [it] really open[s] up a lot of opportunities.

Luther found job security and income to be the fundamental incentives for him to work in Japan. However, Luther noted that as he received tenure and seniority, he has been afforded more freedom and opportunity to develop as a teacher and to explore the opportunities his position offers.

Thaddeus was appointed to Japan for his vocation as a Catholic priest. Thaddeus states that “I came here as a priest and that means that this is not a job, but a vocation.” Thaddeus described how he came to be in Japan; he requested a placement in a country where no other priest wanted to be placed. Thaddeus said his motivation was to serve the church and that “being a priest means that in the system of the church, [you] are very special, and only a priest can replace me, but there are only a few, not many. So my profession is more and more important as I get older.” Thaddeus also stated that the Catholic “church is going over this border and this message is that [a] whole world of brothers and sisters [belong] together. Every church is a social center binding society together.” Additionally, Thaddeus believes that he is “an agent of the message of Christianity which is also humanity, and this makes sense to me in Japan.” Life in Japan allows Thaddeus to accomplish his religious goals, which also serves as his vocation and purpose in life.

Seven participants mentioned how Japan affords them the opportunity to pursue their
individual interests. For example, Lana and Eric were able to fulfill their goal of being language teachers. Eric stated that his goal has been to teach English, and Lana likewise stated that she had a personal and professional goal of teaching Italian. Luther, Craig, and Helen discussed how they each had a passion for teaching, but they also felt that their employment in Japan allowed for desirable monetary benefits and that this was an equally important consideration. Six participants reported that monetary incentives were a strong factor for their employment. Brian found money to be the most important aspect of his career in Japan, because it afforded him the most amount of money for the least amount of work. Brian did receive a degree in education from his schooling in New Zealand, but he never said he enjoyed teaching during his interview. It is apparent that Brian does not attach any significant amount of his identity into his work. Whitbourne (1982) states that individuals may preserve their identity by downgrading the importance of their work, and instead enjoy the quality of life and the level of comfort such work permits. Brian exemplified this concept as he had strictly maintained his New Zealand identity, and he stated that his career is “completely unimportant, it doesn’t mean a thing. There’s no career strategy or anything.” Brian also stated that his employment in Japan put him in a comfortable position, and that he made enough money “so that I can afford not to be at work sometimes and play my record player and lie on the floor” and that he would do “anything [...] if it’s enjoyable enough and not too stressful then I’ll do it [...] it doesn’t really matter what it is.” In comparison, Lana exhibited a sense of self and identity that is invested in her work in Japan as a language teacher, and she referred to herself as “half Japanese.” Lana’s intrinsic motivation was also a measure of acculturation to Japanese culture and/or society because Whitbourne (1986) states that the individual imposes her own identity onto the work experience, as Lana appears to have done.
Thaddeus had a different attitude towards his vocation compared to the other participants due to his status as a priest in the Catholic Church. Thaddeus was appointed to Japan and reported that he was not doing a job, but he was in a vocation that fulfills him as “an agent of the message of Christianity”. Thaddeus also stated that his position in Japan becomes increasingly important because only another priest can replace his work and he stated that “my profession is more and more important as I get older.” Kroger (2000) states that individuals who reach the stage of adulthood called Generativity versus Stagnation often attempt to guide the next generation. Thaddeus exemplifies this desire because he has been involved in the education of young people since he started his position in Japan, and with his creation of various assistance programs. Thaddeus also exhibited elements of Integrity versus Despair, because Thaddeus stated that he would live in Japan for the rest of his life. Thaddeus’s acceptance of his mortality and the wisdom of his place in life and in Japan represent this adult stage of life.

The participants’ attitudes towards their work presented important insights into acculturation and potential assimilation (Whitbourne, 1986). For example, Brian reported having no particular value attached to his profession, but stated that it allowed him to lead an enjoyable and less stressful life. Luther and Helen also mentioned that their positions in Japan allowed them to enjoy more freedom, but both found their teaching positions as desirable. Money proved to be an important aspect for working in Japan for all of the participants except for Lana and Thaddeus.

Summary

This theme developed ideas related to acculturation and its relationship to identity. Six participants felt as if they were between two cultures due to their feeling of not being completely comfortable in either their home culture or Japanese culture. As a result, these participants
appeared to be “somewhere in between” or in a third culture as Bicultural Identity Integration terms it. In the case of Luther and Dexter, this third culture was a product of a consistent feeling of being an outsider in both cultures, which was referred to as ‘residual culture’ that personifies no particular attachment to any culture. The second theme expounded on the changes to behavior the participants noticed in themselves. Six participants noticed that they adopted a more harmonious and calm temperament that usually conflicted with the behaviors of their home culture. Another sub-theme involved a change to worldview that Dexter referred to as being “open minded.” Next, technology appeared to lend an anchor for the identity of four participants to varying degrees. Lastly, vocation was able to reflect potential acculturation into Japanese society, but Thaddeus maintained that identity could be retained depending on the nature of the vocation.
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The goal of this research is to explore and develop explanations of identity formation in foreign individuals from predominately English speaking countries (people commonly referred to as “Westerners”) who have resided in Japan for five or more years. The application of a qualitative methodology with a case study approach was implemented in order to illuminate these changes via interviews with eight participants from various countries. In this chapter, the findings will be analyzed in relation to academic literature in relation to the four main research questions:

1. What are the impacts of living in Japan for more than five years on the identities of English speaking foreign residents?
2. What aspects of Japanese culture do participants identify as most salient to/most important in shaping their identity in Japan?
3. How do participants define, construct, and live a good and meaningful life (via family, profession, socially, spiritually) in the Japanese context?
4. Using the definition of identity as a process of an individual or actor’s actions within the Japanese cultural context via socialization, how does an individual’s actions reflect Japanese cultural practices?

This chapter will apply various *Nihonjinron* ideas as well as acculturation theories such as those by Sam & Berry (2006) and Benet-Martinez & Haritatos’ (2005) Bicultural Identity Integration model. In addition, Identity Control Theory (ICT) and Erikson’s Stages of Adult Identity Development theories contribute to the analysis of the participants’ personal experience of acculturation and aspects of the identity of participants in this research and will help to answer the research questions.
The organization of this chapter will commence with the metaphor of the wall, which described participants’ feelings of being distanced from Japanese culture and/or society. The next section, the binary of uchi and soto, explains the construction of this well, and how foreigners need to be vouchsafed in order for them to be present and successfully interact in Japanese society. Next, the “noisy foreigner” section discusses how foreigners, especially foreign women, felt as if they were not allowed to have a voice, because that would breach the boundary between foreigners and Japanese. The acculturation and identity section briefly analyzes each participant’s level of acculturation and identity based on their responses to questions related to their interactions with Japanese people, culture, and society. The level of acculturation, in part, involved the extent to which they perceived Japanese society as permeable to ‘Western’ foreigners and their influences. Lastly, the thoughts of participants regarding their employment as it related to their acculturation level will be explored. The end of this chapter addresses the questions previously posed.

**The Wall**

Participants stated that there was a wall or barrier that barred them from being a part of Japanese society/culture. This perceived barrier was found in different areas of life depending on the participant. This barrier may be explained by Nihonjinron discourse. A central tenet of Nihonjinron is that Japan is a homogeneous country that is comprised of ethnically Japanese people who embody a predetermined set of criteria that define a Japanese individual. McVeigh (2004) states that Japanese nationals have historically associated tradition, heritage, values, and language with physical appearance. Not being Japanese results in a “symbolic boundary process” wherein individuals who are outside of the group are kept outside a boundary so that the culture of the insiders can be perpetuated (McVeigh, 2004; Yoshino, 1992). As foreign
nationals, participants in this study reported being perceived as not sharing in Japanese values because of their physical appearance. The participants’ foreign status leads many Japanese to believe that those in this study cannot read or speak Japanese, or interact successfully in Japanese culture.

In Luther’s experience, his status as a foreigner led other Japanese to believe that he could neither speak Japanese, nor understand basic social expectations, and that Luther felt that this could also happen to him with a Japanese friend present. Similarly, Helen commented that Japanese people would often openly talk about her assuming she does not know Japanese and cannot understand what they are saying about her. Thaddeus indicated that although he gained proficiency speaking Japanese, he could not be fluently understood. The assumption that foreigners do not know Japanese appears to be prevalent. Nihonjinron reinforces the idea that Japanese language is too complex for foreign comprehension, and that only Japanese people can truly understand it. Befu (1993) states that there is “a perfect isomorphism between the speakers of the Japanese language and the bearers of Japanese culture” (as cited in McVeigh, 2004, p. 197). Luther illustrated this concept as he recounted an experience where he communicated with another foreigner in Japanese rather than English. Although Luther speaks Japanese regularly, his experience seems to represent a misuse of Japanese and a possible taboo against foreigners using Japanese and not interacting with a Japanese person. This may be due to how Nihonjinron thought views language as the very crucible of Japanese identity and Japanese identity associates tradition, heritage, and language with physical appearance that neither Luther nor his friend shared (Dale, 1986; McVeigh, 1997).

On the other hand, the status of being a foreigner in Japan can also allow for a degree of freedom not offered to Japanese people. For example, Brian stated that he felt able to behave in
any manner that he desired and that he would not be reprimanded based on bad behaviors. Brian’s comments lead one to believe that there is a palpable boundary created by Japanese society that allows for foreigners to behave differently because they are not expected to understand and/or adhere to Japanese cultural norms. For example, foreigners who become fluent in Japanese are sometimes featured in Japanese media, but are referred to as “talking dog foreigners” because “like a dog that speaks, they are doing something unnatural” (McVeigh, 1997, p. 191). One can argue that the language and behaviors of foreigners are believed to contrast with those who are Japanese based on nothing more than their status of being non-Japanese.

Befu (2001) states that Nihonjinron thought reflects an active boundary creation process. Foreigners are viewed as outsiders based on certain criteria, but foreigners are often grouped into general categories that come with different levels of status and acceptance. For example, Brian, Eric, and Luther all attested to how foreigners are assumed to be American. Brian mentioned that he is always presumed to be an American while his New Zealand nationality is not recognizable to Japanese people. Eric, who is from Poland, corroborates that certain nationalities have higher status in Japan, as he reported that he was passed over for employment based on his Polish citizenship. These experiences attest to how there is an active boundary making process even with those who are considered outsiders in Japan. McConnell (2002) asserts that Japan takes an arm’s length approach to global interaction, and imports ideas and outsiders. Perhaps the best example of this is the JET Programme where an importation of foreign teachers is predominately focused on teachers from the United States while other English speaking countries are placed high on the list of desirable teachers. Once again, Nihonjinron thought can provide a lens for this phenomenon. Postwar Nihonjinron was based on Japan’s postwar economic
prosperity that helped to reestablish a positive sense of Japanese identity. As a result, the number of *Nihonjinron* books and articles increased as Japan’s economy and image prospered in the late 20th Century (Oguma, 2002). However, Japan’s economic recovery relied on imports of raw materials and exports of finished goods, necessitating good international relations, particularly with countries like the United States, where many Japanese products are sold. Thus, Japan’s place in the global market has shaped the status of foreigners in Japan. As a result, Japan accommodates outsiders, and specifically the people of certain favorable nations over others. In this case, the United States and other English speaking countries are held in high esteem in comparison to other countries that may not be as important to Japan politically and/or economically. While internationalization efforts such as the JET Programme have brought young Americans, British, Australians, and Canadians to Japan, it was also developed in ways that limited the foreign impact on Japanese schools, including short-term contracts, minimal revisions to the approved English curriculum, and an emphasis on showing JET teachers the positive aspects of Japan. The JET Programme helped to maintain the distinctions between Japanese and foreigners, and kept interaction with foreigners as superficial and temporary as possible. Luther described how he felt pushed away during his time working with the JET Programme when he was given a short time period to renew his teaching contract. McConnell (2000) states that the goal of the JET Programme is not to integrate foreigners, but to treat foreigners with great hospitality so they enjoy their stay. The boundary making process that *Nihonjinron* exhibits is a common dynamic that is prevalent in Japanese culture and society, and it is best discussed through the binary of inside versus outside, *uchi* and *soto*.

**The Binary of Uchi and Soto**

One central cultural concept in Japan is the distinction between inside and outside, or *uchi*
and *soto*. Foreigners are commonly categorized as *soto* because of distinguishing qualities such as ethnicity, race, behavior, culture, or any physical differences that are not familiar (Lebra, 2004). In this case, foreigners are placed in the *soto* category due to their different physical qualities, but also because of their differing behaviors and potential lack of Japanese. Luther illustrated how an outsider label or status can keep foreigners from being accepted or welcomed in the same space as other Japanese. Luther stated how he arrived in Wakkanai, Japan late one night and he decided to rent a hotel room. Unfortunately, Luther was denied a hotel room based upon him not being Japanese and not having a company that could vouchsafe for him, a common practice of requiring a Japanese guarantor, either an individual or a company. Luther’s experience exemplifies this inside versus outside binary and how he was automatically excluded from being able to rent a hotel room due to his status as a foreigner. Luther offered a similar experience where his acceptance in a restaurant was contingent on him having a Japanese friend accompany him. Luther’s experiences indicate how a foreigner may be excluded without the guarantee of a local or Japanese person who can vouch for his presence. Luther’s hotel experience illustrates how he could only be given a room if his company had business in Japan while his restaurant experience illustrates how his presence was also not desired unless he was accompanied or given permission by a Japanese counterpart. It seems that in order for a foreigner to be more accepted, he requires a Japanese national to vouch for him. This may reflect how outsiders can become more welcome if they have a Japanese national who can bring them closer to the inside or to *uchi*. Despite this, the status of being a foreigner is sometimes enough of an impetus to exclude foreigners. Every participant commented in some measure about how they felt as an outsider while in Japan, but participants also felt they had gradually changed to better fit into Japanese culture/society by adopting Japanese cultural practices and a
demeanor that was valued.

“The Noisy Foreigner” and Gender

Foreigners felt that their voice was not heard while in Japan. Three participants discussed how their work experiences represented this disregard. Dexter described that when he spoke at work he felt as if he was being “the noisy foreigner interfering with the way things are done in Japan.” Additionally, two participants found that their lack of voice was manifested in their exclusion to vote in Japanese elections despite each of them living in Japan for over a decade. It appears that Japanese cultural norms were how the participants understood their feeling of being silenced or at least quieted. However, this lack of voice may also be related to the perception that foreigners may be crossing the boundary of *uchi* and *soto* if they begin to have a voice in Japan such as by voting in elections. Once again, the *uchi* and *soto* binary may have some influence on the voice of foreigners being heard and not dismissed as “the noisy foreigner interfering with the way things are done in Japan.” Similarly, the voice of other “outside” or foreign people in Japan has been quelled such as the indigenous population, the Ainu, being overlooked in much of Japan, but so too the native Korean population, and the Burakumin.

The treatment of the Burakumin, a caste distinction with roots in Buddhism and historical distinctions in status based on occupation related to death, butchering, and working with leather, illuminates the exclusionary tactics of Japanese society. Maher & Macdonald (1995) assert that the Burakumin do not possess the same basic rights that non-Burakumin people possess despite the Burakumin being ethnically and linguistically Japanese (Christopher, 1984). The Burakumin have a long history of being discriminated against and Oguma (2002) states that the Burakumin are considered to be an alien nation inside Japan. It has been suggested that the Burakumin were excluded based on their traditional vocations such as working with dead animals that made them
unclean in both the Shintō and Buddhist perspectives. The discrimination of basic rights for the Burakumin is still prevalent in contemporary Japan. There are some similarities between foreigners and the Burakumin; for example, both instances involve a group of people who are considered to be outsiders or aliens due to some perceived difference, and both are socially segregated in some manner. For example, the name Burakumin reflects the physical segregation these people experience as this term means “the people of the hamlets” and reflects the impoverished ghettos in which these people live (Christopher, 1984; Fukuoka et al. as cited in Lie, 2001; Hane & Hane, 2003). The Burakumin are physically segregated and this also acts to limit these people socially as well. In comparison, foreigners who reside in Japan are more prone to social segregation that is manifested in their lack of basic rights in Japan such as voting. This uncanny similarity between the Burakumin and foreigners illustrates how Japanese culture/society excludes “others” with different forms of social segregation, such as denying a semblance of basic rights, which allows for an individual to have a voice. The Burakumin are physically segregated which results in social segregation as well. In comparison, foreigners are frequently physically segregated, but to a lesser extent. Foreigners appear to be socially segregated to a similar degree as the Burakumin where neither group’s voices are heard due to their low status in Japanese society. This practice of social and physical segregation may be related to the unique form of collective identity that Japan retains where harmony is an important cultural value, and that can only be achieved when there a strict group identity based on cultural norms and conformity (Fukushima, Sharp & Kobayashi, 2009). Taking into account the often unheard and realistically muted groups found in Japan, it appears that Luther surmised how Japanese society may be unresponsive to outside concerns when he said “In Japan, people will shun you or push you off or not let you in.” Luther speaks to how Japanese society/culture
responds to the Burakumin as well as foreigners who infringe on the unique and collective harmony in Japan. In this case, beliefs of what is inside and what is outside have literally resulted in placing unfavorable groups outside which then acts to socially segregate these physically displaced people. The Burakumin example supplies the unique template of Japanese exclusion and segregation that resonate with how foreigners are treated. Luther’s experiences can attest to how Japanese society has segregated foreigners such as enacting a “no foreigners allowed” policy at a restaurant or hotel, but the common practice is to silence undesirable groups of people ideally by transplanting them to reflect the social segregation Japanese society whishes them to experience.

Two participants included the Japanese adage of “the nail that sticks out gets hammered down” which resonates with the uchi and soto belief in addition to the collective culture of Japan. Some of the experiences participants reported illustrate how Japanese culture attempts to ‘tame’ foreigners who are perceived to be interfering with Japanese practices. One female participant felt that she was perceived as an aggressive American woman and that it was particularly important for women to be obedient in Japanese society. However, this process appeared to be more attuned to a screw being slowly tightened rather than the dramatic force of a hammer. Due to this process, some participants felt that they did not belong in Japan based on personal attitudes and behaviors. Helen and Brian both felt that they needed to change in some fashion to better fit into Japanese society. This feeling of slow adaptation to Japanese and society proved to be an important experience for each participant.

**Acculturation and Identity**

Participants in this study discussed a range of experiences that illustrate their level of acceptance of and into Japanese society. At one extreme, Brian’s level of acculturation in Japan
Brian stated that his involvement in Japanese culture is “almost non-existent.” This is most likely due to Brian’s belief that he was never, nor could he be, accepted by Japanese society and culture. Brian felt as if he was pushed away by an “invisible force field” that resulted in him not identifying with anything Japanese. Due to the messages Brian received, and his feelings of alienation, he chooses to strongly maintain his connection to the culture of his home, New Zealand. Individuals such as Brian have a low level of Bicultural Identity Integration (BII) and feel as if they should choose only one culture and are unable to have more than one identity at a time (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005). This is exemplified by Brian’s comments that:

I don’t do any [...] Japanese hobbies, I don’t eat Japanese food, I don’t read kanji, so I can speak just enough to get me by. [I] don’t really have any Japanese friends that I would consider friends, only foreigners. So [...] really low involvement in Japanese culture.

However, Brian also mentioned that he was more involved in Japanese culture when he first arrived in Japan. This was exemplified through his acquisition of the two Japanese syllabaries hiragana and katakana early in his stay. In addition, Brian reported that he felt as if he created some friendships with a few Japanese nationals at a record store he frequently visited until he realized that he was not perceived or valued as a real friend. Identity Control Theory (ICT) may interpret Brian’s initial desire for immersion in Japanese society/culture through his language acquisition and his aspiration for developing friendships with Japanese nationals as a form of identity change where he learned and practiced behaviors that would elicit new positive interpersonal feedback and would result in new self-perceptions and a change to his identity. However, Brian received negative emotional feedback from his ‘friends’ in Japanese culture, as well as from his feelings of being an outsider, and this resulted in Brian defending his own sense
of self-perception and identity. Brian reported that he felt as if he was being shunned due to an “invisible force field” that distanced him from potential friends and connections to Japanese culture/society. These feelings of having an identity that was not compatible with Japanese culture appeared to have resulted in Brian defending his own culture, which is known as identity defense (Anderson & Mounts, 2012). In other words, Brian has not made any noticeable changes to his identity, and it appears that Brian has kept his identity stagnant or had a certain degree of identity defense due to his perception that he would never fit into Japanese culture and/or society in a meaningful way. This may originate from his perception of what degree he is allowed to become ingrained or connected to Japanese culture and/or society (Berry, 1990).

Brian’s responses during his interview best placed him into Erikson’s stage of Generativity versus Stagnation. However, Brian’s comments arguably place him into Integrity versus Isolation due to his lack of Japanese friendships. Despite this, Brian reported that he had foreign friends as well as a Japanese wife and child. As a result, Brian has established a healthy level of confidence and identity despite his lack of interest and involvement in Japanese culture. Brian is placed into Generativity versus Stagnation, but he appears to be Stagnant due to his lack of affiliation with the positive elements of this stage. For example, Brian has arguably assumed his status in Japanese society to its fullest extent possible, even though it is somewhat superficial. Additionally, Brian does not report that his vocation gives him any personal satisfaction, but rather provides him with a relaxing lifestyle. It is due to this that Brian is placed in Stagnation because he is self-absorbed and defends his identity and culture of origin with little to no thought given to his life in Japan. This is apparent from Brian’s responses as he only identifies with his home country.

Craig also had similar perceptions on his personal culture and identity in regards to Brian.
Craig stated that “I don’t view myself as different [in Japan]” and that he felt that he is a British person living abroad in Japan. Craig is able to retain his original culture to a significant degree, and feels that his identity is still as a British person, but he reports that he is very happy living in Japan. In regards to ICT, Craig feels that he is compatible with Japanese culture and society, and feels no desire to either change or defend the identity he currently possesses.

Brian and Craig present two cases with certain similarities, but notable differences. Due to Brian’s seemingly aggressive identity defense, he may be characterized as having what Sam & Berry (2006) call Separation where the individual values his original culture, and wishes to avoid interaction with others who do not share his culture. Brian reported that he does not participate in Japanese society, and that he purposefully does not try to do so. In comparison, Craig shares a certain predisposition of cultural affiliation reminiscent of Brian, but he is also involved with Japanese nationals through his sports club and his personal acquaintances. As a result, Craig can be placed into the category of Integration due to him maintaining his original culture, but also having frequent intergroup interactions (Bang & Montgomery, 2013; Sam & Berry, 2006).

Brian presents a unique case among the participants. The exclusionary practices that Brian and the other participants mention can have an influence on the identity of a foreigner who resides in Japan for an extended period of time. Brian was involved in a form of identity defense due to his feeling that he was kept away by an invisible force field that did not enable him to gain any significant interaction and identity in Japanese culture or society. Furthermore, Craig illustrates that it is also possible for a foreigner in Japan to retain a significant portion of his home culture while simultaneously being involved with Japanese people in a significant way.

Craig represents aspects of the adult stage of Integrity versus Despair due to his completion of the majority of Generativity versus Stagnation. Craig reported that he feels a sense of
satisfaction from teaching and that his profession as a teacher is important to him. Individuals who guide the next generation and attach a significant satisfaction to their work successfully pass the stage of Generativity versus Stagnation. However, Craig may not have successfully found his niche in Japan despite his employment as a teacher so he may still be considered in Generativity versus Stagnation. This is due to the fact that Craig has not fully taken his place in Japanese society in light of the limit on foreign contracts. On the other hand, Craig does exhibit a contribution to future generation through his employment, but Craig reported that he enjoys interacting with students. As a result, Craig may not be considered in the Integrity versus Despair, but rather at the end of Generativity versus Stagnation.

“Somewhere in the Middle”-The Third Culture

Six participants reported that they did not identify exclusively with either their home culture or Japanese culture. Bicultural Identity Integration (BII) would place these participants into a third culture where they are able to switch from one cultural context to another and integrate two or more cultural perspectives. According to Sam and Berry (2006), Eric, Helen, Lana, and Thaddeus are all best placed into the Integration category on the scale of Acculturation Strategies. This originates from each participant’s sense of identifying with their original home culture, but also having frequent intergroup interactions. Helen, Lana, and Thaddeus maintain a high level of interaction with Japanese people, society, and/or culture. In comparison, Eric reported that he was only a spectator in Japan, but he also stated that he regularly attends Japanese festivals with his wife’s family.

Luther and Dexter both represent differing forms of Marginalization. Dexter stated that he never felt as if he belonged in his home country of Canada, but he also does not feel that he belongs in Japan either. However, Dexter also reports frequent intergroup interactions, which is
reminiscent of Integration. Dexter assumes qualities of both Marginalization and Integration. Luther maintains a similar position as Dexter as he has frequent intergroup interactions; however, Luther reported a higher degree of Marginalization. This was exemplified when Luther stated how he was a fly on the wall in both American culture and Japanese culture and that he did not want to acclimate to either culture, but he just wanted to have fun. As a result, Luther embodies the noticeable degree of Marginalization.

Participants reacted to their perceived place in Japanese society in a variety of ways. The majority of participants were able to integrate into Japanese society/culture to some extent despite the negative messages they reported receiving. These same messages led Brian to separate himself by creating his own wall between himself and Japanese people. This resulted in Brian retaining his New Zealand identity and severely limiting his connection to anything Japanese. In comparison, Luther and Dexter found neither Japan nor their home culture to be substantial and so they both had elements of Marginalization.

Five of the eight participants exemplify Erikson’s Generativity versus Stagnation to some degree. Craig, Dexter, Eric, Helen, and Luther can be categorized into this stage. For example, Helen is best placed into Generativity versus Stagnation because of her continuing efforts as a researcher and author. Helen has found her niche in Japan, and she is dedicated to publishing research due to her personal interest as well as her career path. Helen’s publishing may be her way of contributing to future generations with her research. Similarly, Luther and Eric are also in Generativity versus Stagnation because they have found their niche in Japanese society as teachers. Luther and Eric both stated that they find satisfaction through teaching. Luther stated that he has always had a love of teaching and that he would teach no matter his location or cultural context, and Eric asserted that he would likewise teach if he were in his home country.
Next, Dexter may also be placed in Generativity versus Stagnation due to his tenured teaching position in Japan that he reports is his incentive to stay. Although Dexter stated he would prefer to work in a different field if possible, he was also certain that this would not be realistic. Eric is also in this stage as he followed his dream of being an English teacher. Lastly, Lana was the youngest participant and can also be categorized in Erikson’s Generativity versus Stagnation. This is due to her successful navigation of the previous developmental stage, Intimacy versus Isolation, as she has a wealth of Japanese friends, and a place teaching Italian in Japan.

Six of the participants were best categorized as being in Generativity versus Stagnation as well as being ‘Integrated’ into Japanese society. Despite Brian’s separation from Japanese culture and society, he also found himself in Generativity versus Stagnation, but he was considered to be “Stagnant” due to his lack of affiliation to his vocation. Brian’s case is an example of how a foreigner can separate himself from his immediate cultural context and yet have a successful navigation of adult identity stages. However, Brian is also the only participant who appeared to be in the negative aspects of a developmental stage as he was “Stagnant.” Brian’s case may represent how here may be a relationship between an individual’s level of acculturation and his successful developmental identity formation.

Every participant described how there was a boundary that separated him or her from Japan. However, six participants were best placed into Sam & Berry’s (2006) “Integration” category of acculturation despite their feelings of estrangement. In comparison, Brian felt this push away from Japanese culture and society more profoundly than others, and this resulted in him being involved in “Separation” and retaining his culture of origin through identity defense. Similarly, Luther expressed how he had no desire to fit into Japanese culture or his home culture. In other words, each participant commented on how they were shunned from Japanese culture
and society, but only Luther and Brian’s acculturation category reflects how Japanese society may not necessarily desire foreigners acclimating and possibly assimilating into Japanese society. Sam & Berry (2006) asserted that the feelings emanating from participant’s interactions in Japan may originate from what degree foreigners are permitted to be ingrained and/or connected to Japanese culture/society. It appears that Japan produces and reinforces the push that participants felt, and this idea is consistently reflected in a variety of Nihonjinron philosophies, publications, and Japanese cultural ideas such as uchi and soto. This impulse was an attempt to socially segregate foreign elements that were not necessarily desired.

This push from Japan on foreigners can result in experiences of “Separation” such as Brian reported as well as Luther’s “Marginalization.” Despite this, six participants were ‘Integrated’ into Japanese society due to their constant interactions and connections to Japan. This may be due to the positive emotions and experiences their vocation afforded them. Vocation can be a path to acculturation, and the participants who were “Integrated” reported a high level of satisfaction with their employment. This would also lend credence to how Brian was “Separated” and “Stagnant” because he did not attribute his career to anything important in his life. Employment offered the participants a form of acculturation they could partake and one where they could be accepted. As a result, vocation allowed participants to be involved in Japanese culture and society to a degree, which in turn allowed them to progress, unhindered through their stage of adult development.

**Vocation**

Employment proved to be an important aspect for each participant to some extent. Employment plays an important role during adulthood, and it can be significant in the sense and development of identity. Additionally, work can also represent the level of acculturation of an
individual (Whitbourne, 1986). Six of the participants felt that their vocation in Japan provided them with opportunities they would not have in their home country. For example, Dexter and Luther reported that their vocation allowed them to earn a better salary and quality of life than other places. Helen stated that her employment in Japan allowed her to receive tenure and has allowed her to publish various articles and books during her time teaching. Helen, Lana, and Eric also mentioned how their employment in Japan allowed them to accomplish personal and professional goals that they could not achieve elsewhere. In comparison, Brian was explicit about his lack of personal fulfillment his vocation in Japan provides. It is apparent that Brian does not attach any significance to his work as a part of his identity. Whitbourne (1986) states that individuals may preserve their identity by downgrading the importance of their work, and instead enjoy the quality of life and the level of comfort such work provides. Brian exemplifies this as he has strictly maintained his New Zealand identity, and he states that his career is “completely unimportant, it doesn’t mean a thing. There’s no career strategy or anything.” Brian also stated that his employment in Japan provides a comfortable position, and that he makes enough money so that he can dedicate more of his time to his favorite pastimes and he reported that he would do “anything [...] if it’s enjoyable enough and not too stressful then I’ll do it [...] it doesn’t really matter what it is.” Brian represents someone who has an extrinsic sense of his employment because his work is not important to him, but the life it provides is.

Thaddeus came to Japan for a different reason than any of the other participants: to take a position that fulfills him spiritually. Thaddeus is a unique case because he was appointed to Japan to serve as a priest in the Catholic Church, and he maintains that his vocation is his primary identity. However, Thaddeus did report that his thinking and perspectives proved to be more Japanese in nature and he stated that his time in Japan has changed his identity so that he is
more open and accepting, but that “being a priest in the order [of] the Catholic [Church] is the main identity, there is no big change.” Thaddeus also reported that his profession becomes increasingly important as he ages, because only another priest can take his place. Kroger (2000) states that individuals who reach the stage of adulthood called Generativity versus Stagnation often attempt to guide the next generation. Thaddeus exemplifies this desire because he has been involved in the education of young people since he started his position in Japan and with his creation of various assistance programs. Thaddeus also exhibits elements of Integrity versus Despair, because Thaddeus stated that he would live in Japan for the rest of his life. Thaddeus’s acceptance of his mortality and the wisdom of his place in life and in Japan represent this adult stage of life.

Apart from Thaddeus, every participant mentioned that they felt as if they had more freedom and/or autonomy living in Japan. For some participants (such as Luther and Dexter), this was a result of increased income. Dexter and Brian found that their teaching positions allowed them to be free of certain restrictions that might prove to be restrictive in their respective home countries. Helen stated that she has been given an opportunity to travel and experience different countries. These example can attest to how Erikson’s Generativity versus Stagnation stage of development is realized in the case of Helen and Luther because they have take their place in Japanese society, and report that they feel free to accomplish anything they desire personally and professionally.

Vocation can represent a form of acculturation and potential assimilation into Japanese culture (Whitbourne, 1986). With the exception of Brian, each participant had a varying level of acculturation into Japanese society and/or culture that was clarified by his or her thoughts and feelings on their vocation. Employment in Japan provided opportunities that participants could
not find in their home countries, and participants generally accepted certain cultural practices due to their interaction with their peers. However, Thaddeus presented a case where an individual can be accepting of a culture, and retain the most important elements of it over an extended period of time. Please refer to *Figure 2* for a visual of participant’s Eriksonian stages and acculturative strategies by Sam & Berry (2006).

![Figure 2. Graph of Eriksonian Adult Identity Strategies and Sam & Berry’s Acculturation Strategies.](image)

Taking into account each participant’s comments about identity, it appears that identity is reminiscent to what Helen stated when she said that her identity can be a conscious effort; an
individual may actively keep aspects of her identity, but identity can shift depending on the environment. This concept can be applied to each participant. For example, Brian defends his identity from shifting in any noticeable way while Thaddeus retains his main identity as an agent of religion, but his perspective and thinking has shifted to better accommodate his surroundings. In comparison, Lana stated that she does not wish to lose her Italian identity, but she does have something that is Japanese. Lastly, Luther provided an example where an individual can choose not to identify with a culture in any great depth, but rather create an identity separate from his home culture as well as Japanese culture. Identity is a difficult concept to define, but in this case study, it appears to be influenced by home culture and Japanese culture as well as age, and a conscious effort on the individual’s part. A sociological definition of identity proves to be the advantageous because identity is mediated through the perception of others, and depending on the how an individual receives this perception; identity can either change or remain stagnant.

Summary

Living in Japan for a period of five years or more usually resulted in some change to the individuals in this study. Foreign residents in Japan reported that they felt distanced from Japanese society and/or culture in some manner. This separation resulted in one participant actively separating himself from Japanese culture/society. In comparison, the majority of participants noticed some change usually in the form of being more respectful and calm, but also as if they were not necessarily part of either Japanese culture nor their respective home culture. Participants also reported that the most important portion of their identity was mediated through interaction, and that in order to interact successfully in Japanese culture, they had to be mindful of their behaviors. Vocation proved to be one of the most important aspects of life in Japan, while personal goals and a religious calling also presented as an equally strong influence. An
individual's identity and actions were dependent on the messages from the culture one resides, but it was also dependent on volition.

**Discussion of Research Questions**

**What are the impacts of living in Japan for more than five years on the identities of English speaking foreign residents?**

Participants had a number of personal experiences where they felt alienated from Japanese culture, people, and/or society. This feeling emanated from aspects of Nihonjinron thought and discourse as well as the culturally accepted binary of *uchi* and *soto* both of which thrive on the creation of a barrier to maintain what is Japanese inside while pushing “otherness” out. This persistent environment resulted in participants reacting in different ways. Brian reported receiving a palpable impression that he would never be able to enter or be involved in Japanese society or culture to a significant extent, and this resulted in him developing a strong sense of *identity defense* due to his feelings of being an outsider. This *identity defense* manifested through Brian’s lack of intimacy with Japanese nationals, and he reported that he only had foreign friends. In comparison, Craig felt comfortable living in Japan, and reported that he was happy to live there. Craig also stated how he had frequent intercultural interactions with Japanese people, but that his identity as a United Kingdom national had remained the same despite his long residence in Japan. These two cases represent how an individual can retain his culture of origin to a significant amount despite living in another country for over a decade.

Six participants reported feeling as a foreigner in Japan and in their home country due to their relocation to Japan. Lana commented that despite her need to return to Italy, her hometown was now a place for her to go for vacation more than her home. Likewise, Eric reflected on his home country of Poland and compared it to his life in Japan and jokingly stated that he belonged in
Russia because it was between Japan and Poland. Thaddeus contributed how his identity could not accommodate both his Japanese and German identity. He recalled his experiences when he returned to Germany, and said that in order to regain his German identity he had to remove his Japanese identity. He compared this process to a sponge being wrung so that he could reabsorb his German identity. Thaddeus asserted that this process had to be repeated when he would travel back to Japan. Thaddeus presented his feelings on this topic and maintained that his primary identity was as a priest in the Catholic Church, and although his ways of thinking and his perspective had become Japanese, his identity had not shifted because his vocation was as an agent of religion. Lana and Eric exemplified the attitude of the majority of participants, because they did not identify with one culture exclusively. In contrast, Thaddeus represents a case where an individual can invest his main identity in his life’s work (or vocation as Thaddeus stated) and not necessarily identify with any other identity. Luther appeared to be less flexible with his identity, and although it seems that he is between cultures, his sponge metaphor suggests that he cannot integrate his German and Japanese identity, and they have to remain separate. This may be due to his primary identity as a priest, which is always maintained no matter the cultural context where he finds himself.

Luther and Dexter reported a similar sense of identity where they did not adhere to an identity based on their country of origin, but they also did not feel there was a significant level of identity that emanated from Japan. Luther reported a keen sense of not feeling accepted in his home country of the United States due to his political convictions, and he commented that he received a strong message that he did not belong in the United States from an early age. In addition, Luther also stated that he refused to believe that he was in Japan, and said that he did not want to acclimate to Japanese culture no more than he wanted to acclimate to American
culture. Luther simply said he wanted to do what he wanted to do, and his life in Japan afforded him this opportunity. Dexter also contributed his experience of feeling like an outsider in his home country of Canada and also in Japan. However, Dexter was cognizant that he would never be allowed to gain entrance into Japanese society. Luther and Dexter represent how identity can be either created or maintained independent of their past and current cultural experiences, but this does not prevent an individual from acquiring friends and being involved in the host culture. Those who have consistently limited their identity in either their culture of origin or their current cultural context appear to have a “residual culture or identity” that is somehow maintained perhaps due to the level of freedom and autonomy their host culture(s) allows; but this can also be a product of their adult stage of identity as individuals in the adult stages of development are able to assume and rediscover previous identities they may have forgotten.

The impact for foreigners living in Japan for an extended amount of time is unique to each individual. Brian exemplified how an individual can withdraw from being a part of Japanese culture due to Japanese society’s perception of foreigners. As a result, individuals who relocate to Japan may take part in a form of identity defense due to the possible exclusionary feelings they receive. However, an individual may retain their culture of origin to a large extent while still embracing Japanese nationals, as Craig was able to do. Eric and Lana demonstrated how a third or hyphenated culture could arise due to an uncertain identity that fit neither their culture of origin nor Japanese culture. Next, Thaddeus portrayed how identity can be invested in a religious calling, and while Thaddeus did admit he had changed his perceptions, he was confident that he had retained his primary identity as a priest. Lastly, Luther and Dexter demonstrated how an individual could create and maintain a sense of identity that is separate from their surroundings and their cultural context, but still participant the host culture to a large
What aspects of Japanese culture do participants identify as most salient to/most important in shaping their identity in Japan?

Participants found that their attitudes and perceptions had changed due to their time in Japan. Luther expounded on how he had to change in order to socialize with other people in Japan by acquiring a more respectful, clam, and quiet disposition. Luther recalled that his time in Japan had changed him because when he returned to the United States, his family and friends commented on how he was not as loud as he had been before he moved to Japan. In relation, seven of the eight participants stated how they had become noticeably more quiet and respectful to others so as to reflect the cultural expectations set by Japanese culture and/or society. Lana reflected on her high level of involvement with Japanese culture and stated that it was due to her expansive knowledge of Japanese, friendships with Japanese people, and involvement in cultural events that lead her to being called half Japanese by her friends in Japan and Italy. This involvement in Japanese culture relates to ideas set forth by Bicultural Identity Integration (BII). BII states that individuals who have a high level of compatible acculturation with the host culture will often integrate two or more cultures into their everyday life. Lana and the majority of participants attested to how they had adopted common Japanese cultural customs and values, and integrated them into their daily life while in Japan and in their respective home cultures. For example, Lana stated that she did not wish to change her identity, but she had something that was Japanese, and this was evident in light of her changed behaviors while in Italy. Lana reflected on her experiences of visiting her home in Italy and said she could no longer communicate as effectively as she had before due to her thinking in Japanese and striving to create a harmonious environment by being calm, quiet, and polite. Lana also divulged how her speech patterns in
Italian were slower and quieter compared to other Italians, most likely taking on traits of her acculturation to Japan. Similarly, Helen recalled an experience where she visited a friend in her home country of the United States who knew her before she left for Japan. When Helen returned, her friend commented on how she did not appear to be an American, and suggested that she was more “European” because her mannerisms and behaviors had changed and did not follow typical American cultural customs and/or behaviors. Dexter commented on how he has a great respect for others and a wider perspective on things than he did before. Dexter dedicated some time to explain how he finds people in his home country of Canada impolite and that he does not appreciate any lack of respect that Dexter feels he deserves and that he receives in Japan. In comparison, Brian felt that he had not changed since he moved to Japan, but he also admitted that his involvement with Japanese culture/society was almost non-existent and that he did not interact with Japanese people. As a result, Brian also felt he could act out in any way he wanted to, which resulted in him being more animated and immature. Additionally, Brian reported that he had not noticed any significant changes to himself when he returned to his home country of New Zealand, and that he instantly felt at home when he returned.

The experiences participants described are contingent on the social aspects of life in Japan. Luther succinctly stated that in order for him to communicate effectively, he had to adopt the communication style that Japanese people used. With the exception of Brian, every participant reflected on how he or she had adopted Japanese cultural elements into their socialization practices that they then applied elsewhere. Lana described the state of the majority of the participants when she said she had no intention of changing her identity, but that she could not deny that she had something Japanese embedded in her identity. In this case, she reported that she had a respect for that which is public, which included her being polite, calm, and respectful.
Furthermore, Lana exemplifies how being involved with Japanese people regularly, being actively involved with Japanese culture, and having a command of Japanese can lead one to having an identity that includes elements of being Japanese. Due to this question discussing socialization, it can be applied to the fourth question in this study, which is:

Using the definition of identity as a process of an individual or actor’s actions within the Japanese cultural context via socialization, how does an individual's actions reflect Japanese cultural practices?

Restating some of the same information as the previous question, participants reported that their behaviors reflected traditional Japanese behaviors of communication. This socialization resulted in participants implementing practices such as being calm, respectful, and quiet while in Japan and in their culture of origin.

How do participants define, construct, and live a good and meaningful life (via family, profession, socially, spiritually) in the Japanese context?

Participants considered how they viewed their lives in Japan and how it was meaningful for them. Participants defined a meaningful life in Japan as contingent on what life in Japan allowed them to accomplish. For example, Eric reported having the dream of being an English teacher, which he was able to accomplish in Japan. In relation, Lana wanted to teach Italian, but she reported that it was impossible for her to do this in her home country of Italy. As a result, Lana was happy to have found an opportunity to teach her language in Japan. Helen reported that Japan presented her with an opportunity to teach the content that she was passionate about, and also receive security in her employment. Helen added that her employment allowed her to
continue her scholarly pursuits and she was able to publish a number of books and articles during her time in Japan. Luther found the promise of employment and the monetary benefits just as important as his passion for teaching. Luther also stated that his position in Japan allowed him certain luxuries, such as a generous salary and autonomy to explore teaching, that could not be replicated elsewhere. Dexter, Brian, and Craig all responded that the most meaningful factor was their salary in Japan. Brian was adamant about how his profession and residence in Japan was unimportant, and that his salary kept him in Japan. Craig had similar thoughts, but he also commented that he had a passion for teaching and it had always been his career path. Lastly, Dexter stated that he would prefer to work in another field involving Geography and environmental management if the opportunity presented itself; however, Dexter said his teaching position allows him to provide for his family while and gives guarantees a greater amount of autonomy in his teaching career. Dexter also reported that his position allowed him to speak Japanese, which was also a contributing factor to his position in Japan. Thaddeus had a different experience compared to the other participants. Thaddeus stated that he finds fulfillment being an agent of religion, and that his vocation as a priest gave him a meaningful life in Japan.

Participants commented on how salary was the biggest contributing factor for a good and meaningful life in Japan. Brian was the only participant who completely attached his life to his salary while only Lana and Thaddeus did not mention monetary incentive for being in Japan. Luther, Dexter, Brian, and Helen stated that the monetary benefits along with more freedom and autonomy to pursue their interests proved to be the most meaningful aspect of their lives in Japan. In comparison, Lana, Eric, and Craig found their residence in Japan to ensure their personal goals and dreams of being a teacher. Lastly, Thaddeus provided a case where an individual’s meaningful life could involve spiritual and religious pursuits and fulfillment as the
impetus for residing in Japan. The common theme for all participants was that living in Japan afforded each of them a way to attain their goals, provide for themselves, and reach a high level of freedom and autonomy that life elsewhere may not be able to grant.

**Summary of Findings**

The findings in this chapter were illuminated with a qualitative methodology that delivered plausible answers for how foreigners develop a sense of identity after living in Japan for five or more years. The sub-questions were also developed and provided plausible answers based on the research and information from the interviews. The findings included were highly dependent on the individual level of acculturation of each participant. Regardless, it appeared that individuals who relocated to Japan are active in their identity production. Despite the negative feedback Japanese culture or society may have exuded, the majority of participants stated they felt between two cultures due to their use of common Japanese cultural practice such as being polite and respectful, and their feeling of not being completely accepted in Japanese culture and society. Additionally, participants found that Japan allowed them to live a meaningful life by allowing each of them to accomplish something that would be near impossible to accomplish in their home country. This research connected a sense of identity to the messages of Japan as a society, and compared them to the adult stages of identity formation and development and found that both had an important and long-lasting influence on each individual.
CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

This thesis will conclude with a summary of the findings and the implications of the analysis. This analysis will also synthesize the feelings and experiences of participants as it relates to the literature. In addition, suggestions for future research will be offered that will either increase generalizability or augment research on adult identity development and formation. Lastly, concluding remarks from the researcher will be stated based upon the research and the motifs found in this study. This study was designed to report the thoughts, feelings, and voices of foreigners who have lived in Japan for five or more years, and how their long-term residency has influenced their identity and acculturation in the cultural context of Japan.

Summary of Findings and Analysis

This study concludes that there are aspects of Japanese society that have consistently distanced foreigners from being accepted into mainstream society. This separation or estrangement was metaphorically referred to as the wall, and it affected each participant in a different, but often-perceivable way. This wall was part of an active boundary making process that was best understood through the Japanese cultural conception of *uchi* and *soto* or inside and outside. These two fields resulted with “Japaneseness” comprising the inside while the outside was reserved for the vast category of “otherness” with special attention focused on foreigners. This boundary was created and is maintained to preserve the necessary and prescribed elements reserved inherently for Japanese people. This is regarded by *Nihonjinron* thought as the reason for Japan’s economic and international success and maintains a large portion of Japan’s postwar identity. Despite the increase in globalization, Japan maintains an arm’s length approach to accepting outsiders, and this has resulted in Japan drawing an even sharper line between itself and foreigners. This sentiment is reflected in the discourse of *Nihonjinron* and its increase in
publications over the past few years. This limit on foreigners accepted into Japanese culture/society resulted in at least one participant who maintained and defended his identity due to his feeling that he would never be able to achieve an insider status. However, the majority of participants had less acculturative stress and found their identity was not exclusively Japanese or that of their home culture, but somewhere between the two. This third culture resulted in an individual integrating two culturally distinct behavioral sets (such as the behavioral set practiced in Japan and their home culture’s set) and ways of thinking that were then applied in their daily lives. The most common acculturated changes included participants being calmer, quieter, and more respectful for anything that was public. This third culture, or divided identity, left one participant feeling as if he could not maintain more than one cultural identity at a time. Additionally, another participant was insistent that he did not want to acculturate to Japan or to his home culture, and that his identity was not dependent on any particular cultural context.

Identity was influenced by participants’ chosen vocation and each participant placed a differing degree of identity into their work. One participant devoted his entire identity into his vocation as a priest and this awarded him his primary identity that could not be changed although his perceptions did change and reflected Japanese norms. In comparison, another participant reported that his vocation was unimportant and he attributed his time in Japan to the monetary and lifestyle incentives. The remainder of participants commented that Japan allowed them to reach either personal or professional goals they could not hope to attain in their home country, and this resulted in a sense of freedom and autonomy that is a fundamental quality in adult identity development.

This study concludes that there is a distinction between foreigners and Japanese people, culture, and society that does not simply emphasize these differences, but it hinges upon them.
Without this distinction, what makes Japan unique and unlike the rest of the world is tainted. This line of separation and/or distinction is redrawn depending on the needs, desires, and zeitgeist of Japan. For example, contemporary Japan depends on the distinction of foreigners to reaffirm Japanese ethnic and cultural nationalism and to reinforce how Japanese Japan is. Finally, this dividing line is drawn sharper due to Japan’s commitment to internationalization to maintain its identity as Japanese. Due to this attitude, participants found that their identity was influenced by Japanese societal view of them, and this usually resulted in participants personifying the space between two cultures, one in which they could never be an insider, and the other where they had become a physical and cognitive outsider.

**Implications**

The goal of this research was to illuminate the challenges of English speaking ‘Western’ foreigners who relocated to an Asian country for an extended period of time, and how this cultural context can influence adult identity formation and development. In addition, this research endeavored to offer supplementary information on adult identity that is, at the moment, reportedly lacking much-needed research. This qualitative study offered participants an opportunity to voice their opinions of Japan and their relative place within it. A number of participants felt that they were obstructed or even suppressed from having a voice in Japanese society. This study equipped participants with an outlet and an opportunity to be heard. A qualitative methodology proved to be the best option for this research because this methodology focuses on uplifting a group of people’s voices and thoughts to be heard.

This study attempted to contribute and develop more information on adult identity and formation as well as foreigners’ acculturation to Japan. However, this study was also situated in a specific context, place, and time. In light of this, the results of this study are not necessarily
generalizable to all foreigners who relocate to Japan because the participants all resided in Hokkaido, Japan. Additionally, this research was dependent on time as well. Foreigners who relocate to Japan in the future may not be subject to the same processes and/or reactions by Japanese culture and/or society. Regardless, this research endeavored to provide a rich, thick description of the experiences foreigners residing in Japan may encounter.

This study theorized how adult identity can be, or is influenced by the cultural context of an individual residing in Japan. Identity and acculturation are both continuously changing, and these two fields will become more important as globalization, internationalization, and foreign exchanges become more common in countries around the world. With an increasing number of adults in comparison to other age groups, research into this stage of identity and development will be in greater demand in the future. Identity proves to be an expanding field as participants reported having a different experience based upon social technologies and elements that have not previously existed.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

This study focused almost exclusively on foreigners who lived in Hokkaido, Japan. As a result, the experiences of participants were possibly unique to Hokkaido, and not necessarily representative of the remainder of the population in Japan. Similarly, there was one question that inquired whether Hokkaido was different from other areas in Japan during the interviews. This question resulted in the majority of the participants stating that they were unaware of any differences based on personal experience. Research on the differences between Japanese people in Hokkaido versus other areas in Japan would prove useful, and supply an environmental factor for further research on this topic.

Another suggestion for future research involves including additional female participants.
This research included six males and only two females, and although participants from both sexes had similar thoughts, feelings, and ideas relating to their place in Japan, additional female voices would enhance the diversity of this research. Women are often overlooked by developmental theories, and by including more female participants; these theories could also improve to better represent a more gender inclusive theory of adult identity development and formation.

The term ‘Western’ was used loosely in this study because it implies countries such as those in the European Union as well as Canada and the United States instead of other countries including New Zealand and Australia that are not located in the ‘West’. It would be foolhardy to assume that ‘Western’ nations do not have differences that may influence the answers and/or perceptions of their people. Due to this, research on people from only one country may offer more depth from one cultural perspective. On the other hand, including participants from several countries could prove instrumental in producing a more generalizable experience for foreigners in Japan. Lastly, this study included participants who described themselves as either Caucasian or, in one case, Latin Italian. Including participants who are not categorized into either of the aforementioned categories would reveal additional information of foreigners in Japan that may enhance or contribute to the findings in this study.

Case studies attempt to include participants who represent an interesting or atypical case. This study included a participant who was a priest for the Catholic Church who had a different experience in comparison to the remainder of the participants due to his vocation and identity as a Catholic priest. I feel that more information on the identity formation of priests, nuns, or other groups of people who fall into a religious vocation and who live in another country for an extended period of time would be fruitful. For example, the priest in this research appeared to be
involved with Japanese culture and society and exemplified advanced adult identity stages earlier in life than any other participants in this study. As a result, a study that involves foreigners with a religious position or calling that live in another country for an extended period of time may illuminate some unique conceptions of identity formation and development that participants from other vocations may not.

The influence of technology on foreign residents in Japan proved to be an area that has changed dramatically over the past two decades. A number of participants in this study commented on how technology changed their relationship to their home culture and quite possibly helped them to retain aspects of their identity. One participant stated that the Internet supplied him with enough of his home culture so that he could remain in Japan. Without this connection, he would have returned to his native country years ago. Technology and the Internet have changed so rapidly that they can have an influence on the identity of foreigners. As a result, more research on the use of technology and identity of long-term foreign residents may be a necessary step for future generations planning to live abroad.

Lastly, the influence of marriage on individuals who marry a Japanese national may prove useful. A total of four participants including Brian, Craig, Eric, and Helen have been married to a Japanese national for a number of years. This study did not focus on this issue due to a lack of research on this topic, but a study examining the influence or identity development of a ‘Western’ man or woman to a Japanese spouse may illuminate important considerations that may have been overlooked.

Concluding Remarks

This research illuminated aspects of society that I had not considered before. I believe that Japan, perhaps more than any other country, emphasizes the separation of its people from
outsiders, and this is exemplified through *Nihonjinron* works. However, societies have participated in similar efforts to reinforce identity, but Japan’s identity seems to abnormally center on who is accepted. I believe that each society has a differing concept of defining features for its typical citizens, and each society reacts to foreigners in a different manner. Japan appears to push foreigners away and to desire foreigners to retain their outside status, identity, and culture. I believe that Sarup & Raja (1996) succinctly state how foreigners “blur the boundary” by standing between the inside and the outside, between order and chaos, friend and enemy (p. 8). As I previously clarified, I strongly identity with this study, as I am developing as an adult and wish to move to an Asian context. I feel that this thesis has practical implications in my life, and I hope it will prove to be applicable for others.
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http://www.hrgrapevine.com/markets/hr/article/2013-02-08-gen-y-employees-want-global-experience/?utm_source=Sign-Up.to&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=287886-HR+Man+News+11%252F02%252F13+-.U5ePQi9gMV1


Angeles, CA: Sage.


APPENDIX A. VERBAL CONSENT FORM

Verbal Consent Form/Script

Introduction:
Hello, my name is Geoffrey Hughes. I am a graduate student at Bowling Green State University in the United States and I am currently enrolled in a Master’s degree program and currently involved in conducting research.

I am researching identity formation in individuals from predominately English speaking countries (which some may refer to as “Western countries”) who have lived in Japan for five or more years. You are being asked to participate because your particular background meets the necessary criteria for my research. You are not required or obligated to be involved in this research. Any participation is completely voluntary. The risk of participation is no greater than that experienced in daily life.

Purpose:
I am studying identity formation in a specific age range (25-55+). The identity formation being studied may be similar to what many individuals may experience when he or she relocates to a vastly differently cultural context. This particular age range was chosen because there is currently a lack of research about this population in comparison to other age ranges.

Procedure:
Participation will include at least one in-depth interview, which may take up to 90 minutes. Interviews will take place in an area that is comfortable and convenient for both parties. This meeting place can be in a personal office or in a private room with no distractions. With your permission, interviews will be audio recorded and notes will be taken during the interview.

I will request a short follow-up interview, e-mail exchange, or telephone conversation that should take no more than 20 minutes.

A focus group, or a gathering of no more than 4 people to discuss the topic I am researching, may be created depending on convenience and circumstances. This focus group will be subject to the same stipulations as previously stated for one-on-one interviews and will last from 30 to 90 minutes.

Voluntary nature:
Participation is voluntary and you can withdraw from the research at any time. You are also allowed to skip any questions you do not wish to answer. There will be no negative consequence if you do not wish to be part of this study.

Confidentiality/Anonymity Protection:
All data collected from interviews and any interactions will be held in confidentiality, and all participants will be assigned a pseudonym.

Verbal Consent:
Do you wish to participate in this study?
Contact information:

I can be contacted through email at gshughe@bgsu.edu or via (50) 5539-4540. If you have any questions or concerns that you feel I cannot answer, you may contact my academic advisor, Dr. Christopher Frey, at cjfrey@bgsu.edu. Lastly, if you have inquiries regarding the rights of participants involved in research, you can contact Bowling Green State University directly at hsrb@bgsu.edu or at +1 419-372-7716.
APPENDIX B. INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent Form

**Introduction:** My name is Geoffrey Hughes. I am a graduate student at Bowling Green State University in the United States and I am currently enrolled in a Master’s degree program in Cross-cultural and International Education. I am researching identity formation in individuals from predominately English speaking countries (which some may refer to as “Western countries”) who have lived in Japan for five or more years. You are being asked to participate because your particular background meets the necessary criteria for my research. However, you are not required or obligated to be involved in this research. Any participation is completely voluntary. Risk of participation is no greater than that experienced in daily life.

**Purpose:** As the world becomes increasingly globalized, more and more people relocate to different countries and cultures for an extended amount of time for various reasons. The identity formation being studied may be similar to what many individuals may experience when he or she relocates to a vastly different cultural context. Furthermore, the research will focus on identity formation from young adulthood to middle adulthood or roughly ages 25 to 55+. This particular age range was chosen as there is currently a lack of research about this population in comparison to other age ranges. The goal of this research is to provide more information about identity formation and this research will provide participants the chance to reflect and critically think about his/her personal identity and place in the world.

**Procedure:** Participation will include at least one in-depth interview, which may take up to 90 minutes. Interviews will take place in an area that is comfortable and convenient for both parties. The area of interviews will be chosen by the participant and will be in a private area with little to no chance of disruption such as a participant’s office or a private room. With your permission, interviews will be audio recorded and notes will be taken during the interview. Additionally, after reviewing the interview, I will request a short follow-up interview, e-mail exchange, or telephone conversation that should take no more than 20 minutes. Lastly, depending on convenience and circumstances, a focus group of no more than 4 people may be created to highlight some issues regarding the researcher’s questions. The focus group will be comprised of individuals who do not have schedule conflicts on the requested day of the gathering. Once again, this focus group will be subject to the same stipulations as previously stated for one-on-one interviews. Any focus group session will last from 30 to 90 minutes. All interviewee’s information will be kept confidential by use of a pseudonym.

**Voluntary nature:** Any participation is voluntary and the participant can withdraw at any point during the interview(s) and focus group. In addition, participants may refrain from answering questions. There will be no negative consequence if any participant does not wish to be part of this study. Participants must be at least 18 years old to be eligible for the study.

**Risks and Benefits:** There will be no negative consequences if any participant does not wish to be part of this study and there will be no penalty or negative consequences that would affect their relationship to Bowling Green State University. There are two primary benefits to this study. The
first is to contribute research about identity formation among people aged 25-55+. Secondly, participants are given an opportunity to reflect and share their experiences about identity formation.

**Confidentiality Protection:** All data collected from interviews and any interactions will be held in confidentiality, and all participants will be assigned a pseudonym. Only the researcher will be aware of the identity of the individuals in the study. The key to the identity will be kept in an encrypted document on a personal password protected computer. After research is complete, the key and all documents related to the identity of the participants will be deleted.

**Contact information:** I can be contacted through email at gshughe@bgsu.edu or at (50) 5539-4540. If you have any questions or concerns that you feel I cannot answer, you may contact my academic advisor, Dr. Christopher Frey, at cjfrey@bgsu.edu. Lastly, if you have inquiries regarding the rights of participants involved in research, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) at Bowling Green State University directly at hsrb@bgsu.edu or at +1 419-372-7716.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Geoffrey S. Hughes

By signing this form I agree to participate in this research.

Signature:____________________________________________
APPENDIX C. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**Demographic Questions:**
What is your gender?
Where were you born and raised?
What is your age?
  You can give me an age range.
What is your ethnicity?
What is your nationality and/or citizenship status?
What nationality and culture do you identify yourself with?
What is the highest degree of education you have completed?
Do you have family living with you in Japan? Who, and for how long?
What is the nature of your professional career?
Where have you lived (geographic location) for the longest?
What language(s) do you speak?

**Impression of Japan:**
1. Can you tell me how you first came to Japan?
   A. How long did you stay your first visit?
   B. What influenced you to stay or return to Japan?
   C. What were some initial difficulties with your life in Japan?
   D. Can you give me an example of a memorable time where you felt comfortable in Japanese culture?

**Involvement in Japanese culture:**
2. How would you describe your involvement in Japanese culture?
   A. In what case(s) have you felt like you did not belong in Japan?
   B. Can you remember a time where you felt like an outsider?
   C. Have you experienced a time where there was a disconnect between you and your place in Japan?
   D. Has the use of the Japanese language changed the way you interact in Japanese culture?

**Identity in Japan:**
3. How do you feel your identity is influenced by your experiences in Japan?
   A. Has living in Japan changed any of your perceptions or behaviors?
   B. At this point in your life, what does life in Japan make you feel about yourself?
   C. What does life in Japan help you to accomplish?
   D. How well do you feel you have acclimated to Japanese culture?
   E. Do you feel that the status of your nationality and/or gender affects how you have been accepted into Japanese culture?
Connections to Japanese culture/society:
4. What connections do you have to Japanese culture or society?
   A. Has a long-term relationship with a Japanese man or women (friendship, marriage etc.) changed the way you perceive your identity?
   B. Does having a relationship with a Japanese individual influence you in any way?
   C. What holidays do you celebrate?
   D. What events/rituals do you take part in?

Employment:
5. What are some experiences you have had with your employment in Japan?
   A. What factors influence you to work in Japan?
   B. How important is your profession to you in Japan?
   C. Would the same profession in another country be similar to your position in Japan?

Home country:
6. Where is it that you call home?
   A. Have you gone “home” recently?
   B. How often have you gone back home?
   C. How do you feel in the context of your own country?
   D. Have you noticed any changes to your identity from being away from it for an extended amount of time?
   E. Do you feel different when compared to others when you are home?
   F. How have your experiences of going back home illustrated a change to the way you view yourself?
   G. How would you define yourself compared to others in the context of your home country?
   H. Are there certain things about your home culture you desire while living in Japan?

The use of technology:
7. Has technology influenced your connection to your home culture?

Hokkaido:
8. Do you feel that there is anything unique about Japanese culture in Hokkaido compared to other places in Japan?
APPENDIX D. HSRB APPROVAL

DATE: August 15, 2013

TO: Geoffrey Hughes
FROM: Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board

PROJECT TITLE: [479366-5] Identity Formation of Foreign Residents: A Study of Individuals in Early to Middle Adulthood in Hokkaido, Japan

SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: August 14, 2013
EXPIRATION DATE: June 17, 2014
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is available as a published Board Document in the Review Details page. You must use the approved version of the consent document when obtaining consent from participants. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that you are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the HSRB. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, those modifications must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the modification request form for this procedure.

You have been approved to enroll 15 participants. If you wish to enroll additional participants you must seek approval from the HSRB.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must also be reported promptly to this office.

This approval expires on June 17, 2014. You will receive a continuing review notice before your project expires. If you wish to continue your work after the expiration date, your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Good luck with your work. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 419-372-7716 or hsrb@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence regarding this project.