Report on Interviews with Long-Term Western Foreign Residents (LTW) in Japan

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Abstract

This paper is a part of an ongoing study on long-term Western foreign residents in Japan (LTW). This study is attempting to gather information on various styles of LTW identity formation in distinct communities within the borders of Japan. This subsequently leads to various depths of integration. This particular paper will act as a preliminary report on 25 interviews performed from 2015. A chart of the basic statistical information for all the respondents has also been added. All the quotes used in this paper are taken from the original transcripts (O'Keefe 2017). Various techniques were used to help with the complex process of coding the interviews (McCracken, 1988; Hernandez, 2009; Saldana, 2015). A progressive line of questioning was used for the interviews to allow recurring themes to be added in the "substantive coding" process (Holton 2007: 265). Quotes were all classified into theoretical coding families (Glaser, 1978) to include factors from the catalysts and the styles-of-belonging found in the hybrid identity model (O'Keefe 2017). A full report on all of the quotes would require them to be broken down into several installments which is why this preliminary report is being offered as a foundation for reference in future work in this series on LTW. Throughout this paper results from a 93 item nationwide survey performed in 2015 will be applied when it supports or disputes quotes from the interviews. The typological diagram of LTW used to classify various hybrid identities will also be introduced. This paper concludes the presence of clear examples of the factors used in the hybrid identity model which are vital to the creation of the final goal to support the typological breakdown of complex evolving forms of LTW identity.

Introduction

This paper will report on the qualitative process used to perform interviews for research on LTW. It also will begin to detail some of the

pieces of the puzzle for this research as a whole. This paper will only offer a preliminary glimpse into some of the statements made by respondents. Future installments in this series will report on all the significant results extracted from the interviews after being coded to fit specific factors in the hybrid identity model and compare them with the quantitative data collected from the 2015 survey. The preliminary results in this paper will be used to establish guidelines and references for the future full report. Results from the 2015 survey will be mentioned in this paper when they support or give the opposite result from the interviews. It will also offer a first look at the typological diagram of LTW and how the quadrants are formed through the interconnectedness of the catalysts and the styles-of-belonging found in the hybrid identity model (O'Keefe 2017).

While borrowing some methods from grounded theory (GTM), techniques learned through past research and work experience were also implemented to extract information at maximum capacity. Similar to the style found in GTM, the line of questioning evolved as new data was collected from respondents. The discovery of new information was embraced and promptly added to new questions for the following interviews. An obstacle I faced was that I personally fit the criteria for this study. This does create an inherent corruption of objectivity at some level. Early on in this research, it was realized that many respondents who had very different outlooks and opinions than originally hypothesized allowed me to be aware of my own researcher biases and lack of knowledge of different viewpoints. This was crucial to enhance the results of this research so as to be as objective as possible. This can be somewhat challenging due to the hermeneutics inherently found in GTM and other qualitative research.

The criteria for the interviews were strictly enforced to the point of fault. Two interviews were completely removed after finding out during the interviews the respondents did not fit the criteria. They are not included in the 25 appearing in the transcripts. This was a hard decision to make due to the time used to set up and execute each interview. All prospective respondents had been informed of the criteria requirements during the pre-interview process, but for various reasons chose to ignore certain criteria. Overall the chosen criteria were understood and accepted by most of the respondents as necessary to gain information from experienced people about how an LTW integrates themselves into Japan. This research believes that time is a revealer of truth, which is the basic

logic behind the choice of LTWs who have lived in Japan for over 10 years rather than non-specific lengths of time.

This paper will continue to build on the last two papers in this series which offered the literary framework to help understand certain indicators and factors found within the hybrid identity model (O'Keefe, 2018; O'Keefe, 2019). The criteria for the interviews which are the same as the criteria used in the 2015 survey will also be explained again in this paper in detail. Several difficulties arose when looking for respondents who fit the criteria. One such example was how the semantics within the criteria itself were sometimes misinterpreted by some prospective respondents. The process of how the interview transcripts were edited to protect the identity of the respondents will also be explained. Even though anonymity was a high priority and promised to all respondents equally, there were some examples of prospective respondents who canceled interviews out of the fear of being recognized.

The purpose of the interviews was to gather information to assist in supporting results from the 2015 nationwide survey of LTW. The coding of transcripts was a vital step in understanding recurring information about LTW's family, work and community life. The factors found in the hybrid identity model in both the styles-of-belonging (life satisfaction and cultural fit) and the catalysts (commitment, family, friends, groups, language skills, perceived discrimination, and microaggressions) were all used as labels in the interview coding process (O'Keefe 2017). Using these real-world examples was an essential step to getting as many viewpoints as possible.

Methods

The qualitative data assisted in defining and isolating the specific factors used in the final typological result found in the final part of this study. The search for interrelated patterns acts as a crucial part of creating the definitions needed to separate the coded data into types (McCracken 1988). Some aspects of grounded theory (GTM) were used when executing the interviews (Glaser, 2010; Zarif, 2012). Critical views, like Tolhurst (2012), of GTM, have also been taken into account. Tolhurst breaks down the scientific significance of how GTM needs to follow the scientific method and distract itself from just common sense statements taken from interviews to protect the boundaries of natural science. Bestor et al's (2003) collection of how to perform fieldwork in Japan was also

referenced. According to Lars-Johan Age (2011), GTM strongly upholds two (understanding and usefulness) of the three (not including correspondence) necessary elements to label it as a scientific theory. GTM's recording of correspondence, which is related to positivism or absolute truth, is difficult to maintain with the hermeneutic nature of GTM. This is why all findings from the interviews were compared to the results of the survey.

A series of long interviews with LTW from O'Keefe (2013) was also used to generate a string of items. This breaches GTM's approach by entering the process with some preconceived ideas. The flexibility of GTM to change direction allowing new ideas and concepts to develop was simultaneously upheld. This flexibility allowed for a maximum level of information extraction similar to grounded theory with a few slight modifications. The semi-structuring of basic information did remain consistent throughout the 25 interviews.

Information such as how long the respondent has lived in Japan and their self-assessed Japanese language ability score are some examples of consistent questions used in all the interviews. Life satisfaction scores of their lives in Japan were also recorded and ranked from 1 (low) to 10 (high). Several questions were also used to see if variations of segmented immigration (Zhou 1997) theories were applicable or not. This was to clarify some variances from recent immigration theory due to the high socioeconomic status of Westerners in Japan. Interviews for this research were performed only once but were prefaced with a brief warm-up period as well as a preliminary interview sheet sent to the respondent a week before their interview. Online social networking service (SNS) connections were also created to be utilized as a reference for before and after the interviews took place. Many of the respondents allowed me to join their SNS networks, where I was able to gain access to their online personal lives per their permission. This access allowed me to observe disparities between what their interviews offered and what they wrote online.

The reasons for choosing westerners are clearly explained in a past study in the "Why Westerners?" section in O'Keefe (2018), but it is the uniqueness of this study's criteria that separates it from past research on western residents in Japan. All the respondents needed to have been living in Japan consistently for more than 10 years until the time this study was conducted and be from a native English speaking country with a Western cultural context or a European capable of performing the interview in

English. They also could not have been on active military duty during the 10 years prior to this study. Most studies on Western foreigners in Japan use exchange students or famous Western figures in Japan (Ward et al, 2004; Chirkov et al, 2005; Burke et al, 2009; Komisarof, 2012). The criteria explained above are consistent throughout this research and represented both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Several conundrums arise when trying to classify Westerners as only native speakers. I chose to expand beyond that by including several countries that have cultures that would not be considered culturally distant (Hofstede, 1980; Kogut and Singh, 1988; Kandogan, 2012) to many native English speaking countries when compared to Japan. For this reason, I included Western European countries. However, in the final group of respondents, only representatives of France and Italy were available. These two countries have observably different cultures compared to many native English speaking countries, but according to Babiker et al, they are in a similar contextual range (1980). Babiker et al determined this through anxiety related to changes in language, food, and living quarters generated upon entering Japan or similarly distant cultures. There are Asian countries such as Singapore, India and the Philippines which lists English as an official language, but due to the cultural distance and socioeconomic status, they were not included in this study.

The final piece of criteria was not to include those who have been on active military service within the last 10 years of residence in Japan. A statement by one respondent who was formerly in the military pointed out that a large majority of servicemen do not leave the base and tend to live in a protective "bubble" away from host culture interaction[1]. Many restaurants and bars cater to the military, so they do not need to bother learning the language or understanding the culture beyond the basics. This would make collecting data from that group counterproductive to this study, so they were not included in the criteria.

One logistical difficulty of finding LTW of diverse professions in Japan is some of them develop a life away from Western foreigner based groups and can be more challenging to locate. Permission to use the information gained in the interviews was received through email or through a signed release form from all respondents. The pre-interview questions proved to be especially effective for the respondents who thought about their

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[1] Found in the original transcripts: Collin pg.1 (O'Keefe 2017)

answers before the interview began. Their answers offered a much deeper source of well thought out information and clear examples which is why certain interviews have been referenced to more than others. The average interview ran for around 45 minutes to an hour, but after dead space removal, most were edited down to 30 minutes. The parts edited out were often due to unrelated content or information covered in the pre-interview questionnaire making certain pieces of the interview redundant.

The interviews were performed between May and September of 2015. For the sake of anonymity, each respondent was given a pseudonym for protection. A progressive line of questioning was implemented as part of the "substantive coding" process (Holton 2007: 265) which records commonly recurring themes within the data. Upon the completion of the transcripts, aside from finding factors supporting the original hypothesis, completely new observations appeared. Indicators for repetitive data were noted and then checked for theoretical saturation. Theoretical coding can be one of the most challenging and problematic stages of coding interviews (Hernandez, 2009; Saldana, 2015). Theoretical coding families used by Glaser (1978) was also applied to clarify the construction of both the hypothesized and new axial themes. The coded factors found in the analyzed data assisted in the reinforcement of the hybrid model.

Respondent's basic statistical results

This portion will report the basic statistics of the 25 respondents (figure 1). The basic information provided was collected from the pre-interview sheets mentioned earlier. This was either done verbally or electronically before the interview took place rather than during the interview. Having this information previous to the interview allowed for adjusting certain lines of questioning. Some respondents may be single or married, have the ability to speak Japanese or not, they may be self-employed, full-time or part-time employees; these factors affected the questioning before the interview started to promote a focused discussion on each respondent's own experience over the years in Japan.

Overall the 25 respondents included 18 males and 7 females. It must be remembered the respondents interviewed for this research are not necessarily a representation of all LTW, but rather a sociopsychological glimpse into the character of each respondent as well as their connections to various groups, and their own exclusive interactions with the host

culture. The interviews varied in the range of openness. Some respondents stated that anonymity was unnecessary and anything they spoke of did not need to be hidden. Nationalities remained in the transcripts for research purposes and to also provide confirmation of the criteria. References to whether they lived in an urban or country area remained because it is necessary for the contextual understanding as well as the definition of certain situations. Any references made to a company, a university or any easily recognizable place or association would be either removed or replaced with a fictional name. Specific references to any interests or groups to which a respondent belonged to were also changed or removed. Even knowing these facts, 3 female respondents decided to back out of their interview. Their reasons were similar. They believed that even an anonymous interview would not protect them from being recognized.

The majority of the respondents were from the United States with a total of 17 followed by 3 from Canada, 2 from Australia, and 1 each from the United Kingdom, France, and Italy. It was no surprise that the majority was from the United States. Americans are the largest demographic in the Western group at a population of 52,271[2]. After permission was given, scheduling interviews was the next challenge. While most of the interviews were performed on the weekends, there were times they needed to be done early in the morning or late at night to compromise between our equally busy schedules. Respondents were not chosen by nationality, ethnicity or race. This being said, the majority of respondents were Caucasian with various ethnic backgrounds. Of the respondents, 23 out of the 25 were Caucasian while 1 was Asian Canadian and 1 was Dominican American. While it would be ideal to have more from different ethnic groups to gain a wider perspective on the lives and experiences of many types of Westerners in Japan, due to the randomness of the interviews it was difficult to control for this outcome without rejecting others who entered the process through the natural flow that occurred. The search for specific ethnic groups or nationalities would be influencing results that would be a creation of the author rather than a true reflection of the group being researched. Research focusing specifically on Western born racial or ethnic groups would be an interesting topic for future studies.

Visa status is also an important part of life when living in Japan. Its tentativeness can be a cause of stress and feelings of impermanence. Most

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[2] http://www.e-stat.go.jp/SG1/estat/List.do?lid=000001150236

of the respondents had permanent visas, while two had work visas, one a spousal visa, and one had a business visa. The respondent with the spousal visa had been in Japan for only 10 years, which is often the time many receive their permanent status. The one respondent with a business visa was rather interesting. He had been in Japan for more than 25 years but still had not become a permanent resident.

(FIGURE 1)

pseudonym	PC	age	sex	CoO	eth	LOSJ	vs	job	ms	nos	#child	LS	sp	lis	re	wr
David	810	55	m	USA	C	30.00	PR	SE	mar	NJ	3	9	7	4	2	1
Chris	165	45	m	USA	C	23.00	PR	FTC	mar	jap	2	7	8	8	7	5
Edward	411	47	m	FRA	C	20.00	PR	FT	mar	jap	2	9	6	8	3	2
Robert	811	53	m	CAN	A	24.00	PR	PT	d (nj)	NA	0	7	8	7	6	5
Donald	811	75	m	USA	C	39.00	PR	ret	mar	jap	2	9	7	8	5	2
Anthony	810	56	m	USA	C	23.00	PR	SE	mar	jap	0	8	7	8	4	2
Mark	826	34	m	USA	C	14.00	PR	SE	mar	jap	2	8	8	8	4	4
Carlo	810	51	m	USA	H/L	25.00	bus	SE	sing	NA	0	8	5	6	3	1
Judi	223	49	fe	USA	C	21.00	PR	PT	mar	jap	1	9	5	6	4	3
Tim	630	43	m	USA	C	15.00	PR	FT	mar	jap	2	8	8	7	6	5
Tom	432	52	m	USA	C	28.00	PR	FT	mar	jap	2	7	10	10	10	10
Dorothy	640	70	fe	USA	C	31.00	PR	PT	d (nj)	NA	0	8	6	7	4	5
Nick	812	38	m	UK	C	10.00	PR	SE	mar	jap	0	4	6	6	6	6
Joseph	810	38	m	ITA	C	11.00	PR	FT	mar	jap	2	7	7	7	7	7
Ann	330	51	fe	AUS	C	30.00	PR	SE	d (j)	NA	3	7	10	10	10	10
Cathy	810	46	fe	CAN	C	17.00	PR	FT	mar	NJ	2	8	6	7	4	2
Gary	810	41	m	USA	C	11.00	work	FT	sing	NA	0	7	6	7	4	2
Dan	999	40	m	USA	C	17.00	PR	SE	mar	jap	3	7	7	8	6	5
Barbara	546	45	fe	USA	C	20.00	PR	PT	mar	jap	0	7	6	7	7	4
Lee	816	35	m	AUS	C	11.00	Sp	FT	mar	jap	1	8	8	7	4	8
Theresa	200	67	fe	USA	C	18.00	PR	SE	sing	NA	0	5	3	3	2	2
Steve	802	43	m	USA	C	11.00	work	FT	sing	NA	0	7	7	4	3	3
Amy	819	45	fe	CAN	C	21.00	PR	PT	d (j)	NA	0	8	8	9	8	7
Collin	350	40	m	USA	C	18.00	PR	SE	mar	jap	2	8	8	5	5	5
Sean	658	50	m	USA	C	27.00	PR	PT	mar	jap	2	8	7	7	5	5

sp = speaking
lis = listening
re = reading
wr = writing

CoO = Country of Origin	LOSJ = Length of stay in Japan	Job	ms = Marital status	nos = Nationality of spouse
eth = Ethnicity	vs = Visa status	SE = Self-employed	mar = married	jap = japanese
C =caucasian	PR = permanent residence	FTC = full time contract	sing = single	NJ = non-japanese
A = asian	Bus = business	FT = full time	d(nj) = divorced (non-japanese)	
H/L = Hispanic/Latino	SP= spousal visa	PT = part time ret = retired	d(j) = divorced (japanese)	

The mean for the age of the respondents was 48.36 years (SD=10.35). This was to be expected because of the criteria for the interviews. The average length of time in Japan was 20.6 years with a standard deviation of 7.52 years, which is very close to the results found in the long form questionnaire. Their life satisfaction was also in line with the survey results at 7.52 (SD=1.15). [3]

Like the survey, speaking skills were rated on a self-determined 1 (low) to 10 (high) scale. The scores for language skills are recorded as: speaking 6.96 (SD=1.51); listening 7.1 (SD=1.65); reading 4.5 (SD= 2.6);

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[3] The basic statistical results from the nationwide survey mentioned in this paper can be found in O'Keefe 2016.

writing 5.2 (SD=2.15). These scores are very subjective in nature but can better act as confidence markers in language/communication rather than a ranking of their raw language skills. Some of the respondents compared their language skills to other foreigners they knew while others compared themselves to native speakers. The former often gave themselves much higher scores than the latter, which is to be expected. The variance in self-ranked styles is also an interesting reflection of an individual's goal of communication and to what depth they wish to connect with the host culture.

Of the respondents, 17 were married, 4 were divorced (2 non-Japanese and 2 Japanese partners) and 4 were single. Also, 2 out of the 17 married respondents had non-Japanese partners. One of the respondents who was divorced came to Japan after getting a divorce in her own country. While international marriages alone could be an interesting topic, this particular study only applies family connections as one of the catalysts in the hybrid model but doesn't try to enter too deeply into that discussion due to its depth and complexity. The comparison between mixed marriages with a Japanese national and marriages between two non-Japanese would be an interesting topic of discussion, but one which will be left for future researchers.

1 of the respondents was retired, 8 classified themselves as full-time workers, while 1 was classified as a full-time contract. 6 of them were part-time university teachers and 9 were self-employed. There was an observable variance in responses between those who were self-employed and those who were working in a company or organization. One of the most common differences was self-employed respondents often reported how they are required to create a system or service that can be easily used and understood by Japanese customers or clients. Errors of any kind result in income loss. These errors have to be self-corrected in an atmosphere that offers very little feedback from their Japanese customers.

Those who were employed worked within an existing system which they need to adjust to, but also offers some level of support. If they make a mistake with a student or client, they will most likely be formally corrected by their superiors to prevent similar mistakes in the future. Some of these corrections may go against a Westerner's common sense due to the fact the corrective system itself is host-culture based. This can create frustration for both employees and employers, but it tends to create more psychological stress than economic.

Self-employed individuals need to adjust themselves psychologically and socially to protect their economic earning potential. While finding a Japanese mentor who may be able to teach them how to run a business may be a seemingly logical choice, according to the respondents, it has been better for them to just figure it out on their own. This is primarily because many Western business people need to learn how to adapt their own style to their work which in turn promotes a higher level of satisfaction. This is in contrast to those working at a Japanese company who may have to conform more to their employer's culture. Anthony, who is self-employed, gave an example of how he creates his own system while functioning within the Japanese one when he sells his product at department stores. He puts it like this:

> I go to a department store and you have to sell and you watch everybody else how to sell and because I'm a foreigner and I can get past them, I don't know, the customs of having to say certain things to the customers. I can just say anything I want to the customers where other people can't do that.
> I have that advantage because I'm a foreigner that I can act differently and I don't have to follow all the customs and people will, they like that and they allow me to do that. I can sell much better sometimes than department stores and other people because I can smile at people and I can joke to other people.
> I can even tease them a little bit where of course if there was a young girl trying to say that to that person they would be shocked and they would go to the manager and say this person said this to me. Because it's me, I can do that. (Anthony: 4-5)[4]

Anthony's approach can act as a solid example. It is not necessary for him to conform to the same set of rules the Japanese have to, but rather he offers a different style to his customers which is accepted by them as fresh and new. He understands that it is not how "Japanese" he becomes, but how he mixes his own communication skills with the needs of his Japanese customers. This simultaneous blending of two communicative techniques and mutual understandings leads to an original style which is simple in

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[4] All respondents' quotes in this paper are labeled with pseudonyms to protect their privacy. The number found after the name refers to the page of the transcript for that specific respondent. Full transcripts of the interviews can be found in O'Keefe (2017).

appearance but complex in its nature. While he said he can "say anything," this does not mean he could say anything outside what the Japanese would contextually expect from him. He still has to maintain basic social norms, while injecting his own personal style which few, if any, Japanese workers would even think of trying. Anthony has learned how to culturally define the situation in the acceptable space between himself and his Japanese customer base. His unique style leads this discussion into examples of the catalysts for change found in the interviews.

Preliminary examples of the catalysts as applied to the types of LTW

The *catalysts* found in the hybrid identity model are comprised of various forms of commitment or an individual's experience. They include learning the language, having a family based in Japan, friends, and/or groups connected to a community. The conscious commitment or decision to live in Japan has also been observed in the interviews as promoting stability. Finally, individual experiences of perceived discrimination or microaggressions. The catalysts all have the purpose to connect or separate an individual LTW to a community and defines the depth of their identity within that community. All of the catalysts vary from person to person creating a sort of dactylogram. This is what separates the catalysts from the styles-of-belonging which exist for every subject but on a scale. The positive acquisition of language, family, friends, group connections and commitment have shown results which advocate individual change in their performance within the host culture. This, in turn, promotes the formation of a strong community connection. On the other hand, negative experiences with family life, relationships, group connections, perceived discrimination, and microaggressions affect life satisfaction or are manifested from a lack of cultural fit which in turn may create identity conflict limiting the individual's reach into the sphere of influence in a community or workplace.

This section will acquaint the reader with some examples of the types of Westerners (figure 2) derived from the interviews by applying the existence or nonexistence of the catalysts mentioned above. This said applying only the results from the catalysts leaves the puzzle incomplete. The typological results of this study can only be complete once all the factors from the hybrid identity model are applied. Two of the four types which represent opposing themes both appeared in past research: *balance*

(Figure 2)
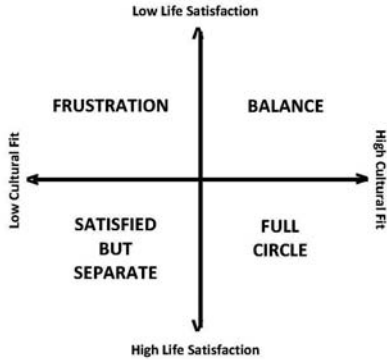
and *frustration. Frustration* was labeled differently in past studies as *doubt and confusion* (O'Keefe 2013) but was changed due to the frequency of the word "frustration" appearing in interviews. The other two types: *satisfied but separated* and the *full circle* both represent the more successfully integrated respondents. Quotes representing examples of the types are not always labeling the individual as belonging to a specific type, but rather using the quote as an independent example of a specific quality of one of the types.

Some respondents are still seeking their integrative style which comes with success and failure causing them to lose their *balance* at times. While all the types can migrate to different corners of the quadrant, the *balance* would be the one to be the most likely to do so. Respondents who reflect the qualities found in the balance admit they have times when a cultural mishap or situation negatively affects them, but they do their best to act positively to return to their balanced state with the end in mind. This is true in the case of Lee. He is sometimes approached by host-culture members who assume he cannot speak Japanese, but he counters the situation with his years of experience and patience:

> The issue for me there is not about being pointed out per se, it's more that they're considering me to be deficient if you will, perhaps. They may not be, but there's a small part of me that sort of feels that they might be thinking on their side that I'm deficient in Japanese so they, therefore, feel obligated to speak to me in English, but that aside, I mean this has happened to me on many

many occasions and I'm very well used to it now. I just go with the flow and return their conversation in English as best as I can or if it turns out that they can't continue in English, then I try and help out with Japanese as best as possible. (Lee: 5)

Not all respondents feel this sense of forgiveness when not given the credit for adapting to the "Japanese way." Lee views his status in Japan as permanent which is part of a commitment to continue living in his current situation. He knows this type of occurrence will happen again and again, so he needs to commit himself to ways to solve or adapt to the position he has placed himself in. The opposing view can be observed in the frustration or microaggression themed quotes. Lee has created his own system of default for this type of situation. Some of those interviewed consciously decided not to be placed in such a position. The reasons for this are many and difficult to track due to historical, racial and ethnic backgrounds and culture. Black or Asian Westerners will experience varying frustrations when compared to their Caucasian counterparts. Non-native English speakers from European countries will also be subject to different experiences in contrast to native English speakers. The list goes on, but in the end, these unwritten rules are impossible to define, but through the collection of qualitative data, solid repetitive examples can be documented. There were an extensive amount of examples of the catalyst appearing in the interviews, which are continuously reported on throughout this paper. An example of conscious separation was given by Chris showing the decisive moment when he decided not to be involved in activities at his children's school.

If you're going through the Japanese education system, you'll notice that parents are incorporated a lot. Whoever the stay home parent is if there is a stay home parent. My wife works and she still has to take care of all the stuff, because I absolutely refuse. I had a really bad experience with my son in kindergarten, my oldest. After that, I have nothing to do with any of their education. I don't go to parents day, I don't go to the whatever sports festivals, I don't go to anything. I told my wife I would leave her if she made me do it ever again. We had huge fights.

She just didn't get it. I don't need the gaijin thing. All it was, was I ate a sandwich at a picnic with my son. The women were

like, "Why aren't you eating a bento, where's your bento?" We finished the sandwich in like 10 minutes. They're sitting there and they're just criticizing. I went to the teachers, I went even to the principal, and they wouldn't do anything. I was like, screw this, I'm out of here. I left, and I never had anything to do with my son's education ever since.

My wife's like, well there's other international couples in my neighborhood, and all the fathers participate. I know on Facebook, and other people, everybody seems to be happy go lucky and participate with their children's education. I can't deal with it. I don't know why. (Chris: 3)

The incident recorded above was enough for Chris to decide to end his connection with his children's school events. He expressed a similar feeling in other parts of his interview (O'Keefe 2018: 21). The truth is, even though he states at the end that he does not know why he feels this way, the actions he made are congruent with his style of adaptation. He decided to make the cut knowing that to continue to go to school events may create mounting stress which could lead to other problematic outcomes. Additionally, this decision could be complicated by his wife's willingness to accept his decision or not. In Chris' case, he and his wife have a highly functional relationship, so his separation from school events seemed to be successful. The catalyst of having access to a stable supporting family life which understands certain cultural compromises needs to be recognized here. If his wife resented his decision, the results would most likely be different. He consciously separated himself from a specific activity which is an action associated with being *satisfied but separated*. The reason this example would not be labeled as the frustration type is because he is highly functional in other parts of his life and satisfactorily connected to various systems within the Japanese community. He also ticks the boxes for many of the catalysts such as high language skill, functional family life and committed to Japan as his adopted home.

All foreign groups in Japan have some sort of documented form of discrimination whether it was systematic, perceived or situational. The level of discrimination Western foreigners experience is not as prominent when compared to their Asian or South American counterparts. The difference can be found in their socio-economic status. I also gathered extensive information from respondents on what they labeled as positive

discrimination. This is when a Western foreigner is treated differently in a positive way by gaining access to things that Japanese or even other foreign groups do not have access to. This is especially true for "white" Westerners. This was observed in the interview with Carlo who is a Latino American. He commented on the differences he has experienced from his time in Japan versus the "white male Caucasians" he has seen. To paraphrase what he stated, Americans emerging from minority groups in America have already experienced discrimination in the past, so the transition is not as shocking for them as it is to the high-class white Americans who may be experiencing it for the first time. His statement is also a solid example of the need to record the unique experiences of minority groups from Western countries in Japan. Westerners may come from many different countries, but in Japan, they tend to be treated according to their first visual impression rather than their country of origin. This is shown in Roberto's statement of his experience with how he is perceived by the Japanese when they first meet him:

> I think my unique view about it was that as an Asian Canadian, thinking of myself as a Canadian first, here, I would sometimes, not always, if I was to encounter any kind of discrimination, negative or positive, it would be not because I'm a Canadian but because I look Asian. That, sometimes, when it was the negative kind of discrimination, it's a little bit saddening but it didn't happen a lot but it happened enough that I can remark on it.
> Most of the time though, it was positive discrimination because I would say, "Oh, I'm a Canadian." "Oh," and then everybody's eyes would light up. "Oh, he's the safe kind." (Roberto: 1)

This could act as an example of how the Japanese see nationality. Visual appearance may be how they judge foreigners at first, but nationality seems to trump this fairly quickly especially if actively introduced by the Westerner. The repetitive pattern of having to keep confirming this with every new Japanese person he meets requires Roberto to have a special kind of patience. He also mentioned how he has experienced both positive and negative discrimination, which is also a common theme throughout the interviews. It was also observed when the topic of negative or systematic discrimination was brought up by a

respondent, strong examples were not observed or explained. I would directly ask respondents to give a specific example of being discriminated against, but respondents would often default to saying that they could not think of an example at that moment. These were common responses even though it was asked in the preparatory questions to think of specific examples to provide in the interview.

The result of feeling discriminated against without cause may be generated from a natural separation from the host culture creating a feeling of being an outsider. If someone was systematically discriminated against, the incidents should be clear and most likely easy to remember, document or identify.

I would like to back up the observation in the previous paragraph with the acknowledgment there are examples of discrimination against non-Japanese groups in Japan, including Westerners. It also must be said that accurate reporting with various factors taken into consideration for all cases of discrimination does justice to the argument. Not disclosing systematic or other forms of discriminatory acts are an injustice to all. On the other hand, inflating stories lacking information with half-truths or leaving out necessary facts should not be tolerated.

Another form of discrimination, which has been dubbed *microaggressions* (Sue 2010), has been a topic of discussion applied to Westerner's feelings of being singled out from the crowd in Japan. The term basically refers to an action or something said by a member of the host culture to a minority which implies difference or inferiority. It should be noted that these actions by the host culture members are not done with malice or any malicious intent. Actually, in many situations, the host culture member may even be trying to make a connection with a non-Japanese. The concept of microaggressions is applicable to any country, but they are reported in this paper as specific examples in Japan only. According to the survey, women (O'Keefe 2016) tended to be more susceptible to this than men. The survey also showed that speaking Japanese did not reduce the number of microaggressions as it did in the case of perceived discrimination. This can be seen in the case of Tom, who is highly fluent in Japanese and economically stable, but he still gets irritated when the Japanese treat him like he knows nothing about Japan:

They give you the dumbass treatment, yeah. I'm so used to that by now…I don't tell them otherwise. I just let them make

asses out of themselves in my eyes....If I get a chance though, and this is something I enjoy doing a lot … This is my own backblast, push back microaggression: when someone's going off like that, I'll just let them keep going, and then I'll find a spot where I can insert a blurt of Japanese, and then you know. I'm sure you've done this too. I don't know any guy who's never played this trick on a Japanese person who's giving them the dumb gaijin treatment…It's so much fun. I love it. The way I look at it … I don't look at it as … Well, I am teasing them a little bit, but I can rationalize that in thinking that I'm teaching that person a lesson. (Tom: 6)

His referral to the Japanese as "they" instead of relaying a story about a specific individual reveals his irritation when dealing with such situations. His description of "pushing back" shows he feels like he has been pushed. It is not uncommon to hear LTWs struggle with the feeling of having to explain who they are and be recognized for their accomplishments and experience in Japan. As shown in item 84 of the survey, feelings of discrimination decrease over time for Western foreign residents, especially for Japanese speakers. There was one comment at the end of the survey that stated only "whiners" complain of microaggressions and some only use the word to cover their own frustrations with the culture. The buildup of years of being subjected to numerous times of similar questioning and assumptions can seem harmless to those who have only experienced them several times. The feeling of frustration can intensify for some after hundreds of misunderstandings. Those with a strong cultural fit will most likely have a communicative system which allows them to navigate such a situation better. As seen with Tom, even with his superior Japanese skills and knowledge of Japan, he still feels discontent towards some common situations in the host culture.

Cultural fit (Searle and Ward, 1990; Ward and Chang, 1997; Ward et al., 2004; Peltokorpi, 2014; O'Keefe, 2019) refers to an immigrant who enters a host culture with a predetermined characteristic to succeed due to their own personal history or personality traits. Cultural fit was fully explained in an earlier installment of this series of works (O'Keefe 2019: 13). To explain briefly, the demeanor of an individual fits into a host culture naturally or with only slight adjustments. On the opposite side of the spectrum, the same person may not do well in their own country or other

cultures which are found at different degrees of cultural distance. The straightforward direct communicative style can often be used in the States or other Western countries in a successful way, but may not always be transferable in the Japanese construct. Individuals who do not fit into the Japanese model may return home, but some stay and fall into a state of frustration which can create years of struggling within the mismatched environment. Results from item 42 of the 2015 survey showed when the responses for "agree" and "strongly agree" were combined, 67.3% of respondents felt like their personality fit Japan.

Life satisfaction, like cultural fit, is another constant factor found in the styles-of-belonging which assists in defining the placement within the quadrant types of LTWs (O'Keefe 2017). Language is often commonly thought to be the connector needed but in recent research, culture fit seems to have a higher correlation (O'Keefe 2016). The results from a Pearson r test showed a correlation between life satisfaction and cultural fit was twice as strong as that of the language factors. Life satisfaction is an important part of the commitment to stay in Japan and a possible building block to form an identity within a community. But it must not be forgotten that life satisfaction can also be obtained as an individual through economic, employment or separated social situations and does not necessarily involve being a part of a Japanese community. This means an individual can be satisfied without a local community connection if they have the economic means or employment situation to allow them to do so. A person in such a situation would be placed in the *satisfied but separated* quadrant. There may be a connection to a "community" of Westerners, Japanese with Western tendencies or even some Japanese groups, but there is a conscious disconnect from certain areas of the culture they do not wish to participate in. This was seen in a statement made by Dorothy when she separated her satisfaction from her physical presence in Japan (O'Keefe 2017). Another respondent, Anthony spoke of his connection with Japanese even when he went back to the States to be with his sick mother. During his trip, he realized it may be hard for him to go back to the States. His connectedness with the Japanese has become part of his nature. He says:

> ...I felt most of my adult life has been more than in America has been in Japan. When I went there, I really felt a little bit out of place I think. I felt more like Japan is my home than back home.
> Just friendship, you do friendship in a different way here than

you do there and it became "how do I do friendship back there and what was it like?" I taught a little (English) back home to some university professors that were doing exchange programs over there. I found out that I wanted to hang out with them more than with my regular (friends). Even though I was back in America for the first time in twenty years, I felt more comfortable with those kinds of people (meaning Japanese).

I don't know if it was my problem or just that I like Japanese people more than I like American people's personality I don't really know why. It was kind of strange for me to feel like that I kind of searched out, looking for Japanese people. I felt comfortable making friends with them a lot easier than I did with Americans. (Anthony: 5)

Anthony's feelings of connection are stronger and deeper than Dorothy's. His feeling of fitting in ("cultural fit") has developed after spending the majority of his adult life in Japan. This may be understood from observing two contrasting points of each of these respondents. The first is their chosen occupation. Dorothy is a competent teacher who has gained respect in her field, while Anthony is a self-employed restaurant owner. The amount of connectedness needed with the community is evident. Teachers have more control over their work environment while someone who is self-employed needs to connect to the community if they wish to be successful and survive. The level of necessity is comparatively different in these two specific examples. Dorothy needs to be flexible and effective within the framework provided by the school she teaches in. This framework does not exist for self-employed work. While allowing a certain kind of freedom, it also opens up the individual to an environment with no written rules and little feedback from customers.

The second difference is language. The effects of language skills are elusive to those who have not learned them and indispensable to those who have. Those who have not learned the language, but have decided to remain in Japan, are masters at finding ways around linguistic barriers by using certain human resources around them, i.e. spouse, friend and/or bilingual coworkers. There are Westerners who have spent years in Japan without ever learning the language at any depth. Daily conversations may be possible but tend to be repetitive verbal actions learned in the first few years of their stay. A self-employed business owner does not have such an

option. The possibility of successful business owners who do not speak Japanese decreases as you leave the metropolitan areas. This statement is subjective because it only relates to the research from this study. Success in business is often a reflection of communicative abilities needed to implement a system, which in many cases will involve the host culture's language at some level or another. The growth of their business relies on it. One difference in approach was observed in two different successful business owners' statements. One business owner, Carlo, who admittedly does not speak Japanese as fluently as he should, often spoke of what he saw as deep systematic obstacles faced by foreigners in Japan. Carlo's solutions are to be reliant on a Japanese partner. He is also a proponent of network creation and stressed this as very important.

> My time here, I've always been an advocate of networking. I've always been an advocate of group building and always been an advocate of a foreigner who plans to stay here a long time should own his own business, so I've always been pushing that because Japan does not offer us a real option. (Carlo: 7)

Carlos has been in Japan for over 25 years and still struggles with not having the same options as native Japanese. He has a Japanese business partner who has been with him for almost his whole time in Japan. The cultural differences he witnesses are not just apparitions but actual experiences. However, he has geared his restaurants and bars to the foreign community, while offering Japanese customers an international atmosphere. His lack of language skills put him at a communicative disadvantage to grasp the depth of a conversation unless his business partner or someone he trusts translates for him. Conversations only in English may result in difficulty overcoming sociolinguistic orientations which are most likely to complicate conversations with Japanese people (Peltokorpi 2008). His years of experience help to fill in the gaps, but communication in the host language is irreplaceable. Assumptions can be made from experience, but could also be rooted in prejudgement which could create unnecessary misunderstandings. When new ideas and concepts arise they need to be understood in detail. Japanese subtleties can be hard for someone who even speaks the language, let alone someone who does not. On the other hand, Dan is also reliant on his own network, but he supports himself through his high-level Japanese skills. He performs all the

sales and contract negotiations for his company himself in Japanese and is not reliant on a middle person to help him do business. But his situation is not void of stress.

> Every time I try to communicate and don't communicate as well as I'd like to…I feel stressed there. I feel the same stress when miscommunications happen in the US, but they happen here more often. The level of stress is probably a little bit high. (Dan: 6)

Dan compares his stress as being the same as in the United States, but such situations are just more common in Japan. He chooses to cope with the stress as a singular problem rather than seeing it as the full weight of cultural opposition. Throughout his interview, Dan was less likely to use the "us" and "them" comparisons as Carlo and Tom did. The irony of these cultural conundrums is they are not exclusive to Japan. Some LTWs have a dilemma when returning to their home country.

Reverse culture shock (RCS) was a topic that emerged from the interviews. This is not a Japan-specific phenomenon[5] and is even listed on the U.S. Department of State website,[6] although it tends to use older versions of the broad culture shock theory (Oberg, [1960] 2006; Pedersen 1994). Some respondents commented that it is almost unthinkable for them to move back to their home country. The reasons for this are specific to each person, but RCS was brought up by several of them. Exchange students have been known to deal with this upon returning to their home country (Gaw 2000). The change is much deeper for long-term residents. Some respondents described RCS as stronger than any of the culture shock they experienced when first arriving in Japan. The subject of RCS was first brought up by Donald, a 45 year resident of Japan. The original question was if he feels any stress in Japan. His answer went as follows:

> No. (Stress in Japan) I feel stress the few times I've been to the United States I felt stress…Yeah and it seems like the United

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[5] Taken from The Week.com. September 5, 2016. I lived in Korea for 5 years. Here's what happened when I came home to Nebraska. written by Bart Schaneman. Last accessed on September 10, 2016. http://theweek.com/articles/637911/lived-korea-5-years-heres-what-happened-when-came-home-nebraska

[6] The U.S.State Department. Last accessed on September 12, 2016. http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c56075.htm

States is a foreign country now because it's been 45 years so the United States has changed tremendously in the time that I've been gone....I had no more dissatisfaction here than I would if I'd lived in the United States. (Donald: 6)

Similar feelings were expressed by other respondents. Judi said the mere thought of moving home causes her stress. On the other hand, Barbara said as much as she likes Japan she often thinks about moving home with her husband.

As mentioned in a past paper in this series (O'Keefe 2018), *othering* and *intragroup othering* often plays a part in understanding identity. Identity is a "negotiated construct dependent on external markers and signs, and above all the presence of 'others' who mirror and delimit private-individual and public boundaries" (Cuninghame 2008:19). There are clear examples of respondents explaining how they have felt *othered* by the Japanese in the workplace or in public. There are also examples of respondents displaying intragroup othering when talking about their foreign counterparts. Respondents gave examples of various traits they obviously did not like being associated with. Some paraphrased examples would be akin to becoming a Japanophile[7] or losing who you really are in the culture. Other respondents stated positions from another perspective saying they never wanted to become someone who lived in Japan for years but could not speak the language. Roberto stated something similar about how he felt when he first arrived in Japan:

...You just struggle along, but what I didn't want for myself was...I didn't want to be seen as one of those foreigners who just kind of struggle along. You got to pat them on the head and you get that condescending attitude. I wanted to be treated as much as possible as a peer among the Japanese. For that, you need...you got to sort of pay respect to the language and the culture by learning the language properly. (Roberto: 2)

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[7] Japanophile or Japanophilia refers to the appreciation and love of Japanese culture, people or history. In Japanese, the term for Japanophile is "shinnichi" (親日), with "親" "shin" (しん) equivalent to the English prefix 'pro-', and "日" "nichi" (にち), meaning "Japanese" (as in the word for Japan "Nihon" (日本)). The term was first used as early as the 18th century, switching in scope over time. Taken from Wikipedia September 9, 2016.

While the success of those does not mainly seem to rely on language skills, bringing up the topic of language skills can provoke a heated debate of its necessity. Styles of adaptation are taken early on in one's life in Japan, which is why most who speak, read and write Japanese learned early on rather than later in their stay. In Roberto's case, he knew from the start of his time in Japan that learning the language was going to be one of his goals. Tim shared some of Roberto's feelings, but in a stronger way when he commented on Westerners who do not speak Japanese even after years of living in the country.

> I don't understand (someone) who has been in Japan for 30 years and can't speak anything. I think it's insulting frankly. You live in someone else's country; you at least have to meet halfway. At least make the effort to do basic communications so you can go to a restaurant and order food without pointing at stuff. I think it was important for me especially being kind of thrown into the countryside, I had to make friends and there were no non-Japanese people around so the only logical alternative is to make friends with Japanese people....If hadn't learned the language. I can't expect them to learn mine. That's not fair. (Tim: 3)

This is a difficult and sometimes a sensitive subject to bring up among mixed company. From an objective perspective, Japanese skills and literacy are learned and attained through dedicated study and should not be seen as anything but that. While this researcher's own work has shown that language ability is not necessarily a factor in professional advancement in areas where English is the dominant language, it also has been shown that LTW believe it is linked to higher general life satisfaction. This link is mostly observed through the ability to move freely through communicative barriers which are not as easily recognized by those who do not speak the language. 69.5% of respondents in the survey, including non-speakers, agreed it affects the quality of life.

Dorothy offered an example of intra-group othering when she put value on other skills and attributes outside of language. She mentioned her 15 years of teaching experience before coming to Japan:

> I'm a teacher who came to Japan unlike...I hate to say it this way but I'm a real teacher, a lot of people who have come here to

teach to get … That's the way they earn their living but for me teaching is my life and then Japan was the location I chose to teach, so it's maybe it's a little bit different from someone. (Dorothy: 1)

Dorothy came to Japan in her early 40's, which would put her in a position to have ample experience over her teaching counterparts who on average arrived in Japan in their mid to late 20's. This type of discourse continued in various combinations throughout the interviews.

One of the types offered in the typological chart reflects the completeness of entry into life in Japan. This is not insinuating individuals become Japanese or even experience full assimilation. The full circle (FC) is the state in which the individual, after years of trial and error, becomes essentially adjusted to their life in Japan while creating a mutually satisfying interconnectedness to the Japanese community. They have few cultural difficulties and basically see living in Japan is as comfortable as they could be. This means they are able to interact with whoever comes their way and are not limited to having people assist them in their daily operations. The leap requires major insight into one's own belief system and how much one is willing to compromise. It is such compromises that keeps many from entering FC. The compromise is sometimes seen as "selling out," which is another example of othering that occurs within the LTW group.

In reality, it is more about the preexisting ability within an individual's own personality to integrate while protecting the self. "Selling out" is going against who you are and will not eliminate differences needed to be addressed to achieve the FC. If one "sells out", regret is bound to appear after years of going against their own values. FC shows how cultures merge and become one, a personalized interwoven complex combination of years of mistakes and successes bound together in the experience of one person. This is the freedom to be and to do what one wishes by accomplishing goals without cultural barriers. Failures are only part of gaining experience and are recognized as such. Those who fit the FC type view Japan as the place they live. Any frustrating concepts of "us" and "them" are all in the past. Japan becomes just another place with the good and the bad as any country would offer. This differs from the balance type because in FC there is no distinguishing of sides anymore. The balance type requires constant negotiation of the middle which can still be unstable.

Those in full circle have mastered the middle to the extent that the need for negotiations becomes non-existent.

Methodological limitations

In all, this study can only be considered exploratory because of its inherent limitations. To begin with, although the respondents were from varying postal codes nationwide and were at least two separations from the researcher, the sample was not random and originated with the researcher on both personal and SNS networks. Moreover, even though the criteria for the study appeared at the beginning of the questionnaire and elicited approval from every respondent, this means it is completely reliant on the honesty of the individual's answers. This means quotes from respondents may not truly represent the LTW group. This type of personal bias has also been mentioned in other studies of ethnic groups in Australia (Mak & Tran 2001). This bias can most often be noted in the language area. There may be some respondents who overrate their ability, while others may be more humble and underrate themselves. However, the self-rated scales could also be a representation and reflection of how confident a person feels about their ability, which gives insight into their personal feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction with their language ability.

Conclusion

This paper has acted as a preliminary report on interviews with LTW. The information gathered offers some insight into various ways LTW interact with the Japanese construct. It also displayed the basic statistical information of those interviewed along with the first glimpse of the LTW typological chart. This information will play a large role in the final part of this study, but the need to explain the intricate combination of factors involved in placing a specific LTW into any of the quadrants will be fully explained in the upcoming reports.

The application of the catalysts and the styles-of-belonging in the interview quotes were given to offer clear referable examples of how these factors exist within the LTW group. These examples were rather broad in the appearance but will merge together with one sense of purpose as this research continues. Examples of the different styles of LTW interacting

with the host-culture concedes there are differences as to how individuals react to specific cultural situations. The ability to define these situations vary greatly from respondent to respondent. There were examples of those in a perpetual state of conflict in their attempts to be seen as equal and wished to be recognized for their individual accomplishments. While others who may have experienced similar situations and not be frustrated with it at all.

These different styles were represented in how LTW view the importance of language, their profession and various aspects of life in Japan. Some respondents displayed a highly observable level of cultural fit. Anthony stated that even when he went back to visit his sick mother in the States, he found himself seeking out where Japanese gathered. This is because he feels more comfortable in that atmosphere and described it as an unconscious decision rather than a conscious one. Donald explained a similar feeling as reverse culture shock when he returns to the United States to visit. He then followed up saying that he has never regretted living in Japan. While this may be seen as strange to someone who does not think like this, it actually works to their advantage within the borders of Japan. Anthony uses his intercultural communication skills when speaking with his Japanese customers. He stated he has the advantage of being a foreigner compared with the traditional ways many Japanese would have to sell in the same situation. He maximizes his difference rather than allowing it to slow him down.

Chris showed how there are specific social spheres that he can be well respected and recognized for who he is and what he has accomplished while simultaneously rejecting other situations that are frustrating to deal with the basics of having to continuously re-introduce himself from zero. Chris is very proud and satisfied of his accomplishments within the martial art he has been practicing for many years, but he would rather separate himself from his children's school activities because he feels he is always under a stereotypical microscope of the "gaijin thing". Tom explained how he playfully uses his high-level Japanese to shock Japanese who feel he is just a visiting foreigner. He said it was his own way of teaching people that there are foreigners in Japan who are competent in not only the language but also their knowledge of Japan. Lee, who works in a Japanese company and uses the language daily, takes a different approach by trying to empathize with the person who has labeled him as he put it "deficient". He continues to speak with them in English but will revert to Japanese if the

person is having trouble communicating what they are trying to say.

Having a command of the language allows more choices with how to deal with various situations. Roberto stressed that language was not only necessary but learning it was a way of paying "respect" to the culture. While understanding the language may be beneficial, it does come with many latent frustrations. Dan mentioned that he knows if he was in the States, he would still make communicative mistakes, but due to Japanese being his second language, misunderstandings are more common. This creates a whole new body of situations that Japanese speaking LTWs have to learn to master if they wish to connect with various environments they need to exist in.

LTW who are proficient in the language will have different styles of adaptation all together than those who do not speak the language at a level that would be equivalent to what is needed to function in a Japanese-only environment. Tim said he found it "insulting" if an LTW who has lived in Japan for 30 years and cannot speak at some functional level. Tim's statement is a form of intra-group othering which is a component when separating certain types in the quadrants. Examples of language skills were not the only time when intra-group othering was observed. Dorothy labeled herself as a "real teacher" compared to many of the people she sees in Japan. She explained she was a teacher who came to Japan rather than coming to Japan to learn to teach. This was something that was very important to her that separated her from others in the LTW group.

Many studies on foreigners in Japan focus on perceived discrimination. While this study has asked all of the respondents about perceived discrimination, no clear examples were given that didn't involve Westerners outside of those still in the earlier or unsettled stages of their stay in Japan. Positive discrimination was brought up by several of the respondents but was not a focus of this study. It would be interesting to follow up on this in future research or later installments in this series of works.

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