Questions of Identity for a Nigerian-Born Japanese Man in Kabukichyo, Tokyo

A thesis presented to

the faculty of

the Center for International Studies of Ohio University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts

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June 2010

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This thesis titled
Questions of Identity for a Nigerian-Born Japanese Man in Kabukichyo, Tokyo

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ABSTRACT

TANAKA, AKI, M.A., June 2010, African Studies

Questions of Identity for a Nigerian-Born Japanese Man in Kabukichyo, Tokyo

(140 pp.)

Director of Thesis: Diane Ciekawy

The objective of this thesis is to examine the subculture and identity concerns of Nigerian-born naturalized citizens in Kabukichyo, Tokyo, through the life experiences of one man. The subculture in question is found in a unique business district of Tokyo in Japan known for its entertainment facilities and hostess/host industry which was established not only by Japanese-born nationals but also by diverse migrants. Nigerian men started to become involved in this industry in the 1960s, and they have maintained their involvement by owning clubs or working as “hosts.” They are often considered to be temporary migrants; however, they have committed themselves by marrying Japanese women and being naturalized. Beyond a doubt, they have shaped a unique subculture in Kabukichyo. Nigerian men have a tendency to create a rather homogenized space in their work by associating with other African men. However, central to work for the clubs are activities aimed at “street catching,” or the recruitment of Japanese hostesses and customers of both sexes. Therefore, a transnational communication has emerged out of Nigerians’ culturally specific business style.

In the first part of this thesis, I describe the general characteristics and background of Nigerian men and their subculture in Kabukichyo. In the second part of this thesis, I examine a personal narrative of Mr. Omo, a Nigerian owner of a hostess/host club in
Kabukichyo. This narrative provides a case study of identity formation in the Nigerian subculture of Kabukichyo. Mr. Omo describes his Africaness and Japaneseness in ways that can be considered to be transnational or postnational. His presentation reveals both his self-identification and his perspective about his family and co-workers in Japan. This work also shows that businesses in the hostess/host industry are some of the limited ways in which Nigerian men find economic opportunities in Tokyo. Despite their postnational identity characteristics, their appreciation of Japanese people and opportunities to live in Japan, Nigerian-born men still face personal challenges of belonging and acceptance by people in the country in which they now live.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

Diane Ciekawy

Professor of Sociology and Anthropology
For those of us who feel to be in-between

Or who feel we belong to multiple places
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Certainly, my academic and personal growths have always been intertwined. That is why my truthful appreciation goes to many who have transformed both my academic capacity and my internal elements. My utmost gratitude goes to Dr. Diane Ciekawy, who has given me truly consequential and trusted guidance. First of all, I would like to thank her for valuing my work; it meant more than anything. Her influential lessons to me during our working relationship were always very timely; that is why I believe that only a few fortunate students can encounter such a perfect educator as a thesis advisor. She showed me her powerful spirit not only as the chair of my thesis committee but also as an educator, scholar, and anthropologist. This influenced my thoughts in which the intellectual and individual being I wish to be at the completion of this thesis flourished. Her enlightened presence in this writing procedure was certainly more than inspiring and became truly transformational in my life and also true to my life. My capacity was raised to the level of more possibilities than I had imagined. Because she also understands the general stakes that come with a challenge of writing, I gradually learned how to deal with much of my previously learned unconscious temptations in my writing and speech. Among all others, I would like to thank her for her warmness, thoughtfulness and care which she showed during this process. My appreciation to her does not end at the completion of my thesis because she influenced me in many ways.

I am also very grateful to Dr. Steve Howard who has supported me throughout these two years through African Studies Program, during which time he has passionately strengthened and built up the program itself. My experiences during the program have
become part of my life and will forever have good influence in me. Throughout the program, I never lost the heart of my passion, which is people and culture. My appreciation to him endlessly stays in my heart. I certainly could not accomplish this thesis and the completion of my degree without his thoughtful comments about me as a good student and his strong support in various ways, which certainly includes the two years of financial support his department provided me.

My appreciation to my committee members, Dr. Francis Godwyll and Dr. Ghirmai Negash, are also countless. I will never forget how Dr. Francis Godwyll used a big blackboard to explain me how I should organize the thesis and what I should remember throughout the process of writing. His office is always full of students and I always gain a lot of insight from his teaching philosophy, which is to educate from the roots, a philosophy which is far away from top-down approach of education being typical in many countries. I am also truthfully thankful to Dr. Ghirmai Negash for all his thoughtful advice to my thesis. Among his many comments, I was most encouraged by two points. Before I chose my committee, he told me that he would like to work with me. When I brought my proposal, he told me that he felt my passion in this thesis. I have also been inspired by his thoughts presented in his speech during events.

I also would like to thank all professors who have taught me in classes I took during my pursuing of Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees. My special thanks to professors who advised me as to what I should do after my graduation and wrote many recommendation letters for me to continue my academic and professional careers. Many professors introduced me to the world I had never known. My appreciation to all of these
professors can never be expressed within this limited space, but I truly believe that their contributions to education have beyond doubt positively influenced this world and have saved or given alternatives to many of the global turning points.

I am also particularly grateful to Mr. Omo, my informant, for his time and commitment to meet with me despite the fact that he could doubt my background as a student and researcher at Ohio University. More than the risk and uncomfortable consequences this research might cause him, he chose to tell his stories to me as a part of his contribution to the relationship between Japan and Nigeria. The only thing he asked me to do in return was to be a friend to his daughter. I strongly believe that a person like him has a positive impact in the environment around him.

I would also like to take this chance to thank my family for their unconditional love. They have believed me in every step I chose to take. They were the ones who taught me with much energy to acquire a borderless nature. We have often suffered for the physical distance considering the fact that this was my seventh year in the U.S and I am their only child. Nevertheless, I believe that our strong presence in each other’s hearts and life has strengthened our bond and raised the boundaries of each of our individual and collective possibilities. I also would like to pass my love and appreciation to my dear grandparents, including my grandmother who passed away right before I received my bachelor’s degree and entry into the Africa Studies program. I have felt their guidance all the time.

I also thank all the wonderful people who I could encounter in the lands of these places where I become the most emotional: the U. S., Japan, Italy, and Ghana. Every
single moment which I have spent time with them has shaped who I am. My relationships with them have developed my loyalty in internationality and humanity and my strong faith in a global assemblage. Each single face I see among my friends preserves beautiful and joyful memories. This journey of seven years in the U.S has especially been quite divergent and unforgettable, and this is also due to meeting with my African sisters and brothers. I would also like to specially thank Augustine, who has definitely influenced my way of thinking and my study of identity. I cannot think of my accomplishments while pursuing of my Master’s degrees without his love and support during my ups and downs. Overall, my international experiences, or better to say human experiences, somehow feel like being welcomed to the originating home base.

I would like to thank for staff in Yamada House and librarians in Alden Library who have prepared a perfect environment for us to concentrate on our studies. This thesis was strongly supported by the writing tutors at Alden Library, starting from Ms. Megan L. Titus. My fortunate encounter with their professional approaches in supporting students, including their generosity, friendliness and a sense of responsibility, will remain in me as educational. Finally, I will not forget to mention God who has protected and guided me through his greatest love.
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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Reflexivity as an Entry Point

Despite the fact that I have been studying African Studies and respect and love for the people and cultures of the continent, I was very nervous when I went to the Kabukichyo area for my research. This was because I was aware of many violent incidents that have happened in Kabukichyo, including the murder of a journalist who was doing an in-depth investigation of the businesses and people there. When I was a high school student, I went to Kabukichyo countless times with my friends and my family to go to a movie theater or to eat (there are many shops and restaurants that are not connected to the sex related industry and people can go there for simple entertainment). However, this time it was a totally different story because I was there as a researcher, not as a visitor. I needed more than “looking at” the entertainment facilities; more specifically, I came to Kabukichyo in order to learn detailed information which I would not know if I were there as a visitor or customer.

Having considered this, I dressed half-casual/half-professional in order not to intimidate people. I wore a jeans with a jacket designed for a semi-professional purposes; I attempted not to look like a worker from an immigration office, but rather a responsive student. I also did not wish to be recruited as a customer or hostess, another reason why I carefully chose my clothing. I walked from a Shinjuku train station and passed the gate to enter the Kabukichyo area. I chose to go there around 8 o’clock because I knew that it would be difficult to see Nigerians or hosts/hostesses in general standing on the streets.
before that time. I also did not choose a time that would be too late for a woman to walk around in Kabukichyo.

After a while, I saw a big African man, around 180 centimeters tall, walking fast. I tried to run a little to reach him. After I said, “Excuse me,” three times or so, he heard me and stopped. It seems that he was surprised because usually he approaches a woman, but this time, it was a woman who approached him first. His eyes were big and he appeared nervous. I explained that I was studying African Studies in the U. S., conducting a research, and looking for Nigerians who work in Kabukichyo so that I could interview them. He said, “I am Senegalese, but there are a bunch of black guys standing at the junction there.” I looked in the direction he pointed and saw around four or five African men with one African woman. There were also two young men who were most likely from Japan standing close to them. It was not obvious from at first glance whether these two Japanese men were working for the same hosts/hostesses club as the African men, or they were just neighbors. When I started to walk towards the African men and talked to one of them, those Asian men also had a surprised look. The man I talked to in this group was again from Senegal, but he pointed at a middle-aged man who was walking out of a shop like a big boss, and said, “Ask him. He is from Nigeria.” This was the man who I later started to call Mr. Omo.

Mr. Omo regarded me with respect and proudly shook my hand. When I told him that I hoped to interview him for my research, he showed a little bit of anxiety. However, he told me to come back the next day. He pointed at his arm watch and said, “It is 8 o’clock. Our business starts now.” He started to approach pedestrians for recruitment.
Pedestrians were walking fast and looking down. When I asked Mr. Omo where we could meet, he pointed at the building that held his shop, which he claimed to own. However, when he realized an advertisement connected to the sex-related industry was in front of the building, he hesitated. We decided to meet at a coffee shop next to the building. When I asked the time we could meet, he said “3 pm.” I thought he was very conscientious.

I came back the next day. I thought Mr. Omo might not come back. However, he came even a few minutes early. He brought a business bag full of things he wanted to show me, including the agreement form he received from a chief of Edo, a magazine which described a conference for “Diaspora Day” he helped organize, a map of Nigeria, and a picture of his daughter. Until the end of our conversation, my nervousness did not disappear, although it lessened over time. Later, however, I realized that the reason behind his decision in meeting me was simply to share his experiences as much as he could. Although he has my email address, he has never emailed for his personal purposes. He only reply to my emails. His replies are very short but with much regards.

This is how I met Mr. Omo, my informant. Briefly, Mr. Omo is an owner of a hosts/hostesses club in Kabukichyo, Tokyo. He is ethnically Edo; he was born and grew up in the Edo region of Nigeria. In the beginning, he worked in a factory in Japan but later came to Kabukichyo. He married an ethnic Japanese in order to earn citizenship. His citizenship in Japan indicates that he dropped his Nigerian citizenship. Now they have a five-year daughter, Satchi.
The increasing number of Nigerian settlements in parts of the world other than in the country of Nigeria has been noted in many scholarly works. Despite the efforts of many scholars conducting research on Nigerian migrants, there are Nigerian populations that are not captured by these studies. My study looks at one of those populations: male Nigerian immigrants in Kabukichyo, Tokyo. This district is known for its entertainment facilities and its participation in the sex related industry, which is known in Japanese as *Fuujokuten*. Unlike other parts of Tokyo and Japan at large, many of the business are established not only by Japanese, but also by foreign settlers. Many of them are considered mafia or gang members in their own countries as well as in Japan, and they share (or compete) for business territories with Japanese gangs, often yakuza. Previously, Koreans and Chinese have been primarily recognized as these settlers. However, my field research shows that there are new arrivals. Especially since the 1960s, West Africans, mostly Nigerians, Ghanaians and Senegalese have come to Tokyo. I focus on Nigerians in my study simply because I had more access to information.

In Kabukichyo, Nigerians work for or own host/hostess clubs. Part of their job includes “street catching,” or the recruitment of Japanese hostesses and customers of both sexes on the streets of Kabukichyo. Some Nigerians knew they would probably work for a nightclub before they left for Japan, and some did not. However, improving one’s earnings is a common goal for the majority of Nigerians. Some of their aims and ways of thinking change along with their experiences in Japan. My interest in this thesis is first of all to explore the general background of Nigerian-born Japanese men, and secondly to
focus on one person (Mr. Omo)’s narrative to look at his particular hardships and efforts to deal with belonging to two countries.

I explore some of the push and pull factors that influence male Nigerians to come to Tokyo and get jobs in businesses in the Kabukichyo area. In this thesis, I analyze their experiences and look at the shifts in their identities. In order to do this, I explored both secondary sources and primary sources, especially by conducting an interview and making field observations in Kabukichyo in August 2009.

I would like to call attention to the position of Nigerians in Tokyo: they are not simply “Nigerian immigrants.” It is not clear if they should be called immigrants at all, due to their hope for having rights in order to be fully accepted by Japanese society. Mr. Omo, the participant in my study said, “The word ‘immigrants’ is the way you put it. It is without feeling. You can say ‘Nigerians settled in Japan,’ but ‘Nigerian immigrants’ take lower case. It is boring and very ridiculous. We have his or her own pride” (Omo, personal communication, August 22, 2009). Indeed, Nigerian-born men, as well as people of both sexes from countries rather Japan, fight every day to live in such a closed and foreign country in order to earn better livelihood. I am hoping that my study will become a common subject of research, despite the fact that it is new, and that it will continue to raise important issues for Nigerians and Japanese people. At this moment, it is difficult for me to decide whether Japanese society should enforce the concept of the melting pot or the salad bowl due to both of the controversy of these issues; however, I believe that it is essential for Japanese society to recognize diversity and equality.
1.2 Background

This section will explain the background to my study in terms of how I arrived at this research topic, how my thesis contributes to the scholarly world, and how the political, historical, and cultural factors of Japan and Africa have affected my research subjects.

1.2.1 Choosing My Research Topic

This research topic stems from my realization of the myth of Japanese homogeneity while I grew up in Japan and an encounter with my interest in Africa. It is a combination of my interests: Japan and Africa. After my undergraduate degree in a Bachelor of Specialized Studies focusing on International Studies and African Dance, I pursued a Master of Arts in African Studies. During the combined time of my BA and MA for six years, I rapidly learned about the African people both academically and non-academically. Experiences such as making friends, having a host family, visiting cities and villages, studying side-by-side, and working together were valuable ways of learning about Africa. A good combination of academics and non-academics has maintained my passion for Africa and has motivated my interest in the subject of Africans in Tokyo, my hometown.

My exposure in many different cultures allowed me to become aware that Japanese “homogeneity” is actually a myth. As I fully explore later in this thesis, homogeneity refers to the belief in the importance of a single culture and population. Before coming to the U.S. at the age of 19 to get a university education, I was fortunate, largely due to my parents’ intentions for me, to participate in many international activities
in Japan. Through the experiences, I realized that people who have “non-Japanese”
background, or people who are called by Japanese people “half Japanese,” suffer in the
cycle of social engineering which creates the homogeneity.

More specifically, my question of the homogeneity of Japan and my interest in
postnational environments and transnational interactions dates back to my early child
education. Returning to Japan after one year of kindergarten in Los Angeles, I had a hard
time fitting into Japanese education. Due to my hardships within Japanese education, I
took part in American summer camps every summer, either in the U.S. or in American
embassies in Japan. After my kindergarten and elementary education, I also commuted to
an informal school whose principal came from Montessori education, an early child
education developed by an Italian female doctor and educator. During my middle school
and high school years, I attended an international horseback riding club in Japan and was
instructed by trainers from Germany, France, and Argentina.

I was fortunate enough to be exposed to the above international environment
beside my experiences in one of the most conservative schools in Japan, a Catholic
female private school where many Japanese princesses from the monarchy graduate. The
international experiences allowed me to critically and objectively look at homogeneity
and diversity in Japan. Throughout 14 years of education in Japan, I always questioned
the collectivist education system, which forces Japanese people to feel their nationality is
the only one and to call themselves “we Japanese” (Takeuchi, 2009). This imposes on
“non-Japanese” people a feeling that they need to “assimilate” into Japanese
homogeneity, for instance by adapting Japanese last names or marrying Japanese people.
Through instances I have witnessed in the lives of my close friends, I realized that the choice for people of “non-Japanese” background is either to become Japanese or to live as *gaikokujin* outsider/foreigner all their lives.

Due to my specialized area of study, African Studies, and my time with African colleagues, it has become easier for me to identify Africans in the Japanese crowd in Tokyo. Especially during my last two visits in Japan, I found Africans in many public domains (in downtown areas, in universities, in a theater, in a driving school, etc.), and I could also randomly talk with some of them. Because the Africans I talked to became enthused whenever I told them about my field of study and my previous trip to Ghana, my interest in opening up the issues of Africans in Japan started to build.

Some online sources written by local people in Japan suggested to me that Nigerians are predominant within Japan’s African population in Japan. During the process of narrowing down my topic, there was one group of Nigerians who struck me the most among the various kinds of Nigerians residing in Japan (such as African students, professors, ambassadors, businessmen, factory workers, husbands, etc). Although I was interested in all of these Nigerians in different statuses and occupations, I decided to focus only on the ones who work in Kabukichyo. I consider that the topic was perfect to reveal the complexity of modernization and westernization both in Japan and Africa at large.

When I passed through the Kabukichyo area in summer 2006, three years before my actual field work, I glimpsed Africans standing on a street and trying to recruit a particular kind of Japanese or East Asian person to their shops. Currently, many Koreans
and Chinese women immigrate to Japan, and in addition to the nature of their physical features, some of them make a special effort to look like “Japanese women” in order to receive special status (Morita, 1998). Thus, I cannot be sure that the women who they recruit are Japanese or not; however, what I was confident about was that they could be considered gyaru due to their fashion and behaviors. Staying in the U. S. for several years and being surrounded by Africans, I also knew that the men were not African Americans despite the hip-hop-like fashion they had adopted. Later on I found out online that there are a number of Nigerian males working in Kabukichyo, and this issue buoyed my interest.

My study in Nigerian immigrants in Kabukichyo area also overlapped with my interest in street children, a concept I learned from a class and an internship. I took a course with Dr. Arthur Hughes on African street children in July 2009, right before my field research in August. There I explored the ambiguity of the definition of street children, which can overlap with other terms to describe people using streets as their survival or business mechanism, such as prostitutes, workers, or head potters. I also have experience working with 11 to 18-year old former street children and 2 to 7-year old children of street workers in Accra, Ghana. I worked with a project called Lifeline Street Girls established by Assemblies of God Relief and Development of Services, a Nongovernmental organization founded by UNICEF and other international organizations. Overall, my experiences with the issues of street children allowed me to learn the complex and dynamic circumstances of African workers of all ages. After
learning the complexity of streetism\textsuperscript{1}, my prior thought that Japan does not have a marginalized population who uses the streets as an instrument for survival and work came back to me as a question. The condition of African workers\textsuperscript{2} in Kabukichyo often resurfaced in my mind, overlapping in some ways with the situation of the street children that I observed and learned about elsewhere.

\textbf{1.2.2 The Uniqueness and Significance of My Thesis}

My thesis challenges the category of “others” which is often found in the demographics of Japan in some of the available censuses and which shows the unwillingness of Japanese people to learn about Africans in Japan. The Central Intelligence Agency (2010) indicates the demographics of Japan as following: Japanese 98.5\%, Koreans 0.5\%, Chinese 0.4\% and Others 0.6\%. There is a note indicated just below this demography that says: “Up to 230,000 Brazilians of Japanese origin migrated to Japan in the 1990s to work in industries; some have returned to Brazil.” This demographic is questionable in many ways because enormous numbers of immigrants and their offspring change their last names or become naturalized\textsuperscript{3}. In addition, among the many nationalities of immigrants in Japan, most of literature focuses on Chinese, Zainichi Chinese, Korean, Zainichi Koreans, Filipinos, Brazilians, Peruvians, Japanese

\textsuperscript{1} According to Ajiboye & Oladiti (2008), “Streetism connotes acts of living and sleeping on the street, it entails using the street as a means of survival as well as making the street a place of abode” (p. 3).

\textsuperscript{2} The Kabukichyo workers who use the streets as an essential part of business strategy are not only Africans but also Japanese people and people with different ethnic backgrounds. However, there is a possibility of which African’s use of streets is a continuation of streetism in Africa, whose ideology seems to be different from Japanese.

\textsuperscript{3} I am arguing only for the ambiguity of the census. It is not my intent here that only ethnic Japanese have rights to obtain Japanese citizenship and to claim to be Japanese; I strongly believe that identity and citizenships should be referred by individual preference.
Peruvians, Europeans, and North Americans. The study of Zainichi Koreans and Peruvians with Japanese ancestry has developed because Japanese people particularly emphasize the preservation of “Japanese blood.” The word Zainichi means foreigners who have gone through the procedure of naturalization and have received their Japanese citizenship. Although many East Asians do not preserve Japanese origin, Japanese people are interested in knowing more about other East Asians because of the Japanese emphasis on “related” ancestry and Japanese physical attributes used to create a semi-homogeneous country.

Many scholars have also noted the increasing number of Europeans and North Americans in Japan who have intermarried with ethnic Japanese women. It is also important to note here that there has been a tendency, especially after World War II, for Japanese people to give extreme “respect” to Europeans and Americans due to Japan’s rapid economic growth, which Japanese people consider possible only through westernization. Although I understand the rationales behind their interests in studying “related” ancestry people in the West, I would like to call more attention to people, like my research subject, Nigerians, who have been included in the category of “others.”

The uniqueness and significance of my thesis cannot be explained without explaining its potential influence to the world. I am hoping first of all that my study will positively influence my informant, Mr. Omo and the people who surround him. Because I carried out observations and conducted a face-to-face interview with Mr. Omo, the

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4 The Japanese government realized earlier the difficulty in maintaining pure Japanese homogeneity due to its external interactions. However, partly due to its nation-building strategy, Japan has preferred to maintain Japaneseness on the surface. Because after WWII, Japan has not emphasized patriotism, this has been the only way to maintain unity.
influence of my study would not simply impact the readers of my thesis and the intellectu
als who I may present my thesis to in conferences and university presentations. I believe that my research will also eventually impact the actual African workers in Kabukichyo, Tokyo. This is not only because there is a high possibility that Mr. Omo will talk about our communication to his fellow African workers, but also because some other African workers, including the two Senegalese men I talked to, became aware of the intent of my study during my search for a Nigerian-born man who would become my informant. I also believe that the impact will not be limited among African-born workers in Kabukichyo, but will also impact their families in Japan, or even people who these workers left behind in their “home” countries (Oxfeld & Long, 2004). The commitments of Nigerian men in Japanese society⁵ have remained unknown; thus, their hardship multiplies. Japanese people around them remain unaware of the real degree of the Nigerian men’s hardships, as well as their nature, life styles, and efforts. I hope that if they knew that some Japanese people had started to study their countries and their continent, this would positively impact them.

A benefit for those participating in my study is that they have the opportunity to think analytically about their own status, identity, and possibilities in Japan. They might become aware of the fact that their hardships have started to be recognized. Although this study does not aim to directly influence immigration policy per se, I am also hoping for future amendments to the immigration and international laws, as well as human rights

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⁵ Douglass and Roberts note (2003) that the current foreign immigrants come to Japan not simply to work and quickly return home, but rather they bring their families, live in Japanese neighborhoods, or enter into a Japanese family system.
policies, in Japan. Some findings in my research could also be of great interest to students and professors from various fields. I strongly believe that my study would be a great contribution to fairly recent developing areas of study, such as Immigration Study and Refugee Study.

My study, which is focused on Kabukichyo, Tokyo, is also unique among the migration experiences of other nationalities in Japan in the sense that it is related to urbanization. In contrast to Nigerians, Brazilians and Peruvians had a tendency to migrate to Northern regions of Japan (Takeuchi, 2009). Although in the beginning, Nigerians came to work in factories in rural or suburb areas, they now prefer to make a living in an area of Tokyo like Kabukichyo. Very little study of these immigrants has been undertaken in any language.

My study concentrates on men is also unique in contrast to other studies of migrated Nigerians in other parts of the world. For instance, the research on Nigerian immigrants in Italy has been focused on females due to the fact that 60% of prostitutes in Italy are female Nigerians (Agence France-Presse, 2002). The incidents in regards to this population are critically noted both nationally and internationally. Due to the fact that Nigerian female immigrants in Italy have been tied to human trafficking that is initiated both by Italian and Nigeria groups, newspapers and individuals have taken the time to research this topic (Guest, 2000; Masciarelli, 2008). On the other hand, the Nigerian male population in Japan is largely voluntary immigrants who are mostly educated. They often

6 Other cities in Tokyo where Nigerians as well as Africans can be found on streets to work for clubs or hip-hop shops are Roppongi, Kichijyouji, Shibuya, Asakusa, Akihabara, and so forth.
attempt to accomplish their economic aims, even in the host/hostess industry, within the legal structure. This includes marrying Japanese women after three years of using a visitor’s visa in order to receive the right to accomplish naturalization (Matsumoto, 2008; Omo, personal communication, August 22, 2009). In this sense, they are often invisible from news and scandals.

1.2.3 The Background Information of My Research Subject

While much Japanese financial aid in Africa has been awarded, the African diaspora in Japan has been neglected. Japan has been noted as a supporter for Africa due to its massive contributions in foreign aid and services made by individuals, government, and organizations like Japan International Cooperation Agency (JAICA). Morikawa (1997) also explains the Japanese commitment to Africa as follows:

African expectations of Japan has dramatically increased since the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the `aid fatigue` phenomenon in the United States and European Union … By the early 1990s, Japan has replaced the United States as the world’s largest donor of Official Development Assistance (ODA), and it ismajor subscriber to World Bank loans. (p. 3)

I would like to believe that Japan has tried to have a positive influence on African development. However, I need to note some probable controversies. Looking at the phenomenon of Nigerians in Japan from a bigger picture, it is important to remember the potential reality of the relationship. Although some Japanese people believe that they have nothing to do with Africa (Nakayama & United Nation University, 2008), they might have impacted Africans and the lives of Africans. The relationship between Japan
and Africa should be noted more closely and intensively. It is not too much to say that
Nigerians are lost in history because documents on Nigerians in Japan as well as ones
concerning Africa at large have not been officially open to the public.

The historical relationships between Japan and Nigeria, and between Japan and
Africa at large, have directly or indirectly influenced the individual lives of Nigerians in
Kabukichyo. Research shows that the relationship between Japan and Africa can be
traced back to the time of European colonization period in Africa. Richard Bradshaw
(1992), a graduate of the history department at Ohio University, wrote a PhD dissertation
entitled *Japan and European colonialism in Africa 1800-1937*. Information from his
work and other literatures such as Jayasuriya & Angenot (2008) and Morikawa (1997)
show that Japan’s understanding of Africa was built through western perspectives which
could have been obtained from the available texts and information at the time. In other
words, Japan’s relationship with Africa started with, and was controlled by, the growing
power of Europe in the west. Japan originally started its diplomacy in Africa with South
Africa, having considered it at the time as “white Africa” (Bradshaw, 1992).

Although externally there does not seem to be much racism occurring in Japan
compared to other countries, some remaining consequences from prior Japanese history
with “white Africa” should be noted. The history has definitely impacted the current
Japanese perception of Africa, which also highly influences the experiences of Africans
in Japan. Until Japanese researchers and volunteers, beginning with Hideo Noguchi, a
disease researcher portrayed on the Japanese 1000 yen paper bill, started to visit Africa,
the Japanese perspectives on Africa heavily depended on the west.
The word *kokujin* 黒人, written in Chinese characters and meaning in Japanese “black people,” was created during Japan’s relationship with “white Africa” to refer to Africans or African Americans. Although the most Japanese people do not consider any racist connotations in the terminology even now, I strongly believe that Africans or people with African ancestry in Japan feel that they are less privileged with this widely used term. Jayasuriya & Angenot (2008) say, “The problems of identification have to be overcome before a comprehensive study of African migration to Asia is conducted” (p. 7). Indeed, I would like the word *kokujin* to be completely abolished. The reality is that even people who are aware of the racist connotations of the term *kokujin* do not have a choice in using this word to refer to an African or African-American because the words like “Africans” or “African-Americans” are not currently common in Japan. Japan should eliminate this term and should start referring to people of different origins by ethnicity or nationality.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The objective of my study is both to unveil the subculture of Kabukichyo formed by Nigerian-born Japanese men together with their fellow African workers, and to explore a personal identity dynamic beyond the subculture. The voices of many local Africans have been “silenced” due to the power of the Japanese national narrative, whose purpose is to maintain its homogeneous nature. Especially through discussing my conversation with Mr. Omo, I would like to recognize Nigerians’ efforts and obstacles along the way to establishing themselves in Tokyo and dealing with the feeling of belonging to both Nigeria and Japan. I would like to explore how Mr. Omo’s identity
shifts as he becomes a Japanese citizen; particularly, how he copes with his transnational and postnational identity with his family and co-workers.

1.4 Research Questions

The following are the research questions that concern the experiences of Mr. Omo:

1. What are Mr. Omo’s experiences as a Nigerian-born Japanese citizen in Kabukichyo, Japan?

2. How do Mr. Omo’s identities change or not change due to or despite of his experiences in Japan? What are the consequences?

3. How does he relate to the idea of “home” and “host” countries? What contributions is he making to these countries?

4. What are his future plans for himself and his family in Japan?

1.5 Limitations of the Study

Despite this relatively clear and narrowed subject of my research, I encountered several limitations. I explore only the background information of Nigerian men in Kabukichyo, Tokyo, among many Nigerians who have various professions, and focus on one person’s narrative. However, because the observation and interview needed to be accomplished in Kabukichyo, Tokyo, I found time to also be a major limitation. I could only plan the interview during the month of August 2009, and my initial plan of conducting field research for a month became even shorter due to the process of IRB form approval. Because my research subjects’ situations are difficult due to their possible status as illegal, the approval for the IRB form took more time than was expected. Once I got the form approved, I literally had less than a week before going back to Athens, Ohio.
Within these few days, I needed to go to the field, find an informant, and interview him. Although I was happy that I could satisfactorily accomplish the observation of African workers and my interview with Mr. Omo in the two days in which I visited Kabukichyo, I wished that I could continue more. If I would have been able to meet more regularly with Mr. Omo for some time, I imagined that I would hear from him more in-depth information about himself or see the actual change of his circumstances and process of the shift of his identity. This was not possible, not only because of the delay in the IRB form, but also because of a lack of feeling of security in Kabukichyo.

1.6 Clarification of Terms: The Migration Phenomenon

1.6.1 Diaspora / Immigrant

“Diaspora” is commonly defined as “the spreading of people from one original country to other countries” (Cambridge Online Dictionary, 2009) or “the movement, migration, or scattering of a people away from an established or ancestral homeland” (Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary, 2009). Ember (2006) explains that the word diaspora comes from the Greek word meaning to scatter and to sow, and it initially referred only to the settlement of Jews outside of Palestine following the Babylonian exile around 586 B.C. (p. xiii). Later, the word began to be used to refer to the migration of any ethnic group in the world. Nevertheless, the simplified definition of diaspora, which is any migrated population, causes ambiguity and cannot properly be distinguished from the words nomad, refugee, and immigrant. Therefore, although Mr. Omo prefers to use the term diaspora to refer to himself and his fellow Nigerians, I call him a Nigerian-
born Japanese man, which is clearer in regard to the complexity of his citizenship and belonging.

Despite my preference in using “Nigerian-born Japanese man” to describe the ethnic and national background of Mr. Omo, it is still important to understand the term diaspora. This is because Mr. Omo refers to himself and other Nigerians as diaspora. Diaspora is explained as migrated people in places other than their home countries; however, it is differentiated from the nomadic culture because they often do not keep moving as a means of leaving. Diaspora usually refers to a permanently, or sometimes pre-permanently, displaced and relocated collective. In addition, they are distinguished from refugees because they are not forced to move due to physical harms resulting from civil wars and other natural disasters.

In addition, the biggest differences between immigrants and diaspora are those of perspective and how the phenomenon of migration is looked at. In order for an individual or a group of people to be called diaspora, the level of migrants’ integration in the migrated place is usually examined or taken in a consideration. Obioma Nnaemeka (2007) explains that diaspora should be differentiated from dispersion, which is the common understanding of its term. He asserts, “Dispersion lacks the affinity with home or sense of belonging that is inscribed in diaspora” (Nnaemeka, 2007, p. 4). In other words, diaspora refers to people who migrate to a country different from the country of their birth, yet maintain a high degree of their belonging to the country and culture of their birth. In addition, when we hear “immigrants,” there seems to be more distance in feeling, or there is more of a sense of “otherness,” than when we hear the word diaspora.
Diaspora sounds more respected, while on the other hand, the word immigrant sounds unwelcoming.

Interestingly enough, some scholars like Ember, Ember, and Skoggard (2005) distinguish different types of diasporas as ‘victim’ ‘labor,’ ‘trade,’ and ‘imperial’ diasporas. However, Ember et. al. notes the fact that these categories often overlap and that population movement can and has occurred for more than one reason. Therefore the previous understanding of the Armenians, Jews, and Africans as diaspora of victims, the Chinese as diaspora taking advantage of labor opportunities, the Lebanese as diaspora of trade, and the Germans and British as diaspora of extending and service empires” (Ember, Ember, & Skoggard, 2005, p. xiii) have came back as a question and show the complex of overlapping causes of Nigerian men in Japan. Nigerian men are also hard to classify into one or two categories.

Ember et. al. chronologically explain that Africans voluntarily started to migrate to other parts of the world in four million B.C.E and continued migration up to 100,000 years ago (Ember, Ember, & Skoggard, 2005). These early African migrants went beyond being “African” and later created their own country and started to be recognized as a different ethnic group or even race. The early history of the African diaspora started with the Atlantic slave trade where Africans were enslaved and shipped to the Americas, including Brazil. There is an estimate that the African diaspora today, which is made up of 140 million Africans of Sub-Saharan descent and 800 million Africans from within Africa, accounts for 14 % of the world’s population. Knowing this fairly large percentage, the phenomenon of African migration is global. It is essential to note here that African
diaspora is a complicated word, and this is a similar to the scholarly argument which deals with questions of whether or not African culture exists. When these scholars talk about a collective African experience in migration, they mostly refer to those of Sub-Saharan Africa, often excepting South Africa. They also do not include North Africa because scholars think that North Africa has a distinct culture and historical background due to Islamic influences. They tend to emphasize South Africa’s apartheid period as a dissimilar experience that can be differentiated from other parts of Sub-Saharan Africa. Due to the ambiguity of the term “African diaspora,” I preferred to narrow down to Nigerian diaspora in my study. However, it was sometimes necessary to make broad use of the term due to availability of sources and some of common experiences of Nigerians with other Africans.

1.6.2 Brian Drain

I believe the clarification of the term ‘brain drain’ is necessary here because Mr. Omo mentioned that he thinks that Nigerians should come to Japan for brain power, not manpower, as many Nigerians recently started lecturing in Japanese universities. Brain drain, whose notion started to be widely used with the emergence and advance of studies of development, economics, and the social sciences in the 1960s, is commonly defined as “the depletion of the intellectual or professional resource of a country or region through immigration” (Odunsi, 1996, p.194) or “the international movement of skilled manpower” (Odunsi, 1996, p.194). I consider that Nigerian men coming to Tokyo have an economic purpose, mostly to earn capital. The concept of brain drain deals with the question and debate of the extent to which migrants’ energy and knowledge being used in their host
country is a loss or a benefit for their home countries. My research subjects can also be considered part of the brain drain phenomenon because they are usually high school graduates who are fully familiar with English. They also often have a desired specialization before coming to Japan. For example, Mr. Omo said that he had a desire to study aviation in the U.S. However, in the case of my study, it is sometimes critical because Nigerian-born workers in Kabukichyo do not make use of those skills and degrees they obtained. More importantly, some know and some do not know the unfairness before their departure from their country.

There is a need to clarify the question of whether the brain drain phenomenon in general sense is a loss or a benefit for the home countries. Because immigrants in foreign countries earn more than in their home countries and they send money back to their families, some scholars believe that the immigrants actually benefit the development of their countries (Odunsi, 1996). I do not disagree with point; however, it is only a short-term benefit. It is dangerous for a country to completely rely on the brain drain phenomenon, especially when those migrants have gone through criminal acts or other kinds of obstacles to earn money. Although I cannot come to a conclusion as to whether the host/hostess industry is good or bad for both host and home countries of those international migrants, I strongly agree with Mr Omo. Nigerian–born Japanese men should have a place to make use of their academic knowledge or the vocational skills they obtained if they wish to.

It is also important to briefly look at the economic understanding of migration because my research subject has a characteristic of being economic migrants. Some
scholars have noted that there are mainly four migration trends in the world (Odunsi 1996; Campbell, 2008): migration from developed country to developed country, from developed country to less-developed country, less-developed to less-developed countries, and from less-developed country to developed country. Although the theory of poverty is western biased, it should not be forgotten that the origin of mobile phenomenon lays in the rapid expansion of the modernization, westernization, and globalization. Some scholars, like Odunsi (1996), also discuss “the reverse transfer of technology” in which professionals from the technologically poorer countries come to more developed countries to apply their skills and knowledge (p.194). In Nigeria, 70.8 per cent out of around 150 million inhabitants live on less than one dollar a day and 92.4 per cent on less than two dollars a day (UNICEF, 2006). It is not too much to say that economically, the migration category of Nigerian workers in Japan refers to the fourth trend, “less-developed country to developed country.” It is also important to note the conflicted understanding that results from the migration from “less developed countries” to “least developed countries.” Some scholars argue under “world system theory” that this type of migration causes the “less developed countries” to remain in a same periphery.

1.7 Clarification of Terms: The Kabukichyo Culture

Knowing that places known for sex-related industries like Kabukichyo, which is similar to Las Vegas and De Wallen⁷, represent a part of national and global history and culture, there should be more in-depth study conducted on them. I strongly believe that

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⁷ This is the Amsterdam red light district, which has existed since the 14th century.
the business and culture in Kabukichyo associated with Japanese, Nigerians, and other East Asians is also a global phenomenon that further influences local and global cultures.

1.7.1 Gyaru

When Nigerian workers look for hostesses who would work for their clubs, they do not hand out flyers to every woman walking in that area. Rather, they quickly group women in their minds and target their recruitment only towards a particular type of women, who used to be called “Gyaru.” Although Gyaru have decreased in amount and softened their features, there are women who still resemble their traits. Gyaru is a group of Japanese female youth with a particular type of fashion that flourished between 1980s and 1990s. African workers in Kabukichyo interact with them on the streets because there has been a tendency for Gyaru to be interested in becoming hostesses. People do not look at the fashion of Gyaru simply as a style. They convey a strong message and have a unique behavior. They reflect the fashion business advertising slogans like “I cannot live without men,” “I am interested neither in work nor marriage,” and so forth. Although they do not show a sign of marriage or commitment, some of them experienced marriage at a young age or are single mothers. I believe that they present a rejection of the Japanese extreme conservative school of thought and the rigid mainstream culture and life style. Furthermore, their thoughts and fashion are the results of materialization, westernization, and modernization in Japan, which have brought about loneliness and “boundaries” between individuals. The traditional Japanese beauty is not seen through the gyaru’s behaviors and fashion; instead, gyaru created a new Japanese sub-culture. Because of their lack of confidence or will to “do well” in the Japanese society, they
easily fall under negative peer pressure and other downbeat influences from other people in society. Much of the business and recruitment strategy found in Kabukichyo is targeted towards *gyaru*. The use of African workers is also a part of these strategies because some *gyaru* like “foreign environment.”

1.7.2 *Hostess /Host Club*

Nigerian workers learned the culture of hostess/host club in Kabukichyo and integrated with their own business strategy. The word “hostess” in Japanese is widely used in Japan to refer to female employees in hostess clubs, which in Japan are called *kyabakura* or *kurabu*. Due to the fact that there is no dancing or nudity as a main business strategy, hostess clubs are distinguished from strip clubs. Host clubs are a common feature in the nighttime entertainment industry of Japan, especially in Kabukichyo, Tokyo. Hostesses can be called *kyabajyo*, and this word is used as a sub-group of *gyaru*. They are usually hired for their facial and physical features as well as their personalities. Hostesses wear very feminine dresses, often a short skirt made of shiny materials. Their job is to entertain male costumers, such as businessmen and chairmen of companies, by lighting cigarettes, singing karaoke, pouring drinks, and offering flirtatious conversation (Educated Community & The Goodknees Inc., 2008). Beside their African hosts, Japanese hostesses or women from other parts of East Asia are also hired by Nigerian owners.

To flirt and praise costumers is the hostesses’ job; however, providing sexual services is not part of the work obligation. Some clubs provide high-security protection. In such places, if a costumer forces a hostess into lovemaking, he can be arrested.
However, because upsetting customers affects business, it is not too much to say that the rights of hostesses are hardly protected. Hostesses do not feel comfortable reporting to the police sometimes because of their marriage status (some are foreigners who were naturalized by marrying a Japanese man) or because of the nature of their job. It is highly expected to take dohan, or the sexual services which hostesses are expected to provide for selected customers, outside of working hours to spend time with some of the selected customers outside of the working hours. Establishing a hostess business is barely considered a part of the sex-related industry and is easier for immigrants to establish or be involved with than any other business through sex-related industries. Because working as a hostess or host makes it difficult for a person to obtain or change a visa status, many immigrants often risk working illegally. However, a significant number, including “tens of thousands of women” from other parts of Asia, are given so-called “entertainment” visas (Douglass & Roberts, 2003, p. xv). This type of visa is usually provided for actors, actresses, or dancers; however, hostesses and hosts are also included. In 2004, the Japanese government, led by the Mayor of Tokyo Shintaro Ishihara, took action against these hostess clubs, and many clubs shut down unless their owners became naturalized by marrying to Japanese nationals. Many hostesses and hosts who had illegally stayed in Japan were arrested and deported.

The origin of hostess work is the okami, who is a female landlady of a Japanese traditional hotel (ryokan) or a female owner of Japanese traditional bars (sakaya). While okami at sakaya provide alcohol and chats to customers, okami at ryokan provide services.

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8 Please refer to p.45 to briefly understand what include in sex-related industry or Fujokuten in Japan.
for customers to enjoy hot springs. Since the 1960s, Japanese-English words were adapted for hosts and hostesses and have shown the shift of the original meaning from *okami*, especially in terms of uniforms and the expectation for *dohan*. Nigerians often work for nightclubs owned by Japanese or Chinese people, but some fortunate Nigerians, who have obtained Japanese citizenship, earn their own shops.

Host and hostess bars are sometimes considered part of *mizu shyobai* ("water trade") or *Fujokuten* (sex-related industry). *Mizushyobai* is usually referred to as the business of bars; however, it is also a blanket term that covers the entire entertainment industry, including the legitimate and illegal activities. Hostesses can also be seen as the modern version of geishas, whose borderline identity between being entertainers and prostitutes is also complex. The reputation of hosts/hostesses has changed among young generation especially among the male adolescents. Tezuka (2008), who was a host in a host club in Kabukichyo and is now an owner of two host clubs and three bars, explains the life of a host in his book, *自分をあきらめるにはまだ早い; Don't Give Up Yourself*. Although the job of hosts and hostesses has not been as respected as other occupations among older generations due to the nature of the job, male hosting is an ideal job for some Japanese youth due to their life styles, which seem to be surrounded by celebrities, expensive suits, watches, shoes, and alcohol (Tezuka, 2009). This trend of hiring young Japanese males also became common after a company called *Jenny’s* became popular for scouting young boys to help them become physically attractive and be trained for all kinds of television entertainment, such as singing, talking, dancing, acting, and comedy. Jenny’s kids changed the image of attractive men in Japan. Handsome men in Japan in
current time seem to be more connected with being slightly feminine, thin, having slightly long hair, and shaved legs. This idea also impacted the appearances and expectation of hosts. The host industry created its own fashion and culture⁹. Many Nigerian-born men are serving the same jobs as Japanese hosts; they entertain female customers or introduce male customers to their shops where hostesses are working. They also recruit women on the street to become hostesses. However, due to the transnational interaction among Nigerian-born men, Japanese customers of both sexes and Japanese hostesses, very interesting phenomenon occurs which is not only unique for linguists, but also for sociologists and anthropologists. Knowing that many Japanese women and men feel more entertained when there are foreigners around, many host clubs prefer to have foreigners who are physically very distinct from Japanese. Africans are considered to be very qualified for any kind of recruitment strategy in Kabukichyo.

The stress and pressure on hosts and hostesses are enormous because the business strategy of hosts/hostesses clubs is similar to other sales companies. Salesmen in an automobile company, for example, must report how many cars they sell every day and every month, as their status and salaries become dependent upon it. In the same vein, hosts recruiting customers on the street also have to complete each day’s uriage or sale with other hosts to gain respect of an owner and to earn praise (Tezuka, 2009). This is a similar system to so-called “tips” in a way, because how much hosts or hostesses earn in tips depends on how much they encounter customers. The expectation of hosts and hostesses also adds a high probability of ruining their health. Tezuka (2009) says that

⁹ There are also particular terminologies which are used in hosts/hostesses industry.
both hosts and hostesses are required to drink with customers every night, so many of
them ruin their health. If they don’t drink, they are punished. If they drink and get drunk,
they are also punished.

1.7.3 Gaijin Bars

The word Gaijin in Japanese literally means “people of outside,” and it is used to refer to foreigners. There is a tendency for Japanese to call people who have physical and cultural differences from themselves “Gaijin” more so than people who come from surrounding Asian countries. According to Matsumoto (2008), a Gaijin bar initially referred to a bar that was targeted towards US Marines and Navy soldiers. However, especially in Kabukichyo, a selling point of Gaijin bars is that customers are serviced by Gaijin hosts or hostesses.

There are many Gaijin bars in Kabukichyo, and they are usually packed into tall buildings. For example, in the building called “The Katrina” in Kabukichyo ni-chome, there are about 100 bars and clubs that are owned by people of many different nationalities; this means that there are approximately 10 bars and clubs on each floor of the building. Many of them are Gaijin bars, and there is estimation that around 60 Nigerian men own and/or run a total of around 20 bars and clubs in Kabukichyo (Matsumoto, 2008, p. 134). Including Nigerians, who are responsible for recruiting customers, there are approximately 100 Nigerians working in Gaijin bars (Matsumoto, 2008, pp. 133-134). All shops use a “street catching” strategy for recruiting customers. In Kabukichyo, Gaijin bars are mostly clustered on Azuma Street or Ward Office
(kuyakushyo) Street. Many of the newer Gaijin hosts or hostesses are from Russia, Eastern Europe, Brazil, and the Philippines.

1.7.4 Bottakuri ぼったくり

Some Gaijin bars are also called Bottakuri bars. Bottakuri refers to an unclean individual behavior, or business styles that are either illegal or barely legal. Bottakuri behavior or business causes people to feel that they are deceived or that a part of their earnings is stolen. If an owner of a shop buys products cheaply and sells them for excessive allowable business profits, including the total of the service fee (which is mostly 10 %), he or she either has a Bottakuri behavior or his or her business is Bottakuri. For example, in the case of using credit cards, sales clerks sometimes tell customers, “This kind of credit card does not work in this shop,” after she or he has already successfully swiped the card in order to charge the price twice. In the sex related industry, Bottakuri is also used for overcharging service fees or for seducing customers. In Japan, Bottakuri prevention measures, or ぼったくり防止条例, were set in place in 2000 in Tokyo first, and other prefectures also started to adopt them. Within this law, it is required to indicate prices in places that are visible to customers, and it prohibits excessive seduction and collection (Brasor, 2007).

Bottakuri is not a strategy imported from foreign countries; it developed in Japan. There have been increasing numbers of fraud in Japan that use either spam or phone calls to mislead people to deposit money. This stems from the development of information technology and technology itself, which exploded in Japan after World War II with the onset of the so-called Japanese post-war economic miracle. The overuse of electronic
communication devices has taken away direct communication between individuals. The growth of technology is also due to the concepts of free market economy and free enterprise capitalism that were adopted from Britain and North America in the late 1860s (Meiji period). The development of technology not only discouraged Japanese people’s communication skills but also influenced people to take advantage of the communication gap. This feature in Japan is in a way on common ground with the situation in Nigeria. The expansion of fraud with a budget account called “furikomi sagi” in Japan resembles the 419 spam in Nigeria. One of the types of furikomi sagi is called “ore-ore sagi,” meaning “fraud of ‘It’s me, It’s me.” This is targeted towards elderly people living alone who need companionship. For example, a man calls an elderly lonely woman and says “Grandma, it’s me!” although he has never met or talked to the woman before. The woman does not remember his voice but talks to him as if she knows him because she is lonely. She might also have confused him with somebody else. At the end of their conversation, the man asks the elderly woman to deposit money for him, and she agrees because she feels that she is needed. Overall, Bottakuri seems to be a global phenomenon; however, the term needs explanation because many Nigerian hosts/hostesses clubs are regarded by Japanese people, including the Mayor of Tokyo, as Bottakuri business.

1.7.5 Kyakubiki 客引き

The Japanese word Kyakubuki literally translates to “pull customers,” and it means to recruit and attract customers. I mostly use “street catching” in my thesis to describe a business performance of Nigerian men who recruit customers or workers on
the streets because *kyakubuki* does not describe the fact that this type of “pulling customers” is carried out on the streets. This term is used to describe the behavior of recruiting and the people who do it. In Kabukichyo, a Nigerian bar or club usually has two to four Nigerian *Kyakubiki*, and they can be the owner's relatives (Matsumoto, 2008, p.141). Nigerian recruiters start street catching around 8:00pm near their shops; they try to draw women in by sometimes saying things like, “There are very young and beautiful *gaijin* girls,” or, “You can trust me. My wife is Japanese” (Matsumoto, 2008, p.141). Around 1:00am, they move to Koma Theater Street to engage with people who are running to catch a last train of the day. In this case, they say things like: “There are no trains anymore. It is Saturday tomorrow, let’s have fun until the next train at 5am” (Matsumoto, 2008, p.141). There is a critical discussion of differences between *kyakubiki* and *ponbiki*. *Ponbiki* can be translated as the behaviors of a pimp, who is the boss of prostitutes, finds customers for them, and bargains the prices. Especially among Kabukichyo fans, shop owners, and customers, there are claims that prohibiting *kyakubiki* without making a clear distinction from *ponbiki* has ruined the interesting and unique cultures of Kabukichyo.

It is not too much to say that *kyakubiki* is traditionally a Japanese business strategy and a part of Japanese culture. Until around 1930s, *kyakubiki* was often done by fish dealers at a market place and sellers at a fruit or vegetable store. Although *kyakubiki* is still seen in rural areas of Japan, it is not too much to say that it is dying. Many local, traditional style shops were compiled and put underneath the department stores in Tokyo. One reason for this move was to create a cosmopolitan city without any Japanese-looking
local shops. Another reason is that due to the increasing number of department stores, super markets, and convenience stores, these traditional local shops had to close down their business or merge into a bigger company. If one goes to the underground stores, he or she can still see sellers who are willing to do kyakubiki vocally, though the vigorousness has declined. Traditionally, kyakubiki uses “calling” without touching customers. Sellers say “irrashai-irrashai,” meaning “Come here, Come here,” followed by an announcement of a price and quality of the products of the day. Kyakubiki in Japan is usually targeted towards a crowd, and people who become interested come closer to the products or sellers to ask questions.

Over time, this strategy of recruiting customers has changed in that recruiters do not need to use communication skills. Distributing flyers or compact size tissue papers with an advertisement on the front are examples of modern strategies. Only male hosts in Kabukichyo are standing on streets in a group to wait for people to be interested in them and talk to them. However, they are not vocally and exclusively calling customers. If they do, they mostly whisper close to people’s ears. Interestingly, kyakubiki is also a marketing strategy in many African countries, such as Nigeria. Both announcing to a crowd and calling a particular person or group to look at what a seller has are very common practices in the markets of Nigeria. However, a small distinction from the Japanese style is that sellers in Nigeria can come close to customers or grab customers’ arms.

It is not too much to say that Nigerian men in Kabukichyo who recruit people for their business are similar to African street men in other foreign countries. In other words,
the issue of street children in Nigeria has expanded globally. These men are not children in terms of the definition of children explained by UNICEF and other global organizations because they are older than 18 years old. However, the survival mechanism of Nigerian men in Kabukichyo is very much applicable to the reasons scholars explain that street children start making a living on the streets.

1.7.6 Fuujokuten 風俗店

In Japan, shops that are connected to the sex-related industry are called Fuujokuten 風俗店. Originally Fuujoku meant manner or customs; however, over time it started to acquire several different meanings. Most of these meanings developed in 1980s, and today there are many different kinds of Fuujokuten. One of them is called Telekura, which is a telephone club in which a male client pays a fee to enter a phone booth and call women who are willing to go on a date, which would eventually lead to paid sex. Other kinds of Fuujokuten are pink salon, sexy pub, soap land, love hotels, host/hostesses club, and so forth. It is illegal to establish any kind of Fuujokuten or post flyers within 200 meters from schools, day care centers, and libraries. Because prostitution is illegal, the businesses find a way to get around the rules that includes very ambiguous definitions of sex.
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review has four sections: Africans in Asia, interactions between immigrants and Japanese people, patterns of immigrants in Japan, and immigration law in Japan. The existing literatures show increasing interest in the subject of African diaspora in Asia.

2.1 Africans in Asia

In order to look at Nigerians in Japan, it is essential to recognize the past literatures on Africans in Asia in general, and I will say that little is available. The reason behind the generality of this literature is that there are few specialists on the African diaspora in Asia. It is important to clarify, however, that within the word “Africa,” these scholars include almost all countries on the continent of Africa, including Madagascar, and without favoritism toward either North Africa or Sub-Sahara Africa. Likewise, when they say Asia, they focus more on Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Southwest Asia (the Middle East). Nevertheless, they do not show much evidence of the presence of Africans in East Asia and not at all in Central Asia. *Uncovering the History of Africans in Asia*, edited by Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya & Jean-Pierre Angenot (2008), addresses the problems of recognizing an African presence in Asia, and focuses on Africans and Afro-Asians in the Indian Ocean World. It mentions only slightly that there has been evidence of African existence in Japan.

The work mentioned above is an edited work that explores the subject of African migration to Asia, starting with the influence of the African-Asian trade in the first century and onward. Some evidence of Afro-Asians are the Afro-Indian dynasties of
Sachin and Janjira, which partly influenced Indian culture, especially in language and arts. Despite the confirmations of African migration to Asia for several centuries and the existence of Afro-Asian population in Asia, the population has a “low profile” (Jayasuriya, & Angenot, 2008, p. 2) with a problem of acceptance. Jayasuriya, & Angenot (2008) say that it is difficult to trace both African origins in Asia and the continuous existence of Africans in Asia because of the conditional and ambiguous terminology being used over time in Asian countries.

There are some texts, however, that discuss various perspectives of Africans in Asia. In Uncovering the history of Africans in Asia, edited by Jayasuriya, & Angenot (2008), Gwyn Campbell (2008) looks at the condition of African-Asian diaspora as a continuation of their slave ancestry. He asserts that the African-Asian population in Asia denies their African heritage and accepts their Asian origins because “[i]n the Asian world, in contrast to the Americas, most slaves were subject to forces promoting assimilation into local society rather than separateness and alienation from it” (Campbell, 2008, p. 44). He explains that the hardship of recognizing an African presence in Asia can be overcome by changing the common attitude towards Africans that arose from historical concepts. He says that in order to understand “what happened, where, when, and why” with regards to the African Slave Trade to Asia and the Indian Ocean Islands, people should look through all possible records, including Africa’s oral tradition, which has shown much essential information (Campbell, 2008). Leila Ingrams and Richard Pankhurst (2006) write a book entitled Somali Migration to Aden from the 19th to the 21st Centuries and combine archival sources and oral histories. They pay attention to free
Somali migrants who migrated to Yemen for trade, particularly in search of employment. Clifford Pereira (2008) writes on “the process by which Africans become Arabs,” by drawing on geographical sources. Pinto (2008) discusses Africans who migrated to the Maldives. She demonstrates through music the integration of cultural expressions of African migrants and the Maldives. Pinto also looks at the geographical spread of Africans in India, and says that Africans have existed in India since ancient times, and historically many Africans came with Portuguese and Arab slave activities. She explains the violence of the slave trade, and highlights that female African slaves were objects of sexual indulgence and that the ownership of slaves was a status symbol. In short, the book explores the history of African migration to Asia, mostly in the countries and island states of the Indian Ocean.

There have also been some studies of African migrations to Asia at large. For instance, *Encyclopedia of Diasporas: imagination and refugee cultures around the world* edited by Ember, Ember, & Skoggard (2005) explains the consequence of the African immigrations chronologically, starting from the movement in four million B.C.E and continuing to 100,000 years ago. According to Ember et al., Malagasy, whose origin is in “first millennium C.E.,” is the largest present day Afro-Asian community. DNA analysis showed the Malagasy carry Austronesian and East African genes (Ember et al., 2005, p. 4). Ember et al. give a new perspective of Africans and Asians by looking at the population of some parts of Northern Africa such as Egypt, the Middle East, and India as Afro-Asian. The book identifies Ethiopians in the Red Sea region, and they are also found in early Muslim armies. It also examines how the “Islamization of large tracts of
Africans” resulted in Africans traveling “wider in Islamic Asia and beyond” (2005, p. 4). Ember et al. highlight the impact of European colonization and imperialism on the lives of Africans in Asia.

2.2 The Problem of Homogeneity:

Interactions between Immigrants and Japanese People

Historically, Japan has been known for its homogeneity: a nation-state with one language, one nationality, one ethnicity, one land, and one culture. For instance, Louis D. Hayes (2005) says, “One of the most important features of Japan is its homogeneity. Japan lacks the kind of racial and linguistic variety that can be found in many countries” (p. 145). Due to this rigid homogeneous feature of the country, many “non-Japanese” people have suffered and been forced to drop their “non-Japanese” identities. For instance, many Korean or Chinese people or their descendents tend to prefer to adopt Japanese surnames so that they can completely “assimilate” into the Japanese society.

The origin of this homogeneity comes from Japan’s geography and history. It is influenced by the fact that Japan consists of islands that are isolated from any continent. In addition, it has a long history of “Sakoku” policies set between the early 1630s and the early 1850s, due to which Japan closed its borders for around 200 years and did not allow any outside influence in the country. Even after opening up its borders, Japan has been a collective society with the emperor at the top until World War II, and the sense of solidarity remained in Japanese society even after the defeat (Hayes, 2005).

Although there is the argument that Japan is a homogenous society, I agree with scholars and intellectuals who believe that there is no such thing as a homogeneous
society. If there is, then the people of the community are forced to believe in the
homogeneity through terminologies used in education, media, politics, and so forth.

Homogeneity in Japan should be instead called a “monoculture myth” (Kymlicka & He,
2005) since it is not a fact but rather a collective belief system. Michael Weiner (1997)
calls this phenomenon “the illusion of homogeneity.” Takeuchi (2009) further expresses
that the homogeneous discourse enforced in schools does not coincide with the
multicultural realities. She says: “My findings among others revealed that the
homogeneous policies and provisions are hegemonic to ‘others,’ including domestic
/indigenous minority and foreign students, as a result of placing their history and culture
at the periphery.” Many diverse cultures and ethnicities are actually found in Japan due to
increasing numbers of diasporas, immigrants, children of cross-cultural marriages, and so
forth; in addition, there are also long time “minority groups,” like Ainu, Burakumin,
Okinawans, and Nikkeijin, who have been pushed away or forced to be distinguished
from the identity “Japanese.” This belief in a so-called a homogeneous society has
created many problems in accepting differences. As a result of the myth of Japanese
homogeneity, people experience discrimination when they do not possess or acquire the
expected physical attributes (Japanese-looking features) and Japanese language skills.

In addition, despite the common belief in Japanese homogeneity, there are a
number of religions practiced by residents of Japan, such as Shinto (believed to be a
native ‘religion’ of Japan), Buddhism, Catholic Christianity, Protestantism, Islam,
Jehovah's Witnesses, and Atheism. Rowthorn (2007) explains:
Westerners, who are used to the exclusivity of their patriarchal religions, often find Japanese religion confusing. This is because the Japanese, for the most part are happy to practice the rituals of at least two, and sometimes three for even four. [Different religions]…all play a role in contemporary Japanese social life, and are definitely in some way of the Japanese world view. (p. 32)

Despite the existing various religious or religion-related practices, Japanese believe in sharing this culture of multi-religious features.

Although it seems on the surface that there is not much discrimination in Japan, there are critical instances of discrimination that must be considered. Currently there is very little legislation to protect foreigners against discrimination (Hogg, 2005) and “unfortunately, the attitude of the Japanese government towards immigration has generally been one of neglect” (Debito & Higuchi, 2008, p. 4). That is why many foreign workers have experienced social discrimination with regards to housing access to public services (Douglass & Roberts, 2003, p. xviii). Due to the high number of murders by foreigners, which is often due to their stress towards their living conditions in Japan, real estate agents or landlords prefer to sell or rent their land or property to Japanese people only. In addition, due to the economic shortage, Japanese government and institutions have not had the budget to properly help newcomers settle down in Japan as residents with stable jobs and lifestyles (Debito & Higuchi, 2008, p. 4). Non-trained or non-properly guided foreigners who also do not know much about Japanese culture experience isolation and depression in their work places.
In addition, it is important to note that the ambiguity of differences between the act of discrimination and the feeling of prejudice has in a way made Japan a racist-free country. Since the 1990s, there are increasing numbers of Sushi restaurants that hire “non-Japanese” Asian *sushi shokunin*, people who make sushi at the counter table. Due to modernization, youth prefer offices to a traditional workplace, such as a sushi restaurant and it has resulted a lack of Japanese sushi shokunin. Accordingly, many traditional sushi restaurants face problems, and they have started to hire Asian people who look similar to Japanese in order to maintain the Japanese environment. However, with increasing numbers of “non-Japanese” people making sushi in a bar, many people have started to wonder why only Asians can be hired and people of color\(^{10}\) cannot work there. They realized that many Japanese people have a hard time enjoying sushi made by people from non-East Asian countries. Some people describe this feeling of preferring something according to one’s race and ethnicity as prejudice and distinguish it from discrimination. They say that this is about favoritism; however, this still remains a question of fairness.

By calling one’s act prejudice rather than discrimination, the question of fairness is not completely solved despite the fact that the degree of discrimination lessons. It seems that prejudice and discrimination come from the Japanese understanding that people from non-East Asian countries cannot completely learn Japanese culture unless they grow up or live there for a decade or so, and without learning Japanese culture, one cannot make sushi. The most important thing is to realize prejudice and be able to critically think and act accordingly.

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\(^{10}\) Japanese people commonly refer to black and white people when they talk about people of color.
2.3 Immigration Law in Japan

The meaning of Japanese nationality is expressed in the Nationality Law of the 1950s. People living in Japan can be classified in one of the following categories: people who have citizenship by birth or naturalization, or people who have a visa. The types of visas include: non-working, working permission, types of landing permission, spouses and children, long-term residency, permanent residency, and alien registration. It is extremely important to understand immigration law in Japan in order to understand which procedures the Nigerian diaspora has to go through for them to comfortably stay in Japan. In order to legally enter into Japan, according to Arudou Debito & Higuchi Akira (2008), a person must obtain a visa (Sashou 証) at an overseas Japanese consulate or embassy. However, this visa only takes him or her to the land of Japan, and it does not permit him or her to go outside of Japanese airports. He or she has to apply for “Status of Residency (SOR)” at the airport in order to stay in Japan. There are exceptions only for people who are from the United States, South Korea, and Taiwan; they receive SOR automatically through their visas although they are still not allowed to work. There are 27 different kinds of SOR, and within them, there are mainly three groups.

Group 1 is for people who are allowed to take a job in a particular skilled field, which requires a higher academic background, skills or professional experience. Some of the examples are following: “Professor,” for a professor or lecturer at a university; “Investor/Business Manager,” for a business owner or a director of a corporation; or “Specialist in Humanities/International Services” for those who will become instructors of a language (Arudou & Higuchi, 2008, p. 22).
People of Group 2, such as “Temporary Visitor” or tourist, and “College Student,” are not allowed to work. These SOR holders are only allowed to stay in Japan for sightseeing or studying at a university without getting paid (job hunting and interviews are permitted). Applying for and receiving “Permission to Engage in an Activity Other Than That Permitted Under the Status of Residence Previously Granted” (Shikakkugai katsudou kyola 資格外活動許可) allows them to work for up to 28 hours a week (Arudou & Higuchi, 2008, p. 48).

People of Group 3 are allowed to do any type of work except in “nightlife” entertainment (bars, hostess clubs, or the “water trade” business). If he or she receives a status of “Spouse or Child of Japanese National” or “Spouse of Permanent Resident,” they will fall under this category. Their status is considered almost the same as having Permanent Resident (PR) status. However, it is essential to keep in mind that it requires about ten years of residence in Japan in order to get PR, and if one is married to a Japanese or a PR holder, the requirement is shortened to three years (Arudou & Higuchi, 2008, p. 22). This has influenced the increasing number of false marriages.

Even after receiving SOR, one has to go to the Ward Office/City Office for Alien Registration to stay more than 90 days after his or her arrival in Japan. He or she will receive an “Alien Registration Card” (gaikokujin tourokushomeisho 外国人登録証明書) (Arudou & Higuchi, 2008, p. 30). More importantly, if a person has a desire to work in Japan, he or she needs to receive “Certificate of Eligibility (COE)” from Japan “before acquiring [a] ‘visa’ at a Japanese consulate or embassy” (Arudou & Higuchi, 2008, p. 20). This means that a person cannot receive a visa or SOR without finding a job because his
or her employer in Japan applies for COE on the behalf of the person. When a person’s employer applies for his or her COE, Immigration will check out not only the person’s background information, but also a company for which he or she will work. Despite the fact that a person might receive a multiple-year labor contract, a person can work in Japan only for the years that their SOR permits, which is usually for one or three years.

In the same vein, if a person is in Japan as a Temporary Visitor or College Student and wants to work, he or she needs to get a COE from an employer, and can apply to change SOR at Immigration. After receiving a post card from Immigration, he or she must go to Immigration and receive the new SOR stamp on his or her passport. After receiving the stamp, he or she must go to the Ward Office /City Office to receive a new Alien Registration Card (Arudou & Higuchi, 2008, p. 38).

Apart from the above categories, there is one called “Designated Activities,” which is for a “non-Japanese” who performs activities specifically designated on an individual basis by the Minister of Justice. This means, whether or not one can work, or what kind of job one can take, is at the discretion of Immigration (Arudou & Higuchi, 2008, pp. 23-24). For instance, working holidays and internships go under this category.

If one stays in Japan illegally without following these steps, one “may deported and have trouble returning to Japan (for up to ten years, of if not for life). Maximum fine for working without a working visa is up to 2,000,000 yen (200 万円) which is around 20,000 dollars for employees and 3,000,000 yen for employers” (Arudou & Higuchi, 2008, p. 50).
Almost all SOR are valid only for one or three years; however, there is a possibility of applying to “Extension of Period of Stay (在留期間更新)” (Arudou & Higuchi, 2008, p. 44). If one receives a visa for one year and extends his or her period of stay for three years, or simply gets a visa for three years in first place, he or she is able to apply for Permanent Residence (PR) by getting married to a Japanese person. If not, he or she needs to find a way of renewing his or her visa every one year or three years for a total of 10 years to get PR, or for five years to fulfill naturalization.

In short, there are many possibilities for a male member of the Nigerian diaspora to come work in the Kabukichyo area as a hostess owner or a host. Some legally come to Japan with a tourist, student, or entertainer visa and obtain an illegal status by overstaying because they believe that their visa will not be extended due to the nature of their work. On the other hand, many achieve naturalization or get married to a Japanese national to receive Permanent Residency.

For this category of visa, some kind of certificate of one’s skills from one’s home country is required. For example, the Philippine government seems to have some kind of certification system for entertainers, so they certify some singers and dancers as entertainer specialists, and those with such certificate can apply for "entertainer" visa in Japan (Debito & Higuchi, 2008).

Beyond visa status, there are two ways to become Japanese. One is to be born in Japan (“Citizenship by birth”) and the other is by naturalization.
There is a category of Japanese citizenship named “citizenship by birth,” which means that people born in Japan automatically receive Japanese citizenship. Nevertheless, the nature of Japanese understandings of their ethnicity and beliefs in their homorganic society does not allow this concept to be completely adapted, especially when people have “non-Japanese” ancestry. In practical terms, Japan recognizes citizenship and ethnicity by “blood,” not by a place of birth; in order words, Japan is a *Jus sanguinis* state.

Article 2 of immigration law in Japan explains three circumstances in which a person can become a Japanese citizen at birth. One is considered Japanese at birth when either parent is a Japanese citizen at the time of birth, when the father dies before the birth and is a Japanese citizen at the time of death, and when the person is born in Japan and both parents are unknown or stateless. This creates one of the most problematic situations: the children of unmarried “non-Japanese” mothers. There is an exception only when the Japanese father shows his paternity before the child’s birth.

Naturalization is the process of acquiring citizenship or nationality from a country where a person was not born. Articles 4 through 10 of the Nationality Law provide five standard requirements for naturalization in Japan. It usually takes about one year for the Minister of Justice to review an application for naturalization.

In contrast, people with foreign resident status, including Koreans and South Americans, are seen as foreigners (meaning outsiders), who originally come from other nations and live in Japan. While Koreans and Chinese who entered Japan either forcefully or voluntarily during World War II are seen as old-timers, newcomers from the 1980s are refugees from Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, and South Americans, mainly Brazilians,
who are first- to third- generation Nikkeijin (Japanese-descendant South Americans). The naturalization process is the only way in which foreign residents can become Japanese nationals (Takeuchi, 2009).

The criteria for naturalization are provided in Article 5 of the Nationality Act (The Ministry of Justice, 1998-2006):

1. Continuous residence in Japan for five years or more
2. At least 20 years old and otherwise legally competent
3. History of good behavior generally, and no past history of seditious behavior
4. Sufficient capital or skills, either personally or within family, to support oneself
5. Stateless or willing to renounce foreign citizenship.

If a person desires Japanese citizenship, he or she can apply for Japanese Nationality (kokuseiki 国籍) by going through a process of Naturalization (kika 帰化). In contrast to getting Permanent Residency (Eijyuken 永住権), Naturalization changes one’s nationality, and one must drop previous nationality/ies. As a Japanese citizen, a person receives a Japanese Passport, and no longer needs SOR or Alien Registration. Unlike in the U.S, a person doesn’t have to get PR before applying for Naturalization; anyone who has stayed in Japan for five continuous years can apply (Arudou & Higuchi, 2008, pp.56-58).

There is also a working visa that is provided only for entertainers. This visa is valid for 1 year, 6 months, or 3 months; this varies individually. This can be obtained by people who will be engaged in activities to engage in theatrical performances, arts, song,
dance, musical performances, sports, the production of television programs or movies, the photographing of models, or any other show business.”

2.4 The Number of Nigerian Population in Japan

Out of the total 130 million population in Japan, 1.69% are foreign residents for a total number of 2,152,973 as of 2007 (The Immigration Bureau of Japan, 2002-2006). However, only 184,000 foreigners living in Japan have permanent resident status (Migration News, 2002). Estimating an exact number of Nigerians has been challenging. More than 1000 Africans registered to get an “Alien Registration Card” (gaikokujin tourokushomeisho 外国人登録証明書) in 1985, and this number increased to 10,000 in 2005 (Matsumoto, 2008, p. 138). However, this number indicates only those who legally registered themselves during that year. Matsumoto (2008) reveals that Nigerians are the biggest African group in Japan with an estimated population of around 2,400. This means one-fourth of legal Africans are from Nigeria. Matsumoto reports that 70% of Nigerians who work in central business districts in Japan are of the Igbo ethnic group and are originally from Biafra. One of the other large Nigerian ethnic groups is Edo (Omo, personal communication, August 22, 2009). Interestingly enough, according to Japan’s Legal Affairs Bureau, there were no Africans who were deported from Japan in 1984; however, nine years later in 1993, the number increased to 845 Africans. This number further doubled and is still increasing (Matsumoto, 2008, p. 132).

2.5 Early History of African Migration into Japan

Both oral sources and documentations that describe history of African immigrants have been intermingled with the history of “Black” presence in Japan. This leads to an
interesting argument that the colors of Asians are the results of the mixing of White Europeans and Black Africans. However, there are few reliable sources to confirm this.

On the other hand, some scholars demonstrate the interaction of Africans and Japanese in the early history. For instance, Runoko Rashidi (1998) quotes from a report carried by the Associated Press as following:

The oldest Stone Age hut in Japan has been unearthed near Osaka...Archeologists date the hut to about 22,000 years ago and say it resembles the dugouts of African bushmen, according to Wazuo Hirose of Osaka Prefectural of Education's cultural division. ‘Other homes, almost as old, have been found before, but this discovery is significant because the shape is cleaner, better preserved’ and is similar to the Africans’ dugouts. (p. 1)

Whether or not this is a coincidence, it is important to consider the possibilities of a deep Japan-Africa connection from earlier time periods.

Japan recognized foreigners with physical features, including colors of skin, more than the locations they came from or languages they spoke. Therefore, the history of Africans is also mingled with the Ainu, who are considered an indigenous ethnic group of Japan and who have slightly darker skin. One of the earliest evidence of “Blackness” in Japan goes back to the Heian period (754-811), with the myth of the Black Shogun, Sakanouye Tamuramaro. Shogun is a title that was given to a hereditary general who governed an armed force. In the case of Tamuramaro, the ethnical origin of his color is not clearly known.
Other evidence of African migration into Japan is found during the Sengoku, or War, period (1467-1573). After Francisco de Xavier, a Portuguese missionary, came to Japan in 1548 as the first foreigner, Shogun Oda Nobunaga met an African man who came to Japan with Italian missionary Alessandro Valignano as a servant/slave (Rashidi, 1998) 11. Oda Nobunaga liked this man for his strength and loyalty and gave him a Japanese name: 弥助 Yasuke. Although he came to Japan as an African slave, Nobunaga befriended him and requested that he stay in Japan even after Valignano’s departure. Although there was some evidence of African men coming into Japan until the 16th century, the flow of migration must have stopped during Sakoku era (1633-1639). This is the time when Japan closed its border and prohibited any outside influences, and missionaries were forbidden to come into the country.

After the long period of Sakoku era ended, Japan opened its border shortly after Commodore Mathew Perry came to Japan in 1853. By the time of Meiji Restoration in 1867, Christianity became legalized again, and Africans started come into Japan as well. There is also some evidence of Africans coming into Japan between 1800 and 1937 Japan and European colonization in Africa. The most documented major migration of male Nigerian population to Japan is after 1960s.

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11 Interestingly, this period is also known as the slave trade era; in 1472 for instance, the Portuguese built Lagos in Nigeria to develop its slave trade, and the first European trader from Portugal built a slave port, Elmina Castle, in Ghana in 1481.
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

In order for me to acquire an in-depth understanding of the occurrence of Nigerian-born Japanese men working in Kabukichyo in my phenomenological research\textsuperscript{12}, and to explore the subjective reality of this particular population, I use the methods of qualitative research. I particularly chose to blend secondary and primary sources to accomplish my study. In the secondary analysis research method, I used various kinds of published and unpublished works mostly from Japan and the U. S., specifically books, dissertations, articles, and official websites. This was to understand background information of the culture of Kabukichyo and the situations that Nigerian men in Japan live in. In order to critically examine narratives of Mr. Omo and to understand his transnational position and his belonging to two countries, I used published sociological and anthropological works.

All of these sources were necessary in my study due to the limitation of works that are strictly written on this specific population. I also used some qualitative studies of a Japanese journalist by translating. Overall, qualitative methods are the only way to learn about experiences and cultures of individuals or a group of people, and I believe that it was the most effective method for my research.

\textsuperscript{12} A phenomenological research is a study of a phenomenon. Lester (1999) says, “Phenomenology is concerned with the study of experience from the perspective of the individual, ‘bracketing’ taken-for-granted assumptions and usual ways of perceiving. Epistemologically, phenomenological approaches are based in a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity, and emphasise the importance of personal perspective and interpretation” (p. 1).
Making use of secondary and primary sources allowed me to explore the unique research topic and to understand the phenomenon from different angles. Secondary sources on Japan-Africa relations are generally very difficult to access, and I could not accomplish my study if I only focused on written literatures. Morikawa (1997, p. v) expresses the difficulty of getting secondary sources on Japan concerning Africa as follows:

A study of [Japan-Africa relations] is not possible without the assistance of many people. This is especially true in Japan, where no national freedom of information law exists, libraries and research centres are not known to be ‘user-friendly’, and the public’s right to know is not highly regarded by a bureaucracy that often treats even the most mundane research materials as secret.

This made me aware of the fact that reliable literature on Nigerians in Japan would be extremely difficult to access. Because of this reason, I decided to combine primary and secondary sources. I was pleased to get quality information from my informant. I got a lot of primary information from him that I could not have possibly obtained from written literature.

The reason behind my decision to use the personal narrative of Mr. Omo, the informant, is to show detailed explanations of personal dynamics within the framework of Nigerian diaspora in Japan. Department of Anthropology at University of Northern Colorado indicates as follows:

Life history, or personal narrative of one’s life, has long been recognized as an important vehicle for learning about how culture is experienced and created by
individuals. Life histories have a special significance in our highly technological, fast-paced, complex world. As we have become more isolated from one another, the life history offers a means of putting us back in touch with others, recognizing the intimacy results from listening to and telling stories.

I also believe that one person’s narratives are substantial sources for studying about culture, or subculture, in relation to individuals. I chose Mr. Omo’s narratives as the core of the last section of my thesis because my aim was to examine the dynamics of the relationship between an identity and a community. In fact, I succeeded in exploring how Mr. Omo feels about my research topic and the reasons why he feels the way he does.

Some ethnographers like Ruth Behar and Marjorie Shostak have demonstrated deep consequences their works of writing upon a single subject written by a single author. Ruth Behar (2003) wrote *Translated Woman*, and Marjorie Shostak (2000; 1981) wrote two ethnographies, *The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman* and *Return to Nisa*. Behar’s work is a study of Hsperanza’s life, and the author’s interpretive and self-critical commentaries were used to complete the ethnography. The author’s self-reflections evaluated the relationship between two women, the author and Hsperanza. *Return to Nisa* is, in a way, a continuation of Shostak’s first ethnography, *The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman*. In her first ethnography, Shostak used the narrative of a woman named Nisa as an anthropological framework. The selection of this framework was due to one of her core aim of the ethnography: to describe the culture of the !Kung ethnic group, which remained unique to the Kalahari Desert of Botswana, specifically the area called Dobe. Shostack chooses Nisa as her main informant because of Nisa’s outstanding ability
to express her feelings and vocalize what she had experienced in her community. Shostak used Nisa’s narrative, or “life history,” in the first ethnography to show readers the !Kung culture from a native perspective. In short, one person’s narratives have been recognized by anthropologists as tools to study a culture and the collective experiences of people who live in the culture.

The following chapters of my thesis focus on my fieldwork in the summer of 2009 in Japan. The findings from this study have been mainly used to build my general understanding of the population of Nigerian men in Kabukichyo and to examine and analyze their feelings, hardships, cultures, and identities. What I found in the field helped me to understand how Nigerian men organize themselves and perceive their lives. I was not able to fully do participant observations; instead I conducted a structured interview, held face-to-face interactions, and conducted observations. Through this semi-ethnographic research, I hoped to understand the way in which people communicate and build up collective/personal identities or symbolic meanings. In sum, a combination of these two types of sources allowed me to go in depth despite the limitations of the interview that was sensitive to the qualities of business and conducted in such a restricted time.

However, there are possible consequences in using one person’s narrative, especially when the research field is a dangerous place. Therefore, I told Mr. Omo that I would give him a pseudonym. However, he said that he did not mind my using his full name because he was not doing anything illegal. Instead, I shortened his last name to make a nickname that does not change the sense of his Nigerian name. When I was in the
field, I did not ask personal information like age, nationality, ethnicity, illegally and legally unless people volunteered it. For my interview with Mr. Omo, I chose broad questions so that he could choose what not to tell. Although I wished to have visual components, I did not take pictures or videos in order to let my informant and his colleagues feel comfortable and to make the situation of my interviews and observations as simple as possible.

I used interpretive techniques and observer impressions to analyze my data, using my standing as a researcher who is a Japanese woman raised in Tokyo and studying African Studies in the U.S. I used impressions coming up in my mind during and after the interviews and recorded it in my notes. I later used them in relation to secondary sources written by African writers and scholars. I believe that observer impression is a fine technique for analyzing findings because interviewing is part of the communication process that is designed to reveal the meanings of an interviewee’s the actual words and to help understand the interviewee’s relationships with his or her community. I was able to find out a certain level of information based on the experiences of my informant and those I observed. For data analysis, I did not desire to simply present information, but rather, I prefer to examine the quality of information that Mr. Omo expressed in the interview.

3.2 Site Selection

3.2.1 Japan

In addition to homogeneity having already been explained, Japanese “modernity” and “materialization” should also be explained in order to understand the situations of
Nigerians in Japan. Modernity and materialization came to Japan with the Meiji restoration (1868-1912) and this was strengthened further during the so-called “Japanese miracle” which refers to economic restoration after World War II. I look at the situations of Nigerian males in Kabukichyo as representatives of African and Japanese “development” and transforming cultures. Nigerian male immigrants stand on the street of Kabukichyo, and hand out flyers of clubs or of undressed East Asian women, mostly Japanese and Chinese.

3.2.2 Kabukichyo

Kabukichyo is located in the Shinjuku ward in Tokyo. It is an area surrounded by large streets with lots of busy traffic, such as Yasukuni and Meiji streets. The Shinjuku ward is one of 23 wards of Tokyo, and is considered to be more urban than other parts of Tokyo. Kabukichyo is divided into two regions called i-chome and ni-chome. The west of i-chome has many cinema theaters like the Koma Theatre, which used to show theater and musicals but currently shows mostly movies. On the east side of i-chome, there is a ward office. After passing the ward office, one finds a small district called Golden Gai. This place consists of narrow paths with small shanty-style bars and clubs that were built of wood after World War II. Each bar has only a counter table and easily gets full. These shops are lined up like matchboxes. The bars are classified into three types, one of which is known as a place for artists (musicians and writers) to gather. Before the 1980s, when prostitution became outlawed in Japan, Golden Gai was known for blue line aosen: unlicensed illegal businesses connected to prostitution. However, after prostitution became illegal, bars substituted the shops. However, adult shops are still concentrated on
back streets of the *i-chome*. Because the Seibu-Shinjuku train station has expanded its business into a shopping center, chain stores related to the discount fashion business have been increased; however, compared to other parts of Shinjuku, *i-chome* Kabukichyo has less shops that sell products. Instead, the shops there provide services.

As for *ni-chome* of Kabukichyo, there is an Okubo hospital and “love hotels” on the east side. While there is a ward office, there are also a number of nightclubs and host clubs. *i-chome* has more sex shops than *ni-chome*. To the North and East side of the main streets, there are office buildings and mansions. These areas do not have an atmosphere of entertainment. There are also places where unemployed people attend career fairs. This area is also very close to Korean town in Okubo, a city near Shinjuku; thus, there are some Korean restaurants and markets.

Some parts of Kabukichyo are known as dark dangerous places, often associated with crime; however, some business shops collaborated in 2006 to illuminate some small streets of Kabukichyo. Along with every other place in Shinjuku, Kabukichyo is currently known as the "Sleepless Town" (眠らない街) because there are lights and people twenty-four hours a day. The district is actually a city that emphasizes and is a symbol of nightlife. There are not only sex shops but there are other kinds of shops as well, including *manga kissa*, a coffee shop which stores comics for customers to read, *pachinko* casinos and movie theaters. The central road of Kabukichyo is famous for scouting and “catching” or recruitment of customers by hosts of nightclubs. The atmosphere of Kabukichyo is unique due to the combination of illegal and legal entertainment businesses, which were developed out of Japanese modernity and history.
Although the origin of the name Kabukichō (歌舞伎町) comes from the fact that a kabuki theater was planned to be built in late-1940s, the theater was actually never built; however, the name has remained. Kabukichyo in English is called “an entertainment and red-light district,” commonly defined as “a neighborhood or a part of a neighborhood where businesses connected to the sex related industry (sex shops, strip clubs, adult theaters etc) exist.” Although the district is called “red light district,” there are no red lights with prostitutes in the windows like in Amsterdam. In addition, prostitution may legally or illegally take place in these areas. Indeed, Kabukichyo has a lot of bars, host bars, love hotels, shops, nightclubs, sex shops, and restaurants.

The origin of the term “red light,” being started to be used in the U.S. in the 1890s, seems to come from the red lanterns carried by railway workers. Interestingly enough, there is almost a similar word in Japanese, and it is also used in the same context. Red light district in Japanese is akasen (赤線), and it literally means "red-line." There is also a history that Japanese police drew a red line on maps to indicate the boundaries of legal red-light districts. Japanese police also use the term aosen (青線) or "blue-line" to identify a non-legal district on a map. It is essential to investigate whether the sex-related industry in Kabukichyo is illegal or legal.

It is also important to note that Kabukichyo is not only a place for sex-related industry but also other kinds of entertainment that can be enjoyed by a wide range of ages. During the daytime, a vast number of elementary to high school students and tourists can be seen, and they can walk in this district with a high feeling of safety. There
are a lot of movie theaters and fashion and food industries as well. Because it is close to a Shinjuku train station, this district can be used for students or business workers to eat and have fun after their work hours.

Before the Kabukichyo was built, the district was called Tsunohazu (角筈), and was essentially a swamp. There were also ponds used for a duck sanctuary right after the Meiki Period. The ponds were filled in when Yodobashi Purification Plant was built in 1893. In 1920, a girl's school was established together with the development of residential areas. The bombing of Tokyo in 1945 destroyed the area completely. A kabuki theater was planned, but was cancelled because of the financial problems. Despite these obstacles, Kabukichyo was redeveloped amazingly fast due in part to the efforts of the Chinese immigrants who bought land for their businesses. For instance, Lin Yiwen, the founder of Humax, started his business with a cabaret in this area.

The Japanese mafia, Yakuza, and the Chinese underground society, Triad, are found in the Kabukichyo area. Although Yakuza used to be easily identified by their fashion and attitude, nowadays it is harder because they tend to look like local Japanese people. In the same way, the members of Triad speak Japanese languages so fluently that it is sometimes very difficult to identify them. Although it varies among local Japanese population, it is said that there are more than 1,000 yakuza members in Kabukichō, and 120 different enterprises are under their control (spokesperson of Metropolitan Tokyo in 2004).
Recently, the Mayor of Tokyo, Shintaro Ishihara, has cleared the area of the Triad mostly because of visa violations. In this area, a number of Africans work illegally as well:

In the dark corners and alleys, you may find the odd man looking for prey but the days when the kyakubiki (customer pullers) announced their wares like a carnival barker seem like a distant era. If you look closely at the skyline and the lampposts, you'll notice what has replaced them: surveillance cameras. They are the same kind of cameras that went up around Shibuya station this spring, and the same ones that will probably be introduced to the Roppongi area later this year. It's all part of Governor Shintaro Ishihara's plan to clean up the streets of Tokyo: first the touts, then the juveniles lurking around after the new official curfew, and, of course, the "bad foreigners." (Ogumo, 2004, p. 1)

3.3 Self as a Researcher

In order to introduce my understanding of myself as a researcher, I need to look at my role from the perspectives of African, Africanist, and Japanese. Because I was born in a Japanese family, grew up in Japan, and spent the majority of time in Tokyo until my high school years, I should be considered as an insider to Japan and Japanese culture. However, because I decided to move to the U.S. at the age of 18 and obtain a university degree, I would like to highlight my ability to look at Japanese culture and situations in Japan objectively as an outsider. Over the past seven years in the U.S., I have acquired objectivity towards life in Japan and Japanese culture due to my involvement with other cultures.
I strongly support diversity in Japan, and as I study more books and recall my memories in Japan, I believe more and more that the homogeneity of Japan is an intention of people, mostly ethnically Japanese and Japanese-like or Japan-born Asians, who benefit from Japaneseness, including the possession of a Japanese last name. I strongly agree that the peace and strength Japan has maintained, especially after World War II, is due to its feature and self-recognition of a nation-state (one land, language, ethnicity, and culture); however, the reality has changed. Japan should be able to rationally and sensibly deal with the rise in ethnical diversity.

In addition, knowing that my subjects are male Nigerian immigrants in Tokyo, it is essential to note that I am a woman who grew up in Tokyo. The Kabukichyo area is in the Shinjuku region, one stop from a train station closest from the school I commuted to for 14 years. Thus I passed Shinjuku everyday by train and often went to Kabukichyo to eat or watch movies with my friends outside schoolwork.

Briefly speaking, I consider myself as an Africanist, but not definitively an outsider or insider. There is a question of whether or not non-Africans or “outsiders” can understand such things as African cultures or African perspectives. Studying African Studies and learning about African cultures first hand, I believe that I have obtained an “Africanist perspective,” which might not an African perspective per se. Being a Japanese woman and an Africanist, I would like to believe that there is a possibility of learning African cultures and societies by studying and involving. I believe in addition that there are certain things that an Africanist who is not an African has advantages in learning about Africa. Objectivity added to passion about Africa is sometimes beneficial
in critically thinking issues concerning Africa. I believe that some factors become certain when there is something else to compare. Because of my experiences in academics, volunteer work, traveling, summer camps, hobbies, and personal life, I have interacted with many different people in the world and have been trained to look at issues from multiple angles. I believe that comparison among people and cultures is a reasonable way of understanding a particular culture.

In African Studies, the question exists as to whether or not issues concerning Africans and Africa can be solved only by Africans. Certainly, as an Africanist, I would like for Africa to be independent in thoughts, cultures, happiness and achievements. I highlight African’s independence from former colonists and developed countries that are the outsets of World System Theory, a theory that explains a mechanism of rich remaining rich. Specifically, I would like for African countries to strengthen their virtues, which could allow the countries to be independent and have ability to fairly negotiate deals with other countries. However, I would like to note that Africa’s physical and mental independence should not lead to continental isolation.

As a Japanese researcher born in a country whose hikikomori youth has dramatically increased and which has a history of sakoku, or land locked policies, I do not support to the idea that African countries should become isolated completely. Although it is good sometimes to stay indoors and have time to restore qualities, complete isolation brings narrow mindsets. Just as a person needs some degree of

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13 This Japanese term refers to the phenomenon of acute social withdrawal and use to describe young people in Japan who have chosen to be isolated and stay indoors due to a lack of confinement to follow collective social norms in a Japanese society.
influence from the outside and inspiration, motivation, stimulation should be often happening in order to have an exciting life, it is same for a country and a continent. Especially in this globalized world, different countries and continents should interact in fair and respected ways. My status as an Africanist studying in the US and born in Japan should be useful in this regard.
CHAPTER 4. PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

In this chapter I will examine the push and pull factors that influence Nigerians to move to Japan. Most of the time, Nigerians look for the following factors in their migrating countries: higher income, improved living conditions, better working environment, improved research facilities, and possibilities for professional growth (Odunsi, 1996, p. 195). Push and pull factors is a useful method to identify the factors in Nigeria and Japan that influenced Nigerians to come to Japan. Push factors look at circumstances in Nigeria or in Africa at large that motivate Nigerians to come to Japan. Pull factors look at what in Japan attracts Nigerians and causes them to leave their own country and decide to stay or settle in such a foreign country. Thinking of the geographical or maybe the psychological distance between Japan and Nigeria, it is questionable why, how and for what Nigerians choose Japan for their settlement destination. Although there is a notion that the world is becoming smaller due to the development of technology and communication, for Nigerians it is one of the biggest decisions of their lifetime to come to Japan. It takes more time, energy, and money to arrive in Japan than one can imagine.

4.1 Push Factors

4.1.1 Political and Social Struggle

One of the biggest reasons why Nigerian men decide to leave Nigeria and look for better opportunities in other parts of the world is because they cannot find similar prospects in their own country. This is true for those who come to Japan. The shortage in capital and job opportunities is due to Nigeria’s political and social struggles, more
specifically the ethnic tensions that exist. Hausa and Flulani in a way integrated and are now the largest ethnic group in Nigeria (29% out of the total of around 150 million population); however, they are hardly seen in Japan. 70% of Nigerians who work in central business districts in Japan are from the Igbo ethnic group who are originally from Biafra (Matsumoto, 2008), and the remaining 30% is Yoruba and minority groups in southern areas of Nigeria, such as Edo. Both Matsumoto (2008) and Mr. Omo (2009) say that the distribution of power is not working in Nigeria; the people who control government and policies are mostly Hausa. For that reason, Hausa have fewer reasons to come to Japan. In our interview, Mr. Omo claimed that if there are Hausa in Japan, then they are most likely sent by the government (personal communication, August 22, 2009). Nigerians who are seen in Japan are mostly from the southern part of Nigeria because they are not satisfied with the society that is privileged only for Hausa. Mr. Omo says, “I am from a little group. So if I fight for election, for example, I do not win. It is all politics” (personal communication, August 22, 2009).

This ethnic tension in Nigeria, which has 250 ethnic groups, is also due to the influence of the colonial period during which Nigeria was divided regionally, mostly into North and South (and again within it, East and West). Although there was a unification in 1914 as the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria, Hausa-Fulani still reside mostly in the North, Yoruba in the Northwest, and Igbo in the Southeast; the integration between ethnic groups is hardly seen, either geographically and culturally. During the colonial period, the northern part of Nigeria was highly influenced by Arab and Islamic culture; therefore, Britain decided to indirectly rule the region through already-established
traditional rulers: Emirs and Satans. During this period, the region was closed to missionaries and any western influence. The Yoruba region in the eastern part of the country was the first to come into contact with western education through missionaries and produced many professionals. Yoruba traditionally had a monarchy system with Oba, a traditional head of Yoruba community, and their system had more upward mobility. However, once western education started to spread, the spread of influence was fast and enormous. By the time of independence, Igbo, an ethnic group in Nigeria, established solidarity and created a state that they claimed later for a secessionist state. Compared to the North, the Southeast and Southwest parts of the country had more educated elites at the time of independence (the North had only a 2% of literacy rate at the time) and were feared by the North for holding the power after independence. However, because the country was divided in a way that North has slightly more population that South, Hausa could occupy a majority of the seats in the Federal Legislature.

When Nigeria discovered oil in the 1970s, the separation of poor and rich, as well as the distribution of wealth among Northerners, Southeasters, and Southwesters became increasingly unfair. According to Matsumoto (2008) and Mr. Omo (2009), the oil-rich Southeast region, including the former Biafra, is the poorest in the country because the benefits from the natural resource are taken by the Hausa, who have power, and as a consequence of the war, Igbo has still suffered from oppression even forty years after the war. Ethnic groups who feel like they are losing their land, their privilege, and life itself attempt to go to “a better place.”
The Biafra War (1967-1970) started seven years after the independence of Nigeria in 1960. In 1966, due to election fraud, an Igbo military officer, Lt. Kaduna Nzeogwa, launched a coup d’état, despite the fact that his initiation was put down by a soldier, Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsí, who was also Igbo. After the coup d’état, several thousand Igbo men were murdered in North.

Ironsí was also assassinated by a Hausa officer. With these incidents and many others, on May 30th, 1967, military governor Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu claimed Biafra as an independent state because of the northern massacres and electoral fraud. South Africa, the Soviet Union, and France supported Biafra, while Britain and the U.S. supported the government of Nigeria because they did not want a country in Africa to be divided (which is ironic because the separation was due to colonization). Although there were not many massive massacres by Hausa towards Igbo during the war, around two million people in Biafra, including a large number of children, died of hunger due to Biafra being completely closed and aid being blocked. Therefore, a foreign effort such as the Red Cross could not fully support the starving population. Before and after the Biafra war, an enormous number of refugees escaped the terrible situation in Biafra to outside Nigeria.

4.1.2 Migration flow

Available previous readings show that the U.S, Canada, the Middle East, and Western Europe have been noted as the most preferable destinations for Nigerians (Odunsi, 1996; Jayasuriya & Angenot, 2008; Ember, Ember & Skoggard, 2005). In other words, there were already many migration flows of Nigerians going to foreign countries
to look for better life conditions. However, due to miscommunication, misinformation, and financial struggle, many of those who wished to go to the U.S. and Europe ended up being in Japan and other parts of non-western countries. Mr. Omo also mentioned that his initial plan was to go to a university in Oklahoma to study aviation and become a pilot. Mr. Omo ended up in Japan because he was looking for job after his father pass away fairly young. Studying in the U.S. would not earn enough to support his family, and whether working in Kabukichyo was voluntary or involuntary, it worked for him. Mr. Omo said, “It happened that I settled in Japan” (personal communication, August 22, 2009). Many Nigerians in Kabukichyo went there because they heard that Kabukichyo was the best place to earn large sums of money in a short period of time. Although they began in the business thinking that it would be temporary, it becomes a permanent job due to peer pressure and the money they receive. When they are in Japan and become addicted to the job, or fall in love with people who are business insiders or Japanese in general, they decide, like Mr. Omo, to marry someone who is Japanese. This also helps them to stay in Japan longer than their initial visa or status provides.

4.1.3 Family Structure

Apart from economic crisis and political change, the cultural shift in Nigeria should be noted as one of important factors of Nigerian manpower leaving Nigeria and moving to Japan and elsewhere in the world. Traditional values in Nigeria emphasized a strong household and the father figure as the pillar of a family, not only in terms of offering economical support but also controlling the modesty and decency of a family. However, due to some characteristics of a family which have shifted and others which
have not shifted, it is easier for men to move their families to more urban areas or to other countries to earn money for the family. In this section, I introduce the notions of family crisis, gender differences, child labor, and urban migration, which have been highlighted by some scholars. All of these factors are influenced by westernization and modernization, which strengthened after the colonization period and developed more in the globalization period. I believe that these characteristics, which are found in Nigeria, have a huge impact on the increasing number of male Nigerian immigrants in Japan. Historically Nigeria has a strong patrilineal focus with strong extended family ties. Nevertheless, with the need for manpower, westernization, urbanization, and the expansion of brain drain, families’ traditional values have changed to nuclear family values.

4.1.4 The Dynamics of Gender Differences

According to Amponsah, Akotia, & Olowu (2006), although a mixture of modernity and traditions can be excessively found in Ghana, “the transition has been slow for women” (p. 343). This is relatively similar for Nigeria.

The reason why many children leave their family to earn money connects with the fact that men often leave their families for looking for higher income. The question of “what are the family issues that “push” children into the streets?” also goes along with a question of men leaving their family and deciding to earn money in a foreign country. For example, Amponsah, Akotia, & Olowu (2006) highlight the family environment in South Africa: “The home is no longer a refuge of harmony, understanding, peace, and quiet but the site of dispute and violence between individuals of different ages and gender” (p.
Whether it is African or Nigerian, the fact is that there are a great deal of power relations in the family between both men and women and adults and children. Within the blanket term, “family issues,” there are various matters, such as a family’s economic circumstances, the extended family system (Wilson & Ngige, 2006), domestic violence, gender discrimination, traditional customs, and family systems that lie between modernity and tradition (Amponsah, Akotia, & Olowu, 2006). Whether or not the shifted family values should be considered a crisis or as simply a change, this shift in values is definitely one of the causes of brain drain of Nigerian men and Nigerian immigrants moving to foreign countries.

4.2 Pull factors

4.2.1 The Collapse of Japanese Bubble Economy and Shortage of Labor Force

When Japan had a good economy but lack in manpower, Nigerians started to come to fill in blue collar jobs. Later Japan’s economy collapsed, and the priority for blue collar jobs became Japanese people (Japanese people started to need even blue collar jobs). Japan’s economy has drawn migrants for the past 100 years, beginning with the prewar and interwar period, when Koreans came to Japan to work.

In order to know the reasons why Nigerian men started to come to Japan, it is essential to look at the patterns of migration in Japan at large. The migration of other nationalities strongly influences the ones of Nigerian male population. During the prewar and interwar period (World War II), during Japan’s so-called 35-year colonial rule (1910-1945), there were many Koreans coming into Japan to work. Michael Weiner says, “In a 1931 survey of nearly one thousand factories in Osaka, for example, it was found that
Koreans comprised 8.4 per cent of labour force, and that in certain areas…this figure rose to more than 10 percent” (2004, p. 313). As Weiner (2004) points out, the number does not clearly show the actual economic, social, political and cultural impacts on both on the receiving society and the migrants themselves. During this period, Koreans were hired as “temporally replacement labour,” which actually affected long-term jobs that “indigenous workers avoided due to poor wages, undesirable working conditions, unsocial hours and law status” (p. 313). Both Koreans and Chinese people are called old-comers. There is a long history of Chinese people voluntarily and involuntarily coming into Japan; however, during World War II, there was an enormous number of Chinese people who were forced to come to Japan, sometimes by abductions to fulfill labor, and this created a flow of migration from China afterwards.

Starting from the 1980s, Japan became “a key migrant-receiving country” (Douglass and Roberts, 2003, p. 306) and demonstrated shifting patterns of immigration. The 1980s’ and 1990s’ growth in the employment of newcomers, foreign workers of the second phase, is one of the biggest reasons why there was an increased flow of many African males, starting with Ghanaians and later Nigerians, coming into Japan to work. Takeuchi (2009) explains more about the idea of newcomers: “Unlike the old-time Koreans and Chinese who look like the ethnic Japanese, the newcomers’ physical appearance, such as hair color, eye color, and skin color, was very different from the ethnic Japanese.” Cambodian Vietnamese and South Americans, including Nikkei Brazilians (Brazilians of Japanese descent), are some of the biggest second phase
newcomers (Douglass & Roberts, 2003), and many of them are considered refugees due to the living conditions of their home countries.

As indicated in the previous paragraph, among those newcomers are Nigerian men. As Mr. Omo says, up to the late 1980s, the economy of Japan was good but it was lacking in manpower, so many Japanese institutions decided to hire foreigners to fill in jobs that were called “Ds” (personal communication, August 22, 2009) or “blue-collar jobs.” “Ds” stands for Difficult, Dirty, and Dangerous jobs. In addition, in the 1990s and early 2000s with the economic crisis, the need for foreign workers further increased and more Nigerians came. Douglass and Roberts say, “In many ways the recession has boosted the demand for foreign workers as a means for small business to keep costs down in a time of falling real prices for commodities and services in Japan” (2003, p. xiv).

However, during the last few years of the 2000s, with one of the worst economic situations in Japan’s history, even these blue-collar jobs are being taken by Japanese people, and many Nigerians had to leave the country. Nigerians who are in Japan now are the ones who came right before and after the collapse of the bubble economy in Japan in the 1990s. They have been able to stay in Japan mostly due to their success in a business and family relationship in Japan.

Matsumoto points out how Nigerian men came to business districts like Kabukichyo (2008, p. 140). It was Ghanaian men who first came to Japan in the 1980s during the bubble economy and started to work in factories in the suburban area of Tokyo, such as in the Saitama prefecture. However, around 1995, when they lost their jobs due to the economic crisis in Japan, Ghanaians started to come to Tokyo. Nigerian men came in
the beginning of the 2000s and pushed away Ghanaians, especially in the downtown areas in Tokyo. Among all Nigerians, the ones who were good at business management started shops to sell Hip-Hop style clothes and items in big fashion areas (or downtown) like Harajuku in Tokyo. Some became doormen of Fuujokuten, for shops related to the sex related industry. Currently, Nigerian men have monopolized the work in sex related industry.

In addition, in the late 1990s and beginning of the 2000s, due to the Winter Olympics held in Karuizawa in 1998 and a desire to have a summer Tokyo Olympics in 2016, Tokyo Mayor Shintaro Ishihara took action to clean up the city of Tokyo by transferring homeless people to shelters, renewing prefectures, and so forth. Also, due to the increasing number of murders and incidences by foreign workers and all others, Ishihara took action by cracking down on Chinese Fuujokuten through the Immigration Bureau of Japan (東京入管) and the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department (警視庁 Keishichō). In 2003 alone, they examined 103 shops and arrested 801 people. As a result, many Chinese Fuujokuten closed, and many empty spaces in Kabukichyo appeared. Those spaces thus became very cheap and affordable for Nigerian men. Before 2003, shops were sold for over 600,000 yen (6,000 dollars); however, now they sell for around 360,000 yen including utilities, which is almost half the price (Matsumoto, 2008, p.140). The efforts to clean up Tokyo definitely affected not only Nigerians who want to come to Japan, but also their thoughts about living there long-term.

After 2008, however, due to the economic downturn, Japan realized the fact that:
Its labor force is shrinking faster than the population as a whole; Japanese women are already shunning the positions being taken by foreign workers; and the elderly cannot do most of the ‘dangerous, dirty, and difficult’ jobs taken by foreign workers. (Roberts, 2000, p. x).

Therefore, foreign workers started to lose their jobs as Japanese workers began to take their place. Mr. Omo said, “Now the economy is bad in Japan, even Japanese people are looking for job opportunities. Many Nigerians I know also have gone or planning to go back home” (personal communication, August 22, 2009).

One of the biggest reasons for the shortage of labor force in Japan is the decline of birth rate, which is called Shoshika in Japanese. Although Japan does not have a policy to regulate how many children a family should have, due to the expensive living in Japan and increasing number of working class families, a family has an average of one and a half children (CIA The World Factbook, 2009). The decline of Japan’s birthrate has been so rapid that “[t]he total population is projected to fall to 100 million by 2050,” and by then “Japan will have the world’s oldest population” (Douglass & Roberts, 2003, p. x). Because of the improvements in medicine, the peaceful condition of the country after World War II, and the nature of Japanese food, Japan has had the highest life expectancy. That is why by 2050 there will be a situation where “of the age 65-plus population 60 percent will be over 75 years old” (Douglass & Roberts, 2003, p. x). Knowing these factors, Japan realized that it needed 610,000 immigrants in order to maintain the working power in Japan (Asahi Shimbun 2002). The total of 700,000 foreign workers in
2002 shows that Japan reached the number. The shortage of the labor force highly influenced many immigrants, but especially Nigerian men, to come to Japan.

4.2.2 Loneliness as a Cause of Night Life Being Developed

Loneliness of youth, women, and men in Japan has helped to develop the nightlife culture in Kabukichyo, a district where people with various ethnic and national backgrounds have come to establish their economic stratagem. It is interesting that Japanese people’s struggle of dealing with sexual dynamics and loneliness has met an international desire of foreign business and created a unique business strategy. Nigerian men would not be working in Kabukichyo if the nightlife were dying in Japan. There are increasing numbers of Japanese youth becoming hosts and hostesses due to the loss of their ambition to study or work in business companies or official institutions. Many drop out of school or work because of social pressure. Many choose to become “freeters,” which can be defined as people “who do not work as full-time employees but move from one part-time or contract job to another” (Genda, 2005, p.x). It is important to note that youth unemployment is usually involuntary, although there is a contention that it is voluntary, a choice of “one’s own will” (Genda, 2005, p.4). Economic crisis also has influenced many Japanese institutions to change their employment style; more importantly, the victims of this shift in style are young people. ‘Lifetime’ employment and remuneration systems based on seniority and length of service were common before the 1990s; companies have since significantly reduced the number of full-time regular employees. They have started to depend upon part-time and contract workers because they can decrease or increase the number of employees or the amount of salaries.
according to circumstances and employees’ job performance (Genda, 2005, pp. ix-x). In addition, many companies initiate cutbacks in new hiring and training programs due to shortages in their budgets. Therefore, young people who are at the bottom of an organization and cannot climb up the seniority system have to remain in those lower-level jobs and therefore lose their motivation to work (Genda, 2005, p. 6) Because it is considered to be a performance-based pay system, workers who lose confidence and motivation to continue working when they dislike their working conditions or changes in their job description, which are actually companies’ initiatives, are forced to leave their work.

The mental distance between adults and youth is the biggest reason for young people to choose to work in nightlife. Many young adults express their stress through their fashion, mostly by dying their hair and wearing clothes in a certain style. Japanese youth and adults are so separate, Japanese youths don’t get the affection and attention they need, and so turn to other outlets, including nightlife, which keeps Nigerian men employed in areas like Kabukichyo. Many follow the style of Gyaru (female) and Gyaruo (male). The culture of Gyaru and Gyaruo is very complex: people can recognize an individual as a gyaru or gyaruo by their motto “loose life,” which is expressed in their fashion, daily vocabularies, and behaviors. Their motto is a reaction towards the conservative and strict Japanese education systems and social norms. Japanese educators, including schoolteachers and parents, have a tendency to focus on collective will rather than young people’s individual possibilities. It is common to hear Japanese parents complaining, “Why is every other child in school and my child is not?” or “Why are you
doing different things from others?” What a society expects people to do becomes the parents’ and educators’ will for young people; young people are expected to get through entrance examinations, to go to a good, well-known university, and to get a job in a good and well-known company. In this regard, relationships between educators and children or parents and children are completely ignored and focused more on adults’ ambition for children. Japanese education, both informal and formal, has overemphasized strict orders, rules, typical life patterns (high school, university, marriage, work, etc.), and group goals.

Looking at youth’s expression nowadays, it is not too much to say that Japan has slowly been corrupted from inside. Although the expectations are high, the relationship between adults and the youth is so distanced that young people do not have places to go when they encounter problems. Students do not visit teachers’ offices and do not ask questions of teachers. I imagine that many Japanese students do not even consider their teachers’ offices as places for them to visit. They rarely ask questions in their classes because they know that a question is a disturbance of the class, as their teachers often describe. Many students ask questions of their classmates and do not even think about asking their teachers.

The stress of youth is even apparent in everyday news. Especially in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the number of strange murders was tremendously increasing in Japan. Teachers kill students. Students kill teachers. Mothers kill their own children. Children kill their parents. For instance, on May 27th 1997, the head of Jun Hase, an 11-year-old boy, was found in front of the school gate. This murder was committed by a 14-year-old boy named Sakakibara. He cut off Hase’s head after mutilating multiple other
body parts. A letter, written in red pen and found in Hase’s mouth, expressed that this was Sakakibara’s “revenge” against the brutal school system. Japan also shows one of the highest suicide rates among youth. Because of the distance between youth and older generations, it is difficult for them to understand each other, and it leads to serious social problems.

A common expression of middle-aged Japanese people is, “I do not understand the youth of today.” Because the older generations do not spend much time with younger people, there are no longer common norms between them. Once parents realize the distance between them and their children, they feel that they do not have the right to educate their children who show potentially dangerous signals, like smoking cigarettes and dying their hair blond. Therefore, even though students have problems, they do not have anybody to ask for help. If they don’t get warm attention from adults even after showing their stress in becoming Gyaru or Gyaruo, they choose “a dangerous way” by entering into nightlife in the Kabukichyo area, and becoming hosts and hostesses.

The pressures on Japanese students to perform well on competitive entrance examinations and the assignments and expectations at Juku are enormous. Juku, or “cram school,” is what students attend after high school to prepare for the entrance examinations of universities. Some go there when they are middle school students. It is a common belief in Japan that if children do not go to Juku, they will neither be successful in their current classes nor be accepted to universities. As a result, children study for their Juku all night and sleep in their schools the next day. The purposes of the actual school lectures have been questioned for decades. In addition, while students study for the
examinations for years, they often develop serious mental or physical sicknesses, like anorexia, rebound weight, depression, and so forth. Students, especially younger ones, are supposed to be outside under the sun playing with their friends, instead of facing their books all day and becoming ill.

While Japan has the choice to emphasize individual possibility, the motto of Japanese education is currently *Issei-kyouiku*, or simultaneous education. It means that children should learn to fulfill united actions. Therefore, many parents and educators want their children to achieve the same things as others and fail to consider their children’s uniqueness. The concerns of parents are usually for their children to achieve common goals, such as entering ‘good’ schools and getting ‘good’ jobs. ‘Good’ schools for many Japanese people are *Gosanke*, or the top three schools, which include every grade level (from kindergarten to university). Japanese people consider ‘good’ jobs to be working as a lawyer or a doctor, or working for famous businesses. Individual possibilities are neglected in Japan.

The necessity of individual possibilities can be proven from the current students’ stresses of being the victims of the typical life patterns of Japan. The students struggle with the mainstream idea of “common sense” and the things that “everyone else does.” *Izime*, meaning bullying, and *hikikomori*, or isolation and confinement, are typical effects of the stress. As an example of the stress of missing the typical life pattern, many students who are not accepted by the university easily become isolated and totally lose their confidence. Indeed, *Ronin*, originally meaning a wandering or hopeless person, is a word to describe a student who has graduated from high school but has failed to be accepted by
a university. It is common for students to be Ronin for many years. This identity leads many students to become a part of Yakuza or Bousouzoku, organized crime groups.

The increasing possibility of “non-Japanese” men marrying Japanese women cannot be explained only by receiving more foreign workers or students, but also through influences by mass media and the increase in the number of Japanese going abroad and becoming more international. Increasing respect for different cultures is not the only reason for Japanese women to be attracted to foreign men, despite the fact that they sometimes know getting a permanent residence is the ultimate goal for these men. In post-World War II Japan, Japanese people have recognized the need for gender equality in their everyday life, education and work places. Before then, women were generally expected to become housewives after graduating high school. Currently, gender roles are relatively equal in terms of access to education and occupation availability. However, in real life, the expectation towards women at home has not changed. Women who are now expected to do as well as men in work places are still expected to do the same home duties as housewives, despite the fact that they can be as tired as men at the end of the day. In addition, due to Japanese culture, which is most of the time indirect and impassionate compared to other cultures, men forget to express their appreciation and feelings for their loved ones. Therefore, many times, foreign men who can cook for women and can express their feelings to women easily attract Japanese women. In a similar way, because of the lack of communication within families due to increasingly developing technology, working hours, and so forth, the boundary of families has
changed. In conclusion, loneliness of youth, women, and men in Japan has helped to develop the nightlife culture in Kabukichyo.

4.3 Case Study: A Man called “Austin”

I directly translated and partly summarized a portion of Matsumoto’s book (2008), entitled アフリカレポート: 壊れる国、生きる人々 (A Report from Africa: Countries Breaking and People Living), from Japanese to English. This text, and my translation of it, aims to provide a qualitative study of an autobiography of another Nigerian man in Kabukichyo, named Austin. I decided to add this autobiography beside my own case study of Mr. Omo in order for the readers see the level of personal dynamics in Mr. Omo’s narratives.

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Austin, thirty-eight years old, Nigerian, originally from Biafra, was an owner of one of the “Gaijin bars” on the fourth floor of “The Katrina,” which is a building full of bars and hostess/host clubs. Before dawn on the morning of 8 July 2006, he was arrested due to an offense report for withdrawing 200,000 yen, which is approximately 2000 dollars, from a customer’s credit card to charge for two bottles of high-grade champagne that the customer did not order. The customer was intoxicated, so when he signed for 6600 yen (66 dollars), he did not realize for awhile that the shop did not return his card for a long time. As it happens in many other shops, Austin signed the receipts of the customer and withdrew 200,000 yen from a bank for himself.

Austin’s English ability was poor, so there was a translator in between him and the police for the investigation. A police officer put the two receipts of two bottles of rosé
(a brand called Dom Pérignon produced by Moët et Chandon) in front of him. One bottle cost 100,000 yen, and the receipts showed that Austin charged the customer for two of them. On the receipts, there was a sign that was not in Japanese (the majority of Japanese customers write their names in Chinese characters kanji for their signatures). The police asked, “Who signed on this paper?” Austin answered, “The customer, himself signed.” A lawyer visited him many times and finally Austin confessed. Until the Tokyo District Court (東京地裁 toukyouchisai) sentenced him to two years of penal labor (懲役 chyoueki) and four years of suspended sentence (執行猶予 syukkouyuyo), he spent four months in a Tokyo detention center (東京拘置所 Toukyyou kouchisyo).

The police also asked Austin if it was true that a total of 26 bottles of Dom Pérignon Rosé were sold within six months after the opening of the bar, and Austin said yes. However, the police already investigated the vendor, and the vendor disclosed that there were no requests for Dom Pérignon Rosé from Austin’s shop. Austin actually was charging customers for items he did not have stocked. According to the credit card company, there was evidence of swiping a customer’s card for 1,560,000 yen (15,600 dollars) although the company rejected the payment. Despite Austin’s crimes, he did not receive an expulsion order to go back to Nigeria, because he had a Japanese wife and a four-year old son.

When Matsumoto visited Austin at his house in the Kanagawa prefecture, which is around two hours from Tokyo, and asked why he was doing such bottakuri business, Austin answered that he initially wanted to do a business of sending spare car parts to
Nigeria. His work in Kabukichyo (he started as being a host in the beginning) was to earn money for the foundation of the business.

According to Austin, he came to Japan in December 2001 with a tourist visa. At first he went to South Africa from the largest city in Nigeria, Lagos. He used a flight from Johannesburg to Hong Kong, which is a direct flight. While he was in Hong Kong with a big Nigerian community, he learned about Japan and received contact information. At first, he was living in Yokohama and did not know about Kabukichyo at all. As a trial run, he bought spare car parts and sent them to his cousin in Lagos. It took one month for them to get to Nigeria, one month for the parts to be sold, and one month to get the money back. After he realized that this business was not successful, he heard about a job in street catching for a shop connected to the sex-related industry in the Roppongi district in Tokyo. He heard that he could get enormous amounts of money in a short period. Because the space for the shop was at the time cheap enough, he decided to pay a deposit with his friends and started the business. Because the history of their business was very short and still did not have regular customers, street catching was the only recruiting strategy.

Austin married his Japanese wife in 2002 and that year their son was born. Austin heard from other Nigerians that he should marry a Japanese woman because Nigerians are easy to be noticed in a crowd and could be reported. However, if they are married to Japanese and receive a permanent residency, a deportation would not happen. Austin did not talk about how he met his wife; however, his wife said, “He was very kind, and he always told me he loved me very much. When I am busy, he often cooked for me. I was
moved.” This goes back to my point about why Japanese women would be attracted to “non-Japanese” men.

Austin was born in Owerri, which was the capital of Biafra, in 1970. It was the year when Biafra lost everything. Austin’s father owned a bakery but passed away when Austin was five years old. His mother took over his father’s business and raised Austin and his two brothers; Austin is the second one of the three. His elder brother graduated from a state university and had a degree in carpentry but could not find a job, so he opened a shop. His younger brother went to the U.S. Austin also went to the same university as the oldest one and graduated with a degree in management. He worked as a regional public servant; however, many times he did not receive his salary at all or on time, so he left. For a while, he helped with his oldest brother’s business, but his earnings were not stable. He was already over 30 years old and could not get married. He said, “I wanted to go somewhere I can get something when I make efforts. In my region, there were no condition for human being to live, but the government is not doing anything to improve. If you don’t have a connection with people, you cannot get a job. This is same for people who have degrees.” He also said, “Is there is any good to having oil in your region? Gas is making noise and burning 24 hours, but we are poor. Although oil is coming out in front of you, you don’t get even a drop of fuel. Because of the hot wind, all the vegetation around it dies. We used to grow a yam that was around 30 centimeters but now it is around 10 centimeters.” When Matsumoto asked what Austin wanted to do next, he said he wanted to get into the car business, although his wife wanted him to do a more inconspicuous job.
CHAPTER 5. POSTNATIONAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION:
EXAMINING THE CASE OF MR. OMO

The previous chapters have focused on the arrival of Nigerian men in Tokyo and formation of the Nigerian subculture in the Kabukichyo area of Tokyo. The aim of the present chapter is to present a case study of a particular person, Mr. Omo, and to understand aspects of identity transformation among the Nigerian mobile population.

Mr. Omo is my informant and an owner of a hostess club in Kabukichyo, Tokyo. He proudly revealed on the first day we met that the building that we were standing in front of was his shop. Interestingly enough, my interview and conversation with Mr. Omo the next day clearly showed his distance from this Kabukichyo subculture of Tokyo. He emphasized his identity characteristics, which could be called postnational or transnational. Given the short duration of time spent with Mr. Omo for the purpose of our interview, this research is limited in terms of the amount of information that could be collected. The aim of this interview was to understand what Mr. Omo “wanted” to tell me about himself and his community. Mr. Omo’s ideal images of himself and his community allowed me to understand what has happened or what might be happening to his identity and how the environment in which he conducts his business affects him. Mr. Omo’s self-reflectivity and his understanding of his community are partly disclosed in the conversation with him.

5.1 Identity, Citizenship, Postnationalism, and Transnationalism

Before I start examining Mr. Omo’s particular situation and his views, I would like to clarify the terms ‘identity’ and ‘citizenship.’ Karen A. Cerulo (1997) says that the
study of sociological identity has developed since 1970. She says that identity was initially considered to solely be a construction of an “individual’s sense of self” that was influenced by “interpersonal communication.” However, many recent studies show a relocation of sociologists’ presentation of identity. They started to present identity in connection to collective terms such as gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and class (Cerulo, p. 385-386). In addition, the culture-personality school of thoughts uses “…cross-cultural ethnographic information to assess the degree to which distinct personality configurations were regularly associated with particular cultures” (Lavenda & Schultz, 2007, p. 57). This culture-personality school of thoughts, being developed by psychological anthropologists, might be one of the closest to my understanding of the relationship between the subculture in Kabukichyo and Mr. Omo’s understanding of his identity.

Both generally and in scholarship, the understanding of citizenship has also undergone a big shift. Citizenship initially worked to provide protected rights, entitlement, and status; it also emphasized geographical boundaries and national territories in which citizens reside (Ong, 2006, p. 501). However, because of the increasing number of, and “the visibility of,” people in the world who belong to more than one nation or cultures, these customary elements of citizenship have become disarticulated. Feyzi Baban (2006) also says, “…the traditional tools of national narratives with respect to articulations of identity and membership are exhausted” (Baban, 2006, p. 185). Within national narratives, a person with a particular citizenship had been expected to possess a sense of a collective identity in the country of citizenship;
however, the idea of citizenship in connection to national identity has transformed to include dependence upon one’s personhood.

I would also like to draw attention to the relationship between citizenship and identity. Mr. Omo’s twofold self-identification as Japanese and African articulates the citizenship-identity connection. Mobile persons of the 21st century, like Mr. Omo, who were born in a nation that he or she is/has considered “native” (Subreenduth, 2008) and reside in a nation in which he or she chooses citizenship, struggle not only to select a single “national identity” but also to abandon a sense of responsibility. This hardship is especially common in a country like Japan, which does not allow secondary citizenship in another country.

To obtain the right to legally live in Japan and to earn respect for the Japanese population, the only choices for Mr. Omo were marriage, naturalization, or ridding himself of his Nigerian citizenship. The “national order of things” in Japan has forced people to make a binary choice in order to acquire or neglect a Japanese citizenship. By “national order of things,” Malkki refers to “an order, which despite its historical recency, presents itself as an ancient and natural” (Malkki, p. 2) This forced decision has changed the conditions of many African migrants like Mr. Omo. Mr. Omo initially obtained Japanese citizenship not because he had a desire to acquire a Japanese identity, but rather, because he wished to acquire a right to develop his livelihood in Japan and to earn respect. Due to his feeling of responsibility to have a Japanese citizenship and to have a family in Japan, he feels obligated to acquire more Japanese characteristics, which for him constitutes acquiring the Japanese language. In sum, the recent mobile population
has a tendency to think that they have free will concerning which elements to include within their identity. However, the administrative procedure of obtaining a new citizenship strongly affects one’s identity, especially when one has a family in the land of their new citizenship. The citizenship-identity connection is so strong that it is often difficult to control at the personal level.

In order to understand the transformation of Mr. Omo’s identity, I would like to use two themes that have been used by many anthropologists and sociologists to study migrants’ citizenship and identity. Transnationality is a principle that crosses national borders (Flemmen, 2008). The transnational family, for example, which is defined by Zlatko Skrbis (2008) as “a symptom of our increasingly globalised lives, which take place across borders and boundaries, thereby eroding the possibility that places of birth, life and dying will coincide” (p. 231). The complexity of the transnational position also stem from one’s distinct and unique cultural (sometime religious, racial, national or ethnical,) background, which does not remain in a single form. Furthermore, when the transnational family co-resides in a particular country, the issue of citizenship also raises complications. Transnational marriages often happen when one visits, studies, works, or settles in a “foreign” country. Either of the spouses might be from the host country, or spouses might choose each other outside of their host country. Interestingly, “how the presumed characteristics of [national, such as ‘Africaness’ and Japaneseness’] are put into play … through the institution of marriage” (Flemmen, 2008, p. 115). In many lives of migrants, family and marriage has been a meeting point of being transnational and has
tremendously affected one’s personal identity in negotiation with one’s national identities.

Baban (2006) acknowledges the importance of the postnational understanding of citizenship and identity. Postnationalism largely includes four characteristics: 1. Transnational communities playing a key role in the process; 2. De-linking citizenship from national identities; 3. The basis of personhood; and finally, 4. The separation of National identity from geographical territory (Baban, 2006). Looking at these elements one by one is essential. First of all, according to Baban (2006), the postnational stance occurs in a transnational community: “Large numbers of workers, immigrants, refugees, exiles and intellectuals live in communities whose origins belong to other national narratives and who often have divided loyalties … They are, on the one hand, connected to their country of origin, yet, on the other, embedded within the lived experience of their adopted countries” (p. 186). Secondly, because “citizenship rights are no longer conditional upon being a part of national identity” (Baban, 2006, p. 187), migrants for example can claim for a citizenship without acquiring a national identity.

In addition, because “national identity” is a creation by “the cultural hegemony” (Baban, 2006, p. 187), it neglects culture of “marginalized” population. People who are experiencing postnational identity have a wish to claim dual, multiple, or transnational citizenship because they do not feel comfortable setting their national identity in one country. In addition, postnationlaism finds limitation in a particular citizenship and often feels part of a member of wider entities, for example supranational entities such as the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union, and so forth. The postnational
stance also looks at personhood regardless of, or outside of, one’s citizenship and national identity. Within the notion of postnational approach, the value of personhood is referred to by more “universal” criteria (Baban, 2006). Baban argues that the debate “…underestimates the deep political connection between citizenship regimes and national narratives” (2006, p. 185). Finally, the transformation of being postnational could be resulted from external pressure or “the internal transformations of nation-states” (Baban, 2006, p. 187).

5.2 The Challenge of the Self-Community Relationship

The dynamics of Mr. Omo’s identity can be studied by looking at the self-community relationship. This study is useful to understand how one decides which characteristic in him or her ascribed or achieved. However, it seemed to me that both characteristics have a big deal with one’s unconscious understanding of practicality. Mr. Omo’s construction of his identity seems to be heavily influenced by the situation in his home country, his new family in Japan, and his business arena.

5.2.1 The Self for and by the Family

The postnational stance goes beyond one’s citizenship and national identity; it emphasizes the dynamic of personhood, which is sometimes transnational (Baban, 2006, p. 187). It also considers these personal dynamics to be significant and to have a global value. There is a range of degrees from which one can depart from one’s citizenship and collective identity. It is essential to look at Mr. Omo’s personhood in relation to Nigerians’ ways of life in Kabukichyo, for not only do collective values in a community influence the lives of individuals, but also individuals affect the organism of their
communities. This section looks at the degree of Mr. Omo’s preservation of “self” within his community.

Despite Mr. Omo’s belonging and dependency on his fellow Africans, he possesses the ability to “take independent action to pursue goals of [his] own choosing,” which is one of the definitions of acquiring “agency” (Lavenda & Schultz, 2007, p. 56). Some of his comments show his feeling of being an individualist and being different from other Nigerians and Africans. When I asked Mr. Omo, “What are your experiences in Japan as a Nigerian male immigrant in Tokyo?” he replied, “Everyone is here for different purposes. If you want to talk about mine, I can only talk about mine. Nigerians are not my concern… Everyone has his or her own pride” (personal communication, August 22, 2009). One of the biggest reasons behind this comment seemed to be his loyalty in keeping his fellow workers’ privacy, which might deal with illegality and other complex matters. However, his individualistic elements are also shown. With supports from and to his fellow Africans on an everyday basis in a market place where a teamwork is a key, I believe that the high degree of his self-awareness\(^\text{14}\) is exclusive. His element in this regard also allowed him to participate in my study alone. Within the subculture of Nigerian men in Japan, which I have explained in the previous chapters, I believe that he does show a unique case. Because individuals make up a community, I believe that his positive state of mind enriches the framework of a sub-culture in Kabukichyo.

\(^\text{14}\) “That is, they can realistically assess their likes, dislikes, strengths, and weakness, as well as the degree to which their goals do or do not mesh with those of other people and institutions” (Lavenda & Schultz, 2007, p. 62).
He sometimes became emotional talking about his personal matters, especially those regarding to his family members, and showed his strong “sense of self.” Interestingly enough, Mr. Omo’s individual sense of “self” seemed to be shaped by his logic of responsibility to his family in Japan. Although it is highly possible that his fellow Africans suggested he marries a Japanese national due to the possibility of obtaining residency in Japan, describing his personal contact with his wife and his daughter caused him to become emotional. His personal choice in becoming more of a Japanese person (the elements of being Japanese will be explained later) and an outstanding individual is to support his family.

Mr. Omo is fully aware of the Japanese political construction of the word “immigrants.” He rejects the Japanese understanding of “ideal-typical figure” (Malkki, 1995, p.52), which comes from the word “immigrants” and the notion of outsiders. Mr. Omo considers that the word “immigrants” itself place migrants in the periphery of a society, which Watts (cited in Malkki, 1995, p. 117) might call “limbo.” Giorgio Agamben could call “excluded groups who dwell in ‘a zone of indistinction’ (cited in Ong, 2006, p. 503). In other words, when one is identified as an immigrant, he or she feels forced to be different and to stay marginalized.

Mr. Omo is aware that immigrants in Japan carry a particular image, are objects of power, and are still under “control” (Malkki, 1995, p. 52) in order for the country to maintain its own idea of nationalism. Watts (cited in Malkki, 1995, p. 5) calls this, “…ritual… [and] continual, taken-for-granted exercise of power” (p. 5). In other words, Mr. Omo believed that the word “immigrants” is the effect of drawing a line between
insiders and outsiders. Mr. Omo considered himself an economic migrant who settled in Japan as a nationalized man, and therefore did not wish to be a part of the “outsiders.” Mr. Omo’s speech emphasized his postnational and transnational nature in his identity and he also wished to become a communication tool between Nigeria and Japan by collaborating with local leaders in Nigeria, national government and supranational organizations. Furthermore, he wanted to open businesses across borders and import/export between the two countries. These plans are to develop mutual understanding of the countries.

5.2.2 Mr. Omo’s Sense of His Community

Although he remarked on his individual sense of self, Mr. Omo’s inerasable belonging and dependency on other “Nigerian diaspora” and African workers in Kabukichyo should be noted. Mr. Omo preferred to be called “Nigerian diaspora,” although he denied the term “Nigerian immigrants.” This demonstrates his feeling of being associated with people of his country being migrated to Japan. He also discussed the unity of Blackness, which represented his understanding of being African in Japan. I asked him why he preferred to live in Japan as an African more than Edo, he stated, “This is our identity, this skin. We are black. Where I see black, there is love. Like Bob Marley, black makes us together everywhere we go. If you see Black, you see them as brothers and sisters and feel one love” (personal communication, August 22, 2009). The concept of Africaness seems to be related to Blackness. Based on the above statement, Mr. Omo accepted the fact that he was a part of the “collective.”
Mr. Omo’s situation of being born in Africa and growing up as an Edo in Nigeria shaped his social identities and sense of belonging to Africa, Africans, minority Nigerians, and Edo. The reason why I emphasized minority groups is that Mr. Omo constantly emphasized ethnic tensions in Nigeria, and he recognized that the ethnic tensions in Japan were also mainly from minority groups. He often corrected me not to call Nigerians in Japan as “Nigerians.” He also slightly expressed his own rivalry to other ethnic groups. The following is his comment on ethnic tension leading a national unstableness being expressed by Mr. Omo:

Nigeria is not poor country…We have everything. But because of no trust, corruption, mismanagement, the money has in some of few hands. Some does not have the privilege to get on top. In Nigeria, we have tribal conflicts. We have 3 major ethnic groups…This area is Muslim…more populated…followed by this Yoruba, followed by Igbo. But I am from this little group. So if I flight for election, I do not win. It is all politics. For Japan it is easy…one language, one color, and one ethnic group…one culture. See…in Japan no shooting nor riots…it is peace. Japanese is one family. (personal communication, August 22, 2009)

This is Mr. Omo’s expression of collective memory, or “‘Mythico-history” (Malkki, 1995). Being part of a minority group in Nigeria and having unequal opportunities not only encouraged his motivation to come to Japan, but also to encouraged him to construct his unique identity. In our interview, Mr. Omo preferred to either use the term “Africans” rather than “Nigerians,” or to use no terms at all in order express being global. I believe
that this trend in him shows his unconscious belief that a postnational and transnational figure is more likely makes peace.

Mr. Omo’s understanding of ethnic, racial, or national identity such as being African, being Edo, and being Black seemed to be something unchangeable. This appeared to Mr. Omo to be an “ascribed status,” something that one is born with and cannot be transformed. In addition, in his understanding, the location where one is born is something that is given for a purpose and meant to be satisfactory. The following is Mr. Omo’s statement showing his understanding of the place of birth and nationality:

[We should consider] Ecology. Eco system. When the world was good, you did not need to travel. Japan is made for Japanese. The culture and the plants…the family. You need to look at your place. America is for Americans. African is for Africans. This is how the God created it. In the west world, like in Japan, you have long hair because the God gives you because samui... it covers you when it is cold. In Africa, we don’t have it because it is hot. We don’t have snow. We don’t have cold and need winter jackets. That is why the God gives our hair. We call it eco system. Ecology. Biology. You live where you are. You see fishes inside water where creates air. Everyone has in the way that the God wants you to live.

However, paying attention to his responsibility of becoming Japanese for his family, Japaneseness for Mr. Omo is something that one can achieve by making much effort. In short, the creation of the self includes how one negotiates his or her position with others
and others’ positions within themselves. In addition, understanding of others also influences the self.

5.3 Mr. Omo Setting a “National” Characteristic in a Transnational Family

Interestingly enough, Mr. Omo believes that the ability of fitting into the homogenous nature of citizenship in Japan, while maintaining one’s Africaness, is the way to acquire the real meaning of being a transnational, both professionally and individually. That is why, although he was aware of his postantional and transnational characteristics, he made an effort to fit into Japanese society and family. That is why he created a new transnational category for other Japanese individuals, especially his family, who might also have such transnational characteristics. Not only the ones that are directly experiencing transnational elements, but the people around them also acquire those aspects. It is quite interesting that Mr. Omo wishes his family to remain Japanese. Mr. Omo says, “Why I have to be Japanese is I have to study Japanese, I have to study the culture, I have to give my heart to my family. My daughter speaks Japanese very well. I need to follow her and I should give fatherly and moral support” (personal communication, August 22, 2009).

I argue that both Mr. Omo’s marriage in Japan and his family are transnational because he was married to a woman outside of his home country and his daughter was born from spouses who come from two different countries and cultures. The transnational family is defined by Zlatko Skrbis (2008): “a symptom of our increasingly globalised lives, which take place across borders and boundaries, thereby eroding the possibility that places of birth, life and dying will coincide” (p. 231). In my understanding, all of Mr.
Omo’s family members, including him, have “transnational” characteristics. In some anthropologists’ opinions, Mr. Omo’s family could be said to have “racialized transnational space” with “differently colored transnational interactions” (Subreenduth, 2008, p. 41). However, Mr. Omo has a different approach to his family.

Mr. Omo considers his family in Japan as Japanese. Mr. Omo was married to a woman who he called a “Japanese woman.” I believe that the reason why Mr. Omo called his wife Japanese was that she as a Japanese-born woman who was raised by a family, which consisted of Japanese nationals. When Mr. Omo talked about his wife’s nationality, both Mr. Omo and I used the general construction of “who is Japanese” as the medium of our conversation. Because I claim that both Mr. Omo and I contain transnational and postnational elements due to our experiences, the strength of the social construction of Japaneseness became apparent in our conversation. To clarify within this politics of Japaneseness, being “Japanese” does not limit its definition in citizenship; it also has a biological connotation, which is to have pure “Japanese blood.” When Mr. Omo said that his wife is Japanese, all of these elements of “Japanese” are silently communicated between him and me.

Although Mr. Omo did not claim that his and his wife’s daughter was only Japanese, he constantly emphasized his daughter’s native tongue, which was Japanese, and her present and future life in Japan. Until I mentioned the possibility of teaching his daughter his native language and bringing his family to his home country, he talked about his family as if they would not go outside of Japan. He accepted the fact that his daughter had a denial of the part of her non-Japaneseness, his father and his origin, which is
resulted from her experiences in a Japanese school. In order to cope with his daughter’s hardship in her life-making in Japan, he wished to develop his Japanese characteristics, which for him included not only Japanese citizenship, but also Japanese language and assimilation into Japanese society. He believed that he would be able to teach these Japanese characteristics to his daughter if he acquired them15. It seemed to me that for him, the Africanness that is forever in him would not change at all. Mr. Omo considered his daughter to be more Japanese than Nigerian, which I believe is due to her place of birth, education, and home training. They were raising her in Japan and providing her with a Japanese education. Mr. Omo claimed that she fluently spoke Japanese, although they often communicated in English, as he did with his wife. He also did not place a “transnational value” on his daughter.

One of the first reasons Mr. Omo described his desire to become Japanese is that his daughter needed support from her father in order to do well in Japan. Mr. Omo said, “Why I have to be Japanese is I have to study Japanese, I have to study the culture, I have to give my heart to my family. My daughter speaks Japanese very well. I need to follow her and I should give fatherly and moral support” (personal communication, August 22, 2009). In other words, his Japaneseesness comes from his responsibility to his family, whom he considers Japanese. This responsibility often likely result from the “homogeneous” environment in which his family lived. They were forced to remember

15 When Mr. Omo talked about acquiring Japanese characteristics, he assumed that his Africaness was unchangeable. In other words, the maintenance of his Africaness was easy because it was something aspired and biological. It might also be due to my national and ethnic origin, but he claimed his becoming Japanese more than the maintenance of Africaness.
their differences in their ethnical background each time they stepped into Japanese society. In the case of his wife, Mr. Omo felt her hardship which coping with the external critique of their marriage, where she was criticized for being married to somebody who was from a different culture and colored society. Although it was her wish to marry Mr. Omo, she often had a hard time coping with her stress, which comes from the external pressure she felt in everyday life. In the case of Mr. Omo’s daughter, in the same vein, she realized she was different from other children due to the external pressure and her skin color.

Although Mr. Omo emphasized much of his transnational and postnational elements in him, he did not present his family as transnational and postnational. He does not say how much his family had learned about his country or continent by having him as the member of their family. The only thing he said was that he wanted to bring them to his country and to show how he grew up. This comment was also made after my remark which valued his culture, language, and country.

Having looked at some individual aspects of Mr. Omo’s identity and his understanding of others, it is not too much to state that being transnational also gives a person a sense of in-betweeness. The ascribed and achieved parts of his identity, his Africaness and Japaneseess, are also very complex. Being part of the first generation of Nigerian Edo men coming to Kabukichyo, Tokyo, there is also a question about Japanese-Edo. It is indeed true that collective terms that express the sense of race, ethnicity, and nationality complicate individual characteristic and identity.

16 Please refer to Appendix.
5.4 Blackness: creating homogenized space in Mr. Omo’s working condition

The majority of cultural anthropologists consider race and color in the context of social construction rather than in biological terms. For instance, Subreenduth (2008) says that “identity, community, and Blackness [are] imagined, redefined, and performed in different spaces” (p. 208). The word “imagined community” is also widely used by anthropologists to describe a community where people associate with each other through an imagined possession of similarities and a common background. Africans associating with Africans to create a community is also influenced by something outside of “the self” and external influences. The complex politics of community, or “the politics of building solidarity” (Subreenduth, 2008, p. 41), complicate a line between the self and the community. This section of this chapter looks at Mr. Omo’s understanding of Africaness and Blackness, which are synonymous concepts for him. For him, being an African or colored is not an ideology and therefore not possible to transform. In order to understand Mr. Omo’s understanding of Africaness, it is essential to examine how he formed his employment staff, which is dominated by Africans, mostly Nigerians and Senegalese.

The reasons behind the creation of an African space among Mr. Omo’s employees are multifaceted. One of the possible reasons is the language barrier: he might have preferred to work with Africans whose medium of conversation was English and who had a similar accent. Secondly, Mr. Omo’s business strategy might go along more with people from similar cultural and economical background. Considering all of these factors, the formation of a safety net also had a vital role in the selection procedure of workers for his business. The term “safety net” is often used to describe a space that is constructed of
people who have same interest and background. Anthropologists could call the
characteristic of the space as “homogenized” (Jackson, 2008), not due to the physical
attribute of homogeneity, but rather due to the notion of unity in similarities. Although
Mr. Omo had a capacity to interact in a “racially” mixed social setting (knowing his
association with his family), he preferred to have African-born men workers as hosts in
his marketplace. This seems to reflect the preservation of his African identity.

Although Mr. Omo’s comments about Japanese people were full of appreciation,
his sense of Africaness and Blackness as ascribed status were so rigid that these identities
did not easily mix with each other. The preservation of the two identities in him,
Japaneseness and Africaness/Blackness, makes me even think that he might have had two
different hearts. His appreciation to Japan is expressed in the following words which he
described after my question of whether he had words to dedicate to Japan and Japanese
people:

I have to thank them. They allowed us to stay with them. They don’t flight you. They
don’t look for your trouble, don’t haunt you, they make friends. They marry to us although
they don’t know about our background…where we come from. We are theft or anything, they
don’t know. They believe that we are human being. They allow us to sleep with them. They allow us to meet with them. They are kind. They respect you. You can stay here for years, and if you don’t make
problem, nobody look for you, they don’t find you. Only when you make trouble, the police look for you. It is very peaceful. It is the best in the world. The crime rate is very low. They are hard working. Their mind is in businesses. They
develop their country. They welcome foreigners. I give take them. (personal communication, August 22, 2009).

Comparing Mr. Omo’s “appreciation” to Japanese people and the making of his homogeneous space with his co-workers, it becomes apparent that Mr. Omo’s loyalties to his African/Black people and Japanese people could mix together, but they still maintained their separate identity properties.

Some anthropologists use terms like “double cross” to express a stress of a population of a particular color dealing with in a multi-color or three-color society. Harden’s (year) article “Japanese Americans in Black and White Chicago” or the Indian population in South Africa is examples of such societies. It is important to note that I am using the term “color” as an ideology to describe people’s imagination of colors as a ascribed status. In the Kabukichyo area, where there are many people from different cultures and countries, I wonder why the characteristic of Blackness does not become transnational, as in the terms used by Subreenduth (2008, p. 41). In other words, my question is: why black people do not become transnational subjects of color?

Within a “politically correct environment” (Jackson, 2008) where Japanese people have created with their sense of mannerism, they are unable to express their ideas about racism or blackness. That is why in Japanese society, “radicalized ideologies” are sometimes politely masked; this masking also affected Mr. Omo. In my opinion, he could not fully and clearly express his experiences concerning racism and blackness. Although I was happy to hear his words for Japan and Japanese people, I had a feeling that something was not fully expressed. He slightly mentioned that his daughter had a difficult
time at school due to her “difference,” which she and her classmates had started to notice.

In addition, it would appear that African business in Kabukichyo rely on blackness as a symbol of extreme foreignness compared to other “foreigners” from East Asia. Some of results show that Mr. Omo’s business was able to be distinct in the Kabukichyo area due to the use of blackness. In any case, Mr. Omo’s comments show that the politics of blackness shaped his business in Kabukichyo and his family life.
CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

I hope that my thesis demonstrated first of all that the homogeneity of Japan is indeed a myth. In Japan, there are a lot of people of “non-Japanese” background who have developed postnational or transnational identities and have suffered from the Japanese homogeneous culture. Kabukichyo is a district where people with various ethnic and national backgrounds have come to establish their economic stratagem and where the Japanese people’s struggle of dealing with sexual dynamics and loneliness intersect with the business strategy. Even in such a place as Kabukichyo, the politics of ethnicity, nationality and color have been rooted in the cycle of its culture. These politics have deeply influenced business mechanism, the lives of individuals, ethnic formation, and “ethnification” (Reynolds, 2009). A Japanese society must “wrap up its history as a ‘monotonic society’” (Douglass and Roberts, 2003, p. xix) so that people who are considered non-Japanese by Japanese-born people will have more alternatives in dealing with their citizenships and identities. It is essential for people of “non-Japanese” background to be able to treasure more of their personhood whereby they should be able to choose to assimilate or not to assimilate, to marry Japanese or not to marry, to become Japanese, to maintain their origin, or to be transnational/postnational. Douglass and Roberts (2003) state that recent migrants have made “the question of national citizenship and migrant rights increasingly complex” (p. xv). In this increasingly globalized world, migrants indeed have the right to see themselves as belonging to two or more societies, being in-between, belonging to nowhere, or belonging to global assemblage.
In the past, the Japanese government’s neglect of the condition of immigrants was mostly dealt with by Japanese and international NGOs (Debito & Higuchi, 2008) and did not show much improvement; recently, though migrants have collectively empowered themselves (Douglass & Roberts, 2003, p. xviii). I found out that my informant, Mr. Omo, also believed that the only way to empower Nigerian diaspora in Japan was to disseminate “information.” He considered letting Japanese people know about Nigerian culture and the similarities between Japan and Nigeria as a way out for the future generation to live comfortably in Japan. He has accomplished much in this regard. For example, he participated in community service and a conference for diaspora to introduce his culture, struggles, and aims. In order for him to maintain his effort in strengthening Japan-Nigeria relations, he deemed that collaborating with a chief of Edo, JAICA, the Nigerian government, state government, friends, and people of villages, Japanese government, and United Nations were all necessary. The existence of migrants and the struggles in their lives must be first of all acknowledged, and the solutions of the struggles must be found in an assembly of Japanese people, Nigerian people, and transnational beings.

Through his conversation with me, Mr. Omo expressed the idea that the dissemination of information could start with his family. He said that his wife and daughter should visit Nigeria. He felt that the current Japanese condition and culture limited his daughter Satchi in establishing her life. Hiroko Ami (2002)’s article in *The Japan Times* indicates, “Currently there are more than 1,000 stateless children born in Japan without citizen in either parent’s home country or in Japan.” Even after Nigerian-
born people and the government of Nigeria create better solutions for Nigeria’s ethnic conflicts, the postnational and transnational children of these diasporas in their migrated places should not be forgotten.

This study shows that many Nigeria-born men have become Japanese in various ways: by becoming naturalized, obtaining citizenship, establishing businesses in Japan, developing Japanese and Nigerian subcultures, marrying Japanese-born women, and having children in Japan. Campbell (2008) discussed that African people around the world have assimilated to the local culture of the migrated place and later created their own culture of Afro-Asian community. Although there is a view that the number of Nigerian-born economic migrants will continue to decrease due to the development of Nigeria, it is however also essential to estimate if there will be a time when the culture or identity of Japanese-Edo or Japanese-Nigerians becomes a familiar concept in Japan. It is possible that the only choice for people having an ethnic background in Nigeria will be to go back to Nigeria or to assimilate to Japanese ethnicity and culture.

There is an increased need to recognize the efforts of the Nigerian male diaspora in the Kabukichyo area. I agree with Mr. Omo’s statement that if Nigerians want to come to Japan, they should be able to come for knowledge not for man power (personal communication, August 22, 2009). Mr. Omo described his Africaness as an ascribed characteristic and his Japaneseess as something achievable. Interestingly, people like Mr. Omo, whose understanding of race and ethnicity is biological, can change their thoughts due to the circumstances that cause them to acquire postnational characteristics.
Finally, it is also important to recognize the degree of Nigerian-born men’s understanding of “home” and the degree of connection to it. Mr. Omo emphasized that many of his Nigerian co-workers have gone “home,” which he uses to refer to Nigeria. He stated that the reasons behind their repatriation related to the economic crisis in Japan, which resulted in the increasing number of difficulties for Nigerian-born men to acquire jobs. Mr. Omo also raised one another reason why many Nigerian-born men started to return home: the situations in Nigeria have become better. In a situation where many of his co-workers have returned home, his imagination of home has enlarged and has influenced his decision-making. Certain issues that made Mr. Omo stay in Japan until now seemed to be his sense of belonging coming from his responsibility of business and his family in Japan.

Having read Ellen Oxfeld and Kynellyn D. Long’s book *Coming home? Refugees, Migrants, and Those Who Stayed Behind* (2004), I would like to situate Mr. Omo’s ways of “imagining home.” Even though he did not inform me of a time when he would go home and bring his family to Nigeria, he said: “I also dream much about home. I have to prepare my home. Certainly, I would like to die at home” (personal communication, August 22, 2009). Although he lived in Japan, Mr. Omo did not use the term home to refer to Japan. He used home to refer to Nigeria. There are several different stages and ways of returning home, such as “Provisional Return” and “Repatriated Return” (Oxfeld & Long, 2004). Mr. Omo has imagined going home because he has experienced a land-calling, or a feeling of must-go-home, but he did not talk about a specific date or year when he has planned to return. He mentioned that it would happen “someday.” This
seems to indicate that Mr. Omo felt a belonging in both countries and struggled to choose a location to finally settle. Although he rejected the word “immigrants” and defined himself and his fellow Nigerian-born people as “Nigerians who settled in Japan,” he still struggled to decide to go back to his “home” country. While it is not possible to assess the degree of strength of Mr. Omo’s sense of belonging to these two cultural orientations and places, it is clear that Mr. Omo maintained ties to both.

Based on Mr. Omo’s statements, and the review and analysis of the available literature, one important point must be illuminated. Even if the Japanese and Nigerian governments, along with their people, make an effort to improve the situations which push and pull Nigerian-born men to struggle with choosing a citizenship and dealing with their multiple identities and identities of their family, the challenge always returns to the physical geographical location, especially when it comes to the place of death.
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APPENDIX: THE INTERVIEW RESULTS

What are your experiences as a Nigerian immigrant in Tokyo, Japan? What do you think about experiences of male immigrants at large?

Everyone is here for different purposes. If you want to talk about mine, I can only talk about mine. Nigerians are not my concern. I don’t want to go other person’s privacy. If you want to know about me, I can support. But I don’t think I can talk about others.

So…please talk about your experience as a Nigerian immigrant…

The word “immigrants” is the way you put it. It is without feeling. You can say “Nigerians settled in Japan.” If you say, “Nigerian immigrants,” you are taking lower case. The word “immigrants” is boring, very ridiculous. Everyone has his or her own pride.

How your identity has shifted?

It has not changed in anyways. Staying in Japan was a machigaeta, [a mistake].

Why is that? Do you miss home, or…?

Right, my aim was not Japan, initially. It was America. I wanted to attend Orkurahoma university to study aviation, piloting. It was my dream. Along the line, my father died very young so I had to work and support my family. So, I lost that chance.

It is not late! In the U.S, there are students in various ages study in universities.

I cannot fly. The age is already over. It happened that I settled here in Japan, and I married to Japanese, has a daughter. Now I am in Japan, I must be a Japanese.

Why can’t you have two identities?

Why I have to be Japanese is I have to study Japanese, I have to study the culture, I have to give my heart to my family. My daughter speaks Japanese… pera-pera dayone. Conversation! I need to follow her off. I have to study. I have to give fatherly supports, the morality supports. The informations in Japan, outside the world!

You can teach your own language too.

My own language… it cannot… see in Nigeria, we have different languages. We have Nihyaku-gojuu kotoba. Takusan dayone. Eigo wa subarashii, all over. She can speak
English. *Eigo wa imawa subarashii,* Do you understand? It is important. Africa, most countries in Africa, English…

**And French?**

And French…But French is not so much important.

**Yeah, in Nigeria.**


**Yeah, France.**

Yeah…France. It is not so elaborate. But in English…you have negeland, Australisa, philio, indo, and Pakistan. English *deshyo.* Canada, America, and *Europa.* English! English is very famous. And…now Japanese speak English. Before they could not go out, but now new generations now move out. You are happy that study in America, *Chyugoku,* all over the world.

**Language has an identity.** I feel like, for example, your daughter will not speak your language. So she won’t have same identity. African languages, local languages are dying. What do you think?

**Local languages is dying because foreign languages take over.** I think that a language has an identity. What do you think about that?

The reasons why local languages are dying certainly because the knowledge and information are not there. In addition, local language depends on the foreign languages. If I speak my own language, you won’t understand. English has already taken all over the world, which will be difficult for her. Certainly, she cannot go to my own *inaka,* my own country. Do you understand? In *inaka,* local language.

**Which language is that?**

Edo. You know, Tokyo was formally Edo.

**Yeah, it is same.**

Yeah, it is same. Not all Nigerian are not from where I came from.

Here is the map. This is Nigeria. Nigeria has 36 states. This is Edo, where I came from. This is Abuja. In Edo, the language is Edo.

**I heard that there is a restaurant in Japan and the owner is Edo. Roppongi?**
Yeah, Roppongi.

**Have you been there?**

Yes, of course. Yes, we are from here, Edo. Do you understand that? [closing map]

**Yes, thank you. So...when you are in Nigeria, you consider yourself as Edo. After you came to Japan, do you consider yourself more as an African?**

Yes, Africa! I dream of home! I dream of home! I am happy…I am part of “African diasporas,” in language we use here. I am a member of… [try to find a document in his bag] Do you understand I mean by diasporas?

**Yes, but it is a broad idea, and it is difficult to understand.**

… [continue find a document in his bag]

**Wow...a lot of documents!**

Yes...*watashi wa sensei dayone*. I hope that I am not taking your time.

**No...I have much time!**

[find it] I have it here

**Diaspora day?**

Yes, This is *kasukan*, Nigerian embassy. This is my Nigeria. So, I am invited!

**So...you made a conference? Technology conference?**

Yes!

When is it going to be the next time?

Well...I am establishing a school, it is going to be a program for Asia.

[looking at the document again] **So...this is not only Africans.**

No..not only Africans. This is… JAICA [for example].

JAICA is also collaborating?

Yes. I have this to tell you understand that I am understanding what you guys are doing.
Yes, thank you so much.

Wherever I go, I go as Japanese, not as an “Asian.” So… it is interesting that you consider yourself more as an African than Edo in Japan. African identity is stronger than for example Asian.

Well… [pointing his skin] this is our identity, we are black. Where we see black, we have love for ourselves. Bob Marley sang a song that wherever you are in the world, you are an African. With love, they come together. That has already sung, and everybody has heard. If you see Black, you you are all brothers and sisters, and can show love. One love.

One love…yes!

What are you contributing to own country, or Africa?

My contribution is information. We should believe our systems… the rulers, government paratetas. African or Nigeria is not poor country… We have everything. But because of no trusts, corruption, mismanagement, crime, the money has in the hand of few. Money does not get to the poor. The gap between rich and poor is widening. Some does not have the privilege to get on top.

In Nigeria, we have everything, but we also have what we call tribal conflicts. We have 3 major ethnic groups. [bring the map] This is a river, Venue, and this is Niger. This area are Muslims… more populated… followed by this Yorubas, followed by Igbo. But I am from this little group. So if I flight for an election, I do not win like Aso and fuku… It is all politics. It is easy for Japan because… one ethnic group, same family, same color, same culture, same language… fight is not much. But in Nigeria, there are more moral differences. Do you understand? A fight is there. I cannot get the vote… It is all politics. See… in Japan no fight, no killing, no shooting, no riots… but in Africa, they can turn the whole aircraft. They don’t mind whoever.

So, there is a tendency of for example Yoruba vote for Yoruba…

I cannot win because 3 major ethnic groups are people who are ruling. But it is also happening in Japan. The prime ministers of Japan, which I happen to know, are all from Tokyo universities. Only Aso happened be different. Koizumi, Hatoyama, Miyazawa… are all from Tokyo university.

Koizumi is different too.

It never got from Hokkaido, Okinawa, Osaka, or Ibaragi. All from the Tokyo university. So, it is still there.

Yeah, it is still there…
They also put their children to think after them. But it is different because they don’t kill, they don’t shoot, no priority…no burning houses, no fighting. It is good because they are one. Japanese is one family… one eating, one culture. In Nigeria, different cultures. Well…going back to your question, information!

**Bringing back information…about policy making…**

Policy making and so forth…I want to bring back info. Japan does not have land but do well. They live in a store land, and they make use the little farm they can produce. In Africa, we have forest and land… farming is not possible because but water is not there, technology is not there, storage facility is not there, skills are not there…they waste food. These are my information. I am building a school in Nigeria, I am weaving farms, sakana farm, oiko farm, and vegetable farms. I see in television, the Japanese emperor plants rice. If the emperor can do that, Nigerians or Africans cannot do it too.

**But they know right?**
They knew, but they don’t want to do it. We should teach how to do it.

**Nigeria is very agricultural. They know a lot of techniques for developing farms. Even though foreigners don’t teach them, from a long time they have already known.**

The richer, the people in the government never allowed to get to farmers. What I have here…
This is maize. They use local ways. They use sticks. Japanese people don’t do this. I will bring information.

See…this is the yellow page where I can get all these equipments. I am sending them back to Nigeria to give them information. These are my information as Diasporas to invest back home. They have to generate denki, electricity, paskokon. So…no fighting. See…in Japan no shooting no riots…it is peace. Japanese is one family.

**Do you think the local way is wrong?**
Well…it is tiring. This is man power. If you use machine, it will be more rapidly, hygienic…

**In so-called developed countries, they now started to bring back local ways of farming. To have organic food. They are now trying to minimize farms so they don’t have to use chemicals.**

Yeah…in my state…we don’t need chemical, fetaraizers. Everything is natural. We do clup rotation, we call it virgin land. Like In Japan, where there is not big land, fertilizer is
needed for the rotation. Fertilizer is harmful. That is advantage what Africa has which they have never known. But they still need information.

**Do you search all these by yourself or do you have organizations you collaborate?**

Well…when I visited home, I met we call, our loyal hnest, like your emperor.

**A chief?**

Yeah, I went to him. Certainly, they don’t give me money but I need their support. Support means, they can provide land for me. I cannot do it alone that is why. I met JAICA, and I am going to meet Japanese government… my Nigerian government, state government, friends, my community in Bini city in Edo, and village, inaka, where I heritaed a land from my father. That is why I met this kind. I can get a very big land. I have to start from somewhere before I exmapnding. I cannot do it alone. I have the responsibility.

First, I meet the king of Edo, and… meet Japan, UN, G8, UNICEF, global…

**Does your chief know you are in Japan?**

Right, that is a good question. [trying to find something in his bag]See…this is a message from the chief.

**What is it written here?**

What is written here is…contact. Communicate us…that is I should report background in all matters. Develop the communication between Japan and Nigeria to be Humble humble. Put information together. What way Japan can help Nigeria and what way Nigeria can help Japan. Humble humble. That is why the chief should provide land which he has already provided.

**To you?**

I cannot say that it is only for me. Bord of diratass… land is cannot be only for me…for state… for my city, for my community. Japanese government doesn’t help individuals, UN does not help individuals…They help communities, states, federal, Africa…

**What is your contribution to Japan. How does Nigerians culture which exists here influence Japan cultures? How do you think you have influenced people around you in Japan?**

Well…Japanese had never ideas about information about Africa. Many still think that Africans still live with wild animals…like lions, gorials, we eat with them, and sleep on
the top of trees. Some Japanese still believe that because they don’t have information. I am happy that you visited Africa. See? We don’t sleep on the top of the trees.

Japanese eat ramen ramen ramen….ramen have no stamina. In Africa, we have a lot of food. Now in Japan they eat Indo food, and Indian food. I will teach more of Nigerian things…culture, more restaurants. Nigeria has natural resources… [bring documents to show me].

I am planting all these in Nigeria. There are claps that are good for Japan. Places like Okinawa are like Nigeria…they can plant fruits from Nigeria. I don’t have land here in Japan, so I can plan in Nigeria and bring it into Japan. My business is import and export. Not only Nigeria can depend on Japan but Japan can rely on Nigeria. We have gasoline, Cray, rubber, Coco, iron, cash, organs, bananas, pineapples. They all can be brought to Japan.

**Do you think that the benefits go to the local people in Nigeria?**

Yes of course, that is why I am a member to say that the gap has to be shorten. All fighting is all for the local and the poor people, not myself. My age is already gone, so we have to care for new generation, for our children yet to born. We should see that the power, everything get to them. All my establishment cannot be taken by the government. It cannot be taken by any person. I need to make sure it gets to the roots. And teach them too…how to fish, not to fish for them. I am already not young…I am working for future people. Come aboard is not ultimate. If I teach them, they can do it at home. They way I came into Japan…I don’t want my people to come like that. There are a lot of Africans lecturing in Japan…many in Waseda University, in Temple University. A lot of Africans are lecturing. They are teaching in America, Australia… too. We have brain is there. But it is not developed. I drive very well. I do many things…You will be surprised. I have a lot in mind, *atama*. I do wedding, farming, mechanics, writing, everything. Believe me; I do a lot of things.

Look this picture. This is the Nigerian ambassador, kasukan. Look at me here. Scientific atomic engineer! Nuclear…from Nigeria. Electricity, *Denki!* I do a lot of things. Like your questions, it must go to local ones.

**What kind of cultures which you want to teach to Japanese people?**

I want Japanese people to know that we all have a similar culture. Similar! You can see *Edo*…Tokyo, before it was called Edo. My state, Edo, that is Bini, we say *Domo*. Right? Japanese say Domo. We also say *ame*.

**Oh, do you call rain *ame* too?**

Yes, really. We have imouto, otouto, as lanugae. We have bara-bara, omae, oniisan.
Yeah...similar sound.

Yes. We have it.
And food... Most of Japanese food here, we have in Nigeria. We have same herbalist.
We have the medicine back home too, also ochya. I want to tell we grow and eat this too.
We have orange juice. It is a part of our culture. We have osumo too...Have festivities. I
go to Koenji. We dance and drums and so forth. Native dress. I go to Suginami-ku center
to see culture, and what we call international sports. They also do crafts, iron making,
designing, those are curving woods and sawing.

Yeah, I like the traditional clothes. So beautiful.

Yes, so beautiful. If you need, I saw it for you. The relationship is growing. I prepared
all these for you. I contributed for you to know more about Nigeria.

We have same holidays and education system...many other things are similar. Culture
and development. Nigerian and Japan.

Since I have a child...[bring her picture]See... this is my daughter. Satchi.

Satchi! It is a Japanese name! or...it is a popular name in Nigeria as well?

Yes, we have. Imawa go-nen..

Go-nensei?

No...go-sai.

Has your wife been to Nigeria?

She hasn’t. But...they must go. [Bring another magazine.]

This is her.

Is this some kind of a magazine.

This is palm tree. You can get oil, abura. From oil, you can get soap, osake. This is a
Japanese school in Benin Republic. This man is called...Azuma. If they can go here, they
can go to Nigeria.

After the 1980s, the number of Nigerians in Japan increased because of oil found in
70s, and the rich and poor...

Yeah, that is no. 1.
What are other causes why Nigerians come to Japan?

Not all Nigerians…do you understand that? People you see are…Edo and Igbo. Hausa is in government. The Hausa who are here are ones sent by the government. We don’t have equal rights as this Hausas. Hausa do not pay for school fees, for education. They give them money…They give them job. I pay for school fees. The Nigerian of economy is from here. [Pointing the map] But this people are taking this economy here. This people are now fighting people here. They cannot take our oil. This crisis here made many people to evacuate from home and look for better life in different places. This is the second factor.

In the early 1980s to 1990s, the time of Miyazawa, the economy of Japan was good by it was lacking in man power. Sachyo needed workers. They were even giving jangyo and bounce. Sachyo could give money. This attracted people to come to Japan. So…people were thinking, “Oh, I can go to Japan.”

Now the economy is going down. No more jobs. No more jangyo. Many are now going back home. Many came before, but the number is declining. Like a friend of mine is going home finally.

Was it his choice?

Nigerian is getting better so he is ok.

I have worked a lot of time. I like studying, and you know my businesses. I am preparing for a way for Satchi…I don’t think I have much time in Japan. I also dream much about home. I have to prepare my home. Certainly, I would like to die at home. Secondly, I am not going to encourage my people to leave home and come. When they school very well, they can get jobs. They can come here for a part time. For holidays, they can go home. They can go to the U.S. for knowledge, but not for manpower. Come and say “hayaku hayaku.” “Karada-omoi” no…It must be with pasokon and booru-pen. Not..by “hayaku stand on streets and look for customers.”

Yesterday, I met two men from Senegalese. What are the reasons behind their migration.

Senegalese still has a good govenement. Population is little, 4 million. They come for better life.

I saw them standing on streets. What are the reasons behind that?
I cannot answer that. Everybody has individual purposes. You asked about Nigeria and you asked about me, and now you can see my motives and message. If you ask why I was on the street is better. Unfortunately…I have to survive. In Nigeira, we have open shops and people can see. In Japan, you open shops in san-kai go-kai jyu-kkai. Nobody cannot see, so you have to come outside to show what we have… We show papers. If they are interested they can go with you because everything is inside. But in Africa, it is open. In china, it is open.

**Yeah, we have a small land, so…**

We have to go up and inside. That is why we talk to people outside. If they are interested in foreigners, they can go. If they are not interested, don’t force them.

Most of [African workers] do [street catching] because they have to survive. It is a lot of one’s interest, and one’s not. Everybody wants to go home. Home is home.

**If you have a message to Japan…**

I have to thank them. They allowed us to stay with them. They don’t flight you. They don’t look for your trouble, don’t haunt you, they make friends. They marry to us although they don’t know about our background…where we come from. We are theft or anything, they don’t know. They believe that we are human being. They allow us to sleep with them. They allow us to meet with them. They are kind. They respect you. You can stay here for years, and if you don’t make problem, nobody look for you, they don’t find you. Only when you make trouble, the police look for you. It is very peaceful. It is the best in the world. The crime rate is very low. They are hard working. Their mind is in businesses. They develop their country. They welcome foreigners. I give take them.

Do you think the change in binderies of family is a part of the causes of Nigerians coming into Japan?

Not really. Ecology. Eco system. When the world was good, you did not need to travel. Japan is made for Japanese. The culture and the plants…the family. You need to look at your place. America is for Americans. African is for Africans. This is how the God created it. In the west world, like in Japan, you have long hair because the God give you because *samui*… it covers you when it is cold. In Africa, we don’t have it because it is hot. We don’t have snow. We don’t have cold and need winter jackets. That is why the God gives our hair. We call it eco system. Ecology. Biology. you live where you are. You see fishes inside water where creates air. Everyone has in the way that the God wants you to live.

But out of corruption, mismanagement, *onaka suita*, make people to go to…come here for survival.
So it is not about family.

Not at all.

**Family is still very connected.**

Yes, family is still connected. But Socialism, sociolism comes in. you want to speak English. Now you want to pass information. Now you can see America, you can see Africa. That is sociolosim. You have seen different cultures. Cultures change human being or circumstances. It was not my intension to marry to Japanese. [My intension] was to work, make my money, go back home. It comes to a stage where I have to have a status. There is Japan system that if you don’t marry to Japanese, woman, you cannot have a passport. So this forced a lot of us to marry to Japanese. But when you marry, it becomes a body. You have to feed her, you have to plot her. …another extended families makes you to keep longer. When I was not married, I was working in a faculty. Sachyo takes the apartment job. Then, I could save my money. Now, the money goes to the wife and to the kid to make you stay longer. And the economy is declining. The Zangyo is not there. It is even heard for Japanese. A lot of jobs Japanese don’t do before and that give to immigrants, but now Japanese do it. We have jobs that are called Ds, that is Dangerous job, that is Dirty job, you know like gomi, and Difficult job. There are the three jobs Japanese give to immigrants. You cannot be a police man, you cannot be a keisatu, you cannot be a train master, you cannot work at bank, and you cannot work at coffee shop.

[Phone rings.]

Sorry.

**Oh, that is ok.**

[He started to talk with his African friend who asks him for a direction to go somewhere. He taught how to use trains, how to pronounce the names of the train, and where to get off.]

*Gomen-nasai.*

*Ie-ie. Arigatou-gozaimau*

*Tomodachi...aeno mekyo school.*

*Mekhyo?*

*Mekyo mekyo...Shiranai? Mekyo!*

*Ah...Mayotteru?*
Nani...Mayteru. Kore kore [he takes out his driving license from his wallet].

oh...Menkyo! Oh, ok ok.

Yeah, mekyo.

Yes, Menkyo. It is a long process.

I had this.

That is good!

So...he wants to get. The station is Futamatagawa. He went a long place.

The questions are over, so thank you so much.

Please don’t mention.