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Replication and resistance: Japanese male returned sojourners speaking about gender, masculinity, and desire

［模倣と抵抗:ジェンダー、マスキリニティと欲望についての日本人男子留学生の語り］

by

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Abstract

The international sojourns of Japanese youth have received plentiful attention in research. They are often theorized as once-in-a-lifetime opportunities for personal growth and language development. To date, ample studies have focused on the experiences of Japanese women overseas, particularly in primarily English-speaking nations (e.g., Kobayashi, 2007; Morita, 2004; Ono & Piper, 2004; Takahashi, 2013). However, there has been comparatively very little research that explores the international narratives of Japanese men. This dissertation aims to address this gap by analyzing the experiences and perceptions of Japanese men who have gone abroad and returned to Japan.

Previous studies that investigate the narratives of male sojourners have tended to focus on respondent perceptions of gendered working culture in Japan (e.g., Kato, 2015; Ono, 2015; Suzuki, 2015). The current study expands the analysis of the Japanese male experience overseas by examining participant perceptions in relation to gender, masculinity, and desire. These discourses were analysed in relation to participants' construction of identity and how they spoke about important groups during their sojourn. Data was collected through semi-structured qualitative interviews with 25 Japanese males who had studied or worked abroad. Interviews were analysed using inductive thematic analysis and themes were created based on the similarities and differences in participant accounts. Examination of interviews suggested that participants perceived gendered expectations in Japanese society that act as hindrances to men's international sojourns. For some participants, the act of going abroad was a form of resistance to undesirable hegemonic discourses concerning the role of an adult man.

Participants regularly contrasted their study/work abroad with how they imagined the Japanese women in their host community experienced their sojourns. The data also suggested

that interacting with images of hegemonic Western masculinity impacted the way many participants viewed either themselves, or Japanese men as a group, as (un)acceptable romantic partners for non-Japanese women. Some participants replicated discourses of heterosexual Japanese masculinity as romantically undesirable abroad, while other found ways to form more favourable identities through enacting agency or through negative descriptions of Japanese women or host community women. Overall, the findings in this study can expand our limited view of the experiences of Japanese male sojourners through investigating their constructions of identity and structures of power presented within their accounts.

Preface

This study has undergone ethical review at Osaka University, Graduate School of Human Sciences in June 2017 was approved in July 2017. It was subsequently edited and reapproved in May 2019 (Registration number: OUKS1706R1). This dissertation is the original work of Elisabeth (Libby) Ann Williams.

A portion of the data and analysis present in Chapter 8 were published in the Journal of Gender Awareness in Language Education, Vol. 11 (2019) as “Perceptions of desirability and enactments of agency among Japanese male university students abroad”.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

i. Study background

International sojourns abroad for studying, short-term work, and volunteering are frequently portrayed by educators, academic institutions and travel consultants as life altering events comprised of personal growth, intercultural friendships, increased career opportunities, and in the case of foreign language environments, the optimal context for language acquisition (Block, 2007; Kinginger, 2009). Japanese young people have been actively involved in international sojourns for many years, both as study abroad participants and as part of Working Holiday Maker (WHM) programs –reciprocal arrangements between countries that allow youth to work and/or study in each other's nation for a limited period. The Japanese Association of Overseas Studies (JOAS) (2018) estimated over 200,000 Japanese nationals studied abroad in 2017, 80% of them being in predominantly English speaking countries (United States, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand). JOAS includes WHM participants in this data considering the significant overlap of the roles of WHMs and study abroad participants given that the majority of WHMs also partake in language study. In fact, according to Ota and Hoshino (2016), more than 86% of Japanese WHMs in 2015 took part in language study during their time overseas, blurring the categories of WHM and study abroad. Moreover, the forms of sojourns are taking now different shapes for many Japanese young people. For instance, the number of Japanese youth who take part in "super short term programs" increased from 16, 873 to 60,145 from 2009 – 2016 (Shimmi & Ota, 2018).

Kubota (2011) observes how the promotion of the international sojourns of young people, particularly study abroad, commonly reflect neoliberal ideologies of self-improvement and

intercultural competence necessary for competition in the global marketplace. Past research concerning the international experiences of Japanese young people has mirrored similar discourses through a focus on English language acquisition and intercultural competencies attained through study abroad (e.g., Churchill, 2009; Sasaki, 2007; Wood, 2007; Yashima, 2010). Research interests have also included learning about personal stories and subjectivities of Japanese sojourners and how their time and interactions abroad affect their perception of self and host community. Such research has shed light on what identities can be enacted in what context, and, importantly, what triggers the projection of particular identities (e.g., Ichimoto, 2000; Morita, 2004; Takahashi, 2013).

Although more females statistically take part in temporary sojourns on average worldwide (Kinginger, 2009), this gap appears to be particularly noticeable among Japanese study abroad participants and WHMs. Japanese data from both study abroad and WHM programs show a significantly higher number of female participation (Kato, 2015; Kobayashi, 2018). In fact, these numbers have been estimated to be as high as 80% female participation for both study abroad and WHM programs (JOAS), 2016; Kobayashi, 2018). Similarly, Hirakawa (2004) and Kato (2015) note an abundance of literature on the lives of Japanese women overseas and Japanese women's perceptions of countries and peoples outside of Japan. Studies have explored topics such as the historical trends of Japanese women's ventures abroad (Gildart, 2014), the reasons nehind Japanese working women's choices to go abroad (Kobayashi, 2007), Japanese women using international experience as 'human capital' (Ono & Piper, 2004), Japanese women's attitudes toward English learning abroad (Kobayashi, 2018) and Japanese female's enactments of agency in graduate programs abroad (Morita, 2004). Other research has shifted its focus to the romantic lives and desires of Japanese women abroad (e.g., Hamano,

2019; Kelsky, 2001; Takahashi, 2013). The transnational mobility of Japanese youth appears to be a highly gendered practice.

To date however, there has been very little comprehensive research that explores the experiences and perceptions of Japanese male sojourners. Kato (2015), who has conducted some of the most in-depth field research with Japanese young people abroad, notes the potential danger in neglecting the narratives of Japanese men overseas, stressing that only focusing on Japanese women abroad:

> "may problematize both the act of migration and women as something unusual, and intensify the stereotype of women as socially problematic compared to men. Second, it leads to a monolithic depiction of men as if they were all equally content with Japanese society." (p. 222)

Indeed, it could be argued that the sheer amount of research into the international narratives of Japanese women has resulted in the representation of Japanese females as much more complex and agentive than their male counterparts. This is exemplified by Takahashi's (2013) remark, who, in her ethnographic study of Japanese female study abroad participants in Sydney, remarked that the Japanese men she interviewed were "more or less straightforward and practical" (p. 1) in comparison to the women she spoke with. Her lack of interest in their answers ultimately contributed to her dropping men as participants from her study.

The few studies that do engage with Japanese men tend to focus on Japanese men in relation to work and career in Japan (e.g., Kato, 2015; Ono, 2015; Suzuki, 2015) or Japanese men and language acquisition (Churchill, 2009). This dissertation aims to broaden the understanding of the international narratives of Japanese men. I use Benwell and Stokoe's definition of 'narratives' as the "stories" we tell others "through which people recall, recount, and reflect on their lives" (p. 130). Giddeons (1991), furthermore, argues that storytelling is a

tool we use to construct our identities through sharing with others and simultaneously reflecting on ourselves. Exploring the narratives of young Japanese male sojourners therefore allows this study to examine participant identity and construct a potential place of self-reflection for participants.

This dissertation concentrates on areas that have received minimal attention in the international narratives of Japanese male sojourners, namely, the men's perceptions of masculinity and desire, and the influence that these perceptions have on identity construction. 25 returned Japanese male sojourners were interviewed and their accounts analysed regarding discourses of masculinity, desire, and other factors that participants frequently spoke about or deemed as memorable during their time abroad. I will expand on the background of this study before highlighting the ways in which this dissertation contributes to the field of international narratives of Japanese male sojourners.

ii. Japanese women's international narratives and *akogare*

As Hirakawa (2004) and Kato (2015) note, the majority of research on the international narratives of Japanese nationals focus on the stories and experiences of females. The respondents in these studies have primarily been women who travel to Anglophone nations. Some studies aim to understand the high rates of Japanese women's sojourns through analysing their interests in English, international communication and female respondents' future trajectories (e.g., Ichimoto, 2003; Morita, 2004; Ono & Piper, 2004), whereas others analyse an interest in foreign languages and cultures (predominantly English and perceptions of 'Anglophone culture') in relation to heterosexual desire and intercultural dating (Bailey, 2007; Burton, 2002; Kelsky, 2001a; 2001b; Takahashi, 2013).

A concept that frequently arises in these studies is *akogare* (憧れ), which is a Japanese word used to represent a longing or desire for something unattainable (Kelsky, 2001b). In these studies, it is applied to the discourse of heterosexual Japanese women's attraction to English, Anglophone cultures, and English speaking men. Some studies have also presented accounts from Japanese women who admire English speaking, often White men, while degrading the image of Japanese men (Hirakawa, 2004; Kelsky, 2001a; 2001b; Takahashi, 2013; Takeda, 2012). For example, when interviewing Japanese women married to Australian men, Takeda (2012) noted a respondent saying, "'I am sorry to say this in front of a Japanese man, but I think Australian men are more gentlemanly than Japanese men'" (p. 294).

Many studies that use *akogare* as a tool to analyse Japanese women's desires have been criticized by Kato (2007; 2015) and Kitamura (2016) for upholding essentialist ideologies of Japan and the discursively constructed West, and for failing to take the vast diversity of 'Japanese women' into account. Moreover, in her analysis of an interview with a Japanese man learning English in order to speak with a Filipina woman he is infatuated with, Kubota (2011) argues the limitation of viewing *akogare* merely as a Japanese female phenomenon. Likewise, Kato (2007; 2015) has cautioned that the absence of Japanese male voices in such studies allows negative images of Japanese men to go unchallenged.

iii. International narratives of Japanese men

To date, comparatively little research has been published about the international narratives of Japanese men. In 2015, the Journal of Asian Anthropology published a special edition that featured the analysis of narratives of "self-motivated transnational mobility of young Japanese men" (Aoyama, 2015, p. 215). These articles (Kato, 2015; Ono, 2015; Suzuki, 2015) focused on the reasons why the study respondents left Japan, their destination choices, and how

leaving Japan may affect their lives and identities back in Japan. These studies interviewed Japanese men in four sojourn destinations: Sydney and Vancouver (Kato, 2015), Dublin (Suzuki, 2015), and Bangkok and Chiang Mai (Ono, 2015). A common similarity was a frequent connection between the desire to leave Japan and a perception of a rigid and restrictive Japanese working culture. This resistance is connected in all three studies to an aversion to older generations' expectations of men in the workplace. For example, Kato (2015) presents that example of Shinichi, who left his career to go abroad because he was "[e]xhausted from a job that forced him to come home after midnight several times a month, and seeing the lifestyle of older colleagues who were sacrificing family life" (p. 230). For these men, it appears that leaving Japan for temporary stays was a way of resisting or delaying entrance into an undesirable working culture that places significant constraints on their personal freedom.

Kato (2015), Ono (2015) and Suzuki (2015) report that their participants feared that leaving Japan to go abroad would hinder their return to the domestic workforce. Suzuki (2015) notes that this concern is reflective of a strong pressure on Japanese men to enter and remain in the workforce after university graduation. In contrast, several studies have suggested that Japanese women's marginalized position in the workplace gives them increased opportunities to study abroad and return to Japan to take up similar positions (Kato, 2015; Kobayashi, 2007; Takahashi, 2013). For many men, the possibility of insufficient career prospects was connected to the concern of not being perceived as a suitable marriage partner, suggesting a link between a man's career and heteronormative gender roles (Kato, 2015; Suzuki, 2015). Masculinity, moreover, is primarily connected to the ability to acquire and remain in a full-time position.

iv. Japanese men and desire abroad

As shown in the limited research regarding young adult Japanese male sojourners, the analysis of international narratives tends to focus on respondent perceptions and interactions with working culture in Japan. On the other hand, analysis of Japanese female international narratives provide lengthy discussions of participants in relation to topics such as career, language use, community membership, and dating abroad. One study that does interview Japanese men and presents themes outside of work and career is a master's thesis by Takayama (2000). In his research, Takayama interviewed Japanese male study abroad participants at private language schools in Vancouver to assess how these men "construct their experiences in the midst of global and local ideological discourses" (p. 3). Unlike the previously mentioned studies, Takayama was interested in how his participants spoke about host community members and incorporated an analysis of discourses of race when viewing participant accounts. While not a main focus of his research, Takayama concluded that the majority of the men he interviewed had essentialized ideas about the "Canadian women" in their host community. Namely, that these women were White, native English speakers that were often compared to beautiful Hollywood celebrities. Moreover, Takayama concluded that many respondents idolized the essentialized image of these women while simultaneously othering them. In other words, "Canadian women" were described as beautiful and yet too different for a romantic relationship with "Japanese men".

v. Study contributions

Takayama's (2000) study is unique in that it looks at some of the same discourses and participant perceptions as previous studies that focus on the narratives of Japanese females. It also addresses essentialized images of both 'self' (Japanese man) and 'other' (host community) and introduces the concept of romantic desire, something seldom spoken about in regards to

Japanese male sojourners. Yet, romantic desire was not a main focus of Takayama's study. The way Japanese male sojourners speak about masculinity, gender, and desire in relation to international experience has not yet been widely addressed. Expanding our knowledge on these topics can contribute new critical perspectives to the field of study abroad/international sojourners for several reasons.

First, as Kato (2015) argued, exploring the Japanese male sojourner experience from difference perspectives will help challenge the relatively static image that appears in both academic and public discourse. Next, examining Japanese men's perceptions of masculinity or how they embody different masculinities abroad can illuminate host community structures of power. Messerschmidt and Messer (2018) assert that by using an intersectional approach to analysis of masculinity by viewing how a man's aspects of identity such as race, sexuality, social class, age, (and I argue linguistic repertoire) interact, we can gain a more dynamic view of not only how masculine identities are formed, but also how the power that men hold is fluid depending on context and interlocutor. Therefore, learning about the experience of Japanese male sojourners in relation to masculinity also allows the critical examination of structures of power in a host community, and how a male study abroad participant may be affected by such structures.

Similarly, perceptions and enactments of desire can also be a site of critical examination. Both Nemoto (2009) and Motha and Lin (2014) illustrate how desire's connection to identity construction is intertwined with the possible material and social resources one's object of desire possesses. In other words, what can be gained through interactions or a relationship with the object of desire? Analysing Japanese male sojourners' articulations of desire may expand our understanding of who is desirable in a host community, which also provides an avenue to

examine relationships of power in a particular context. As educators, understanding more about the above topics can help us more critically understand the Japanese male sojourner experience.

vi. Defining key terms

A common thread running through this dissertation is the question asking "how do participants replicate or resist dominant discourses of masculinity or desire?" *Discourse*, *replication,* and *resistance* are important terms within this dissertation that warrant further definition. In defining these terms, I draw on the work of scholars in the filed of sociology, psychology, and applied linguistics.

First, Burr (2015) defines discourses as:

> a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way produce a particular version of events. It [discourse] refers to a particular picture that is painted of an event, person or class of persons, a particular way of representing it in a certain light (p. 74 – 75).

Her definition is based on the work of Foucault (1980), who asserted discourse encompasses not only "a set of meanings", but also shape the dominant thoughts, behaviours, and actions. This includes regulating what options are readily available to particular individuals in a given context. Structures of power, therefore, are key in this definition of discourse.

In this study, the term 'replication' draws from the conceptualizations of Foucault (1980) and Bourdieu (1977) regarding the way that status and relationships of power are both discursively reproduced through interaction and reproduced through wider cultural practices (as cited in Norton, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2014). This approach to replication is used in this dissertation to assess when and how interviewees contribute to upholding or strengthening certain discourses through their interviews.

Next, 'resistance' is defined as instances where individuals challenge hegemonic systems. According to Seymour (2006), resistance can take form through physical actions, speech or even within one's thoughts. Norton (2000) argues that hegemonic systems can be challenged through the creation of counter-discourse that reposition a dominant discourse as less powerful or a marginalized individuals as more powerful. In this dissertation, resistance is used to analyse ways that participants challenge unfavourable, but powerful images that they perceive either abroad or in Japan.

vii. Research Questions

This dissertation analyses data from qualitative interviews with 25 Japanese men who returned from international sojourns. Considering the frequent overlap of study abroad and WHM participation, I have chosen to include participants who did study abroad or WHM programs, or a combination of both.

The question that guided this inquiry were:

1) *How do young Japanese men with study abroad and/or WHM experience (hereby "participants") speak about being a Japanese man abroad?*
2) *Who are the influential agents in participant construction of identity?*
3) *How do participants speak about gender, masculinity and desire abroad and in Japan?*
    a) *How do participants replicate or resist wider discourses of gender, masculinity and desire that they encounter abroad or in Japan?*

The aim of the first research question is to learn about participants' general experiences abroad and their perspectives of these experiences. The second question relates to the social influences in participants' host communities (and occasionally in Japan), and how participants discursively create their identities and the identities of others through descriptions of these agents

within their communities. Lastly, the third research question seeks to gain a deeper understanding of how participants not only speak about masculinity and desire but how their interviews either support or challenge common discourses of masculinity and desire. The combination of these questions allows me both investigate the experiences and identities of participants and importantly, how they interact with pervasive, and possibly marginalizing discourses in their host and home communities.

viii. Personal connection to research

This dissertation is in part a continuation of the findings of my master's thesis, which explored the identity formation and perceptions of language ownership among Japanese university students who had returned from study abroad in English medium programs. I temporarily moved to Japan to collect data in order to examine the case studies from six university students: three women and three men. Much of what I learned from my female participants I found supported by previous studies, but my male participants shared very different narratives that I struggled to discuss in relation to past research. It was here that I first began to consider their sojourns in relation to perceptions of gender, masculinity and desire, as all of the men were open to sharing their experiences or expectations of dating abroad. All three men expressed that they believed heterosexual Japanese men had negative reputations as romantic partners abroad. This was not a major topic initially of my master's thesis, but it developed into the theme that I became the most interested in.

After my return to Canada, a friend and I started a Japanese language conversation club that met weekly. Our group grew very quickly and I met many Japanese study abroad and WHM participants, and I always enjoyed listening to everyone's story. Why did they leave Japan? Why

did they choose this destination city? How was their experience since arriving? I found that some of my discussions with men from Japan mirrored my interviews with the three male respondents during my master's research regarding romance and images of masculinity abroad. I became particularly interested in the ways that discourses of gender, race, and romance played out in the stories I heard.

Given the contentious nature of concepts like gender and race, I recognize there is a potential for essentialisation through my analysis of participant accounts. Essentialism exists within our everyday lives as a tool to categorize and make sense of the world we live in, but it does so through the creation and recreation of stereotypes, labels, and tropes. The use of essentialism also risks replicating oppressive structures of power (Kubota & Lin, 2006). Of particular concern to me is speaking about race. Within this study, I view race as "a system of social meanings and cultural classifications, which is created and sustained through relationships of power and hierarchy, but which changes over time and can be subverted" (Alexander & Knowles, 2005, p. 11).

Reflecting on the discourse of race in research, Alexander and Knowles (2005) note "the dilemma facing researchers and writers is how to acknowledge the lived effects of racial categorization, or racialisation, without reifying race as a biological reality" (p. 12). In order to address this challenge, I have attempted to do two things in this dissertation. First, I critically explore reductionist ideas present in data, even when they are constructed through interactions with me as a researcher. The researcher's role as a co-creator of data is a concern that is addressed in detail in Chapter 5. Next, I analyse how discourses in interviews construct notions of race and racialized bodies, but emphasize that my analysis of these images is limited to participant perspectives within this study.

ix. Organization of Dissertation

In the following chapters, I present the theoretical concepts that guided the construction and analysis of this study (Chapter 2). This includes the broad theoretical background of this dissertation and definition of and approach to key concepts. In Chapter 3, basic background information about common discourses that surround study abroad and WHM programs in Japan. Next, in Chapter 4, I analyse previous studies with similar participant populations to this dissertation (Japanese men who are taking part/have taken part in study abroad or WHM programs). I consider the key findings and gaps from methodological and theoretical perspectives. Following this, I provide a comprehensive explanation of this dissertation's research design (Chapter 5). This includes not only data collection and analysis, but also this study's approach to the translation and presentation of data and a reflection on research subjectivity. Chapter 6 introduces the 11 participants in focus whose interview transcripts are representative of this study. Following this, I present my data through first a broad overview of the entire data set (Chapter 7) before examining themes in detail in Chapter 8 through 10. Lastly, in Chapter 11, I summarize the findings of this study before presenting the studies implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

Chapter 2: Guiding Theoretical Concepts

i. Introduction

In this chapter, I present and define the key concepts within this study and illustrate how they relate to the study's analysis. After presenting this study's ontological perspective of social constructionism, I discuss four categories used to analyse participant accounts (used interchangeably with "interviews") and the discourses within them. These terms include identity, gender, masculinity and desire.

ii. Theoretical backdrop: Social constructionism

In her discussion of social constructionism, Allen (2005) states:

> Social constructionists assert that meaning arises from social systems rather than from individual members of society. They contend that humans derive knowledge of the world from larger social discourses, which can vary across time and place, and which also represent and reinforce dominant belief systems. (p. 35)

Galbin (2014) offers a another definition by saying the "[t]wo distinguishing marks of social constructionism include the rejection of assumptions about the nature of mind and theories of causality, and placing an emphasis on the complexity and interrelatedness of the many facets of individuals within their communities" (p. 83). Simply put, social constructionism rejects the view of a constant, measurable objective reality outside of human experience. Instead, the social systems, the individuals, and individual beliefs are shaped and reproduced by societal practices.

Integral to our construction of reality is the notion of *discourse*, which, in addition to the definition inspired by Foucault (1980) that was previously presented by Burr (2015), can be described as "the collective text and talk of society" (Doane, 2006, p. 256) that shape the vary things that they are about. Discourse is therefore both productive and reflective (Burr, 2015; Edley, 2001). Human beings reside among a variety of contesting discourses that influence what

identities and actions one can take in a given context. These conflicting ideas may even be present within a single setting (a classroom, a magazine, a sports team, an academic text, and so on), which produces different interpretations and subjectivities among individuals. This provides the possibilities of multiple translations of a single phenomenon.

Within social constructionism, individual's characteristics such as class, gender, sexuality, and even race are not stable constructs. They reside instead "within a socially shared meaning system that is intimately bound up with social structure" (Burr, 2015, p. 49) and shift across time and space. The meaning systems are further shaped by social hierarchies of power that assign value to constructs and the individuals seen as possessing them –take for example, the moral judgements placed on homosexuality in many societies. The question arises then, how much agency does a person have within these social structures? While Burr (2015) notes that social constructionism has tended to neglect the subject of personal agency, Norton (2000) argues that we are afforded varying degrees of agency through drawing on current discourses available to us, or even creating empowering counter discourses in reaction to undesirable structures of power. Connell (2005) likewise claims that discourse is not constant; it transforms as society itself changes, leaving all discourses open to contest and possibilities for agency.

Social constructionism's strength when used in qualitative research lies in its recognition of the social world and its influence on participant narratives (Losantos, Montoya, Exeni, Santa Cruz, & Loots, 2016). It highlights the influence of discourse and the way discourse may be replicated or challenged by individuals. Moreover, social constructionism challenges us to critically consider our presuppositions about the world and the power structures and human relationships within it through the rejection of simplified categorization and essentialized notions of self and other (Burr, 2015). In this way, it is a fitting framework for anti-essentialist research

goals. Lastly, social constructionism's highlighting of the importance of social processes should include exploring the process of research as well (Losantos et al., 2016). For instance, taking a social constructionist approach to qualitative interviewing gives space to illustrate the researcher's role in the creation and interpretation of data, allowing for greater transparency (Roulston, 2010b).

iii. Identity

In order to analyse participant construction of identity, this study employs Norton's (2000) theory of identity. Norton defines identity as "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how the relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands the possibilities for the future" (p.5). Inspired by feminist scholars such as Weedon (1987), Norton (2000) takes a contextual and dynamic approach to identity that highlights the ways that parts of our identity interact differently depending on context. In this view, individuals are continuously shaping and reshaping who they are.

Vital to Norton's theory of identity is intersectionality. She claims, "ethnicity, gender and class are not experienced as a series of discrete background variables, but are all, in complex and interconnected ways, implicated in the construction of identity and the possibilities of speech" (p. 13). Moreover, viewing a single category of one's identity in isolation risks neglecting the diversity of a particular group and can lead to essentialization (Crenshaw, 1991). Within research, an intersectional approach to participant identity can help analyse how a particular person may experience different subjectivities in different contexts and with different interlocutors.

The concept of power is central to Norton's (2000) approach to identity. She claims, "the question 'Who am I?' cannot be understood apart from 'What am I allowed to do?'" (p. 8).

Identity can therefore become "a site of struggle" (p. 127) when an individual is positioned in powerless or unfavourable ways. This frequently involves having a desirable identity rejected or an undesirable identity enacted on us by a powerful person or adverse dominant discourse. Such powerful discourses may even make us feel we have lost the right to speak. Norton (2000) also draws on Bourdieu's (1986) notion of symbolic capital, or the resources of 'value' one is perceived as having within a given community, arguing that our symbolic capital is influential in the identities we can or can not claim in participant contexts.

Yet, Norton states, "the subject…is not conceived as passive; he or she is conceived of as both subject of and subject to relations of power within a particular site, community and society: the subject has human agency" (Norton, 2000, p. 127). Ahearn (2001) defines agency as "the socioculturally mediated capacity to act" (p. 112) and Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) expand on this definition by arguing that agency is "more than performance, or doing; it is intimately linked to significance" (p. 146). In other words, our ability to take certain actions is both influenced by our circumstances and our needs, but when agency is enacted, it is rooted in our personal desires and identity.

iv. Gender

When speaking about and analyzing gender, this study takes the approach that gender is constructed through fluid social, cultural, and linguistic practices that vary over time and space (Pavlenko, 2004). Perceptions of gender are shaped by societal practices that are embedded in both wider cultural institutions and day-to-day interactions (Connell, 2005). In this way, one's gender is both reproduced through interaction and prone to shift through social intercourse. According to Messerschmidt, Martin, Messner, and Connell (2018), the social nature of the construction of gender requires a social perspective in its analysis.

In everyday life, through both media and social interactions, the idea of 'gender' is commonly defined through placing essentialized images of men and women in opposition to each other. Two terms that have been used to describe these essentialized images of male and females are "hegemonic masculinity" and "emphasized femininity" (Connell, 1987). These terms not only define a culture's notion of idealized males and females, but they also create a point of comparison for less socially desirable forms of masculinity and femininity, thus creating gendered hierarchies of masculinity and femininity.

According to Connell (1987), the body is central to all social practices. Likewise, this study's approach to gender acknowledges the corporeal influence in the performance and reception of gendered identities. Our bodies, the stylization of our bodies and our bodily practices such as gestures and voice, all contribute to how our gender is received by a particular interlocutor. In this way, ideas of gender also open up potential for conflict (Buchbinder, 2013). We may encounter contesting discourses about our gendered identities that disempower us from claiming desired identities. Here, the importance of intersectionality comes into play to assist in the examination of structures of power within relationships and social structures that can marginalize particular gendered identities (Messerschmidt, et al., 2018), which is of particular interest to the current study.

Pavlenko (2004) cautions against the use of gender as "an essentialized variable" (p. 54) in research. She claims that gender should not be theorized as a static marker of an individual but instead that the malleability of the performance of gender and different contextual understandings of gender must be taken into account in research. This is especially true of international sojourners, who may encounter different gendered expectations and normative practices abroad than they are familiar with (Teutsch-Dwyer, 2001).

v. Masculinity

Masculinity is also a frequently referenced theoretical concept running throughout this doctoral dissertation. 'Masculinity' and 'masculine' are common terms, and yet they are challenging to define. Similar to Connell's (1987) analytical terms of "hegemonic masculinity" and "emphasized femininity", masculinity is often first attributed to biological males and then defined in comparison *against* 'femininity' and biological females. The dichotomies present in these everyday definitions highlight that the concept of masculinity is "inherently relational" (Connell, 2005, p. 68); it does not exist apart from comparisons with essentialized images of women and emphasized femininity.

Connell (2005) advocates that just like concepts of gender, masculinity is both dynamic and social. Perceptions of masculinity not only vary depending on culture and location but also shift historically. Next, the construction and projection of masculinity often relies on relationships with women and the subordination and oppression of women. Yet Connell also stresses the necessity to define masculinity with respect to relationships among men and envisions these relationships creating a hierarchy of masculinities. Dominating this hierarchy is 'hegemonic masculinity'; a form of masculinity rarely represented in the everyday lived experience of 'real men', but nonetheless the form of masculinity that is most widely valued in a society. Connell (2005) defines hegemonic masculinity as:

> at any given time, one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted. Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. (p. 77)

Part of the validation of a cultures' hegemonic masculinity is therefore linked to the devaluing of nonhegemonic masculinities and presenting them as deficient or contemptible (Kimmel, 2010).

Hegemonic masculinity has become a common concept utilized by scholars analyzing masculinity and gendered relations of power. However, Messerschmidt and Messner (2018) caution against the use of hegemonic masculinity as a research tool unless scholars take the diversity of masculinities or the gender relations within a given context into consideration. Where there is power, there is also potential for resistance and the creation of counter discourses to facilitate more favourable identities (Burr, 2015). Messerschmidt and Messner (2018) demonstrate this concept when introducing alternative forms of masculinity created in opposition to hegemonic masculine ideals such as "protest masculinities", which "are constructed as compensatory hypermasculinities that are formed in relation to social positions lacking economic and political power" (p. 38), and "positive masculinities…that contribute to legitimating egalitarian relations between men and women, masculinity and femininity, and among masculinities" (p. 42). Connell's (2005) theory of masculinity is used in the current study to analyse three main concepts: (1) wide societal expectations of masculinity and gender, (2) how interacting with these expectations influences participant perceptions of themselves and Japanese men in general, and (3) how participants speak about the men in their host communities.

vi. (Romantic) desire

This study theorizes desire as not only a passion or attraction to a person or a particular group of people, but also as a "device for self-making" (Nemoto, 2009, p. 1). This approach proposes that there is potential for identity construction through our romantic desires and relationships with others. This is because desire for another is intertwined with what that person represents – what status and capital (social, linguistic, or financial) they hold and what we may attain from our connection to them. Desire opens up possibilities for new group memberships and shapes our trajectory for the future through affecting our social circles. Thus, desire not only

represents passion and romance, but also "by extension a person's craving for certain social and cultural powers" (Nemoto, 2009, p. 1).

Wetherell (1995) argues that desire can be used to investigate not only one's construction of self, but also how one discursively constructs the object of their desire. Central to her inquiry are what "social imageries" and "symbolic resources" (p.139) shape the discursive construction of other. In other words, what wider discourses are drawn on to create the image of the person (or people) we desire? Moreover, what structural hierarchies are reflected in these discourses? For both Nemoto (2009; 2011) and Wetherell (1995), discourses of desire are intrinsically connected to intersecting ideologies of race and gender that form hierarchies of power and privilege in society. Applyby (2013) suggests that discourses of language (for example, what is indexed by one's linguistic abilities in a given culture or society) further complicate these structures of desire. This dissertation investigates discourses of desire both as a tool for identity development and also in relation to how 'the other' is constructed in participant interview accounts.

vii. Summary

In this chapter I have outlined the guiding theoretical concepts in which this study is situated. Within a flexible view of social constructionism, I utilize Norton's (2000) theory of identity, which emphasizes the importance of intersectionality and the power-laden and dynamic nature of subjectivities. I also presented my approach to gender and masculinity, largely inspired by the work of Connell (1987; 2005). Lastly, I discussed the way that desire is used in this study to investigate discourse of self and other. In the next chapter I will present an overview of relevant literature in relation to my research topic.

Chapter 3: Common Discourses in Japan Around Study Abroad and WHM

i. Introduction

In Chapter 1, I introduced this dissertation's goal: to investigate the international narratives of Japanese male sojourners and their identities through discourses of masculinity, gender, and desire. There are several concepts that necessitate further definition before engaging with previous literature that considers the experiences of Japanese men abroad. This chapter therefore provides an introduction to the discourses surrounding Japanese international sojourners by focusing specifically on study abroad and WHM programs that involve young adults (as opposed to K – 12 sojourns). Following the introduction of these discourses, I present perspectives that challenge the image of international sojourners through examining the 'cosmopolitan neoliberal subject' and dominant discourses of English as a mode of internationalization.

By examining common perceptions and the policy around study abroad and WHM programs in Japan, I provide a background for discourses that participants may have employed during this study's research interviews when framing their experiences and their perceptions of their host communities. These discourses are also referenced in the analysis and discussion of participant accounts. Lastly, the examination of the Japanese context of study abroad and WHM programs provides a path to critically examine these discourses and assess their potential to impact young adults in Japan.

ii. Defining study abroad

The wide range of potential activities in 'study abroad' makes its definition complicated. Study abroad may include activities like language learning, university exchange, volunteering, homestays, internships, and local excursions. The current study uses Kinginger's (2009)

definition of study abroad as "a temporary sojourn of pre-defined duration, undertaken for educational purposes" (p. 11). In this case, the primary sojourn goal is to engage in some kind of educational activity. However, as many scholars have argued, study abroad is primarily a social experience that involves the transportation of one's identity into a new culture and environment (e.g., Benson, Barkhuizen, Bodycott, & Brown, 2014; Block, 2009; Kinginger, 2009). This dissertation therefore recognizes both the educational purposes and the social consequences of study abroad.

iii. Globalizing images of study abroad in Japan

Kinginger (2009) illustrates a wide romanticization of study abroad in both education institutions and the private realm through her statement: "[s]tudents who go abroad, it is claimed, develop greater personal maturity, first-hand knowledge of other lands and peoples, commitment to civic engagement, and intercultural awareness fostering mutual understanding among nations" (p. 5 – 6). In many countries, study abroad is seen as a time of growth, intercultural skill building, and foreign language development for young people. Similar claims have been made about the importance of Japanese youth participation in study abroad in terms of developing "open-mindedness and cross-cultural understanding" (Asaoka & Yano, 2009, p.175).

In Japan, the image of study abroad is frequently intertwined with ideas of internationalization on both micro (personal) and macro (society) levels. At the micro level, study abroad is thought to facilitate personal development through multicultural interactions abroad. In her analysis of Japanese study abroad advertisements and literature both in print and online form, Takahashi (2013) observed a common conception of study abroad as the ideal way to improve an individual's intercultural communication skills and facilitate foreign language development. Yet, foreign language development, she notes, is generally equated to English

language studies. In Japan, learning English through study abroad is promoted a tool for self-internationalization (Tsukada, 2013).

The skills developed abroad are also toted by universities as a benefit to students when searching for a career in a continually globalizing world (Kobayashi, 2018). Overall, the general image of study abroad on the personal level is one of growth, skill building, developing diverse personal networks, and opening new doors for future careers. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to develop a new international you (Takahashi, 2013).

On a macro level, study abroad is linked to a wider discourse of the internationalization of the Japanese university (Bradford, 2015; Burgess, 2015). For instance, university instructors and researchers Asaoka and Yano (2009) assert that by improving study abroad programs and increasing student participation, Japanese universities will be better able to promote "research, international contribution, economy, and diplomacy" (p. 174). This rhetoric is also found at a governmental policy level as exemplified in the Ministry of Education, Sports, Culture, Technology's (hereafter, MEXT) (2013) Japan Revitalization Strategy. A portion of this policy is dedicated to "strengthening human resource capabilities from global operation activities" (p. 52) by sending 120,000 Japanese students abroad annually by 2020.

Foreign language acquisition is also central in the macro discourse of study abroad, although the idea of 'foreign language' is almost exclusively applied to English (Burgess, 2015; Kobayashi, 2018). Given that English is assumed to be used for international business and policy, and for communication with non-Japanese, a prevalent discourse has developed that Japanese youth acquiring English abroad and using it domestically will help to internationalize Japan (Kobayashi, 2018; Kubota, 1998; Seargeant, 2009). Individuals with these skills have been termed "gurōbaru jinzai" ("global human resources"). Following Asaoka and Yano's (2009)

previous argument, when Japanese students gain such skills abroad, they supply them to their university upon their return, and these skills are eventually transmitted to wider society. Such a discourse is ultimately connected to the idea that the 'international skills' of gurōbaru jinzai developed through study abroad are necessary to keep Japan competitive in a globalizing world (Kato, 2015).

iv. Concerns regarding declining participation in study abroad

In recent years, MEXT has expressed concern over sharp decline in study abroad among Japanese youth. In 2004, 82,945 Japanese students were enrolled in overseas tertiary education but by 2014 MEXT lamented that these numbers had fallen to 55,350 (Burgess, 2015; JAOS, 2016). This apparent lack of interest in going abroad has been attributed to beliefs of an *uchimuki* ("inward-looking") attitude of modern-day Japanese youth (Burgess, 2015; Kato, 2015). Concerns over *uchimuki* youth have been observed in both media and political policy that stress the need to overcome "an inward looking" tendency in order for the benefit of Japan as a nation. Burgess (2015) notes: "The importance of securing global human resources – resources which are increasingly portrayed as absolutely crucial for Japan's future in the face of its global competitive decline – are often accompanied by hand-wringing over an (apparently) inward-looking passive Japanese youth" (488).

Instead of participation in study abroad declining, JOAS (2018), Shimmi and Ota (2018), and Bradford (2015) all argue that international sojourns are merely taking different forms. This includes private language study, internships, volunteering, WHM programs (JOAS, 2108), and "super-short study abroad" opportunities (Shimmi & Ota, 2018). In contrast to MEXT's original tally of 55,350 Japanese students studying abroad in 2014, JOAS (2016) estimates that when taking into account the above sojourns, the numbers of Japanese nations on temporary sojourns

was approximately 173,000. These statistics challenge the idea of *uchimuki* youth and suggest that Japanese young people have continues to be involved in international pursuits outside of Japan.

v. Defining Working Holiday Maker Programs

WHM programs are "based on reciprocal arrangements between nations that allow youth to enter each other's countries to temporarily live, study, work and holiday for the purpose of grassroots cultural exchange" (Kawashima, 2010, p. 268). Japan's involvement with WHM programs began in 1980 with the establishment of an agreement with Australia, followed by New Zealand in 1985 and Canada in 1986. Since then, Japan has entered relationships with 21 countries in North America, Europe, Asia, Oceania, and South America (JAWHM, n.d.). The general age range to take part in these programs is 18 to 30.

Just like study abroad, WHM programs are diverse and participants have diverse goals. Another similarity to study abroad is that WHM programs often have a social focus that promotes multicultural relationships. For example, the Japan Association for Working Holiday Makers (JAWHM) (n.d.) states, "the Working Holiday Scheme has the aim of promoting greater mutual understanding and friendship between partner countries, and fostering a global perspective and a deeper understanding of other cultures in the youths who participate". Importantly, previously introduced by Ota and Hoshino (2016), the vast majority of Japanese WHMs also participate in language studies during their sojourn. This dissertation therefore recognizes the fluid nature of WHMs, who may move between work and study.

vi. WHM as escape

In her interviews with Japanese WHMs in Australia, Kawashima (2010) perceived similar micro level discourses to those connected to study abroad. Firstly, participants hoped to

both improve their English language abilities and to develop multicultural global competencies with the eventual desire to "increase [their] marketability in Japan" (p.271). Kato (2015) termed her Japanese WHMs respondents *jibun sagashi imin* ("self-searching migrants") who were "self-reflexive migrants searching for what they really wanted to do with their lives" (p. 221). WHM participation, like study abroad, therefore is viewed as having the potential for skill development and facilitating a deeper understanding of oneself.

Nevertheless, Kawashima (2010) argues that the majority of her interviewees took part in WHM programs as a way to escape, even temporarily, an undesirable situation in Japan. Commonly, these undesirable situations were related to an overly stressful workplace, or a dull career with little prospect of upward mobility. Kato's (2015) interviews with Japanese sojourners in Vancouver and Sydney offer similar conclusions, as several of her respondents spoke of "escapee guilt" (p. 277) due to quitting their jobs to go aboard as WHMs. Comments that WHMs are fleeing Japanese society for temporary vacations (Oi, 2015) or even damaging the economy through resisting full-time domestic work (Cook, 2016; Kato, 2015) are other impactful pieces of the social image of WHM programs in Japan. This perception may be connected to the age in which WHMs leave Japan (18 to 30), which is when many Japanese youth have entered the workforce. Therefore, unlike study abroad programs that are frequently connected to macro discourses of cosmopolitan identities that benefit Japan's future, WHMs is often associated with an image of a temporary flight from Japanese society.

vii. International sojourns and the neoliberal subject

Kubota (2016) is critical of many of the commonly held discourses surrounding study abroad. First, she notes that the widely assumed benefits of study abroad are not as prevalent as frequently suggested –a position also supported by Kinginger's (2009) extensive overview of

study abroad research. Instead, Kubota (2016) views the ideas surrounding study abroad as part of a 'neoliberal social imagery'. Kubota summarizes neoliberalism as "privatisation, marketization and branding as well as an emphasis on human capital development and lifelong learning, all of which aim to increase a competitive edge nationally, institutionally and personally in the capitalist knowledge economy" (p. 348). In other words, study abroad is not only an act of self-fulfillment or initiator of multiculturalism, but is also connected to a capitalist system that promotes continual self-improvement and the maximization of profits (Park, 2018). While Kubota's (2016) position does not deny the possible benefits of international sojourns, she argues that the persistent promotion of study abroad creates pressure on students to study overseas as a way to help them develop the human capital to stay competitive for their future careers. Participants of study abroad therefore can be seen as aligning with "the image of the neoliberal subject, who are equipped with communication skills, a global mindset, and intercultural competencies" (p. 348 – 349) that are meant to prepare students for engagement with a cosmopolitan market.

viii. English as internationalization

Foreign language skills have been argued to be another key component of the neoliberal subject. Park (2015) claims that "ideologies of language provide an indispensable step in the relentless transformation of people and their actions into quantifiable human capital" (p. 453) due to the discourse of the neoliberal multilingual cosmopolitan. The attainment of foreign language skills, a notion frequently promoted through study abroad programs, can be seen as contributing to this discourse (Kubota, 2016). English holds a particular place of importance in this discourse due in Japan to the perception of its use in global relations, technology, science and technology (Tsuneyoshi, 2005). Motha and Lin (2014) argue that this focus on English is

accompanied by the gradual intensification of the relationship between English and capitalism.

As previously mentioned, both discourses of study abroad and WHM programs in Japan are predominantly associated with English language study. According to Yamagami and Tollefson (2009) the assumed justification for this connection is that "English is the most important international language of science, technology, and economic competitiveness, and therefore English language ability is essential for individual participation in these areas of 'globalized' human activity and for the economic well-being of society" (p.15 - 16). English is frequently viewed as a method of internationalization, or what Tsuneyoshi (2005) terms "Englishization as internationalization" (p.68).

Several scholars criticize of the common rationale of English as a form of internationalization in Japan. Tsukada (2013) claims that while English is promoted as a form of connecting Japanese nationals with an international community, reductionist images of 'English speakers' create "the essentialized Self-Other dichotomy between the Japanese and Anglophone communities" (p. 69). Kubota (1998; 2011) and Rivers and Ross (2013) describe the essentialized image of English speakers as individuals from Anglophone nations, what Krachu (1985) termed Inner Circle nations (English dominant countries: USA, UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand). Moreover, these speakers are frequently viewed as having European (White) backgrounds. Therefore, these scholars challenge the promotion of English as an international language and form of internationalization on the grounds that it creates a restrictive image of Japanese nationals interacting not globally, but with a select group of English speakers.

ix. Summary

This chapter presented an overview of the dominant discourses surrounding Japanese youth's engagement in study abroad and WHM programs. Study abroad, both at the personal and

national level, has been promoted as a method of internationalization. It is also associated with images of self-discovery and the development of human capital. WHM programs are surrounded by similar discourses, and yet are also seen as negatively viewed as an escape from Japanese society. At the same time, considering that most WHMs also take part in language studies during their sojourns, the lines between study abroad and WHM are often blurred.

This chapter also introduced two prominent criticisms of international sojourns. First, notions of growth and multicultural skills development during study abroad were explored instead as the acquisition of human capital by neoliberal subjects. Next, challenges to the discourse of foreign language development were reframed as "Englishization as Internationalization". In this perspective, English is not a global language but instead, interlocutors are commonly viewed as native English speaking White people. Through presenting the discourses surrounding study abroad and WHM programs in Japan, as well as the challenges to these discourses, this chapter accomplished two things. First, it introduced some of the notions that participants drew on or challenged during their interviews. Next, this chapter highlighted the importance of both personal interactions with one's host community and language development attained through time abroad, suggesting that international sojourns operate on both a linguistic and social level.

Chapter 4: Young Japanese men and international sojourns

i. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I introduced dominant discourses in Japan surrounding the images of study abroad and WHM programs, namely that both methods of sojourn can be seen as an act of self-internationalization, despite WHM participation also receiving criticism for being an 'escape' from Japanese society. I also presented some criticisms of the discourses connected to international sojourns. In the following chapter, I will locate the experience of Japanese men who go abroad in these discourses through examining studies about the experiences and opinions of Japanese male sojourners. I focus my overview on studies with respondent populations similar to my own respondents: young Japanese men who have taken part in study abroad or WHM programs.

First, I provide a summary of the relevant studies by focusing on their research design, goals, and the key findings. I then consider their methodology and how it impacts their significance. Following this, the key findings are examined and the potential research gaps highlighted. By reviewing these particular studies, I also emphasize the contributions that this doctoral dissertation can offer to the field of Japanese men's international narratives.

ii. Young Japanese men in study abroad and WHM programs

As previously mentioned, there is a stark contrast between the number of Japanese females and males who take part in study abroad and WHM programs, with as much as 80% of Japanese participants being female. Moreover, Churchill's (2003) overview of 11 studies that included 1000 Japanese study abroad participants counted merely 24 male participants (as cited in Churchill, 2009). Perhaps this is one reason why the studies regarding the experiences of Japanese men overseas are quite limited in comparison to studies concerning Japanese women.

Two other possible yet contrasting reasons for the lack of research about Japanese male sojourners are the taken-for-granted assumption of 'the male experience' as standard experience (Taga, 2005), and a common goal of feminist research to facilitate the dissemination of the female voice and experience (Taga, 2003). Nevertheless, the studies that do investigate the narratives, opinions, or attitudes of Japanese men abroad have tended to focus on Japanese men in relation to perceptions of domestic work and perceptions of Japanese corporate life. Other studies mainly look at language and socialization or perceptions of host community. Table 4.1 presents summaries these studies in chronological order.

Study	Research context	Data collection methods	Study goal	Key findings
Morinaga Williams (2018)	Japanese male graduate student who studied abroad for 6 months in Washington State in 2010	2013 – 2014 Case study: qualitative interviews, member checking	To learn about participant's construction of identity as a Japanese man abroad	Participant felt a struggle to date in USA and claimed this was due to a wide belief among women that heterosexual Japanese men are poor romantic partners
Kato (2015)	Japanese WHMs and study abroad participants in Vancouver and Sydney (177), ages 20s – 40s	2001 – 2014 (Vancouver), 2011 – 2014 (Sydney) Qualitative interviews	To understand if and how personal happiness abroad and masculinity are connected for Japanese male sojourners	Many male participants left Japan due to harsh working conditions and were looking for happiness abroad - but many experienced "escapee guilt" for leaving
Ono (2015)	Japanese male sojourners working, studying or traveling in Bangkok and Chiang Mai (30), ages 20s – 30s	2003 (3 months), 2006 (2 weeks) Qualitative interviews and observation	To examine Japanese male mobility in relation to *sararīman* masculinity	Thailand seen by many participants as a place to start again and/or escape undesirable domestic corporate life

Suzuki (2015)	Japanese WHMs in Dublin (49), ages 20s – 30s	2010 – 2011 Qualitative Interviews	To analyse participants' perceptions of lives in Dublin in relation to social expectations and personal desires	Many male participants came to Dublin as a form of avoidance of *sararīman* lifestyle, felt both guilty and proud to leave Japan
Churchill (2009)	Japanese male high school student in one-month study abroad in Eastern USA school in 1999	1998 - 2000 Case study: Pre-sojourn English test scores, qualitative interviews, during sojourn journal, post-sojourn English test scores	To investigate participant's English learning experiences and host community interaction during study abroad	Participant's status as only male in host school program isolated him from his Japanese female peers, compelling him to interact primarily with his host community – developing English skills and new social networks
Takayama (2000)	Japanese male study abroad participants in university exchanges and private languages schools in Vancouver in 1999 (17), aged 20 – 30	1999 Qualitative interviews	To examine participant experiences abroad in relation to discourse of neo-colonialism, international-ization, and *nihonjinron*	Many participants viewed their host community and Japan in essentialist terms, using Occidentalist discourses to paint their host community ('Canadians') as desirable 'others', valuing the linguistic and social capital 'Canadians' represented

Table 4.1 Summary of studies that focus on Japanese male sojourner experience

A point of similarity between these studies is the use of qualitative interviews in order to learn more about respondent experiences abroad and their reasons for sojourn participation. Participant narratives are connected to wider gendered discourses in relation to career, language learning, perceptions of Japanese culture, and in some cases, hegemonic masculinity. Another similarity of these studies emphasize the social nature of international sojourns, either in regards

to one's home community (what systems or agents pushed participants abroad), or one's host community (what social networks participants wish to join). It is also important to note that with the exception of Ono's (2015) study, all men interviewed took part in study or work in Anglophone nations and thus ideologies of English are also a shared theme.

iii. Methodological considerations

Besides the test data from Churchill's (2009), the data analysed by the studies in Table 4.1 are all qualitative in nature. Moreover, each utilized qualitative interviews in some capacity. It is also notable that while the majority of interviews were carried out in Japanese, all studies only present translated English version of the interviews.

By using qualitative interviews, the above studies elicited life stories, opinions, and past experience from participants. Yet, as Talmy (2011) argues, research interviews should not be seen merely as "a tool for investigating truths, facts, experience, beliefs, attitudes, and/or feelings" (p. 26) but also as a speech event that is co-produced with the interviewer. As a result, the interview data from these studies are best viewed as the perceptions of participants constructed with the researcher, as opposed to objective facts. By using qualitative interviews, these studies cannot claim to represent all Japanese male sojourners' experiences, yet, they can be analysed in reference to mainstream discourses that may have influenced participant utterance in interviews.

Two studies in Table 4.1 (Churchill, 2009; Morinaga Williams, 2018) utilize case studies to learn more about the experience of one male Japanese sojourner, though in rather different contexts. Over two years, Churchill (2009) used data such as interviews, English assignments, and diary entries with Hiro, a high school student who studied in the Eastern United States for a month. On the other hand, Morinaga Williams (2018) collected three extensive bilingual

interviews and conducted member checking (directly discussing interview data with a participant) with Ki, who studied as an undergraduate in Washington State. By taking a case study approach, these two studies are able to thoroughly analyse a single narrative through triangulation and contextualization of findings (Duff & Anderson, 2016). While these studies' conclusions cannot be overgeneralized due to their single participants, they nonetheless explore potential impacts of study abroad on one individual that can be used in an exploratory manner for considering future research.

iv. Key findings

Japanese male sojourners and domestic work and the *sararīman* image

The theme of distaste for corporate life and a strong desire to avoid or delay participation in this field were prominent themes in Kato's (2015), Ono's (2015), and Suzuki's (2015) studies. All authors argue that for a significant amount of the men they interviewed, an intense dissatisfaction with their previous working conditions in Japan was the driving factor in the men's choice to study abroad or become WHMs. Such conditions included exhausting working hours, interpersonal conflicts with senior team members, and a numbing boredom in their daily tasks. The workplaces described by participants were generally corporate positions. Moreover, the analysis of all three studies suggested that authors believed these conditions to be more frequently experienced by men than women in Japan. In other words, it was argued that male participants identified a rigidity in their domestic workplaces that Japanese women were less likely to experience. This rigidity was attributed to the gendered expectations placed on men in the Japanese workplace, namely that a pervasive discourse in Japanese society connects full-time work (particularly in the corporate sector) with notions of normative masculinity. According to Suzuki (2015), "gaining full-time employment following the completion of education continues

to shape the idea of what it means to be a respectable adult man" (p. 239) in Japan. Kato (2015) expands on this idea by asserting that gaining full-time employment *domestically* is becoming increasingly important within normative notions of masculinity in Japan.

Another commonality and notable finding within these studies is interviewees' references to the image of the *sararīman.* During the prosperous bubble economy in Japan (1986 – 1991), the *sararīman*, or *kingyo senshi* ("corporate warrior"), became a symbol of the flourishing national economy (Dasgupta, 2003). Dasgupta (2010) describes the social image of the *sararīman* as: "the figure of the urban, middle-class, white-collar 'salaryman' [*sararīman*] loyally toiling away for the organization in return for an implicit guarantee of life-time employment stability" and claims that the discourse of *sararīman* once "came to signify both Japanese culture, and more generally, Japanese masculinity itself" (para. 5). While Kato (2015), Ono (2015), and Suzuki (2015) all note the decline of the idealization of the *sararīman* (also noted by Dasgupta, 2003; 2010), the authors nonetheless stressed that several male respondents described a lingering pressure from the pervasive image of *sararīman*. For instance, while the men in Ono's (2015) study frequently criticized the *sararīman* lifestyle as restrictive and stressful, some also envied men in the Japanese corporate sector. For example, interviewee Hiro stated:

> I went back to Japan for a job interview for a company that imports Thai products. I felt the need to do something with my life. As I was standing at the train platform during morning rush hour, I saw a Japanese salaryman wearing a suit and tie. I felt like a loser (*dame ningen*). I do admire them. But I wouldn't be able to live like that anymore. (p. 257)

Reflecting on the above comment, it may be the case that *sararīman* masculinity is simultaneously incompatible and enviable to some Japanese male sojourners.

The above three studies also conclude that common working culture in Japan creates different gendered trends in international sojourns. The authors suggest that this is mainly due to two factors. First, as previously described, young Japanese men may experience harsh pressure to pursue full-time domestic employment immediately after university due to what Suzuki (2015) called, "the idea of what it means to be a respectable adult man" (p. 239). This may result in the men who take time off to go abroad being stigmatized upon their return to Japan, and even cause difficulties re-entering the job market.

Next, Kato (2015), Ono (2015) and Suzuki (2015) claim that a continued marginalization of women in the Japanese workplace and lighter social expectations on them to pursue long term full-time careers (see also Aronsson, 2015; Hirota, 2000) has allowed women in Japan more freedom to go overseas for temporary sojourners. This marginalization appears to allow female employees in non-managerial positions to leave and re-enter similar positions in the future. While reflecting on the difference between her female participant narratives versus those of her male participants, Kato (2015) explained the women she interviewed had less personal conflicts ("escapee guilt") about their sojourns "partly because Japanese society today allows or even encourages, women to be active in hobbies and other matters that are not necessarily related to a career –reflecting their marginality in the job market." (p. 231). Kato argued that gendered discourses surrounding work both privilege men while concurrently keeping men bound to Japan.

The findings from these three studies focus primarily on Japanese male sojourners in reference to working culture in Japan and images of normative *sararīman* masculinity. They also suggest how the images surrounding Japanese men's roles in work create a discourse that inhibits greater male participation in study abroad and WHM programs. Yet, as the three studies also

note, the male respondents were predominantly men who left or delayed careers in Japan to find greater happiness elsewhere, or to pursue goals that were not available to them domestically. In this way, going abroad may be an act of resistance or challenge to normative notions of masculinity in Japan. Moreover, these studies provide evidence that while the idea of international sojourns have become increasingly feminized in Japan, the act of going abroad is utilized by young men who pursue *jibun sagashi* overseas (Kato, 2015).

Host community interactions and ideologies of language

Another key finding from this review of literature is the importance of host community interactions in developing feelings meaningful community membership. This appears to also be related to a sojourner's satisfaction abroad. This has also been argued extensively in other study abroad contexts (see Block, 2009 and Kinginger, 2009 for reviews of such studies), but the studies in Table 4.1 make this argument specifically in relation to the narratives of young Japanese men overseas. Moreover, they connect male experience to some of the prominent Japanese discourses surrounding international sojourners that were introduced in the previous chapter. These findings shed light on the Japanese male experience abroad, and provide possible motivations male respondents may have had for leaving Japan outside of avoiding domestic corporate culture. Again, it is notable that with the exception of Ono's (2015) research, all the studies under review feature Anglophone host countries. This is reflective of the top destinations for Japanese study abroad and WHMs (JOAS, 2017).

The theme of sojourner host community membership is the most salient in Churchill's (2009) and Takayama's (2000) studies. These authors include an analysis of both respondents' desires to interact with their host community and actual interactions that took place. Ultimately, Churchill (2009) and Takayama (2000) suggest that a sojourner's confidence to use a target

language (in these cases, English) have more influence on one's networks in a host community than actual foreign language ability. Churchill (2009) provides an example of this through his case study of Hiro. While Hiro had lower English skills than most of his fellow Japanese study abroad classmates, he nonetheless appeared the have the most success socializing with his American peers because of his ambition to do so.

Churchill (2009) also investigates Hiro's membership in his host school through a gendered perspective. The author argues that because Hiro was the only male in his study abroad cohort, he was forced to find acceptance outside of his female Japanese classmates. This led him to join the school track team where he developed strong bonds with non-Japanese classmates and used English in the majority of his interactions. Churchill concludes that Hiro's status as a male minority in his program in combination with his confidence in verbal English led him to develop meaningful social networks at his American high school. This was the most notable through his active participation on the school track team.

One of the most prominent conclusions from Churchill's (2009) study is the positive identity development that Hiro experienced due to his status as a valued member of his host community. Takayama's (2000) study, however, presented the narratives of male respondents with very different experiences abroad. Takayama observed a desire among participants to make friends in their host Vancouver community, but also perceived a "sense of fear socializing with 'Canadians'" (p. 113) among numerous participants. This was due to the respondents' exaggerated perception of difference between Japanese culture and Canadian culture. The author suggests that this led to the participant conclusion that people from such different cultures were incapable of forming genuine relationships. Takayama associates this sense of difference with discourses of *nihonjinron* ('discourses of Japanese uniqueness', see Kawai, 2015; Liddicoat,

2007) “which emphasize the unbridgeable cultural gap between Japan and the West” (Takayama, 2000, p. 115). Takayama’s study therefore presents the possibility of essentialization as interference to participation in one’s host community. In this particular case, binary views of ‘the West’ and Japan acted as barriers to respondents’ participation in English-speaking circles.

Despite binary views of host culture and Japan impeding participants’ social networks, Takayama (2000) also noted a strong desire to use English with native English speaking Canadians among his participants. Many men he interviewed likewise expressed an attraction to essentialized images of Anglophone pop culture – particularly American pop culture – such as movies and music. This observation is unique in that this kind of *akogare* for English and Anglophone pop culture has frequently only been attributed to Japanese female desire (e.g., Kelsky, 2000a, 2000b; Takahashi, 2013).

Romantic desire abroad

Another valuable point of analysis from Takayama’s (2000) research was interviewees’ claim that their identities as Japanese men in Canada hindered them from romantic relationships with host community women. All the examples presented in his study involve interviewees speaking about “Canadian women”, and thus Takayama’s analysis strictly pertains to heterosexual relationships. Takayama notes that his participants frequently described ‘Canadian women’ as White, native English-speaking females. He further explains that several of his participants expressed a physical attraction to ‘Canadian women’, and yet believed them to be incompatible partners for Japanese men. This was not only due to participants’ aforementioned ideas of cultural incompatibility, but also because some interviewees felt that Japanese men were romantically undesirable to White women in their host communities. For instance, Takayama recounts a transaction with participant Gon:

> Gon: I wonder if White women are interested in Asian men. I don't think they like us much.
> KT: Why?
> Gon: We are short and I don't think we are attractive.
> KT: Why?
> Gon: Because we are not attractive and also there is a language problem. I cannot think that they would like Japanese students like me, unless they are really eccentric. (p. 108)

According to Takayama, participants frequently voiced feelings of inferiority in regard to English and essentialized Western standards of beauty – "fair skin, Western figure, blue eyes and blonde hair" (p.109). In this way, he highlights the importance of English in his respondents' sojourn, in addition to arguing that many of these men both idolized and otherized the women in their host community.

The findings of Morinaga Williams' (2018) case study of Ki mirror several findings from Takayama's (2000). For example, Ki, who claimed to have planned to date during this study abroad but was unsuccessful, stated that Japanese men's physique and unfamiliarity with dating culture in the United States made them unappealing romantic partners for American women. Morinaga Williams also examined the way that Ki compared his perception of the romantic experiences of Japanese women abroad and those of Japanese men:

> K: Ah. My experience. Not only my experience. But there's an image of Japanese women as popular with men.
> I: Mm hm.
> K: With foreigners. And they easy to get, like Japanese girl easy to get. American or Canadian boyfriend. But Japanese man is face difficulties [laughing]. (p. 1578)

Moreover, Morinaga Williams (2018) examines Ki's account in relation to Takahashi's (2013) longitudinal ethnographic study of Japanese female university students in Australia that explores common discourses of romantic desire in connection to Japanese women, English, and discursively constructed ideologies of the West. Overall, Morinaga Williams (2018) points to

similarities between Ki's descriptions of Japanese women as popular romantic partners abroad and the experiences of Takahashi's (2013) female interviewees, many of whom recount being approached by male members of their host community with romantic intent. Morinaga Williams (2018) suggest that in some cases, Japanese women abroad may possess more cultural capital than Japanese males due to Orientalist notions that tend to sexualize Asian women. On the other hand, the author argued that Orientalist discourses regarding Asian men frequently portrayed them as effeminate and therefore ill-suited partners for Western women.

This case study, in combination with Takayama's (2000) research, provide evidence that marginalizing images of Japanese masculinity in Anglophone nations can affect the experiences of Japanese male sojourners by effeminizing them in comparison to stereotypical notions of Western masculinity. Furthermore, both of these studies present examples where the interviewees are aware of these images and believe they hindered their dating experiences abroad.

v. Gaps in the literature

The studies in Table 4.1 form the basis of English literature that specifically addresses the international narratives of young Japanese men abroad. Analysis of these studies sheds light on four primary areas. First, several studies examine (1) Japanese male sojourns' reasons for leaving Japan and (2) Japanese male sojourners' opinions of domestic working culture. Next, (3) the impact of target language (English) use and community membership is presented. Lastly, (4) a small amount of studies investigated the way notions of "Japan" and "other" linked with discourses about Japanese masculinity that respondents saw are detrimental to intercultural dating.

While the previous studies contribute to expanding the limited field of international narratives of Japanese men, the only topics that have been comprehensively analysed to date are Japanese male sojourns' reasons for leaving Japan and their opinions of domestic working culture (Kato, 2015; Ono, 2015; Suzuki, 2015). These studies tend to focus on participants' past experiences in Japan and their comparisons of domestic working culture and working culture in their host communities. These studies also emphasize standards of *sararīman* masculinity as both something that propelled numerous respondents from Japan but simultaneously remained a constant source of pressure. There remains room, therefore, to thoroughly examine the narratives of young Japanese male sojourners from different perspectives.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the international narratives of Japanese female sojourners have experienced significant attention in research, particularly concerning Japanese women's perceptions of the languages, cultures, and members of their host communities. In addition, discourses of desire and romance have been analysed from gendered perspectives by several scholars. Concerning the experiences of Japanese men, Morinaga Williams (2018) and Takayama (2000) consider similar themes. However, Morinaga Williams' (2018) research is limited considering that it was conducted as a case study of one respondent in one host culture. Likewise, Takayama's (2000) research site was limited to one location. Within his study, 'desire' and 'romance' were not original areas of focus and therefore did not receive substantial consideration in his evaluation of findings. Moreover, Takayama's discussion did not address discourses of masculinity but instead focused on broader intersections of race and language.

This dissertation addresses these gaps in several ways. The first contribution this study offers is methodological. Unlike past studies, the interview data in this dissertation is presented as it occurred, whether that be in Japanese, English, or with translanguaging (drawing from all of

one's bilingual resources in a conversation, or 'code switching'). When necessary, an English translation is provided. Presenting data in this fashion allows Japanese-English bilingual readers a more comprehensive understanding of how the data was constructed.

Next, this study analyses discourses of masculinity within and outside of the notion of *sararīman* masculinity. It looks at the ways that participants spoke about their perceptions of the expectations placed on men within Japan and within their host cultures. This includes both expectations of *roles* (such as in work, education, and the family), and *physical* expectations of how men's bodies should appear and be maintained. Next, this dissertation expands on the work of Morinaga Williams (2018) and Takayama (2000) by conducting interviews with participants who sojourned in a variety of locations (often having gone abroad more than once). It specifically enquires about the men's expectations and opinions concerning romance during their time abroad. Another unique aspect of this study is how participant identities are analysed through intersections of gender, language and race, and how this may connect to discourses of masculinity. Therefore, this dissertation seeks to expand the relatively limited idea of "the Japanese male experience overseas" by providing a novel analysis of participant accounts that pays particular attention to both the intersections of participant identities and also perceptions of desire and masculinity.

vi. Summary

This chapter presented a summary of the still limited studies that address the international narratives of young Japanese men who go overseas for study abroad or WHM programs. After examining the studies from a methodological perspective, I introduced the three key findings of: Japanese male sojourns in relation to domestic work, Japanese male sojourners and community membership and language ideologies, and Japanese male sojourners and discourses of desire. I

also emphasized where issues of gender and perceptions of masculinity were particularly salient. Finally, I noted gaps in the research that this dissertation hopes to address – specifically that there has yet to be an in-depth analysis of Japanese male experience overseas outside of discourses of domestic work. In the next chapter, I present this dissertation's research design and expand on my approach to my own positionality.

Chapter 5: Research Design

i. Introduction

This chapter introduces this study's research design. As previously mentioned, this dissertation used qualitative interviews with 25 young male returned sojourners who studied abroad or took part in WHM programs. In this chapter, I first introduce this study's methodology, including my approaches to data collection and analysis, and the theories that underpin these processes. I then give an outline of the interview procedure, as well as an introduction of this dissertation's 25 participants. Next, I describe my approach to data analysis, including translation and the presentation of bilingual data. Lastly, I attempt to critically examine my role as researcher and summarize the limitations of this study. Methodological concerns have been included throughout this chapter where applicable.

ii. Methodology

The overarching goal guiding this study is to learn more about how young Japanese males with international experience make sense of their identities as 'Japanese men' abroad and in Japan from a gendered perspective. Such a broad line of inquiry necessitates flexible methods of data collection and analysis. Qualitative semi-structured interviews and inductive thematic analysis were therefore selected to investigate participants' narratives, experiences and perspectives. Due to the inductive nature of this study, research questions and methods of analysis were continually refined through the process of interviews, and through my exploration of previous literature.

Data collection: Qualitative semi-structured interviews

According to Galletta and Cross (2013), semi-structured qualitative interviews "incorporate both open-ended and more theoretically driven questions, eliciting data grounded in

the experience of the participant as well as data guided by existing constructs in the particular discipline within which one is conducting research" (p. 45). Using this type of interview allowed me to learn more about participants' descriptions of their own lived experiences and to consider how pervasive discourses in society may have affected their accounts. Birkmann (2013) argues that qualitative interviews are "particularly adept at making the obvious obvious" because they illuminate "something we knew all along, but did not know *that* we knew!" (p. 69, emphasis in original). In this way, qualitative interviews also have the potential to elucidate how influential everyday experiences can be on concepts such as identity construction and an individual's interactions with dominant discourses in society – providing another reason why this style of interview is beneficial to this dissertation.

iii. Limitations of Qualitative Interviews

Despite the suitability of qualitative interviews, several scholars have argued that they are commonly overused and undertheorized in the social sciences (e.g., Atkinson & Silverman, 1997; Talmy, 2011; Wooffitt & Widdicombe, 2006). Certainly, qualitative interviews appear to be the data collection method of choice in many studies, especially those conducted by novice researchers (Roulston, 2014). This overreliance on interviews can result in a discrepancy between research goals and research design. Birkmann (2013) makes the excellent point that, despite the versatility of qualitative interviews, "it is not uncommon, however, to find that people have fallen in love with interviewing as a method, and then seek to apply it to answer questions that are ill-suited for this kind of method" (p. 48).

Another notable criticism of the use of qualitative interviews involves the presentation of data. According to Potter and Hepburn (2005) Talmy (2011) and Wooffitt and Widdicombe (2006), many studies using qualitative interviewing have a tendency to present data in the final

report as decontextualized excerpts that neglect to show how the data was constructed with the interviewer. In other words, the interviewer's voice is rarely present. In addition to concealing how participant utterances were created, deleting the role of interviewer in data analysis may even mask power imbalances between participants and researchers (Roulston, 2010b). In order to address these concerns while keeping this study's research goals in mind, I selected a constructionist theory of interview to guide my data collection and analysis. This approach is described below.

iv. Constructionist theory of interview

In line with this study's framework of social constructionism, I utilized a constructionist theory of interview when planning and analysing interviews. Unlike neopositivist approaches to interviewing that assert only a capable interviewer can gain access to valid data and stress the necessity of an objective analysis, constructionist interviews emphasize the situational and interactional nature of the research interview and believe everything has potential to be valuable data (Roulston, 2010b). Here, the researcher's subjectivity and the way interviewee and interviewer interact is integral to the analysis of data.

To emphasize the situational nature of participant utterances, constructionist interviews are commonly referred to as 'accounts' as opposed to being viewed as "an essential doorway to the interviewee's 'authentic' self" (Mori, 2012, p. 491). In other words, interviews provide a contextual understanding of an event or phenomenon that is generated by the interviewee and interviewer. Moreover, a constructionist approach advocates that seemingly problematic interactions with participants do not result in 'failed' interviews. Rather, all data generated within an interview are considered worthy of analysis. Such troubled exchanges can add

commentary to understandings of membership categories, research methods, and interviewee and interviewer assumptions (Roulston, 2014).

Concerning the presentation of interview transcripts, the constructionist theory of interview regularly use lengthy selections as opposed to brief interview excerpts. This is meant to emphasize the interactional nature of interviews and provide context. Transcriptions frequently include actions such as pauses, laughter, and gestures to assist with clarity (Roulston, 2010b). Through the presentation of context-based interview segments involving both researcher and participant, the constructionist approach to interviewing can address some of the concerns in section 5.1.2.1.

v. Summary of recruitment and interview process

Interviews were conducted from June 2017 to July 2018. I recruited 28 Japanese men but was only able to interview 25 due to scheduling conflicts. Initially, purposeful sampling was utilized to recruit participants through my personal professional and academic networks. I found this to be the most practical form of sampling as the study began. First, I contacted acquaintances that fit the interviewee criteria (which is explained in a subsequent section) and then reached out to colleagues and friends whom I thought may know other young Japanese men who had studied or worked abroad. After making initial contact with several participants, I used snowball sampling to continue recruiting interviewees. Cohen and Arieli (2011) describe snowball sampling as a recruitment method "where one subject gives the research the name of another, who in turn provides the name of the third, and so on" (p. 424). In other words, after each interview I asked participants if they knew anyone who fit this study's participant criteria. A common answer from participants was that they had several female friends who had lived abroad but not male friends. This struggle to find interviewees is also why data collection lasted 13

months. However, I am satisfied with a relatively small number of interviewees, as I desired to gain a deeper, rather than broader, understanding of my research topic.

Participants were contacted by email or through social media to explain the study's goal of learning more about the international narratives of Japanese male sojourners. This was explained in both Japanese and English. Interviews ranged from 45 minutes to two hours and took place in the Kansai and Kanto regions of Japan in public places such as university cafeterias or coffee shops. On rare occasions when I was very familiar with a participant, we met at that his home or workplace.

Both Japanese and English were used in interviews and many interviews featured heavy translanguaging (or code-switching) between the two languages. Interviews were then transcribed in the languages in which they were spoken. Most participants are fluent English speakers but I attempted to respect their choice of language during the interview and used Japanese as much as possible if it was preferred. Conversely, some participants were eager for a chance to express themselves in English and thus these conversations tended to favour English. Several participants commented that it was quite useful to use both languages to maximize self-expression and communication.

Upon meeting, participants were presented with a bilingual Japanese-English consent form outlining the study's ethical approval and right to withdraw from the study. It was important to me for participants to know why I was specifically interested in speaking with Japanese men and so I explicitly explained the purpose and background of study in detail before each interview began. Following this, participants were asked to summarize their experience abroad in terms of location, length of stay and purpose. This was a frequent segue into asking specific questions about their lives abroad. From here, interview questions varied greatly, but I

was conscious to inquire about:

- Participant perceptions of their experience in comparison to the Japanese women around them
- How participants believe Japanese men were viewed in their host communities
- Participant experiences, desires or expectations in regards to dating abroad and in Japan
- Perceptions of society's images of 'ideal young men' vs. 'typical young men' in Japan

Initially, an interview guide was created for use in each interview but I soon realized that this guide needed to be dynamic due to the open and fluid nature of qualitative interviews and the diversity of participant narratives. As a result, the interview guide was not firmly relied upon during research interviews (the original interview guide can be found in Appendix A). Actual questions and follow up questions varied depending on participant experiences and what was deemed to be of interest to them during the interviews. As Atkinson (2017) explains, this variation in participant questioning can lead to challenges in data analysis due to the 'untidiness' of the range of answers. Nevertheless, not strictly adhering to the interview guide contributed to the generation of a variety of data and helped me attain the richness of data I was seeking.

vi. Participants

My objective was to interview young Japanese male returned sojourners who had participated in study abroad or WHM programs. This description warrants some clarification. First, "young" is a very ambiguous term but participants ranged from 19 to 36 years old. Originally I had hoped to interview men who had been abroad for at least six months and had returned in the last five years. However, I soon found it difficult to find enough participants who fit these timeframes. The criteria was therefore changed to a minimum of one month abroad and

a return to Japan in the last ten years. One month abroad, though very short, is also reflective of the recent Japanese sojourn trend of "super-short term study abroad" referenced by Shimmi and Ota (2018) in Chapter 1.

Participants all self-identified as Japanese nationals and were born in Japan. Their hometowns were cities across the country, but all men now lived in the Kansai and Kanto regions of Japan. Their occupations varied but undergraduate students, graduate students, full-time company employees, artists, and small business owners were all jobs that participants mentioned. All of the students interviewed also worked part-time. Several participants identified as monolingual Japanese speakers, despite their high English proficiency. Other languages that were spoken by participants were Korean, German, Thai, Swedish, and Arabic. Most of the participants openly identified as heterosexual, though not all explicitly stated a gender preference for a romantic partner. Two participants defined themselves bisexual, with one saying he usually prefers to date men.

In order to protect participants' identities, I asked participants to choose a pseudonym. Their schools, work places, and all other identifying characteristics, have also been given pseudonyms. A table of full participant profiles is presented below. When a large group of participants are referenced, this study uses the participant number for indication.

Name	Age at interview	Location abroad	Year(s) abroad	Time abroad	Sojourn reason(s)	Occupation at time of interview
1. Akihiro	34	New York (USA), Singapore	2008	2 weeks, 2 weeks	Private English study	Accountant
2. Dai	31	Vancouver (CAN)	2015 - 2016	1 year	English study at private language school and WHM	Filmmaker and small business owner
3. Fumiya	20	Jakarta	2017	5 months	Mainstream classes	University

		(Indonesia)			at partner university	student
Name	**Age at interview**	**Location abroad**	**Year(s) abroad**	**Time abroad**	**Sojourn reason(s)**	**Occupation at time of interview**
4. Gen	27	Cebu (Philippines), Kelowna (CAN)	2016 – 2017	6 months, 13 months	Intensive English study at private 'boarding' language school, WHM	About to leave to be a JICA volunteer overseas
5. Haruki	21	Vancouver (CAN)	2016 – 2017	10 months	English language study and mainstream classes at partner university	University student
6. Hikaru	27	Vancouver, Canmore (CAN)	2015 - 2016	6 months, 6 months	English study at private language school and WHM, WHM	Study abroad agent
7. Jin	24	Adelaide (AUS,) Gurgaon (India)	2016	2 months, 8 months	WHM, English studies at private language school and internship at small IT company	Recruitment company worker
8. Junpei	27	New York (USA)	2010	1 month	English study at private language school	Bartender
9. Kazu	28	San Diego, Northridge (USA)	2010 – 2011, 2017 – 2018	6 months, 1 year	English language study, MSA program	About to start a new job as an accountant in New York
10. Masato	25	Frankfurt (GER)	2016	10 months	Mainstream classes (EMI) at partner university during MEd	MEd student
11. Natsuki	25	London (UK), Hamilton (CAN)	2013, 2013 – 2014	5 weeks, 8 months	Short-term language study, mainstream classes at partner university	MA student
12. Nobu	19	Seattle (USA)	2016 – 2018	3 years	High school international student	University student
13. Nori	28	Växjö (Sweden), London (UK)	2012 – 2013, 2014 – 2015	10 months, 1 year	Mainstream classes (EMI) at partner university, MA	PhD student
14. Ryoma	36	San Francisco (USA), Bangkok	2009 – 2012,	3 years, 25 months	Company transfer to USA, Japanese	Owner of language school

		(Thailand)	2015 – 2017		teaching and Thai language studies	
Name	**Age at interview**	**Location abroad**	**Year(s) abroad**	**Time abroad**	**Sojourn reason(s)**	**Occupation at time of interview**
15. Ryota	24	Vancouver (CAN)	2014 – 2015	10 months	English study and mainstream classes at partner university	Salesperson
16. Ryuhei	24	Vancouver (CAN)	2014 – 2015	8 months	English study and mainstream classes at partner university	Graduated from MA and planning to became a counselor.
17. Seiya	28	Toronto (CAN)	2011 - 2012	7 months	English language studies at a private language school	IT worker
18. Shoma	22	Melbourne (AUS), Vancouver (CAN)	2015, 2017	1 month, 2 months	Volunteer, internship	University student
19. Shinya	24	Vancouver (CAN)	2014 - 2016	2 years	English study and mainstream classes at partner university	University student
20. Takeo	31	Vancouver (CAN)	2014 – 2016, 2018	2 years, 6 months	English study at private school and WHM, visa sponsored by private company	Professional gardener
21. Tani	28	Seattle, Davis (USA)	2010 - 2011	1 year, 6 months	Agricultural training program in USA through Japanese university, agricultural studies in partner university	Manager at educational materials and English language teacher recruitment company
22. Tom	21	Edmonton (CAN)	2016 - 2017	8 months	English study and mainstream classes at partner university	University student
23. Wataru	31	Vancouver (CAN), London (UK)	2013 – 2015, 2015 – 2017	2 years, 1.5 years	English study at private language school and WHM, WHM	Customer support in investment company
24. Yoshi	27	Cebu (Philippines),	2013, 2014,	10 months, 10 months,	Intensive English study at private	Guest house manager

		Sydney, Tasmania (AUS), Gurgaon (India)	2016	2 months, 2 months	'boarding' language school, WHM, WWOOF, IT studies	
Name	**Age at interview**	**Location abroad**	**Year(s) abroad**	**Time abroad**	**Sojourn reason(s)**	**Occupation at time of interview**
25. Yu	28	Sydney (AUS)	2015	1 year	English study at private language school and WHM	Salesperson

Table 5.1 Summary of participant profiles

vii. Lack of participant diversity

Unfortunately, it was a challenge to find a diverse group of men who had been abroad. Because purposeful and snowball sampling are not random, their tendency to gather similar participants is noted as a possible hindrance to study validity (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). Likewise, the men I was introduced to through other participants tended to be university educated, middle class, heterosexual, and from the Kansai region of Japan. Moreover, 23 of the 25 participants spent at least one of their sojourns in an Inner Circle country. 10 of interviewees had at least one sojourn in Vancouver, Canada, which I believe can be attributed to two factors. First, as Kato (2015) points out, Vancouver is one of the most popular destinations for Japanese for WHM and study abroad. Next, a prominent university in the Kansai region has a well-established student exchange agreement with a recognized research university in BC. When I interviewed respondents from this Japanese university, I noticed that they had predominantly been to Vancouver for their sojourns.

A notable limitation among participants is the lack of Japanese men from the LGBTQ community. I was aware that focusing primarily on heterosexual men's experiences or overgeneralizing their narratives to represent a broad 'male' experience would risks replicating

heteronormative discourses. Moreover, considering this study's goal to examine perceptions of masculinity, which in itself is a complicated and multifaceted concept, a deep exploration into the subject requires divergence from merely looking at heterosexual masculinities. I therefore contacted three LGBTQ student clubs in order to connect with participants. Unfortunately, I was only able to interview two men in total from these organizations. Incorporating more diverse views from male sojourners of different sexual orientations would certainly enrich future studies on this topic.

viii. Participants in focus

As mentioned above, this study contains data from 25 Japanese men who have studied or worked abroad and returned to Japan. While all interviews were examined and analysed to compile the findings of this dissertation. I specifically drew on the accounts of 11 men when showing interview excerpt examples in the Findings/Discussion chapters. Therefore, although interview excerpts from these 11 men are exclusively used for reference, I used analysis of all 25 participant accounts to create the results and conclusions of this dissertation. An overview of the entire data set is presented in Chapter 7.

There are several reasons why I decided to narrow my focus when presenting interview data. First, the 11 participants in focus either spoke the most frequently about gender, masculinity and desire, or provided contrast to statements made by the majority of the other participants. Each of these participants also appeared eager to speak for an extended amount of time and provided significant amounts of data. Next, limiting interview examples to the participants in focus allowed this dissertation to use multiple and lengthy excerpts from each of the 11 men. This provides the reader with opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of these

men's perspectives and experiences. In the following chapter, I provide brief biographies of the 11 individuals in focus.

ix. Data analysis

All interview data was transcribed unless it was completely unconnected to the research topic. I adapted my transcription conventions based on Roulston (2010b) and Takahashi (2013). A table of transcriptions for reference can be found below:

@	Brief laugh
@@	Long laugh
(.)	Short pause
(2.0)	Two second pause
::	Elongated sound
<u>friends</u>	Emphasis
@friends@	Words spoken while laughing
°friends°	Words spoken in a whisper
"friends"	Imitation of another person speaking
friends=	Speaker cut off by next utterance
[hits table] [sarcastic voice]	Description of action or change in tone
[???]	Inaudible
[…]	Section omitted

Table 5.2 Transcription conventions

Inductive thematic analysis

Inspired by Roulston's (2010a) suggests for qualitative interviewing, I first looked at my transcriptions and asked myself, "what stands out in the data?" (p. 200). This included assessing interview transcripts both in terms of the dissertation's research questions and the interactions within the interview. The notes created this phase acted as a pre-stage to the official coding and analysis. After scanning the interview transcripts with this question in mind, I began my formal data analysis.

Inductive thematic analysis was selected to categorize, inspect and present data. Thematic analysis is a method of finding patterns of similarity and difference among participants, while maintaining awareness of how context may have influenced the patterns (Ayres, 2008). Taking an inductive approach to thematic analysis entails "a process of coding the data *without* trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame, or the researcher's analytic preconceptions" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83, emphasis in original). It is a flexible approach that can be applied to a variety of theoretical frameworks (Braun & Clark, 2013). Braun and Clark's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis were used in this study, which included (1) familiarization of data, (2) generation of initial codes, (3) creation of themes, (4) review of themes, (5) definition and naming of themes, and finally, (6) creation of the final report (see p. 87). Aryes (2008) notes that codes and themes simultaneously inform each other, making thematic analysis not a linear procedure but instead a dynamic process that involves referring back to data and refining analysis. Likewise, my own analysis was an ongoing process that involved reviewing interview transcripts, refining codes and themes and drawing on previous literature. I also contacted participants when necessary for clarification of interview transcripts and intended meaning—a process which Roulston (2010b) refers to as 'memberchecking'.

x. Translanguaging in interviews

Language is a central component of the analysis of qualitative interviewing and this is particularly apparent in bilingual and multilingual research (Inhetveen, 2012). When more than one language is used, choices in translation and the presentation of data are worthy of consideration. And yet, the decisions and processes behind translation are often neglected in the written reports of multilingual studies. When descriptions are present, they are often presented as matter-of-fact or included with a hasty warning about possible translation errors (Shklarvo,

2007). Considering the social and cultural factors embedded in the process of translation, in addition to instances where a range of interpretations are possible for a single word or phrase, it can be problematic to argue that one correct translation exists (Inhetveen, 2012). It is therefore important that a researcher present both their choices and their reasons for their translations and the way in which they display data. If literal translations of data are used, nuance, in addition to the social and cultural aspects of an utterance, can be lost. Conversely, pragmatic translations lack fine details such as specifically where pauses, laughter and other contextual cues took place.

Because of these concerns, I was aware that I needed to be explicit about my own process of data translation but also struggled to present the data findings in an easy-to-read manner. The data in this study proved difficult to both present and translate due to frequent translanguaging between Japanese and English. For this reason I have decided to present the data as it occurred in the interviews (including code-switching), along side English translations when necessary and originally Japanese utterances in **bold** font. When only a small amount of Japanese was used, I included the English translation beside the word or phrase in square brackets ([ ]). By maintaining the patterns of translanguaging, Japanese-English bilingual readers will have a more comprehensive understanding of the nuances of certain utterances, and the context in which they were created.

Process of translation

Interviews were transcribed and then compiled with NVivo. After all interviews were transcribed and I completed the initial process of coding and creating themes, I selected which interview segments I wished to use as examples in the final report. I translated several excerpts into English to the best of my ability, and often contacted bilingual participants to assist me with the finer nuances of translation. Later, a Japanese-English bilingual colleague who is familiar

with the concept of translanguaging became the primary translator of the interview data and I reviewed her completed translations. One of our concerns was over the Japanese あいづち (*aiduchi* –brief responses to maintain the flow of conversation). When translated into English, *aiduchi* at times appeared to signal agreement when they in fact indicated merely acknowledgment or understanding of the previous utterance. Overall, the English translations of data were a collaborative process between participants, peers and researcher.

A largely pragmatic approach rather than literal approach was taken for this dissertation's presentation of English data. This was done to best preserve the original nuances of the interview interactions. However, this method did complicate incorporating important pieces of the interview such as hesitations and emphasis. In the end, the interview transcripts with a great deal of code-switching proved to be the most challenging to present in English, and therefore I ask the reader to refer to the original transcripts if possible.

xi. Researcher reflexivity in relation to interviews and data analysis

As Roulston (2010b) notes, a constructionist approach to interviewing necessitates analysis of how the interviewer/researcher acts as a co-creator of data. She argues that this includes examining the actual interactions that take place and considering the influence of a researcher's intersections of identity on data production. As in every interaction, structures of power may influence the interactions between interviewee and interviewer. Therefore, taking a critical stance on how power emerges or shifts within a research interview is an important component of analysis (Finlay, 2013).

When considering structures of power present in interview interactions, I chose to practice reflexivity. According to Guillemin and Gillam (2004), "[r]eflexivity involves critical reflection of how the researcher constructs knowledge from the research process—what sorts of

factors influence the researcher's construction of knowledge and how these influences are revealed in the planning, conduct, and writing up of the research" (p. 275). This involves consciously reflecting on the interactions that took place during an interview, and how they were constructed. Following Best's (2003) and Takeda's (2012) approach to reflexivity, however, I did not solely focus on my influence on participants in research interviews, but instead on the social process of the interview in which interviewer and interviewee affect each other.

Native English speaking researcher/ Japanese as a second language researcher

As this study's interviews progressed, the term 'native speaker' (or ネイティブスピーカー) quickly became a more and more frequent in participant accounts. This was most commonly used to refer to native English speakers, and was often done in a tone of admiration. I became aware of the ways participants were possibly constructing my identity during our interactions. For instance, some participants made remarks such as, "don't you think you're lucky to be a native speaker?" and "English is really the only language you need, so why would you learn Japanese?". Following dominant discourses of the importance of English in Japan (introduced in Chapter 1 and 2), the label of 'native English speaker' can act as a status enhancing subjectivity (e.g., Kobayashi, 2018; Kubota, 2011). When English was used predominantly in interviews, it also allowed me more opportunities to speak. Yet, not all men chose to use English in their interviews. Primarily Japanese interactions led to a clear shift in both the prowess of communication between the native Japanese-speaking participants and myself, resulting in a shift in dynamics of power within the interview. Language choice can, after all, be used in an interaction to gain status and enact legitimate identities (Norton, 2000). I therefore argue that my native speaker English status did not always put me in a privileged

position. Instead, this relationship appeared to be fluid depending on the participant and how much translanguaging took place.

Researcher intersections of race and gender

Being a researcher who is perceived as both a member of *gaijin* ("foreign") and *hakujin* ("White") groups in Japan can be a contentious position. First, as a visible minority I am sometimes treated as an outsider or temporary visitor. This has led feelings of frustration and disenfranchisement. Yet, as many scholars have argued (e.g., Kobayashi, 2018; Kubota, 1998; 2011; Rivers & Ross, 2013; Russell, 2018), Whiteness holds a privileged position in the Japanese social imaginary and is commonly intertwined with ideas of internationalization and aesthetic beauty. As will become clear throughout this dissertation, several participants articulated a fascination with or attraction to essentialized notions of White Anglophone culture. My status as a White researcher was therefore not unmarked to participants.

White women were frequently referenced in participant interviews, both by interviewees and myself. Best (2003) maintains that within research interviews, the interviewer and participant are "actively engaged in doing race" (p. 895) through interaction, which in turn discursively constructs both their own race and the race of their interlocutor. Following this argument, this study's interviews resulted the bidirectional positioning of researcher and interviewee identity while simultaneously constructing 'the other'. For instance, in Excerpt 7.3, participant Tani expresses his belief of Japanese women's *akogare* for 白人 ("White people"), whom he describes as "[h]aving blue eyes and blonde hair, like you". By directly comparing me to the racialized facial features that he states Japanese women yearn for, it could be argued that Tani projected a privileged identity onto me.

Race intersects with multiple other factors that result in complex articulations of one's own identity and the projection of another's identity (Kubota & Lin, 2006). The intersection of my race (White) and gender (female) also warrant careful consideration given that desire for (or lack there of) White femininity among Japanese men became a prominent theme in participant accounts. It is easy to imagine that the men I interviewed would be been more forthcoming with information had I been male or had a different racial background. There were also several cases during the interviews in which I was perhaps too conscious of my identity as a female interviewing men, and therefore felt somewhat uncomfortable in my exchanges with participants. Despite these struggles, I view these 'imperfect utterances' as data worthy of analysis in terms of researcher – participant interactions, and the negotiation of our shifting subjectivities (Best, 2003).

xii. Summary

This chapter presented the current study's research design. This is a qualitative study that investigates the gendered experiences of 25 Japanese men who participated in study abroad or working holiday programs and have since returned to Japan. Semi-structured interviews, rooted in a constructionist theory of interview, were used to elicit participant narratives. Participants for this study were recruited through purposeful sampling and snowball sampling.

Data was analysed through inductive thematic analysis, which involved an ongoing process of referring to original data, previous literature, and participant clarification. Although all participants' interview data were analysed for this study, the Findings chapters of this dissertation present examples from 11 men who spoke the most extensively about gender, masculinity and desire. These 11 men have been labeled "participants in focus" and their brief biographies follow this chapter. Interview excerpts are presented as they took place (bilingual

with code switching) and when necessary, an English translation is presented along side. The process of translation involved the researcher, a Japanese – English bilingual colleague and occasional assistance from the participants themselves.

The end of this chapter was dedicated to reflexivity on my own subjectivities as a researcher. This was primarily connected to the intersections of my identity as a White female native English-speaking researcher in Japan. Although I argue that identity and power are not static, especially given my status as a foreign resident and non-native Japanese speaker, I also acknowledge that I hold a privileged identity in certain contexts in Japanese society.

Chapter 6: Participants in Focus

i. Introduction

Prior to analyzing participant accounts, I will present brief biographies of the 11 men whose interview accounts became the focus of the data presented in this dissertation. Participant biographies are presented individually and in the order in which the men's interview excerpts appear in this dissertation. Biographies were created based on interview accounts, memberchecking and my own personal observations.

ii. Shinya

Shinya, a tall, energetic and charismatic young man, was originally from a large coastal city in the Kansai region of Japan. When he was young, his family moved to Hong Kong for four and a half years for his father's job. He studied English in Hong Kong and developed a firm grasp on the language. At the time of our interview, Shinya was 24 years old and was preparing to graduate from university in Japan. He had recently been offered a position in sales at a company in Tokyo. Until he left Kansai, he planned to work part-time as a fitness instructor at a local hotel while preparing for his graduation and move across Japan.

Shinya spent two years studying at a prestigious research university in British Columbia, Canada. His university and this Canadian university have a longstanding exchange agreement and approximately 100 Japanese students from his home university spend a year at this Canadian university annually. In the first semester, students typically take intensive academic English classes before entering mainstream classes. Due to Shinya's excellent English abilities and strong academic performance, he was given the option to stay at his host university for two years of study. These two years abroad delayed graduation from Shinya's Japanese university but he

claims the experiences of his life in Canada and what he learned at his host university were well worth graduating a year 'late'.

I interviewed Shinya in a bustling café in central Kyoto city. I was intrigued by his frankness when he spoke about his study abroad experience and he was open to follow up questions after I began my analysis of his interview. Unfortunately, after Shinya moved to Tokyo for work, we largely lost touch. When he did reply to my messages, however, he still had the same energetic and congenial tone as during our interview.

iii. Nori

Nori is a current doctoral student in education at a large Japanese university in Kansai. When we met, he was 28 years old but I assumed he was much younger, despite his mature, thoughtful and calm demeanor. Nori came to Kansai from the southern island of Kyushu to attend university. As an undergrad, he spent a year studying in Växjö, Sweden, which sparked an interest in Swedish education and educational policy that he still holds today. He did his masters in education in London at a well-known program before returning to Japan to begin an unrelated career at a Japanese company. Due to high levels of job dissatisfaction and a lingering interest in Swedish education, Nori eventually left work to begin his doctorate degree in Kansai.

I met Nori for our interview in a cafeteria at his university shortly after he began his PhD program. We spoke at length about his experiences in Sweden and the UK but it was also clear to me that Nori was greatly disappointed with his current program and the limited opportunities to pursue his research interests. He ultimately decided to return to Sweden for a semester of 'research abroad. He claimed this was primarily for data collection, but also hoped to explore Swedish graduate programs with the interest of transferring to a doctoral program that better suits his needs and interests.

iv. Wataru

Wataru had recently returned from his second WHM stint abroad at the time of our interview. He was 31 when we met. He had first spent two years studying and working in Vancouver, British Columbia before briefly returning to Japan only to leave again to work at a Japanese company in London, UK. Originally from an extremely rural area on Shikoku Island, Wataru dreamed of leaving his small community to work in an urban area. After securing a job in Tokyo, Wataru claims he was greatly affected by seeing a group of energetic non-Japanese residents in Tokyo giving out 'free hugs'. The openness and warmth of this group of people inspired him to begin seriously thinking about seeing more of the world and learning English – the language these people giving out free hugs had spoken to him.

I met Wataru in a quiet café for our interview. He looked extremely cool in his black T-shirt, dark jeans, and shaggy hair. Although friendly and comical outside of our meeting, Wataru became rather serious once I began to record our conversation. In our follow-up contact, Wataru has been very quick to reply and eager to share more about his experiences. Interestingly, he now works for the same company that employed him in Vancouver at their Kansai location.

v. Gen

Gen was introduced to me by a fellow participant (Yoshi, whose biography appears subsequently). Gen and I met in a board game and cat café for our interview. At 27 years old, Gen had studied English in the Philippines, studied and worked in Canada, and was preparing to take part in a two year volunteer with JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) in Fiji. Gen studied in Cebu in an intensive English program where he spent the entire school day as the only student with a private teacher. His program fees included housekeeping and meals in order to allow students to completely focus on their English studies. Unfortunately, I did not learn

much more about Gen's time in the Cebu as his time in Canada quickly became the centre of our interview. Shortly after the Philippines, Gen went to Kelowna, British Columbia as a WHM. He studied at a private English school for four months before finding a serving job in a local Thai restaurant.

Gen struck me as an incredibly bright and motivated man with a passion for foreign languages and intercultural communication. His time abroad was largely driven by his interest in developing these skills. He mentioned that he hopes to become an English teacher in the future.

vi. Yoshi

Yoshi was born in Kansai and projects a strong pride in his local identity. We first met randomly while both on a river walk in the summer several years ago. Yoshi's sincerity and reflective nature prompted me to invite him for a research interview and we became fast friends. At the time of our interview, Yoshi was 27 years old and worked at a high-end guesthouse in Kansai while independently designing his own smartphone applications. We met at his guesthouse and shared dinner during our interview.

Yoshi claims that a deep interest in English has prompted his moves abroad and, like his friend Gen, Yoshi has gone abroad multiple times. He also participated in a similar intensive English program in Cebu before going to Sydney, Australia as a WHM. Yoshi worked as a hotel housekeeper for about 10 months and then took part in WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) in Tasmania for 2 months. This extremely rural experience of working on a farm with only the elderly owner appears to be Yoshi's most memorable experience abroad. After our interview, I found out that Yoshi also spent two months studying IT skills in India.

vii. Ryota

Ryota, who was 24 when we first met, always looked stylish when I saw him. He spent a year at the same Vancouver university as Shinya. Ryota had wanted to study abroad in an Anglophone country because of his passion for English hip hop. He claimed he chose the famous British Columbian university simply because he could transfer credits directly to his university in Japan.

During his time in Canada, Ryota began dating a fellow international student, a Korean-American woman who he maintained a long-distance relationship with for about four years. Ryota had a deep interest in Korean pop culture and the Korean language, which his girlfriend was happy to teach him about. Sadly, about a year after our original interview, Ryota informed me that he had ended the relationship. However, he also noted that he was already receiving many messages from other women interested in dating him. It did not surprise me that Ryota had women pursuing him – he was cool, funny, and a very good conversationalist.

Upon returning to Japan and completing his undergraduate degree, Ryota took a position in sales at a company not far from his hometown in Kansai. He was clearly unhappy in this job and told me of a long-term goal to create his own business somewhere overseas. He was also considering applying for a WHM visa for Korea. When speaking with Ryota, I noticed he had strong opinions and critical awareness about issues of social equality –particularly gender equality. Ryota often mentioned that he thought he would be happier outside of Japan, giving me the impression that his sojourns abroad were not over.

viii. Tani

Tani and I met for our interview in a Kyoto bakery. Although only 28 years old, Tani held a managerial position for a company that sold English educational materials and introduced

assistant English teachers to kindergartens and elementary schools. He was wearing a Coldplay T-shirt and spoke passionately about his interest in British and American rock.

Tani's time abroad was somewhat unique among participants given that he had taken part in a year and a half program through his Japanese university that sent him to work as a volunteer agricultural assistant at an organic farm in the United States. He was placed on a small island in Washington State where he worked closely and lived with paid staff and family that owned the farm. He travelled to Seattle once a week to sell produce at a farmer's market. For the last six months of his program, Tani went to a university in California and studied agriculture. During this time he was a homestay student at the house of an American family.

After returning to Japan and graduating university, Tani took a full-time position with Uniqlo, the famous Japanese clothing company. Here, he started a romance with a White American female coworker that lasted slightly less than a year. While Tani decided to end the relationship due to what he described as his ex-girlfriend's uninhibited and at times jarring communication style, he appeared to overall positive memories with this woman.

ix. Tom

Tom was one of the youngest men that I interviewed. At 21 years old, he was in his final year of university and had just recently returned from his 8 month long study at a large university in Edmonton, Alberta. He was introduced to me by my former colleague who was acting as his undergraduate supervision at the time. Tom explicitly stated that he enjoyed international travel but was not interested in living abroad again. He noted that his primary motivation for studying at a Canadian university was to improve his English skills in order to become an English teacher in the future. He was, however, not overly interested in intercultural aspects of foreign language learning or teaching.

Perhaps influenced by the exuberance of being back home after a long absence, Tom spoke at length about the superiority of Japanese food and weather in comparison to what he experienced in Alberta. His study abroad program involved a semester in English language classes followed by a semester in mainstream classes of his choosing. Tom chose classes in education and drama and said that he made the most meaningful friendships during his time abroad in these classes.

Some time after our interview, I followed up with Tom see how his goal of becoming an English teacher was progressing. Tom now works as a junior high school English teacher in the Kansai area. We still occasionally keep in touch regarding teaching conferences in the area and he appears to enjoy his work very much.

x. Haruki

Haruki was also introduced to me by the same colleague as Tom. Also 21, Haruki had studied for ten months at the same British Columbian university through the same Japanese university as Ryota and Shinya, only two years later. Interestingly, his mother had also spent time studying at his host university. She was a substantial encouragement in his choice to study abroad and to choose his particular destination.

Haruki appeared to enjoy his studies but was also very involved on campus and within his host community. He took part in language exchanges and volunteered to teach Japanese to his campus mates. Haruki also was active as a volunteer coach for a Japanese-Canadian baseball team in his city. He spoke about the benefits of this experience at length in terms of friendship building and language development. Yet, Haruki was the most impressed by the way that the bicultural players on his team navigated their Canadian and Japanese identities. This led him to think more deeply about the way he viewed himself as a Japanese national abroad.

Tall and lean but muscular, Haruki struck me as very athletic. He majored in sports science during his undergraduate degree and at the time of our interview, was considering doing a graduate degree in a similar field in the USA, Canada, or Australia.

xi. Natsuki

Natsuki was a master's student in education at a prominent Japanese university when we first met. He had studied on a 5-week program in London, UK during his undergraduate degree and then went to Hamilton, Ontario for an 8-month study abroad. His interview focused primarily on his time in Canada, where he lived on campus and took a variety of mainstream classes. Natsuki became very close friends with another international student, Jim, who had a Native American background and a keen interest in Japanese language and pop culture. Natsuki shared stories of visiting Jim's family and going for drives together.

Natsuki was 25 at the time of the interview and we met in a quite Kyoto bar where we chatted casually over drinks. Natsuki was by far one of the most opinionated and open participants in the study. While I was at times somewhat startled by his blunt comments, I nonetheless greatly appreciated his candor and lack of hesitation in sharing about his experience as a student in Canada.

When we first met, Natsuki was also working toward acquiring the qualifications to become an English teacher separate from his masters degree. However, as he neared the end of his degree, burnt out by his own studies and interactions with faculty, Natsuki became less and less draw to the identity of 'teacher'. In the end, he took an office position with a company in Kansai unrelated to his studies. He told me that he hoped to learn more about business and perhaps one day go abroad again to complete an MBA.

xii. Ryoma

Ryoma was one of the two participants I interviewed who openly identified as a member of the LGBTQ community –specifically as bisexual. I met him at a small café that was run by community volunteers and aimed to support the local international community. Ryoma had a warm smile and infectious smile that put me at ease despite us meeting for the first time. I could tell that Ryoma was very well liked in the café the way that he interacted with the rest of the staff and customers.

Ryoma was the eldest participant that I interviewed, and at 36 years old, he had changed his life trajectory several times. He had not entered university immediately after high school and instead joined the workforce. Eventually this led him to a 3-year transfer through his Japanese company to San Francisco. Some time later, he decided to enter university in Japan and pursue his undergraduate degree. He majored in Thai, which led him to a 25-month sojourn to Bangkok. Here, Ryoma spent a year teaching Japanese at a junior high school and senior high school. He told me he was struck by the openness and acceptance of the students and teachers in these schools concerning LGBTQ issues.

For the last 13 months, Ryoma entered a Thai university to study Thai language and linguistics. He completed his undergraduate degree upon returning to Japan and decided to start his own language school in the Kansai area. At the time of our meeting, Ryoma was just preparing to open his new language school.

xiii. Summary

In this short chapter, I have introduced the 11 men whose interview accounts are the focus of this dissertation. Many of these men share an interest in foreign languages and life outside of Japan. Yet, their reasons for leaving Japan vary, as do the degrees to which they desire

to move abroad again. The men's histories, as well as their future trajectories, shape and both their portrayals of their sojourns and their lives in Japan. Even by viewing the brief descriptions of the backgrounds of the participants in focus, the diversity of their experiences is apparent and challenges the static portrayal of Japanese male sojourner introduced by Kato (2015) in Chapter 1. In the following chapter, I present a summary of the entire interviewee data set. This provides a background to Chapters 8 through 10 that focus on major findings through the accounts of the 11 participants in focus.

Chapter 7: Introduction to participant experiences

i. Introduction

Before looking in depth at participant experiences, perceptions and construction of identity, the following chapter examines a general overview of the interviews of the 25 participants of this study. This chapter has two main goals. First, I seek to provide a general background to the study in relation to sojourn goals, participant occupation, and dating experience. Next, through examining general trends and contradictions in the data set, this chapter supports the analysis presented in subsequent chapters that draw on examples from the 11 participants in focus.

ii. Goal for going abroad and activities abroad

Each research interview began with me asking participants to explain their decision to go abroad and share both about their day-to-day life, in addition to any memorable experiences they may have had. Two things quickly became clear: English language study was the main reason given for a sojourn as well as the main activity most men participated in during their time abroad. Below is a summary of the given reasons interviewees left Japan and their main activities during their sojourn.

Name	Reason	Main activities	Name	Reason	Main activities
1. Akihiro	English study for fun, socializing	English study, socializing with classmates	14. Ryoma	Work transfer/ Thai language studies	Work/ learning Thai, teaching Japanese to secondary students
2. Dai	Meet people, make films abroad	English study, attending language exchanges	15. Ryota	English study for degree, make non-Japanese friends	University studies, socializing
3. Fumiya	English study for career	University studies, exploring	16. Ryuhei	Desire to challenge himself in new	University studies, church group

		campus life		place	
4. Gen	English study for teaching career	Develop English to be an English teacher in future	17. Seiya	English study for fun, make non-Japanese friends	English studies, traveling
5. Haruki	English study for career	English study, socializing with classmates	18. Shoma	Seeing the world, meeting new people	Volunteering with local environmental group, internship at language school
6. Hikaru	English study for fun, try a totally new job abroad	English study, working at restaurants	19. Shinya	English study for degree, make non-Japanese friends	University studies, socializing
7. Jin	English study for career, IT study	Studying and socializing with housemates	20. Takeo	English studies for fun, learn about gardening in Canada	English studies, full-time land-scaping
8. Junpei	Make non-Japanese friends and see New York	Partying, traveling	21. Tani	Study English for fun, learn about organic agriculture	Volunteering on farm, English study
9. Kazu	English study for career, accounting degree	Studies	22. Tom	English studies for teaching career	University studies, socializing
10. Masato	German study for degree	University classes, travel	23. Wataru	English studies for communication with non-Japanese people	English studies, working at investment company
11. Natsuki	English studies for teaching career	University classes, soccer club	24. Yoshi	English studies for fun, work abroad	English studies, working in a hotel, volunteering on farm
12. Nobu	"Loved English"	Intense studies, socializing	25. Yu	English studies for career	English studies, working in a café
13. Nori	English/ education studies for degree	University studies, socializing			

Table 7.1 Sojourn reasons and main activities abroad

English's connection to participant sojourns

The above table shows that language study consumed much of participants' time abroad. It was also the overall most common reason for taking part in both study abroad and WHM programs. 21 of the 25 participants listed language as the main reason for a sojourn, and 19 of these men listed English as the language of study. Only Ryoma and Masato, who studied Thai and German respectively, were majoring in these languages in their Japanese universities and connected their sojourn directly to graduation. The goal of the remaining 19 men to develop their English skills is reflective of 80% of Japanese sojourners who study English abroad (JOAS, 2018).

For eight interviewees, English was justified as directly connected to a future career in Japan (3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 22, 25). With the exception of Tom and Gen who wanted to be English teachers in the future, other participants linked English acquisition to gaining careers that they loosely defined as something "international" within Japan.

English was also strongly connected to ideas of increasing one's competitiveness in what was described by many as a 'globalizing Japan'. This idea is reflective of Kubota's (2016) and Park's (2015; 2018) arguments introduced in Chapter 3, where the language skills acquired abroad (particularly English), are part of a increasing neoliberal trend of self-improvement and lifelong learning to remain employable in a competitive job market.

In contrast, not all participants justified their English studies abroad in association to a career. Some participants (1, 6, 12, 17, 20, 21, 24) expressed ambivalent desires to learn English. Their goals to learn English were mainly connected to interests in Anglophone pop culture and yet these participants at some point also expressed a frustration with a pressure they perceived in Japan to learn English. Others (8, 15, 17, 23) were interested in socializing in English with non-

Japanese people. Kubota (2011) notes how language learning as a "social space for enjoyment" (p. 475) can be a powerful motivator in inspiring both studies and cultivating friendships. Likewise, for these men, English as a motivator to go abroad appears to be connected to English as a 'fun' hobby or avenue to socialize with English-speaking people.

iii. Occupation before and after sojourn

The previous section introduced participants' overall interest in English use and acquisition as a driving force for their sojourn. Many connected their goal of studying English to how they imagined their future careers in Japan. The next section addresses what occupations participants did before their sojourn and what they took part in on their returns to Japan. For the ease of reference, I have also included the occupations of participants previously introduced in Table 5.1.

Name	Pre-sojourn occupation	Post-sojourn occupation	Occupation at time of interview	Name	Pre-sojourn occupation	Post-sojourn occupation	Occupation at time of interview
1. Akihiro	University student	University student	Accountant	14. Ryoma	Company worker/ university student	Language teacher/ university student	Owner of language school
2. Dai	Filmmaker	Filmmaker	Filmmaker and small business owner	15. Ryota	University student	University student	Salesperson
3. Fumiya	University student	University student	University student	16. Ryuhei	University student	University student	Graduated from MA and planning to became a counselor
4. Gen	Company worker (sales)	Guest house manager	About to leave to be a JICA volunteer overseas	17. Seiya	Company worker (advertising)	Game industry (start up)	IT worker
5. Haruki	University student	University student	University student	18. Shoma	University student	University student	University student
6. Hikaru	Company worker	Study abroad	Study abroad	19. Shinya	University student	University student	University student

	(sales)	agent	agent				
7. Jin	Company worker (sales)	Recruitment company worker	Recruitment company worker	20. Takeo	Professional gardener	Professional gardener	Professional gardener
8. Junpei	Factory worker	Bartender	Bartender	21. Tani	University student	University student	Manager at educational materials and English language teacher recruitment company
9. Kazu	Accountant	Accountant	About to start a new job as an accountant in New York	22. Tom	University student	University student	University student
10. Masato	Graduate student	Graduate student	MEd student	23. Wataru	Company worker (engineering)	Customer support in investment company	Customer support in investment company
11. Natsuki	University student	University student	MA student	24. Yoshi	University student (recent graduate)	Guest house manager	Guest house manager
12. Nobu	High school student	University student	University student	25. Yu	Property rental agent	Company worker (sales)	Salesperson
13. Nori	University/ grad student	University/ grad student	PhD student				

Table 7.2 Participant occupations before sojourn, after sojourn, and at time of interview

Student participants

15 of the 25 participants went abroad at some point during their studies. Shimmi and Ota (2018) note that this is an increasingly popular period to go abroad for Japanese students because it is often possible to participate in study abroad and remain on the standard four-year university track. Likewise, for the majority of these interviewees, their sojourns fit into the timeline of their degrees and did not extend their education. These interviewees claim not to have experienced significant resistance from their community regarding their decision to go abroad. However, for three of them (Nobu, Ryota and Shinya), their time abroad added at least one year to their

degrees. Nobu, who was a high school student, found that the school semesters in Japan and the United States began at different times of year, causing him to start a semester behind his American classmates. He therefore entered university later than his Japanese classmates once returning. University students Ryota and Shinya also entered the Japanese workforce after their classmates with whom they entered their university.

Kobayashi (2018) suggests that a major factor that deters Japanese men from participating in extended sojourns is the delay of university graduation and job-hunting (a topic to be addressed in Chapter 8). While Nobu, Ryota and Shinya claim they did not feel pressured by their community to stay in Japan and graduate with their peers, all three men did express a slight sense of embarrassment for what they described as 'falling behind' their friends. Yet, these three interviewees also articulated that their experiences abroad were well worth a delay in entering university or job-hunting because of the valued skills they acquired abroad. Some examples of skills interviewees claimed to gained abroad included: language skills, verbal self-expression, multicultural communication skills and a deeper understanding of Japanese society. Therefore, participants who were students during their sojourn(s) did not express explicit barriers to their choice to go abroad, even when for three of the men, it led to a later entrance to university or joining the Japanese workforce.

Participants who left the workforce to go abroad

In general, the participants who were not student sojourners had very different experiences. Seven of the ten men (4, 6, 7, 9, 14, 17, 25) who left a career behind to study and/or temporarily work abroad quit their jobs with no expectation of resuming when they returned to Japan. Although none expressed a fondness for their previous positions (a topic to be explored in

Chapter 8), all seven of the men noted a concern among members in their community about their decisions to go abroad. This concern was frequently connected to not only participants' possible inability to return to a respectable position in the Japanese workforce, but also their status as men. In other words, these participants claimed more Japanese men face barriers when choosing to study/work abroad than Japanese women. These interviewees believed this was because Japanese women had more flexibility in leaving and returning to the workforce because their positions were more commonly 'temporary'. Japanese men, however, were described as experiencing significant pressure to find work immediately after university and remain in their position. Indeed, several researchers introduced in Chapter 4 provided similar conclusions in regards to the pressures their male participants perceived from their Japanese communities (e.g., Kato, 2015; Ono, 2015, Suzuki, 2015). This idea is analysed in Chapter 8.

Some participants had well-paying white-collar jobs in Japan before their sojourn (Seiya, Wataru, Gen and Jin). According to Dasgupta (2000; 2010), men in such corporate positions frequently hold a place of privilege in Japanese society as they represent "the corporate and masculine ideal" (2000, p. 193). However, despite the status these men likely held through their full-time careers, they all chose to go abroad in the face of opposition and uncertainty. This indicated a significant amount of agency that is explored in Chapter 8.

Upon returning to Japan, none of the men previously in white-collared positions immediately entered jobs pay or status as high as their previous positions. It appears this was not necessarily due to an inability to be hired in their former fields, but instead indicative of a shift in career aspirations among participants. Among most participants who left and returned to the domestic workforce (4, 6, 7, 9, 14, 25), jobs that utilized the skills developed abroad became more desirable than their previous positions. For example, positions that required skills such as

English fluency and the ability to communicate smoothly with non-Japanese people were perceived as attractive by participants. Next, I will examine participants who actually entered into occupations that utilized the skills gained, or hoped to gain, through their sojourn.

Appeal and participation in 'international' careers

Section 7.2 introduced the importance of English in many participants' motivations to go abroad and main activities they took part in during their sojourn. As I previously mentioned, nine interviewees (3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 22, 24, 25) all connected English acquisition to a future career in an 'international' field. Of this group of interviewees, only three men: 4 (Gen, JICA volunteer), 9, (Kazu, accountant in the USA) and 24 (Yoshi, guesthouse manager) have chances to use English or interact with non-Japanese people on a regular basis. Two participants (Jin and Yu) expressed a sense of regret that their current careers do not afford opportunities for English use.

However, some participants who did not explicitly connect their sojourn or English acquisition with their future careers also have occupations that regularly allow interaction with the 'international realm'. For instance, Wataru assists Japanese customers who make investments overseas, Tani is an English teacher recruiter, Hikaru is a study abroad agent and Ryoma owns his own language school. Overall, aspirations for language learning and use (primarily English) were not only the driving force of most interviewees' sojourns, but it also appeared to remain an important aspect in terms of many men's career aspirations.

iv. Relationship status and intercultural dating experience

A major goal of this study is learning more about participants' perceptions of desire and their experiences dating abroad. I found that while most men were eager to speak about intercultural dating in general (such as their ideas of couples in their host communities), those

who personally had intercultural dating experience during their sojourn sometimes seemed rather hesitant to share.

Below is a chart that details interviewee dating status abroad, their status at the time of interview, and a brief description of their partners. "NA" indicates the participants who said they did not date during their sojourn.

Name	Dating during sojourn	Status at time of interview	Name	Dating during sojourn	Status at time of interview
1. Akihiro	NA	Japanese wife, one child	14. Ryoma	Dated several men and women abroad from different nationalities	Single
2. Dai	Japanese girlfriend, Brazilian girlfriend	Japanese girlfriend	15. Ryota	Korean-American girlfriend[1]	Korean-American girlfriend (same)
3. Fumiya	NA	Single	16. Ryuhei	NA	Single
4. Gen	NA	Japanese girlfriend	17. Seiya	Japanese girlfriend	Japanese wife
5. Haruki	NA	Japanese girlfriend	18. Shoma	NA	Japanese boyfriend
6. Hikaru	Japanese girlfriend	Japanese wife (same)	19. Shinya	Taiwanese girlfriend	Japanese girlfriend
7. Jin	Japanese girlfriend	Single	20. Takeo	Lived with Japanese wife abroad	Japanese wife (same), one child
8. Junpei	NA	Japanese girlfriend	21. Tani	NA	Japanese girlfriend
9. Kazu	American girlfriend	American girlfriend (same)	22. Tom	NA	Single
10. Masato	NA	Japanese girlfriend	23. Wataru	Japanese girlfriend	Japanese wife, one child
11. Natsuki	NA	Single	24. Yoshi	NA	Japanese girlfriend
12. Nobu	Spanish girlfriend	Single	25. Yu	Japanese girlfriend	Single

[1] Participant's description

13. Nori	NA	Single			

Table 7.3 Participant relationship status during sojourn and at the time of interview

According to participant interviews, 11 of the 25 participants dated at least one person in their host community. Of these 11, six dated fellow Japanese sojourners and four dated international students from other countries (Dai dated both a Japanese woman an a female Brazilian international student at his language school). Only Kazu and Ryoma dated nationals from their host communities. Ryoma claims to have casually dated American women and men during his sojourns, and Kazu was in a relationship with an American woman who he planned to move to New York with at the time of our interview.

At the time of the research interviews, 16 participants were in committed romantic relationships. Only two of these participants were in a relationship with a non-Japanese person – Kazu who was dating an American woman he met in California during his graduate studies, and Ryota, who was in a long distance relationship with a woman he described as "Korean-American" who was his classmate in British Columbia. Also noteworthy is the cases of Hikaru, who met a Japanese woman at the same English language school, started dating in British Columbia and got married shortly after they both returned to Japan.

Images of dating abroad

Answers to my question, "did you date while you were abroad?" indicated different participant assumptions about 'legitimate' dating abroad. For instance, Jin, Shinya and Dai, all men who started romantic relationships during their sojourn, at first claimed they did not date. Soon after, each interviewee corrected himself to indicate he dated either a Japanese woman and/or a fellow international student. For these participants, the idea of 'dating abroad' appeared connected to dating a host community national.

Although some participants seemed hesitant to share their personal dating experiences, many were eager to share their images of the relationships they witnessed in their host communities. These conversations tended to focus on intercultural relationships, primarily through descriptions of participant ideas of the experiences of Japanese women abroad. Of the 25 interviewees, 18 men (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24) stated that the heterosexual Japanese female sojourners in their host communities dated much more frequently than heterosexual Japanese males. This was attributed a common interviewee perception of Japanese women's *attraction to* and *attractiveness to* host community men. Comments from several men (1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24) appeared to either replicate discourses of Japanese women's *akogare* for non-Japanese, English speaking men, or to portray these women through Orientalist discourses. Similarly, men within the host community were connected to Occidentalist images of 'Western men' as tall, muscular, and aggressive by 11 participants (1, 4, 7, 9, 12, 13, 15, 19, 21, 22, 24). These topics are explored in detail in Chapter 9 and Chapter 10.

Japanese men dating abroad

Despite 11 participants having romantic relationships during their sojourn, a common statement in interviews was that heterosexual Japanese men were rarely desirable romantic partners for non-Japanese women. This idea was expressed by the same 18 interviewees who commented on Japanese women's supposed romantic appeal in their host communities. Terms used to describe Japanese men often included: weak, short, thin, shy and 'uncool'. These comparisons frequently took place in opposition to descriptions of host community men. Such statements not only contained Orientalist discourses that marginalize Asian men in relations to

'Western' men, but also highlighted a relations of power between these participants' perceptions of the two groups ('Japanese men' and 'host community men').

Moreover, for at least three participants (Shinya, Yoshi, Haruki), and idea of Japanese men as 'unappealing' to non-Japanese women affected their dating habits abroad. In other words, all three interviewees claimed they hesitated to approach non-Japanese women in their host community because they felt unattractive based on the combination of their nationality and gender. Chapter 9 and 10 examine this theme in detail.

Once returning to Japan, ten participants (1, 6, 9, 12, 13, 15, 19, 21, 23, 24) reported they maintained the belief that heterosexual Japanese men were generally unattractive partners to non-Japanese women in Japan. However, in the context of Japan, Japanese men were more frequently presented as attractive partners to women from Asian countries, especially women who had immigrated to Japan.

v. Conclusion

This chapter presented a general overview of this dissertation's data set in relation to participant's motivations for going abroad, their experiences in relation to career, and their romantic status. Looking at Table 7.1, it is clear that English acquisition was the dominant motivation for participants to go abroad. Many interviewees hoped to connect English to their future careers before their sojourn. However, not all of these interviewees currently use English or interact with non-Japanese individuals in their work, while some participants who saw English as a source of entertainment have positions that necessitate English and multicultural communication skills.

The student sojourners appear to have different experiences than the interviewees who needed to quit work in order to take part in their study abroad or WHM program. Students, who

are often able to go overseas and graduate university in four years as planned, reported very few instances of resistance from their community regarding their choice to go abroad. On the other hand, participants that had to quit work for their sojourn frequently experienced pressure from their family or friends to stay in Japan. Nevertheless, no interviewee expressed regret about having gone abroad, even when they did not return to as high paying jobs upon their return. Instead, many of these participants changed their trajectory to more internationally focused jobs in Japan.

Lastly, this chapter presented the relationship status of participants both during their sojourn and at the time of interview. Less than half the participants reported dating experiences while abroad, but even more so that their own experiences, interviewees appeared eager to share their opinions about the intercultural dating they witnessed (or imagined) in their host community. The images shared by the majority of interviewees presented Japanese women as more popular romantic partners within the host community than heterosexual Japanese men. Similar ideas were carried back with participants after returning, although Japanese men in Japan were described as being appealing partners to immigrant women of Asian backgrounds.

In the subsequent three chapters, I expand on the above general findings through presenting major themes in participant accounts. I draw on interview excerpts from the 11 participants in focus and then relate the dissertation findings to relevant literature. In Chapter 8, I speak about participants' perceptions of barriers to male sojourns. Following this, I investigate how the experiences of Japanese women abroad were conceptualized in participant accounts (Chapter 9). In the final findings and discussion (Chapter 10), this dissertation analyses discourses in connection to Japanese men and desire in relation to race, nationality and language.

Chapter 8: Enacting agency through international sojourns

i. Introduction

In Chapter 7, I presented a broad overview of participant accounts through description of the entire dataset of this dissertation's 25 interviewees. Sojourner motivations for going abroad, their interest in language learning, their occupations, and their dating experiences abroad were some of the topics highlighted. Chapter 8 to 10 serve as this dissertation's "Findings and Discussion" chapters. They expand on and analyse the information presented in Chapter 7 through focusing on major similarities or contradictions among the 25 participants and present analysis in the form of 'themes'. Interview excerpt examples are drawn from the 11 participants in focus. After presenting and analyzing interview transcript examples, I show how the experiences of participants and the discourses reflected in their narratives connect to previous literature.

In this chapter, I explore participant sojourn motivations and how language learning (predominantly English learning) factored into their choices to go overseas. Next, I discuss possible barriers that Japanese men face when deciding to go abroad and why working interviewees decided to go despite pressure to remain in Japan. Examples from the accounts of Gen, Yoshi and Wataru are primarily referenced. Ultimately, this chapter seeks to answer two questions: (1) Why did these participants go abroad? And (2) what enabled them to feel they *could* go abroad?

To answer these questions, I draw on notions of resistance to examine what undesirable hegemonic discourse participants oppose. I also investigate participant enactments of agency in opposing these undesirable discourses. This involves first examining undesirable discourses

that participants described regarding Japanese men and international sojourns. These discourses were primarily connected to images of hegemonic masculinity and corporate working culture in Japan. Next, I explore how participants resisted such discourses in order to take part in their sojourn. I also suggest why participants were able to enact agency in the face of undesirable discourses. Ultimately, this chapter argues that the act of going abroad can be an act of resistance to undesirable masculine ideals.

ii. The role of language learning in participant motivations to go abroad

Data presented in Chapter 7 revealed that English study was the most frequently cited reason for international sojourn for both study abroad participants and WHMs (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25). Even interviewees who studied outside of Inner Circle countries primarily joined English-medium programs (For example, Nori in Sweden, Fumiya in Indonesia, and Jin in India) or were in intensive English studies in the Philippines (Yoshi and Gen). The motivation to study English outside of Japan reflect the common idea that language acquisition is best learned through intensive immersion abroad (Kinginger, 2009; 2014).

Gen, one of the eight interviewees who directly connected his choice to go abroad with his future career, went to the Philippines and Canada to develop his English fluency in order to one day become an English teacher. In order to reach this goal, he first took intensive classes in Cebu before coming to Canada as a WHM. At the beginning of our interview, I asked him to summarize his experience abroad and he quickly stressed the importance of English and its connection to his desired career as an English teacher.

Excerpt 8.1: Gen – *"My main purpose was not really working"*

L: Actually (.) first, can you tell me generally:: about your time in Canada. Actually, you were in the Philippines first? Can you tell me about your time abroad in=
G: O::kay. In terms of Philippines (2) I went there in order to improve my English skills. I did

intense? Intensive classes. As for Canada, my main purpose was also studying, study, improving my English skill. Because I want to be English teacher in the fu::ture (3) As you know (2) I had a working holiday visa in Can Canada. But my main (.) purpose was not really working (2) Because I needed to get some money to live @ But it's not big purpose.
L: Oh::
G: The (.) my future (.) is important.

Gen and Yoshi both chose the Philippines as their first sojourn primarily for two reasons. First, language school tuition and cost of living is significantly cheaper in comparison to Inner Circle countries. Next, the school they chose offered intensive private language classes with instructors one-on-one. Following his studies in Cebu, Gen went to British Columbia on a WHM visa where he worked part-time as a server in a Thai restaurant. Gen seems to have genuinely enjoyed this position having developed close friendships with coworkers, and because was able to use English with customers who were "native speakers". His intensive English classes and this part-time job were all steps he saw as getting him closer to his goal of being and English teacher, suggesting that his sojourn motivations and connection to English were largely instrumental. English was a tool help Gen enter a desirable career.

For some participants (8, 15, 17, 23), a desire to use English with non-Japanese speaking people was the main reason for their sojourn. For instance, Wataru connected his decision to go abroad to an interest in English language acquisition but unlike Gen, English was not related to future career opportunities. Instead, he appeared to have a somewhat ambiguous desire to communicate with non-Japanese people. Below is an excerpt from a lengthy exchange where Wataru explained the moment he wanted to learn English. During an outing with a friend in Tokyo, they came upon a group of foreign residents with signs offering "free hugs".

Excerpt 8.2: Wataru – *"Free hugs"*

W: Free hugs の sign 持ってて(3) ハグって | W: They were holding free hugs signs (3)

文化も日本にないから最初は驚いたな:: それ以上に知らない人同士なのにこんな(.)こんなに笑顔になる事に感動したよ@ L: なるほど! W: うん！(2) そこで, 英語を話せしてる友人がいて(.)自分が話せなかった::のが悔しかった@ 今まで英語なんて関係ないっ思ってたけど(2) 初めて初めて英語を話したいな::って思って。	there's no hug culture in Japan so at first I was surprised. Beyond that, even though they were people I didn't know to smile that much (.) that much, I was moved @ L: I see! W: Yeah! (2) And then, my friend was there who speaks English (.) I felt bad that I couldn't speak @ Until then I didn't think I had any connection to English, it was the first time the first time I thought I wanted to speak English.

This appears to be a very memorable encounter for Wataru considering that until that moment, he did not have "any connection to English". Yet, meeting the "free hugs" people and watching his friend who was able to communicate in English shifted his life trajectory (a topic to be elaborated on later). He also began to want to connect with 'another' culture – one where people give free hugs and huge smiles to strangers. This culture also appeared distinctly different to him than what he was familiar with ("there's no hug culture in Japan so at first I was surprised"). Although Wataru stated that he was not sure at first how he wanted to use English or where he would learn it, his desire to interact with such friendly people as those giving free hugs was enough to change the way he viewed English in his life.

Six interviewees (1, 6, 17, 20, 21, 24) described a general interest in learning English that was not necessarily connected to career ambitions or personal relationships. For some men, Anglophone pop culture was appealing, while others saw English as a hobby. One interview, Yoshi, simply described a long-term draw to English as the main reason for his sojourn. Below he details how his failure to enter his desired university major contributed to his choice to go abroad.

Excerpt 8.3: Yoshi – *"I really liked English from a long time ago"*

L: ね、なんで、もともと留学しようと思	L: So, why did you want to go to study abroad

ってた？ Y:もともと？ L: うん。 Y: 本当は、あの:: まぁ大学、すごい英語好きだったから昔からね。大学も国際関係の学部に入りたかったけど。でも全然勉強しなかって@ L: あ、そう@ Y: @で、自分のあの：希望した学部に入れなくて。一般落ちて、あの：まぁ R 大学ね、に行って、全然社会福祉勉強して。本当勉強したかったこと全然違う(.) 分野だったけど。 でもやっぱ大学卒業してまだ (2) あの:: 英語勉強したいなってずっと思ってて。	in the first place? Y: In the first place? L: Yes. Y: I actually, um:: well in university, I really liked English from a long time ago. For university I wanted to enrol in an international relations program. But I didn't study at all @ L: Oh I see @ Y:@ So, my um: I couldn't enter the program that I wanted to. I failed *ippan* [an entrance exam], um:: well, I went to R University and studied Social Work. It was a completely different field from what I really wanted to study. But after graduation, still (2) um:: I kept thinking I wanted to study English.

It is possible that Yoshi's original goal to pursue a major with plenty of English speaking opportunities would have fulfilled his desire to acquire English. However, Yoshi's inability to enter the international relations program did not allow him to develop his language skills the way he had hoped. As a result, he continued to seek other ways that he could study English. Immediately after his graduation, Yoshi went to the Philippines to complete an intensive English program. His motivations appear different than that of interviewees like Gen and Wataru, considering that Yoshi did not describe English learning in relation to work or socializing. Yet English still had significant value to him and his pursuit of the language brought him to both the Philippines and Australia.

iii. Challenging language learning as "something women do"

Despite the above examples of participants' interest in and enjoyment of English learning, several participants (1, 4, 6, 11, 13, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24) described a dominant image of language study, particularly English language study, as something more common

among Japanese women than men. For example, after Nori and I discussed the ratio of Japanese female sojourners to male sojourners in his host communities of the UK and Sweden, he shared his perception of a dominant discourse (described as "a stereotype") in Japan that made it more acceptable for women to study languages.

Excerpt 8.4: Nori – *"Language is something women do"*

L: So did you notice more [Japanese women] when you were abroad?[2] N: Yeah. L: Uh huh. N: I always felt like (.) um (2) 女子の方が多い。どこに行っても。 L: そうっかそうっか。 N: So um even in the department of foreign studies at my Japanese university, I think the ratio 割合？ Of female students I think is um 70%. L: I see:: N: Yeah 70% female students and 30% male students. I guess. L: Yes yes yes. N: I feel so. So um (3) I think I always think (.) um (.) female are more interested in kind of like international thing? Like English or (2) foreign cultu::res yeah, stuff like that. L: Why do you think that is? N: Hm:: (4)よく言われるのは (2) male is good at like something <u>science</u>. Which is not really related to <u>English</u> itself and internationalization or globalization. Without English they can do science って言われてる。なんか最近は別、あの: :English is very important like tool. だけど(.) なんか when it comes to English language, なんか (2)より、あ： ：文系と理系はわかりますね。	L: So did you notice more [Japanese women] when you were abroad? N: Yeah. L: Uh huh. N: I always feel like (.) um (2) **There were more women. Wherever I went.** L: **I see I see.** N: So um even in the department of foreign studies at my Japanese university, I think the ratio **ratio**? Of female students I think is um 70%. L: I see:: N: Yeah 70% female students and 30% male students. I guess. L: Yes yes yes. N: I feel so. So um (3) I think I always think (.) um (.) female are more interested in kind of like international thing? Like English or (2) foreign cultu::res yeah, stuff like that. L: Why do you think that is? N: Hm:: (4) **what is often said is that** (2) male is good at like something <u>science</u>. Which is not really related to <u>English</u> itself and internationalization or globalization. It's said that without English they can do science. Like recently, um:: English is very important like tool. **But (.) like** when it comes to English language, **like (2) more than, ah:: do you understand "the Arts"**

[2] I directly shared JAOS and MEXT statistics about the gendered trends of study abroad in some interviews. I recognize that this very likely shaped the responses that participants gave, influencing their descriptions of the differences between 'Japanese men' and 'Japanese women' overseas.

L: うんうん。
N:なんかそういう (2) その：：言語とか。そういう(2)より、文系の、topics が、フィルドに興味があるのは、女性。で、高校でも (.) there are more female students in 文系 class. But there are more ah:: male students in science class. なんか、そいう、なんかこう、本当に stereotype みたいな、のが、日本人の中に、あるんじゃないかなって。
L: う::ん=
N: そういう(2) 国際的なこと、language のこと、そういうことはまぁ、「女性がするものだ」みたいな。
L: はいはい。それも留学と関係あるの？
N:うん、留学と関係あると思う。

and "Sciences"?
L: **Yeah.**
N: **Like those (2) those:: languages or something. Those (2) women are more interested in topics, the fields in the Arts. And even in high school (.)** there are more female students in classes for The Arts. But there are more ah:: male students in science class. **Like, those, like it's really like a stereotype that I think might be among Japanese people**.
L: U::m=
N: **Those (2) international things, languages, those things are like, "those are things that women do."**
L: **I see. Is that related to study abroad?**
N: **Yes, I think it's related to study abroad**.

Nori describes a common idea in Japan where females and males excel in different skill areas that either orients them to or away from particular subjects. This "stereotype" portrays the Arts (文系), and consequentially language learning, as 「女性がするものだ」("these are things that women do"). Men, however, are constructed as both drawn to pursing and being more talented in the Sciences (理系) than women. In the context of language learning, Kobayashi's (2002) extensive survey of Japanese youth's interest in foreign languages and cultures, and her investigation of internationally-focused university programs in Japan (2018) observed a sexist discourse that categorizes what students are socialized to study based on their gender. This suggests that pursuing language learning abroad may emasculate participants as they study a subject traditionally seen as feminine. Scholarly works on *akogare* (e.g., Bailey, 2007; Kelsky, 2000a) have been criticised for reproducing the discourse of English learning in Japan as a feminine activity (Kitamura, 2016).

However, despite the discourse of language learning as a female pursuit both in Japan and within many participant accounts, no participant shared any negative perceptions or regrets in regards to their choice to pursue a foreign language (primarily English) abroad. Simply put, many participants appeared aware of the dominant discourse of 'the feminization of language learning', and yet it did not appear to hinder their masculine identities in any way. One possible reason for this is the high number of student interviewees who were pursing majors in the Arts (3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 19, 22). These students, primarily majoring in education and international relations, were likely already immersed in environments that valued language learning.

In fact, developing one's language skills abroad was seen as a benefit to the majority of interviewees (2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 14, 15, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25), whether in assisting intercultural communication skills, broadening career prospects, or even increasing the ease of international travel. In other words, the English skills gained abroad were seen as a way to increase one's symbolic capital.

iv. The conventional male career path as a barrier to international sojourns

As mentioned in Chapter 7, student sojourners did not claim their decision to go abroad was criticized by anyone in their community. On the other hand, seven interviewees who had to leave work to go abroad (or delay their entrance into the workforce) stated that at some point before their sojourn, they were pressured not to go abroad by family, friends, or coworkers. In the following excerpt, Yoshi described his distaste for the common practice of *shūkatsu*[3] and claims he used this time instead to search for English schools abroad. This appears to have

[3] 「就活」 or "*job-hunting*" is an extremely busy time of year when many third and forth year university students apply for jobs, attend employment seminars and are interviewed at numerous companies (Eades, 2016)

created concern among his classmates.

Excerpt 8.5: Yoshi – "*Are you okay if you go abroad?"*

Y: あの、まぁ、20 社とか 30 社とか。とにかくあの、アプライするでしょ？それでもやっぱ (2) ね。仕事ゲットできなかったりして。皆落ち込んで@ L: ね：: Y: そんな、そんなのすごい見てきたから。これは絶対いいスタイルの就職活動のやり方じゃ<u>ないな</u>と思って。もっと色んな働き方とか、色んなあの、生き方があるんじゃないかな？と思って。僕はほんまに皆が就職活動してる時は、ずっと(.) 海外の英語の学校調べてて。すごい皆心配した、僕のこと＝ L: あ、皆って？ Y: あの、学校の友達。本当に、あの：：(2) 就職？就職しないで、あの、「海外に行っても、大丈夫か」という。僕のキャリア。「大丈夫っか」という。すごい心配してたけど。全然平気@@	Y: Um, well, twenty or thirty companies or. They just apply, you know? But still (2). They can't get any job. They become disappointed @ L: Yeah:: Y: Like this, I have seen something like this a lot. I think this is definitely not a good way of job hunting. More different ways of working or different, um, like I think there are different ways of living? When everyone was job-hunting, I was really, I was all the time (.) searching about English schools abroad. Everyone was really worried about me. L: Oh, who is everyone? Y: Um, friends from school. Really, um:: (2) Job-hunting? Without finding a job, um, like "Are you okay, if you go abroad?" Like my career, they were like "are you okay?!". They were really worried. But I was completely fine @@

Yoshi's friends' concerns reflect the heavy importance attached to undergraduate student participation in *shūkatsu*. According to Breaden (2014), *shūkatsu* is "one of the definitive undergraduate student experiences in Japan, often overshadowing curricular study in the later stages of one's bachelor degree" (p. 425). It is the primary method of entering the full-time workforce. Therefore, Yoshi's refusal to take part in the *shūkatsu* process in order to plan his temporary sojourn overseas was likely thought to have serious implications on his career once returning to Japan.

Wataru as well noted pressure from his parents not to leave his job as an electrical engineer to go abroad as a student and WHM. Besides his parents' disapproval, he described a

general pressure in Japan for men to remain in one position because of the difficulty in reentering the workforce. According to Wataru, women do not experience the same pressure because of they frequently hold temporary positions at work. When discussing the higher number of Japanese women abroad, Wataru stated:

Excerpt 8.6: Wataru – *"Risky"*

L: なんで男性は少ないと思う？
W：仕事やめることがすごいリスキーだからね。社会復帰、まぁ、女性の方が (.)一回。日本の社会的に仕事がやめることがすごい、あの：：マイナス：：だって。リスキーだ、特に男性の場合だと、結構。日本の文化だと、女性は結婚すると家庭に入るっていうの方が多いから。結婚しても[???]までのやめたことは全部忘れるというか、it's okay だけど。男性の場合は主婦になるって言うことはありえない、ほぼほぼないから。まず、やめること自体にプレシャーがあって。で、来てる女性だったらやっぱり一般職の人が多かったかな。一般職というのは、その 5 時半に帰る。その時間が決まってる。営業とかではなくて。営業とかではなくてその資格持ってる女性か、まぁ、一般職。やめること前提っていう。多分多分五年十年で。だんだん若い人は変わってく position？ 総合職ってのは会社に長くいて position を上げていく人？女性でもその position とかがあるけど、女性　：：の方はそういう人でやめる人は少ない、いなかったと思う、ほとんど。一般職っていうやめやすい position. 結婚して「やめます」と言う position なんだけど。他の人は別にやめるのは普通だから。仕事が変えることが、楽だから来てると思う。男性は、ね、一回働いてやめて仕事見つけるのは、ちょっと日本の社会には難しいか

L: Why do you think there are fewer [Japanese] men [abroad]?
W: Because quitting your job is very risky. Returning to work, well, for women, once. Quitting a job in Japan is socially very, um:: negative:: they say. It is risky, especially for men, like really. In Japanese culture, it is common that once a woman gets married, she will quit her job and become a housewife. Even if they (women) get married, like they would forget everything that they quit until [???], so it's okay. For men, it is impossible to become a househusband, very unlikely. First of all, quitting itself causes a lot of pressure. And among women who were there [abroad], I think there were more women on non-managerial track (*ippanshoku*). *Ippanshoku* is like um go home at 5:30. The time duration is fixed. Unlike someone in sales. Not like sales, they are the women who have the eligibility [to go home at a fixed time], well [they are] *ippanshoku*. It's like assuming they would quit. Probably probably within five to ten years. It's a type of position that young people change [over time]? *Sōgōshoku* is like those who stay in the same company for a long time and advance their positions? There are also women in these positions, but women:: out of those women, there were few who quit, I don't think I saw any, almost none. *Ippanshoku* is a position that is easy to quit. It is a position that you get married and say, "I'll quit." It is common to see others quit. I think they came [to study abroad] because it is easy to change jobs. For males, you know, it is a little difficult

な。

in Japanese society to find a job after quitting the job after they had started working.

Wataru illustrates that going abroad can be a high stakes act for some men by describing gendered practices and expectations in the *sōgōshoku-ippanshoku* track system[4]. He notes that *sōgōshoku* positions, which are primarily filled by men, are difficult to quit and one day return to. Leaving such positions compromise a man's future career prospects in Japan if he were to want to return to the career track. On the other hand, those in *ippanshoku* positions often have shorter hours and less work obligations and stress than individuals with managerial roles (Aronsson, 2015). This track consists primarily of clerical roles that provide less stability, a lower salary, and no possibility of promotion. Women have been largely excluded from the *sōgōshoku* track, and the low wage and instability of their clerical roles have been long criticized as factors that keep Japanese women from career and economic advancement (Aronsson, 2015; Hirakawa, 2004).

In the case of international sojourns, Wataru presents the *ippanshoku* path as allowing women to leave work temporarily (such as for study abroad), only to one day return to a different, yet similar job. He frames this as a positive aspect of the *ippanshoku* path without acknowledging the discrimination that women face in the *sōgōshoku-ippanshoku* system. He appears to recognize the limitations placed on men in the *sōgōshoku* track, however, where leaving work is much more 「リスキー」 ("risky"), considering that a man's career advancement would halt or even regress.

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[4] This system, utilized by many companies, creates two pathways that comprise a career track (*sōgōshoku*) and non-managerial track (*ippanshoku*).

v. Enacting agency through international sojourns

Among the ten participants who left the workforce for studies or temporary work overseas, seven men shared stories that suggested they perceived a general opposition to their choice to go abroad. As Wataru and Yoshi stated, this was in relation to a strong expectation for men to enter the workforce immediately after graduation and remain in it. Analysis of the seven men's narratives suggests that they did not make their decision to go abroad lightly, but were in fact aware that their sojourn risked damaging their future careers in Japan, or potentially harming their reputations within their Japanese communities. This act of going abroad, therefore, required significant agency on the part of participants. The next three excerpts from participant accounts illustrate a strong desire to leave Japan to pursue their goals, and how the men enacted agency to go abroad.

As mentioned previously, Wataru's "free hugs" narrative illuminated the way that he began to foster an interest in English and intercultural communication. However, after this encounter in Tokyo, he continued to work as an electrical engineer and grew more and more dissatisfied with his job. This dissatisfaction, in combination with his desire to study English, led him to search for a more satisfying path outside of Japan.

Excerpt 8.7: Wataru – ***"Because I had this goal to go to Canada"***

L: 何年間働いた？卒業して、3、4？ W: 3 年半だね (.) いや、４年半。 L: なるほど = W: °そうなんです° 4 年半働いて、東京一年。山梨は 3 年半だね。 L: どうだった？@ W: [breathes in] 何が？その = L: 山梨県。 W: 山梨はもう：あれ。結局田舎で生まれて、都会で働きたくて、都会に出て来てて	L: How many years did you work for? After you graduated, three or four (years)? W: Three and a half years (.) No, four and a half years. L: I see= W: °Yeah° I worked for four and a half years. A year in Tokyo. And in Yamanashi for three and a half years. L: How was it? @ W: [breathes in] What do you mean? Um= L: (I mean) Yamanashi Prefecture.

、田舎に行って(.) そうだね。山梨にいたときは (2) 自分なんというだろうな。目標、カナダに行く目標があってたから、普通に頑張ってたと思う。それはなかったら多分おかしくなると思う。
L: どういうこと？
W: もう、あの、目標はないって感じたから。山梨に住み続けるわけはないけど山梨に住んでることで、多分なんかね (.) すぐ仕事やめたかもしれない。３年半働けなかったと思う。カナダに行く目標があるから３年半いたんだなとって思うけどね。多分目標はなかったら２年ぐらいやめてたと思う。

W: Yamanashi is like:: that. After all I was born in a rural area, I wanted to work in the city, so I went to the city, and then was back in the countryside (.) Yeah, when I was in Yamanashi (2), I was, how can I put it. A goal, because I had a goal to go to Canada, I worked hard, like I normally would. If I didn't have that goal, I probably would have gone nuts.
L: What do you mean?
W: Well, um, I felt there was no goal. I would not continue living in Yamanashi, but because I was living there, probably well (.) I might have quit the job right away. I don't think I could have worked for three and a half years. Because I had this goal to go to Canada, I stayed there for three and half years. If I didn't have a goal, I think I would have quit in two years or so.

Wataru, who was born in the *inaka* (countryside), had fantasized about one day living in a large city. After he found employment in Tokyo as an electrical engineer, he was disheartened to discover he had been transferred to a rural area in Yamanashi prefecture after only a year. Although he had a full-time position and a reasonable salary, after moving to Yamanashi his work became so unenjoyable that he lost a clear purpose. It was his decision to study English and work in Canada that helped him endure his tiresome job and life in the countryside and save as much money as possible for his sojourn. Wataru's agency is displayed through his action of resigning from his company in the pursuit of something 'better' abroad despite the possible risks to his career. His act of going abroad can also be viewed as a way of resisting the conventional male career path.

In the next excerpt, Gen describes possible opposition that working Japanese men face when choosing to leave their positions to go abroad. I had previously asked Gen about his image of a "typical" man his age in Japan. Gen then detailed his view of the quintessential trajectory of

a man his age in Japan, which consisted of graduation from university, obtainment of a full-time job, marriage and eventually children. In this excerpt, he shares his own collision with and resistance to the discourse of the path of a "typical man".

Excerpt 8.8: Gen – *"I wanted to do something."*

L: So um it sounds like there aren't many options? Like it's quite a strict =
G: Ah::
L: Yeah yeah (5)
G: Yes I think (2) they maybe they think they don't have much options (2) The only way is keep working @ in their own company.
L: Mmhm.
G: And then (2) yeah get married and have children. Have children. It's very, hm:: ordinary way of life.
L: Hm:: a very kind of traditional way?
G: Yeah @ a traditional way (4) I think not (2) not many of them want change hm:: jump on new environment and change try to change totally their life. "Okay let's go to abroad"! And "let's immigrate"! No. They don't do that.
L: Hm. Do you think that's because in their mind that's not really an option? Or is that too scary?
G: [breathes in]
L: You mentioned before not being very brave?[5]
G: Mm! M(.)m(.)m (4) °scared° (2) I think I think both. Scared. (2) Yeah it must be (.) it must be scared. Changing life must be scared. And yeah but second one is it's not common.
L: Hm yeah absolutely.
G: Yes @
L: I agree. People often say "Oh Canada, American or England or Australia are so much more free", but to be honest, most people follow the same pattern. There might be more flexibility, but it is very similar. So =
G: Yeah, they wanna do what everyone do.
L: Yeah yeah yeah. Do you think they feel pressure to follow that path?
G: Yeah. So follow that path means?
L: Of university, work, marriage, kids.
G: Oh yes. Yeah (3) So many of think it's correct. It's hm:: (2) as long as they follow that way, maybe they don't fail.
L: Mmhm:::
G: Very badly.
L: Yeah yeah.

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[5] Earlier in the interview, Gen stated, "For women (.) I think they are brave and easy? Yeah easy [to try new things]. They don't hesitate to jump in new environment. And changing thei::r lifestyle. Sometime Japanese male wanna (2) keep their status and en environment. They are not so brave."

G: Yeah. So it's more stable somehow.
L: But it seems like yo::u are, you don't really fit in this (.) typical path.
G: Hm. Yeah I may. Yes. (2)
L: Mmhm how do you feel about that? @
G: How do I feel? (.) Actually I can fit if I have to. If I try. Because I was a salesman.
L: Ah::
G: As an ordinary people.
L: I see I see =
G: Yes (2) I was in very typical way. When I was 24 years old maybe? Yes but I could keep going that. But I thought (3) it could be boring. I might do something challenging? I want to do something I want to do. I <u>really</u> I want to do (2) Of course it was a little bit scare. Quit my job and going to abroad. In Japanese, in Japan. Mm, it was not good for (3) apply new career @ (2) I will be deemed as, "oh you couldn't accept Japanese society" @ Like that =
L: Ah I see.
G: But even so (2) I wanted to do something. I wanted to be a teacher.

Gen's picture of the "typical man" in Japan included a set course on a rigid timeline. This path is linked to notions of safety and stability ("as long as they follow that <u>way</u>, maybe they don't fail"), again alluding to his perception of the risk of deviating from the social expectations of employment previously described by Wataru. Gen also notes the possible negative reaction by those around him ("I will be deemed as…") if he were to leave his current position to go abroad. However, his desire to reach his goal of being an English teacher pushed him to leave his job and spend almost two years abroad developing his language skills. The statements of "But even so (2) I wanted to do something. I wanted to be a teacher." are particularly powerful in illustrating a motivation that allowed Gen to resist the conventional career male path and go abroad.

In these examples, Wataru and Gen both describe an expectation in Japanese society for men to find full-time employment and remain in it. This is exemplified in their comments that leaving work for any reason could be "risky" or "a little bit scare [scary]". Similarly, in Excerpt 8.5 Yoshi described his classmates as 「すごい皆心配した、僕のこと」("Everyone was really worried about me") because of his choice not to take part in *shūkatsu*. The act of going

abroad for these men illustrates not only enactments of agency, but also resistance to a dominant discourse that pushes men like many of the interviewees in this study (university educated, middle-class men) to follow a rigid career path.

Two main factors appear to have helped many working sojourners go overseas, thus resisting the dominant discourse of a career path: dissatisfaction with their position (or working culture in general), and a keen interest in acquiring English. For Wataru, the combination of his growing desire to learn English and his dislike of his previous position were important in his enactment of agency. While he did not have a clear goal about what kind of career he wanted in the future, Wataru did not believe that his *inaka* position would make him happy. Likewise, Gen also appeared dissatisfied with his previous career as a salesperson and desired to change his career to become an English teacher. Yoshi's resistance can be seen in his rejection of the dominant practice of *shūkatsu* in order to pursue his studies overseas.

vi. Discussion

The findings in this chapter focused on why participants went abroad, what barriers they perceived to their sojourns, and ultimately, why they were able to go abroad. The concern participants faced from family or friends about their choice to go abroad was frequently connected to the men's deviation from the conventional Japanese male career path of *shūkatsu* and full-time employment immediately after university. However, participants' keen interest in pursuing their English studies abroad in addition to dissatisfaction with the conventional career path allowed them to both enact agency and pursue their goals abroad. The discussion section will further explore how participant accounts both reflect and resist common discourses of English in Japan. Next, I examine how the expectations placed on men and notions of *sararīman* masculinity may marginalize men who stray from the conventional career path. Lastly, I explore

the possible new identities that can be created through international sojourns in transnational masculinity or values of the "neoliberal subject" (Kubota, 2016).

Replicating and resisting ideologies of English

In Chapter 1, this dissertation introduced some broad discourses about English in Japan. Namely, that English has held a distinct place of social recognition in Japan for over 50 years (e.g., Kobayashi, 2015, 2018; Kubota, 1998; 2018) and has been increasingly seen as necessary in international business, science, technology and intercultural communication (Yamagami & Tollefson, 2009). Likewise, the status ascribed to English by participants in this dissertation can largely be categorized into two dominant language ideologies in Japan: learning for leisure and consumption (Kubota, 2011a) and linguistic instrumentalism (Kubota, 2011b).

English learning for leisure and consumption involves pursuing English as a hobby where "a primary function can be self-fulfillment, self-actualization, and socialization" (Kubota, 2011a, p. 475). This applies to interviewees who had ambiguous desires towards English or saw it primarily as a mode of socializing and enjoyment as opposed to the development of capital. Yoshi, for example, did not articulate a clear use for English and yet learning it was clearly powerfully connected to his identity and gave his life a sense of purpose.

In contrast, English as a form of linguistic instrumentalism emphasizes English's connection to upward mobility and skills valued in a global and interconnected world. According to Kubota (2011b), this is situated in a broader discourse of neoliberalism that promotes lifelong learning to remain employable in a precarious economy. Participants like Gen who sought to develop their English skills for future careers often described English this way. Student sojourners also regularly attributed English skills to increasing their chances of finding desirable work in Japan. Thus, participant accounts frequently replicated discourses about the significance

of English in Japan; both as a source of enjoyment and socialization and to help raise one's employability.

Conversely, participants' keen interest in English language learning and engagement with intercultural communication conflicted with dominant discourses of language learning as a feminine pursuit (e.g., Kobayashi, 2018). Moreover, much of the research around *akogare* has described a 'yearning' for English learning as something unique to Japanese women (e.g., Bailey, 2007; Kelsky, 2000b; Takahashi, 2013) and yet many participants in this dissertation claimed their passion for English was motivated them to go overseas. Participants therefore challenge dominant ideas around *akogare* for English learning through their engagement with English, whether their goals were instrument, for self-actualization, or simply because they love the language. This finding is unique to this dissertation considering that Kato (2015) and Ono (2015) did not extend their analysis of male sojourners in Anglophone countries to language learning.

The conventional male career path as a perceived barrier to men's study abroad

Several of the excerpts in this chapter emphasize the hurdles to Japanese male participation in temporary international sojourns from a social and professional standpoint. The accounts of Wataru, Gen and Yoshi combined these two perspectives to suggest that the choice to stray from the conventional male work path by going abroad risks inhibiting a man's career and inciting judgment from his community. Numerous scholars have argued that engagement in this career path is the cornerstone of Japanese male adulthood (e.g., Cook, 2016; Kato, 2015; Ono, 2015; Suzuki, 2015; Takeyama, 2010). For instance, Kato (2015) notes that among her numerous male participants, many developed "'escapee's guilt'" (p. 230) while they were abroad. She attributed this to feelings of abandoning their masculine civic duty of continual

contribution to the domestic workforce by taking part in their international sojourn. In this way, the social and cultural pressures to pursue an uninterrupted domestic position may prevent Japanese men from taking part in international sojourns. The participants in the current study also frequently suggested this as a hurdle to men's domestic sojourns.

Participant (1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25) descriptions of the "typical" young man in Japan generally painted the picture of a heterosexual man in full-time employment somewhere in the corporate sector. The image of men in full-time employment draws influence from the image of the economic-bubble *sararīman* who embodied the conventional career path (Dasgupta 2000; 2010). Dasgupta (2003; 2010) argued that the post-bubble *sararīman* no longer holds the same status as his pre-bubble counterpart (Dasgupta, 2003; 2010). Cook (2016) and Taga (2005) link the lingering strength of the *sararīman* discourse in connection to deeply rooted gendered heteronormative beliefs of the importance of the male breadwinner's role in Japan. For instance, Taga's (2005) interviews with young Japanese men about perceptions of gender roles showed fairly egalitarian views towards the status of Japanese men and women at home and in the workplace. Yet, in order to have a family in the future, the majority of these men maintained that providing a family's financial support is primarily a male's duty. Cook's (2016) ethnographic work with male *furītā* (job hopping workers) illustrates similar conclusions through participants' simultaneous rejection and acknowledgement of the *sararīman* as a representation of Japanese male adulthood. While the idea of the *sararīman* has changed over time and has even experienced harsh criticism in Japan (Dasgupta, 2010), the "symbolism of the salaryman remains entrenched" (Cook, 2016, p. 3) in Japan and exerts influence in many young men's life trajectories.

The image of the *sararīman* also appeared influential in the way participants in this dissertation imagined the lives of young Japanese men. Participants (1, 4, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 23, 24) used the term *sararīman* (or the English term "salaryman") at some point in their interview to talk about the "typical" Japanese man. Overall, participants presented a very negative image of the *sararīman* as a dull, overworked man with very little personal freedom. Gen and Wataru, who had experience working in the corporate world, also explicitly expressed they had no desire ever to return. Out of these men, only Shinya seemed to speak about being a *sararīman* positively – which he directly connected to pride in his deceased father being a *sararīman.* Overall, the participants in this study framed the *sararīman* (or corporate male worker) as central to the idea of the "typical" Japanese man. With the exception of Shinya, participants spoke negatively about *sararīman* as a way of distancing themselves from what they viewed as an undesirable identity.

The construction of new masculine identities through international sojourns

Dasgupta (2010) suggested that the hegemonic discourse of the idealized image of the 'corporate warrior' deteriorated after the bubble burst, and in its wake a very different image of the young male professional began to form. He observed that the media started to portray a corporate ideal of "individual ability, efficiency, risk-taking, and conditional loyalty" (para. 14) and strict bodily care, based on European and American managerial standards. Dasgupta argues that this image was not only reflective of domestic economic and cultural factors, but also driven by outside discourses of globalization, neoliberalism and the spread of technology. He draws on Connell's (1998) term "transnational business masculinity" to describe the new corporate hegemonic masculine Japanese ideal. Kimmel (2010) provides a detailed description of the transnational businessman:

> He sits in first-class waiting rooms or in elegant business hotels the world over in a designer business suit, speaking English, eating "continental" cuisine, talking on his cell phone, his laptop computer plugged into any electrical outlet, while he watches CNN International on television. Temperamentally, he is increasingly cosmopolitan, with liberal tastes in consumption (and sexuality) and conservative political ideas of limited government control of the economy. (p. 144 – 145)

If, as Dasgupta (2010) claimed, traditional Japanese *sararīman* masculinity is being replaced by transnational business masculinity, then this dissertation's interviewees overseas experiences may represent the values of the neoliberal subject introduced by Kubota (2016) in Chapter 3: foreign language abilities, intercultural communication skills, and the ability to work effectively in diverse environments. These were all skills regularly labeled as beneficial to participants. According to Connell and Wood (2005), transnational business masculinity is becoming the representation of global corporate hegemonic masculinity, potentially providing more value to male sojourners' experiences in the context of multinational businesses or overseas positions.

Reflecting on the contradiction of personal desires and restrictive dominant discourses reminds us that agency, and the capacity for agency, do not exist within a bubble. Lantolf and Pavelenko (2001) state that "agency is never a 'property' of a particular individual; rather, it is a relationship that is constantly co-constructed and renegotiated with those around the individual and with the society at large" (p. 148). Therefore, for these interviewees, their identities appeared to be "a site of struggle" (Norton, 2000, p. 127) as their own desires collided with the expectations placed on Japanese working males. Yet, just like the men in Ono's (2015) study, "from their [participants'] own points of view, they are making better lives for themselves through their mobility, liberating themselves from homogenous masculinity and reshaping their lives and selves" (p. 260). Learning about participants' quest for happiness outside Japan

challenges the idea that Japanese male sojourns abroad are for primarily instrumental purposes (e.g., Takahashi, 2013) and highlights the complexity of these men's individual experiences.

Agency and contradicting the *uchimuki* discourse

Kato's (2015), Ono's (2015) and Suzuki's (2015) qualitative interviews with Japanese male sojourners suggested that despite their desires to go overseas, many men attached significant value to full-time employment in Japan and even felt inadequate in comparison to *sararīman*. In this dissertation, given that many participants' excursions overseas took them out of the typical professional trajectory – and subsequently away from the prominent definition of Japanese male adulthood – these men could be viewed as embodying a deficient form of masculinity. Nevertheless, perhaps it is through resistance to the perceived conventional career path that participants in this study were able to construct counter discourses in order to form new desirable identities for themselves. This can be seen in the agency exercised by the participants who left or delayed work to go abroad. Instead of allowing themselves to be positioned as 'deficient' through their sojourn, several participants justified their time abroad as either being connected to internationally-focused careers, or providing unique opportunities for learning, adventure and personal growth that could not be found in Japan. This appears to have given them competences (language skills, international communication skills, cultural knowledge, and so on) and experiences that most men their age who have not gone abroad lack.

Participants' actions and desires in Japan pre-sojourn provide several examples that conflict with the discourse of *uchimuki* youth introduced in Chapter 3. For instance, a keen engagement with language learning and aspirations for intercultural friendship are evidence of these men's investment in interests outside of Japan. Resisting the conventional Japanese male

career path through leaving one's job and going overseas is another clear challenge to the notion of "inward-looking passive Japanese youth" (Burgess, 2015, p. 488).

Participant education and class

Study abroad is predominantly an activity of middleclass university educated youth (Goldoni, 2017; Kinginger, 2009; Kubota, 2016), as are WHM program (Kawashiyama, 2010). These sojourners generally have the financial means to go abroad and also have access to the information necessary to plan their sojourn. 24 of the 25 participants in this dissertation were also university educated, middleclass (or upper middleclass) men. While reflecting participants' class does not negate the men's agency (such as the examples from Gen, Wataru and Yoshi), it does provide further context why these men could go abroad. For example, the majority of student sojourners participated in student exchange programs at their universities, allowing them easy access to a variety of important aspects to study abroad like housing, health insurance and even scholarships for financial support. Some WHM participants, such as Hikaru, used an 'agent' to help them apply for WHM programs, find homestays and apply to language schools. In this study, Jumpei was the only participant who joined the workforce immediately after high school.

vii. Summary

In this chapter, I presented interview excerpts in which participants discussed the most common motivation for going abroad: English language learning. Participants had varying connections to English, but the majority of interviewees described it as either a tool for desirable employment or as a way to socialize with non-Japanese people. Some participants also expressed a strong desire to study English, but did not articulate uses for it. Overall, these findings challenge our perceptions of language learning and study abroad as a feminine pursuit (e.g.,

Takahashi, 2013) and discourses of *akogare* in relation to language learning in Japan (e.g., Bailey, 2007; Kelsky, 2000b)

Next, I discussed participants' ideas of possible barriers that Japanese men face when deciding to go abroad. This discussion was largely rooted in perceptions of the conventional male career path of university studies followed by immediate full-time employment. While student sojourners did not experience this barrier since their sojourns usually fit into their university studies, working participants faced a possible stigma by quitting their jobs to go overseas. Participants in this study, however, appeared to be able to overcome this barrier for several reasons. First, participants' eager engagement with language learning, specifically English, was a major motivation for them to go abroad. For some participants, this also coupled with a strong dissatisfaction with corporate life in Japan and helped them take the necessary steps to go abroad. Class and education were also important factors in being able to go abroad, considering that 24 out of 25 men were middleclass and university educated, providing them with the capital and knowledge to partake in international sojourns.

Participant sojourns can be seen as resisting the conventional Japanese male career path. The men who undertake them create counter-discourses and claim new masculine identities that may in fact align with the neoliberal globalized ideals of Dasgupta's (2010) and Kimmel's (2010) definitions of transnational business masculinity. This included competencies such as risk-taking, multicultural communication and language skills (Kubota, 2016). These participants' desires and agency provide a challenge to the discourse of Japanese *uchimuki* youth.

In the next chapter, analysis focuses on participant construction of identity through how participants speak about the Japanese female sojourner experience.

Chapter 9: Views of Japanese Women and Their Experiences Abroad: *Akogare*, Language and Desire

i. Introduction

The previous chapter primarily focused on participant motivations to go abroad and how international sojourns can act as a form of resistance to the conventional male career path. In Chapter 9, analysis and discussion focus on how interviewees spoke about Japanese women in their accounts and used them as a point of comparison for the Japanese male sojourner experience. First, I will expand on participants' descriptions of a general infatuation with English and English-speaking men among Japanese women, and how this was believed to facilitate more language use and easier access to host community networks. Next, images of Japanese femininity and Western masculinity that were discursively constructed in participant accounts are discussed. Throughout this chapter I suggest ways in which participants use descriptions of Japanese women to construct more favourable identities for 'Japanese men'.

ii. Images of Japanese men and host community males in relation to Japanese women's akogare

Ideas of 'Japanese women' overseas and in Japan were a dominant group that participants drew on to describe their own experiences. Through speaking about how participants imagined these women's experiences, interviewees frequently described both their own experiences but also presented opinions regarding their host cultures. This was often done through describing Japanese women's experience in relation to an *akogare* for English, foreign cultures, and non-Japanese men.

ii.1 Participants' descriptions of culture and race

The following two chapters involve analysis of participant perceptions of race and culture. Because of the contentious nature of these topics, I will first present a summary of the terms used by participants.

When describing non-Japanese cultures, the following terms were used: "foreign", 「海外の」 ([culture] abroad), 「白人の」("White"), "Caucasian" (used as a synonym for "White"), "Western", "English" (referencing Anglophone culture), "Caucasian" (frequently used as a synonym for "White"),「西洋の」("Western", often in reference to Western European nations), 「欧米の」("North American") , "North American or European", "American", and "Canadian". Similar terms were used when describing host community members. Descriptions such as 「外(国)人」("foreigner"), "not Japanese", "White", 「白人」("White"), "Caucasian", "Western", "English speaking", or host communities nationalities (for example, "American", "Australian", "Thai", and so on) were used. Two participants (Ryota and Nobu) also sparingly used the term "Black". Moreover, Shinya and Haruki used the description, "not Asian".

The majority of participants use more than one term when describing their host communities. Below is an example where Tom moves between the words "foreigner" and "White person":

L: Can you tell me:: (2) more about the <u>part</u> of appearance is no::t (.) not popular?
T: So for <u>men</u>, for guys. (3) It's like one one reason is I think the nose.
L: Ah::
T: Yeah, yeah @ I often <u>heard</u> that. How to say? Japanese people's nose is lo::wer than foreigners. Low? ん？ **[hm?]** How do you say?
L: Ah okay. Do you mean 鼻がた＝**[the nose is ta=]**
T: 高い**[tall]** Yes yeah. White person is more 鼻が高い**[taller nose]**
L: Hm:: that's very interesting.

Because of the fluidity of participant descriptions of race and culture, it was sometimes difficult to specify that backgrounds of who participants were speaking about. In my analysis I attempt to draw on the terms or descriptions used by participants. When descriptions of these groups appear contradictory or ambiguous, I use the term in "Western" in quotation marks. I realize this term is problematic given its ambiguous nature and neocolonial overtones (Alexander & Knowles, 2005; Blake Willis, 2008). However, for many participants, the word "Western" represented 'the other' overseas - English speakers of non-Asian backgrounds.

Replicating the discourse of Japanese women's *akogare*

In Chapter 8, Nori stated that language learning is commonly framed as a female pursuit in Japan. Likewise, 18 interviewees (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24) claimed that there is a widespread fascination for English language studies and Anglophone culture among the Japanese women in their host communities. 16 of these participants associated this interest with a widespread *akogare* among Japanese women for White, English-speaking men. Participants took various approaches when describing their view of women's *akogare*. For instance, some men seemed to think women's *akogare* was a well-known fact (such as Shinya and Tani), which others appeared to be amused by the women's so-called *akogare* (like Natsuki). At times this amusement was tinged with a sense of reproval, such as is the case of Wataru presented below.

The following example takes place after I asked Wataru if he felt there were any specific benefits to being a Japanese man abroad. He first states that Japanese women appear to be approached in English by host community members more than Japanese men (a subject that will be discussed in detail subsequently). Although interactions with host community members could be seen as enviable, Wataru criticizes Japanese women's supposed desire to speak English with

these men as something potentially dangerous. In this excerpt, Wataru refers to the internationally utilized online social event organization platform, Meetup (www.meetup.com), which had a high attendance of Japanese nationals in free language study groups and language exchanges in both his sojourn destinations.

Excerpt 8.1: Wataru – "*This person is suspicious*"

L: で、日本人の男性としては、利益とかはなかった？
W: 利益。まぁ、日本人男性である利益 (2) そうだね。女性と比較してってことかな。
L: うん、そうだね。
W: まぁ、さっき見たように話しかける、話すことで違いは (.) あって。で、日本人女性、まぁこれもえと：：まぁ：：悪いイメージがあるかもしれないけど、まぁ、日本人の女性、海外に来てるってことは英語も勉強したいことで、でまぁ(.) meetup とかもうそうだったけど英語で話しかけられて、そこでその人がいい人か悪い人と関係なくて、英語話したいっていう目標あるから。そこからついていくとか、まぁ、ちょっと変な、明らかに日本人はそんな人ついて行かないような人にも、英語が話せるっていうから。仲良くなって。まぁ、ちょっと危なかったりとか。と考えても「いや、この人怪しいでしょ」@という場合も(.) が、多いというか、まぁ、それはありえる。あったって感じだね。
L: うんうん。
W: まぁいい意味でも悪い意味でも、男性の方がそんな、あの女性が(.) 変な女性の人が日本人男性に 話しかけて連れて行くってことはまぁ、ないから@
L: @なるほど。
W: その危険性は、日本人男性は少なかった。日本人の男性か、男性は、少ないからね、そういうのは。

L: So, as a Japanese man, weren't there any benefits?
W: Benefits. Well, benefits of being a Japanese man (2) let's see. You mean compared with women?
L: Yeah, I do.
W: Well, like we saw a bit ago, in terms of talking to someone, talking, there are (.) differences. So, Japanese women, well, this too um:: well:: there might be negative images but, um, Japanese women, if they go abroad, this means they want to study English, and well (.) some places like meetup, when someone talked to them (the women) in English, they don't care if this person is good or bad, because they have a goal that they want to speak in English. So they follow him, well, even if he was a weirdo, like someone who Japanese people would never follow, because he can speak English. So they become close. Well, even if they think this would be a little bit dangerous, or in the cause like "this person is suspicious" @(.) there are many (cases), um, that was possible. Well, like these things could happen.
L: Yeah.
W: Well, in both good and bad ways, men are such, um, it is rarely the case that a woman (.) a creepy woman would speak to a Japanese man and take him somewhere @
L: @ I see.
W: For Japanese men, there was hardly any concern like that. Japanese men or men [in general] would have few chances (to encounter such a situation).
L: That's true.

L：確かに。

When participants were asked about the benefits of being a Japanese man abroad, the most common answer revolved around the idea of physical safety (1, 3, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16, 19, 20, 23, 24). A man's strength and size allowed him to enjoy freedoms abroad that women did not have, such as walking alone, staying out late at night, or living in high-risk areas. Wataru elaborates on this potential benefit of being male by connecting the notion of physical safety to gender, language ideologies and desire. Specifically, he claims that a powerful attraction to English hinders the judgment of some Japanese women to the point that it leads them into potentially threatening situations. He argues that Japanese men, however, do not face the same dangers. This is rationalized as partially because Japanese men do not possess the same fervour for English as Japanese women, and that Japanese men are less frequently approached than Japanese women in their host communities. Interestingly, Wataru does not specifically state that the 「怪しい」("suspicious") people speaking in English to Japanese women are male. His comparison of strange women speaking to Japanese men, nevertheless, likely implies that the suspicious people approaching Japanese women are predominantly male. Overall, Wataru presents the yearning to speak English abroad as a potential hazard for Japanese women. Through this description of the Japanese female experience, Wataru also highlights the benefits of being a Japanese man abroad.

In these participant accounts, Japanese women's perceived attraction to English was frequently described in relation to romantic desire for non-Japanese men and many interviewees claimed to hear about or witness mutual flirtation between Japanese women and men in their host communities. Furthermore, participants described English-speaking men as the most sought

out conversation and romantic partners for Japanese women abroad. These men were presented as having significant symbolic capital abroad because of their linguistic resources and status as host community nationals. The following excerpt of my interview with Nori provides an example of such ideas. This section was prompted by my previous question of "do you think your experience was different than [Japanese women's] in any way?". Nori went on to state that during this time in Sweden and the U.K., he viewed the Japanese women around him being treated as "cute objects" by members of the host communities. Inquiring further about this comment led to our discussion of both our personal encounters with the popularity of "foreign men" as boyfriends for Japanese women.

Excerpt 9.2: Nori – "*High status boyfriend"*

L: Mmhm. (5) Um, how did you see the women, the Japanese women being treated as cute objects? Are there any examples that you can give?
N: Hm:: (2) so like, um (2) maybe at the bar or club.
L: Uh huh.
N: Um like, many guys (.) spoke to Japanese girls (3) And try to tried to hug them or even like even. When they are drunk. I mean both guys and Japanese girls. Um, they try to like, kiss with each other?
L: Ah::
N: So I think that it's maybe like, it's probably because um they are drunk @ but. Yes um (4) そういう感じの状況を。
L: 見ました。
N: 見ました。
L: Was that in Sweden and London or?
N: Yeah both.
L: Both. Interesting.
N: But [clears throat] I think [clears throat] sometimes Japanese women (.) don't hate that situation.
L: Ah ha.

L: Mmhm. (5) Um, how did you see the women, the Japanese women being treated as cute objects? Are there any examples that you can give?
N: Hm:: (2) so like, um (2) maybe at the bar or club.
L: Uh huh.
N: Um like, many guys (.) spoke to Japanese girls (3) And try to tried to hug them or even like even. When they are drunk. I mean both guys and Japanese girls. Um, they try to like, kiss with each other?
L: Ah::
N: So I think that it's maybe like, it's probably because um they are drunk @ but. Yes um (4)
that kind of situation.
L: **You saw it.**
N: **I saw it.**
L: Was that in Sweden and London or?
N: Yeah both.
L: Both. Interesting.
N: But [clears throat] I think [clears throat] sometimes Japanese women (.) don't hate that situation.
L: Ah ha.

N: Yeah. Because some of them were saying that um, “I am more interested in like, Western, foreign men, guys”. So (2) I don’t think like um, it’s sexual harassment or anything like that. No.
L: You felt that some of the women were interested in being pursued by these men?
N: Yeah yeah, sometimes.
L: Hm:: So um, why do you think, because to be honest, some of my girlfriends have said the same thing. Some of my Japanese girlfriends. Have like ah:: なんか「外国人の彼氏がいいなぁ」とか[6]
N: @@
L: 「外国人の彼氏が欲しいなぁとか」
N: うん：：
L: Or sometimes some of my friends have said “do you have any single Canadian friends?”
N: Ah::
L: So I am curious=
N: @@
L: Why, why do you think these women are interested in? Why would someone say 「外国人がいいなぁ」 or something like that.
N: It’s a difficult questions but um (5) um:: I think (3) like foreign guys (.) are something that 憧れ？
L: I see.
N: For Japanese girls.
L: I see.
N: And of course some of them want to just like want to learn English, like through communication with those foreign guys. But 憧れとか。[breathes in] Hm:: (2) なんだろう (3) それのが大きいかな (2)と思います。
L：憧れ、憧れはやっぱり、英語と関係ある？
N: Ah:: 英語もあるだろうし。Like I think if

N: Yeah. Because some of them were saying that um, “I am more interested in like, Western, foreign men, guys”. So (2) I don’t think like um, it’s sexual harassment or anything like that. No.
L: You felt that some of the women were interested in being pursued by these men?
N: Yeah yeah, sometimes.
L: Hm:: So um, why do you think, because to be honest, some of my girlfriends have said the same thing. Some of my Japanese girlfriends. Have like ah:: **Something like, “a foreign boyfriend would be nice.”**
N: @@
L: **Like “I want a boyfriend who is a foreigner.”**
N: **Yes::**
L: Or sometimes some of my friends have said “do you have any single Canadian friends?”
N: Ah::
L: So I am curious=
N: @@
L: Why, why do you think these women are interested in? Why would someone say **“I like foreigners”** or something like that.
N: It’s a difficult questions but um (5) um:: I think (3) like foreign guys (.) are something that ***akogare*** **[longing].**
L: I see.
N: For Japanese girls.
L: I see.
N: And of course some of them want to just like want to learn English, like through communication with those foreign guys. But **something like *akogare* (longing).** [breathes in] Hm:: **What is it (3) I think (2) that *akogare* is more important.**
L：***Akogare*, *akogare* does it have something to do with English?**
N: Ah:: **English is probably a part of it.** Like I think if Japanese girl dates with foreign guys?

[6] This is an example of the co-construction of the idea of Japanese women’s *akogare* between participants and myself. I address this in the final chapter of this dissertation.

Japanese girl dates with foreign guys? (2) Um, the fact that Japanese women have foreign boyfriend, is kind of high status. (2) Yeah. L: Hm hm. N: I feel that way. Yeah.	(2) Um, the fact that Japanese women have foreign boyfriend, is kind of high status. (2) Yeah. L: Hm hm. N: I feel that way. Yeah.

Nori recounts instances in both Sweden and the U.K. where he observed mutual sexual attraction between Japanese women and non-Japanese men at clubs abroad and even claims to have heard Japanese women blatantly state a preference for "Western, foreign men, guys". These statements, in combination with my detailing of my own mild annoyance with some female friends' lighthearted jokes about finding a "foreign boyfriend", replicate an image of Japanese women's *akogare* for non-Japanese men. Our comments, however, are an example of the discourse of *akogare* that does not only privilege White men, but also marginalize Japanese men (Kato, 2007; 2015).

The attraction to foreign men (also labeled "Western" men) described by Nori is rooted primarily in a desire to develop English fluency – similar to Wataru's comments in Excerpt 9.1. However, even more so than English practice, Nori concludes that dating a foreign/Western man provides status "a high status" to a Japanese woman. Likewise, Appleby (2013), Kubota (2011) and Takahashi (2013) describe the privileged status that White, English-speaking men have some spheres in Japan. As a result, Japanese women who date these men are viewed as acquiring some of the symbolic capital that their romantic partners possess.

The next interview segment continues to explore the notion of racialized romance and desire between non-Japanese men and Japanese women. After Tani told me about one of his ex-girlfriends who was a White American woman that he previously worked with in Tokyo, I stated that I thought his experience was somewhat of a rarity, considering the higher prevalence of

Japanese women dating White men inside Japan (Kelsky, 2001a; 2001b; Schans, 2012; Simon Maeda, 2011). Tani responded in agreement before detailing what kind of men he believes are attractive to the average Japanese woman. While he is referring to women living inside of Japan as opposed to those on study abroad and WHM programs, the discourses he draws on are portrayed as embedded in popular Japanese heterosexual female culture.

Excerpt 9.3: Tani – "*Blue Eyes and Blonde Hair*"

L: So I feel like it's a little bit 珍しい **[rare]** your experience.
T: Hm 確かに珍しいですね:: **[Indeed, it is rare, isn't it::]**
L: I'm curious why it's 珍しい. **[rare]**
T: [Breathes in]
L: Yeah, do you have any opinion about that? (6)
T: [Breaths in] Let's see (5) Oh:: (3) So typically this uh (2) like, in Japan, uh:: like movie industry or music industry. Uh:: the Western culture is <u>really</u> popular, so (2) Lots of Japanese girl love One Direction or::
L: @@
T: Like.
L: Yeah.
T: Anyways the (3) yeah like 白人 **[White people]** 。この、なんか憧れみたいな。あるかもしれない。 **[This, someone like *akogare* (longing). There might be.]**
L: Hm:: (3)
T: Having blue eyes and blonde hair, like you.
L: Yeah @
T: @@
L: What can I say? @
T: Yeah @
L: So 憧れ is a good word to describe it.
T: Hm::
L: Yeah yeah yeah. Do you think it's mainly Japanese <u>women</u> that have 憧れ **[akogare (longing)]** for=
T: I think so.
L: Yeah.
T: Hm:: (2) So, my work is to go to nursery and kindergarten.
L: Yeah yeah yeah.
T: And to bring the native English teacher too. And then the (2) kindergarten teacher told us [high pitched voice] あ、かっこいい！背が高い！**[Look, he's good-looking! He's tall!]** Yeah?
L: They just say it?
T: Always excited. Yeah.

L: Yeah, wow. And these are female teachers? Female Japanese teachers excited about the male English teacher?
T: Right.
L: I see:: (3)
T: Hm:: (3)
L: So Japanese women have 憧れ **[akogare (longing)]** for these men? You feel?
T: I think so yeah. So definitely the:: (2) the (3) it's interesting but uh English speaking (2) English speaking men (3) looks really confident. Compared with Japanese guys.
L: Hm.
T: Hm:: always say like "yes or no". Japanese are like, 「あ：：」柔らかい「どっちでもいい」**["um::" soft[ly], "either is fine"]** @@

I had hoped to learn about Tani's intercultural dating experiences, but either due to his hesitation to share or my somewhat vague question of "do you have any opinion about that?", Tani shifts the topic to Japanese women's desire. He draws an image of a tall, blonde, blue-eyed male English speaker as the object of Japanese women's desire, which he claims comes from the permeation of Western film and music in Japanese mainstream pop culture. He notes such *akogare* is evident at his current workplace when he introduces native English speaking male teachers to female staff. Tani also enhances the appeal of English speaking men through using essentializing notions to both masculinize the English language and feminize Japanese. While English is described as direct and elicits images of confidence, Japanese is conveyed as hesitant, ineffectual and weak. This comparison also feminizes Japanese men. Tani's portrayal of Japanese women's *akogare* therefore includes having access both to English and the physical features of stereotypical European ideals of masculinity (White, blonde hair and blue eyes). Similar to Nori's account, Tani's description of Japanese women's *akogare* marginalizes Japanese masculinity through the idea of Japanese women's so-called preference for White, English speaking men.

Wataru, Nori and Tani's accounts present examples of the ways participants described an Japanese women's supposed desire for interactions in English and romantic relationships with English speaking Western men. This was sometimes extended more broadly to Japanese in Japan (such as in Tani's example). Through discussing their perceptions of Japanese women's desires, participants replicate dominant discourses of *akogare*. However, descriptions of women's desire can also be seen a self-making act for these men. This is apparent in the way Japanese men held marginalized place in Wataru, Nori, and Tani's accounts in comparison to English-speaking Western men.

iii. Desirability's connection to speaking opportunities and social networks

The 18 participants who viewed Japanese women as particularly attracted to English speaking men also believed these women were *attractive to* men in their host community. As a result, many participants claimed Japanese women had more opportunities to improve their English during their sojourn. In the majority of participant accounts, Japanese women were characterized as receiving ample romantic attention from English speaking men in their host communities. For instance, "famous", "モテる" ("*moteru*", or "popular" or "attractive"), and "popular with guys", were terms used by participants to describe Japanese women abroad. For many participants (1, 3, 4, 6, 11, 13, 15, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24), Japanese women's desirability abroad was directly linked to increased opportunities for English use and friendships or romantic relationships within the host community. In this way, Japanese women's 'popularity' abroad was a source of envy to some participants.

Tom, who spent an academic year on an exchange program in Alberta, Canada, first claimed that he did not see a difference between his experience and the Japanese women around him. However, following this, he stated that these Japanese women were able to make friends

quickly, primarily because they were approach by English speaking men with romantic

intentions.

Excerpt 9.4: Tom – *"Men in Canada likes Japanese girls"*

L: Um. So the first question I want to ask is, um. I guess I should ask first. Were there any Japanese women in your classes or in your program?
T: Yep.
L: Yeah. So do you think that your experience of studying was different than them in any way?
T: Mm:: I:: I don't think so. Yeah because:: (2) Yeah so my community. Yeah in my community there was woman.
L: Mmhm.
T: Yeah so I think yeah. (2) It's not there's not a lot difference. But I think Japanese woman is easy to make friends.
L: Oh okay.
T: Yeah. Because I think the men, men in Canada @ likes Japanese gi::rls.
L: Hm::
T: Yeah so. (2)
L: Oka::y. So so the men in Canada, non-Japanese men?
T: Mmhm. Yeah.
L: Were interested.
T: Yeah.
L: Mmhm. And did you <u>see</u> that? Or did you hear it?
T: I saw that so yeah. I think that in the party, yeah. If I just only stand there, stand. No one no one yeah talk to @me@
L: @
T: Yeah. But (2) if Japanese woman (.) Japanese girls, yeah. Many many guys talk to her, or yeah so yeah. So I <u>have to</u> talk to other foreigners to speak English. But the girls don't have to do that.
L: So basically they could just stand and people would approach them?
T: Yeah.
L: They had lots of chances to talk but you had to make your own chances?
T: Yeah::
L: Your own opportunities.
T: Almost yeah. Yeah. I think so yeah.
L: Yeah:: And how was that? Was it difficult to approach people, or did you feel it was easy
T: <u>First time</u> it's so difficult, yeah. And uh actually, I can't speak English. I couldn't speak English, so, if I start if I talk to the (.) guy or people. It's the conversation will be would be finished soon. So:: Yeah first time it's <u>so</u> difficult.
L: In the beginning. Yeah yeah. You're speaking now though, you seem very comfortable.
T: Yeah.
L: Do you feel like you improved your English a lot?
T: Yeah, I think so. Yeah @.

According to Tom, the Japanese women in his host community experienced more ease in building friendships than he did, which he attributes to a popularity of "Japanese girls". The "friends" he refers to appear to be mostly male ("men in Canada") and have more than merely friendly intentions. What he also indicates, however, is that these interactions generated ample opportunities for the Japanese women to use English. More so than the development of social networks, To envied Japanese women's increased chances to improve their English skills. According to Tom, he was not ordinarily approached in English during his study abroad and therefore had to make a deliberate effort to engage others in conversation to create his own opportunities to improve his English skills. Notable here is Tom's comment of, "So I have to talk to other foreigners to speak English" since it is not exactly clear who "other foreigners" implied. Tom may have been referring to other international students or immigrants in Canada, or even non-Japanese people in general. As previously stated, many men used the term "foreigner" or 「外(国)人」 to refer to non-Japanese individuals both inside and outside of Japan. Nevertheless, it is clear that these interlocutors were English speakers who Tom desired to interact with.

Ryota shared similar views to Tom when reflecting on his experience studying at his Canadian host university. After I inquired if he thought there were any differences between his experiences and those of the Japanese women in his cohort, Ryota promptly illustrated a gap between what he perceived as the Japanese male and female study abroad experience. He was quick to state that Japanese women's romantic popularity among men in their community was positively correlated to their English development. Moreover, Ryota's account explicitly details

the marginalization he felt Japanese men generally experience in Canada.

Excerpt 9.5: Ryota – *"it seems like Japanese men look a little unattractive for foreigners"*

R: So it might be a bit different but uh, because uh:: I feel, I felt like uh guys are mostly gather like (2) Asian guys. Mostly like only Japanese guys. But girls (.) are with uh, like uh others students from other countrie::s or other the students are not only women but men. So I so I mean I think like still we have some difference between men and women. Women and especially Japanese men, Asian guys, like, Japanese men is still looks like young. Younger than White. Or the like the other guys other (2) like yeah uh, European or like uh:: you know or (2) But girls (.) are they look are different (2) なんと言えばいい？(.) なんか男には (.) 日本の男は正直若く見えたりとか。なんか、その (3) 外国の目からちょっとかっこよく見えなさそうな。
L: Hm hm.
R:特にモテないしね。
L: なるほど。
R: という from (.) the other ladies from the other countries. けど、この ladies, Japanese women are different. They're really famous among other country guys. And so that's why they got many chance to learn English from the people from other countries. So (2) yeah. I have some I have uh:: girls friend from my university. So she:: (.) I am I am really trying to have friends from the other countries but ki::nd of I feel still uh:: nervous to talk to the people speak English. I mean people who have English as a mother tongue. Because I can't really speak English. And yeah, my English was poor.
L: Hm::
R: So I was nervous but, so so in this situation I:: it's hard to talk (.) from (.) me.自分から話しかけるのは、もう、it's hard.
L: はいはいはい。
R: But if there are people are native English

R: So it might be a bit different but uh, because uh:: I feel, I felt like uh guys are mostly gather like (2) Asian guys. Mostly like only Japanese guys. But girls (.) are with uh, like uh others students from other countrie::s or other the students are not only women but men. So I so I mean I think like still we have some difference between men and women. Women and especially Japanese men, Asian guys, like, Japanese men is still looks like young. Younger than White. Or the like the other guys other (2) like yeah uh, European or like uh:: you know or (2) But girls (.) are they look are different (2) **How should I put it? (.) Like for men (.) Japanese men honestly look young so. Like, um (3) it seems like Japanese men look a little unattractive for foreigners.**
L: Hm hm.
R: **They are not really popular (*motenai*).**
L: **I see.**
R: **So that's Japanese males' image** from (.) the other ladies from the other countries. **But, these** ladies, Japanese women are different. They're really famous among other country guys. And so that's why they got many chance to learn English from the people from other countries. So (2) yeah. I have some I have uh:: girls friend from my university. So she:: (.) I am I am really trying to have friends from the other countries but ki::nd of I feel still uh:: nervous to talk to the people speak English. I mean people who have English as a mother tongue. Because I can't really speak English. And yeah, my English was poor.
L: Hm::
R: So I was nervous but, so so in this situation I:: it's hard to talk (.) from (.) me. **Initiating a conversation with someone for me is, so**, it's hard.
L: **Okay, I see.**
R: But if there are people are native English

speaker, talk to me, in that case also I feel like nervous because I can't really talk to have conversation fluently. So I, but so that's why kind of like why feel like guys, Japanese guys around me uh:: are really avoid from the native speakers. I feel like. [19 second pause while drinks arrive] けど(.)女の子はもう、どんどんこう話しかけられる。自然と、男の子から。ただ普通にしてても、男の子って女の子からあまりかけ[られない]、日本では特にだけど=
L: うんうん。
R: 女の子から声かけるよりかは、女の子は男から声かけるの方がは多い。That's why I feel like girls have a better chance to learn English (3) more than guys. (2) だからなんというか。It was obvious to uh:: difference between guys and girls. Hm. I felt.

speaker, talk to me, in that case also I feel like nervous because I can't really talk to have conversation fluently. So I, but so that's why kind of like why feel like guys, Japanese guys around me uh:: are really avoid from the native speakers. I feel like. [19 second pause while drinks arrive] **But (.) Girls are so, they are approached countlessly. Naturally, from boys. But for boys, if we're just being normal, we would hardly be approached by girls, especially in Japan but=]**
L: Yeah.
R: It is more frequent that boys talk to girls, rather than girls talk to boys. That's why I feel like girls have a better chance to learn English (3) more than guys. (2) **So how should I put this.** It was obvious to uh:: difference between guys and girls. Hm. I felt.

Like Tom, Ryota states that the women in his host community appeared to have much broader social networks than Japanese men, largely due to heterosexual non-Japanese men's romantic interest in these women. Ryota claims that Japanese women's popularity with "other country guys" furthermore creates plentiful opportunities for English usage and gives the women a linguistic advantage over Japanese men.

According to Ryota, there are two reasons why Japanese men do not have the same amount of encounters with host community members. First, he claims that Japanese men are typically not romantically desired outside of Japan, as seen in his juxtaposition of the "特にモテない" ("they are not really popular", or "*motenai*") Japanese men with "famous" Japanese women. He highlights the value of physical attractiveness within romantic desire by claiming Japanese men "look young" and "uncool" in the eyes of non-Japanese people (particularly

"White" or "Europeans"). Yet, Japanese women's appearance is viewed as something that draws male conversation partners to them, giving the women more opportunities to use and improve their English skills.

Ryota also clearly articulates how gendered expectations of communication increase Japanese women's interactions with male members of their host community, which is a notion hinted at in Excerpt 9.1 (Wataru) and 9.4 (Tom). In this case, such communicative expectations include the common practices and beliefs of who can initiate a conversation and who the recipient of that initiation is. In both Tom and Ryota's accounts, Japanese women are portrayed as having many opportunities to improve their English during their time abroad, and yet they are commonly seen as being *spoken to* by the men in their host community and not the instigators of these conversations. Ryota states that this is not only because of their status as desirable romantic partners, but also because it is common social practice for men to approach women and not vice versa. The expectation of men approaching women was one that he claims to have observed in both his host community and in Japan. In this way, Japanese women were presented as relatively passive in their interactions with English speakers, notably if the interlocutor was male. Such interviewee statements therefore reconstruct normative expectation of women as unassertive in communication as more 'likeable' conversation partners for men (Reid, Palomares, Anderson & Bodad-Brown, 2009) and that Japanese women in particular are positioned to be gentle and polite in speech (Okamoto, 2013).

iv. Resisting marginalized identities through creating opportunities to speak

Of course, through participant accounts it is impossible to surmise if the Japanese women in their host communities were actually approached by men with romantic intentions or if they actually welcomed encounters with these men. However, the above interview excerpts

suggest that many participants saw opportunities to use English as highly desirable and beneficial to their sojourn. It is therefore unsurprising that several participants in this study claimed making a conscious effort to develop social networks and use English was more of a necessity for Japanese men than for Japanese women. The participants who seemed the most satisfied with their language development were those that displayed agency in creating their own opportunities to speak and claiming identities as legitimate members within their host communities.

Shortly after our exchange in Excerpt 9.4, I asked Tom how witnessing the supposed admiration of Japanese women among men in his host community made him feel.

Excerpt 9.6: Tom – *"I have to take action"*

L: Hm. (5) Yeah. So how did you feel, um like for example if you looked at the Japanese girls at a party and they're like standing there and guys are talking to them. Were you like, "what?" or?
T: Hm:: Actually I feel I don't feel bad. But, "Oh. They are lucky". Yeah. Yeah. So yeah. I just feel yeah oh (2) just thought they were lucky? Or yeah I have to for me, I have to do something. I have to take action:: Yeah. Or yeah. So I don't feel bad.
L: It didn't affect your confidence.
T: Yeah.
L: Yeah yeah, good.

The perception of Japanese women's status as desirable romantic partners abroad and the resulting English language exposure does not seem to have hindered Tom's sojourn, but instead inspired him to expand his own English-speaking social networks. By coupling his feelings of exclusion with his desire to improve his English, he became highly motivated to create his own opportunities for language development. In other words, Tom's feelings of marginalization prompted by the intersection of his nationality and his gender acted as an impetus for agency in his own social circles and within his language learning.

Haruki, who spent a year at a Canadian university, also commented on how the desirability of Japanese women had gave them more chances to use English abroad. To make his own opportunities, he became active in campus language exchange clubs with both his Japanese and non-Japanese classmates. However, the experience that meant the most to him was his time as a volunteer coach of a local Japanese-Canadian baseball team. Here, Haruki not only had a vital role as team coach but also spent his time directing the players in English, giving him access to his target language. The following excerpt takes place after I asked Haruki about some the things he enjoyed the most about his study abroad.

Excerpt 9.7: Haruki – *"to have pride as Japanese"*

L: What were some of the best things?
H: Best things? Best things. (4) That's difficult @ I can't decide what's the best thing.
L: That's okay. Maybe not the best, but some of the best.
H: Um, obviously the volunteer in the JC Baseball Club was a good experience for me. Because I learned, not only English, but the:: culture. Not only culture but they were the Japanese Canadians, so they have the same essential [essence] as the Japanese and Canadians, Canadians. Both culture they have. So I learned a lot. From them.
L: What kind of things did you learn about, if they have kind of those two identities?
H: Uh huh. So, obviously we are in Canada. But they have a typical Japanese culture in baseball. In Japan, both teams do like, お辞儀? **[bowing]** Before entering the=
L: Is that like bowing?
H: Yeah. Before entering the ground. Or even after, before and after the games. But in Canada whole team don't do that. But JC do that in Canada. That was an interesting for me. I learned also, I learned like I should be proud of my identity. My Japanese identity. Even I was in Canada. Or wherever I am. I learned like to have pride as Japanese.

Haruki's choice of joining the JC Baseball Club allowed him to combine his love of baseball with language development and a new social network. In addition to this, he held a position of authority on the team and over the native English-speaking players. Connell (2005) argues that participation in sports is a powerful site for the enactment of hegemonic masculinity and this has been argued in the context of Japanese male university student sports teams as well (McDonald, 2009). Participation in the JC Baseball Club may have provided an avenue to affirm

Haruki's active and athletic masculine identity. Interesting, the interactions with the bicultural nature of his team appear to have facilitated a profound pride in Haruki's national identity. While many participants described race (Asian) and nationality (Japanese) as a hindrance to heterosexual men's symbolic capital abroad, Haruki's agentive actions in his host community led him to "have pride as a Japanese" in Canada.

v. Eroticizing discourses of Japanese women as described through the eyes of Western men

Several participants in this study spoke either in a humorous tone about the *moteru* image of Japanese women abroad (1, 4, 6, 7, 12, 22, 23, 24), or were critical about how they believed heterosexual Japanese men's experiences differed from women in their host communities (Ryota, Yoshi and Haruki). However, a small group of participants (Shinya, Takeo and Yoshi) expressed sexist perceptions –or stated that others had such perceptions –of Japanese women in regard to their supposed *akogare* for English speaking Western men. This is an example of another way that participants constructed their own identities through comparisons with 'Japanese women'.

Shinya also stated that Japanese women in his host community were approached more frequently by host community members for conversation. As a result, Shinya claims that women developed their English skills and social networks rather effortlessly. However, Shinya also connected this to a demeaning image of sojourning Japanese women in both Canada and in Japan.

Excerpt 9.8: Shinya – *"How can I say delicately?"*

S: Ah:: I think there's not a big difference between man and woman. But there is one:: advantage for a for a woman.
L: Oh, okay.
S: Ah, I think Japanese woman doesn't need to find a kind of community or place to learn English. Cuz you know, guy (.) not Japanese guy (.) like Japanese woman in Canada. So Japanese, ah not Japanese guy comes to talk to Japanese woman. But speaking of us. We needed to find a community by ourself. So it was really hard. Hm:: this is one (2) Hm:: (3) And I think

Japanese woman doesn't have to be more aggressive (.) to learn English, or to be a (.) like, Canadian? Like, non-Japanese.
L: Mmhm.
S: Yeah. So guys more aggressive in speaking of Japanese. Yeah. This is a difference. Mm:: What else? (6) 難しいな。**[This is difficult.]**
L: 大丈夫、質問聞いていい？ **[That's okay. Can I ask you a question?]**
S: Yeah yeah please.
L: So you mentioned it's much more easy for Japanese women to um (.) I mean they don't have to make a community, the community comes to them.
S: Yeah.
L: But Japanese men have to go out and make a community. So why do you think that um I mean students, or people in the community came to Japanese women (.) and not to Japanese men?
S: Cuz:: Hm:: This is my opinion. Uh in I think in Canada (2) how can I say delicately?
L: You wanna, you wanna delicately=
S: @ I know that what Japanese people say is, Japanese woman is easy to get laid. Yeah yeah yeah.
L: Oh!
S: Yeah! So they always approach to them.
L: Hu::h.
S: Yeah. That's why @ That's the biggest reason.
L: I see I see, so uh:: in other words, Japanese woman abroad=
S: Mmhm.
L: There's kind of a stereotype=
S: Yeah, stereotype.
L: That they are easy to:: have sex with.
S: Yeah.

Previously, Shinya had insisted that Japanese men needed to exercise assertiveness in order to join English-speaking communities in a way that Japanese women did not because Japanese women were frequently approached by host community men. However, according to Shinya, this was not simply due to Japanese women as *moteru* but as a result of a common belief abroad of the promiscuity of Japanese women. He claims this is a belief held by Japanese people ("what Japanese people say is"), thus arguing that this sexist label of Japanese women's attraction towards foreign men exists domestically as well as abroad.

After this comment, our conversation moved quickly into a different direction and I did not refer back to his utterance of "easy to get laid". However, in follow up contact over SNS I asked Shinya to elaborate on "the stereotype" in his previous comment.

SNS Excerpt 8.9: Shinya – *"Japanese women likes white guys very much"*

L: Can you please tell me what you think about this stereotype? Do you agree or not?
[L Shares previous interview transcript]
[…]
S: As for my comment in the above interview, what I wanted to tell you as long as I remember is I am thinking Non-Japanese is thinking it is easy to get laid with Japanese women since they know some of Japanese women likes white guys very much. I understand this is stereotype but I agree since that is true haha.

Consistent with his interview, Shinya states the sexualized stereotype of Japanese women's *akogare* for foreign men is much more than a cliché. In this exchange, he specifies the object of these women's desires as White men, as opposed to the more general descriptions of "Canadian" and "non Japanese guy[s]" from his previous interview. Despite the tongue-in-cheek nature of his comments, this brief text message is situated in a sexist and discriminatory assumption that most Japanese women will have sex with White men because of the men's race. Moreover, Shinya suggests this is what makes Japanese women attractive overseas. In previous examples of *akogare* descriptions, Japanese men frequently were marginalized. Here, however, Shinya draws on misogynist discourse to excerpt power over 'Japanese women' abroad.

Yoshi also shared an example of the belief of Japanese heterosexual women's attraction to non-Japanese men. He demonstrated this through briefly recounting a previous comment from his White American friend Kurt. Kurt, whose photo Yoshi had shown me earlier, apparently bragged about the ease of 'picking up' Japanese women during his time in Japan.

Excerpt 8.10: Yoshi – *"Piece of cake"*

Y: あの Kurt さっき見せたでしょ？ L: あ、そのアメリカ人？ Y: そう。アメリカ人。He said 楽勝@@ L: It's easy? Y: Like piece of cake @@ L: [breathes in] I feel like, イライラする、それ言われたら@ Y: @@日本人の女の子超簡単だよ @@	Y: **Um Kurt, that I showed you before?** L: **Oh, that American person?** Y: **Yes. The American.** He said **piece of cake** @@ L: It's easy? Y: Like piece of cake @@ [L: [breathes in] I feel like, **annoyed, if that was said @** Y: @@ **Japanese girls are such a piece of cake (to get)** @@

Yoshi's recounting of Kurt's misogynist comments is another example of claiming a powerful identity through descriptions of Japanese women's sexuality and desire. First, the perception of Japanese women's attraction to non-Japanese men –particularly White men– is linked to being 'easy'. Furthermore, Japanese women's desire is portrayed as a weakness that allows the object of their desire to exploit them. Within these discursively constructed images, Japanese women's agency is not celebrated or even acknowledged. Instead, participant accounts present an eroticized figure of Japanese women that is both comical and disparaging. Non-Japanese men, on the other hand, appear as the predators of Japanese women.

Reflecting on the diverse narratives of participants, a commonality appears to be the prevalence of descriptions of how interviewees viewed and judged the Japanese female experience and how they positioned themselves in relation to these experiences. The image of a *moteru* status of many women was a source of envy for several men due to the belief that it opened up access to a host community and facilitated target language (English) development. Still, the supposed popularity of Japanese women led to ridicule by some participants. These men drew on essentialized images that sexualized Japanese women and also emphasize the dominant status of non-Japanese (mainly White) men who pursue Japanese women.

vi. Constructing racialized femininity of Japanese women

Shinya's and Yoshi's accounts reflected discourses that marginalize Japanese females who are interested in English or Anglophone cultures by objectifying these women and eroticizing their interests in English and Anglophone cultures. This was also portrayed as something that attracted men in their host communities to Japanese women. Instead of explicitly speaking of sexuality, however, the majority of participants described what they believed made Japanese women 'famous' overseas, namely, the women's submissiveness and exotic beauty. The features attributed to Japanese women's desirability tended to replicate Orientalist discourse and were used as another device to structure 'Japanese male sojourner identity' in addition to images of host community members.

Several participants (1, 5, 11, 13, 19, 20, 21, 24) painted a picture of Japanese women as submissive and deferential to her male partner's wishes. These traits were often described in comparison to essentialized of Western men or Women. In the next excerpt, Tani details what he believes "American guys" find attractive in Japanese women. This takes place shortly after Excerpt 8.3 in which he suggested the confidence of male English speakers was appealing to Japanese women.

Excerpt 9.11: Tani – *"maybe that matches"*

T: So yeah (.) I think Japanese women fee::l yeah (4) likely to interest in confident person. L: Hm:: T: I think so. L: Interesting. (7) T: And uh (7) And I think 英語と日本語 is uh so much difference in the uh like (2) sound. And how to uh 声の出し方とか、が違って (2)日本人はこそこそ喋ってる。小さい声で喋る。なんか English speaker はなんか大	T: So yeah (.) I think Japanese women fee::l yeah (4) likely to interest in confident person. L: Hm:: T: I think so. L: Interesting. (7) T: And uh (7) And I think **English and Japanese** is uh so much difference in the uh like (2) sound. And how to uh **something like the way you make sounds is different (2) Japanese people speak like whispering. Speak in small volumes. Like** English

きい声自信持って話している。それを見える。

[Tani comparing vocal volumes in English and Japanese omitted]
[…]

L: I understand what you mean. Yeah:: So that confidence is appealing? You think?
T: Right (.) And like from:: (.) So let's say American, American guys (.) sees Japanese women uh:: they are:: how to say? Uh:: obedient? Obedient. And quiet.
L: I see::
T: And then, polite. And then it looks like Japanese women (4) don't argue (.) a lot. So maybe as a man they feel (5) that kind of yeah.
L: I see. As a man they feel like?
T: Hm:: so probably they feel like [clears throat] they want their girlfriend or their wife to be [breathes in] (2) kind of like always following, always follow him.
L: I see. I see. Yeah, yeah, yeah.
T: So that maybe that matches @@

speakers **um speak in a loud voice with confidence. That's how it looks to me.**

[Tani comparing vocal volumes in English and Japanese omitted]
[…]

L: I understand what you mean. Yeah:: So that confidence is appealing? You think?
T: Right (.) And like from:: (.) So let's say American, American guys (.) sees Japanese women uh:: they are:: how to say? Uh:: obedient? Obedient. And quiet.
L: I see::
T: And then, polite. And then it looks like Japanese women (4) don't argue (.) a lot. So maybe as a man they feel (5) that kind of yeah.
L: I see. As a man they feel like?
T: Hm:: so probably they feel like [clears throat] they want their girlfriend or their wife to be [breathes in] (2) kind of like always following, always follow him.
L: I see. I see. Yeah, yeah, yeah.
T: So that maybe that matches @@

Tani's description places essentialized feminine qualities on Japanese women ("obedient", "quiet", and "polite") compliment and uphold masculine ideals by allowing their male partners to enact qualities such as leadership and strength. He suggest that for "American men", a female Japanese romantic partner may be more suitable in constructing the heterosexual male identity than women of other backgrounds. Moreover, Tani claims that the attractive confidence of English speaking men and the submissive nature of Japanese women draws the two groups together for an appropriate romantic 'match'.

Just as appearance was a significant factor in constructing the appeal of White men ("blond hair", "blue eyes" and height were common features listed by participants), Japanese

women's bodies were a key element in contributing to their *moteru* image. The generally slender figure of Japanese women represented an idealized femininity that differed from that of the women within a host community. In three men's accounts (Akihiro, Fumiya and Natsuki), a petite body represented both beauty and delicateness, which were seen as virtues that host community men were drawn to.

The appeal of Japanese women's petite bodies was a topic of conversation with Natsuki. This focus arose through his juxtaposition of the size "Japanese women" and the women in his Canadian community. Natsuki breached this topic after we discussed how it was sometimes necessary to take the initiative of approaching someone of romantic interest. Natsuki then began speaking about the reasons he believed Japanese women might have been particularly attractive at his Canadian university.

Excerpt 9.12: Natsuki – *"If you compare, they are smaller, right?"*

N: 自分から行かなきゃいかないから。そうそうそう。	N: **Because we have to go [approach someone] by ourselves. Yeah yeah.**
L: うんうんうん。なるほどなるほど。	L: **Yes, I see.**
N: っけなんか、あっけど (2)そう、日本人の女性はせいなんやろう。もう、このことを言って変やけど、(2) 日本の女性でこう、可愛い?	N: **Something like, oh but (2) yeah, what should I put it, Japanese women are like. Um, it's awkward to say something like this but, (2) among Japanese women, are like, cute?**
L: うん。	L: **Okay.**
N: こう、確かに男には人気ある。男がすごい近くよってくるけど、留学の場合は、日本でキャーキャー言われてない女性でも近く寄ってくれる。	N: **Like, the ones who are obviously popular among men. Many men approach [these women], but during study abroad, even women who are not really popular in Japan would get approached.**
L: あ：：	L: **Oh::**
N: わかる？そう。日本だと、いや、多分男が近く寄ってこないよ。	N: **Do you get it? Yeah. In Japan, well, probably men wouldn't approach [them].**
L: うんうん。	L: **Yeah.**
N: まぁ、あのよね、いや全員近く寄ってこない。ね。それな、恋人いる場合もあるよ。もちろん。	N: **Well, um, not all of them would be approached. You know. There are cases that they have a partner. Of course.**

L: うんうん。
N: けど、そんななんというか。向こうからくることないなという感じということだけど海外だと向こうからくるという経験もあるかなって思った。
L: はいはいはい。
N: そう。
L: え、なんでだと思う？(3)
N: いや、それはたぶ：：ん、まぁ、その海外の native student が日本興味あるかもしれない、ってあるかもしれないし、あともう一個、もしかして小柄なん。小柄がいいかも。な、日本の、女性って小柄ってわかる？
L: わかる＝
N: あの、slender というか, slender and ちょっと、あの、比べたら smaller じゃない？小さい。小さい。
L: はいはいはい。
N: 小さい、あの compared to Canadian girl? なんか？@これは俺のステレオタイプと思って、ごめん、あの this is ひょっとしたらね、perhaps just uh, my stereotype but.
L: Ah::
N: Canadian girl って、こう、ちょっと、結構、大きい人多い。ちょっと太ってたりもするし::
L: Hu::h.
N: 特に足とかすごい太い人多いって思った。

L: **Okay.**
N: **But, so something like. They won't have someone approaching them [in Japan], but I thought when they are abroad, they have experiences like that.**
L: **I see.**
N: **Yeah.**
L: **Well, why do you think that's the case? (3)**
N: **Well, that's pro::bably, um, maybe native students abroad might be interested in Japan. And one more thing. Maybe small, they like that Japanese girls are small. Um, Japanese, women are, do you the word *kogara* (small)?**
L: **I do=**
N: **Um, like** slender, slender **and a little bit, um, if you compare**, they are smaller **right? Small, small.**
L: **I see.**
N: **Small, um** compared to Canadian girl? **Are they? @ I think this is my stereotype, I'm sorry, um,** this is **this might be**, perhaps just uh, my stereotype but.
L: Ah::
N: A Canadian girl **is, like, a little, quite, many of them are big. Some are a little chubby too::**
L: Hu::h.
N: **I thought especially legs, there are many with really big legs.**

Natsuki's perception of the symbolic capital attached to Japanese women's intersection of nationality/race and gender abroad is apparent through his assertion that even undesirable Japanese women are popular overseas. This is based on their appearance (「かわいい」, "cute"), particularly in contrast with "Canadian girls" whom Natsuki found to be physically large and often ちょっと太ってる ("a little bit chubby"). Japanese women, however, are described as

slender, which he assumes is more attractive. Nevertheless, although Japanese women may have symbolic capital abroad, Natsuki's elaboration on the women's supposedly petite figures presented them a subordinate identity.

Excerpt 9.13: Natsuki – *"Maybe a male instinct comes out"*

N: やっぱり日本人の女性ってちょっと小柄って感じだからこう守りたい気持ちで行く。So for guy, um, they want to guard こう守りたい、protect the Japanese girl because Japanese girl is smaller and very 細い、slender. そう 弱く見える so look very weak right? L: Hm:: N: Uh compared to Canadian girls. だからなんというか？男の本能出てくるかも。何？この male's 本能. Instinct. L: Ah:: N:うん。To protect girls from other なとか、このね？ [hugging gesture] L: はいはいはい= N: Enemies かな？ @@ L: Hm:: 面白いね。 N: そういうもあるかもね。	N: **You know, Japanese females are like a little small, so they [men] go with the feeling like they want to protect her.** So for guy, um, they want to guard **like they want to protect her**, protect the Japanese girl because Japanese girl is smaller and very **skinny,** slender. **So they look weak** so look very weak right? L: Hm:: N: Uh compared to Canadian girls. **So what do you call it? Maybe a male instinct comes out. What is it? This** male's **instinct**. Instinct. L: Ah:: N: **Yes. Like,** to protect girls from other, **like this? [hugging gesture]** L: **I see=** N: **From** enemies **or something**? @@ L: Hm:: **Interesting.** N: **Maybe there is some aspect like that.**

Here, physical fragility is described not only as a favourable quality in a woman, but also as a sign of femininity that can activate heterosexual masculinity. In other words, Japanese women's "weak" appearance bolsters the inherent male need to "protect" their female romantic partner. According to Natsuki, Canadian women, whose average size perhaps does not warrant the same extent of male safeguarding, may therefore be less attractive romantic partners for men. By placing Japanese women in a subordinate position of needing to be protected, Natsuki claims a dominant identity over 'Japanese women'.

vii. Discussion

One of the goals of this study is to examine how participants speak individually and collectively about their communities and the members within them during their sojourns. Japanese women became popular characters in many interviewees' accounts, which was likely prompted by my request for participants to compare their experiences to those of the Japanese women around them. Cameron (2001) notes how the narratives of self and other allow us to curate our own identities through interaction. In other words, speaking about their ideas of the experiences of Japanese women allowed participants to construct their own identities in research interviews.

Some participant comments about the images of Japanese women abroad and in Japan are reflective of wider discourses that surround Japanese women, English, Western men, and racialized romance. In this way, participants can be viewed as replicating and strengthening these discourses, while at the same time creating subject positions for themselves in relation to Japanese women and host community men. In other words, the men in this study drew wider discourses to construct images of Japanese men (self) and Japanese women and non-Japanese men (others).

Participants identity in relation to the discursive construction of Japanese women's *akogare*

The idea frequently expressed by participants of Japanese women's passion for English and English-speaking (particularly White) men can be analysed within broader discourses of the status of English and Whiteness in Japan. The global power of English and the perception of its financial and personal benefit in Japan have been argued to have forged a widespread desire to be a part of the global English speaking community (e.g., Kobayashi, 2018; Kubota, 2011;

Yamagami & Tollefson, 2009). These notions are strengthened through educational institutions such as the *eikaiwa* (private English language school) industry, which commonly promotes English as fashionable, fun and an essential tool for individual growth and connection with the non-Japanese community (Kubota, 2011). Likewise, many Japanese universities frame English language abilities as a pathway to skills in intercultural communication and global citizenship (Kobayashi, 2018).

Despite the aggressive promotion of English in Japan, scholars like Kubota (1998; 2011; 2018) Matsuda (2003) and Rivers and Ross (2013) contend that a socially constructed connection between English and Inner Circle (primarily White) countries bestows the identity of 'legitimate speaker' to a limited amount of individuals of the English speaking community. According to Holliday (2006), English native speakerism positions individuals from Inner Circle nations as both gatekeepers to the language and to Anglophone culture. This gatekeeper status can give Anglophones increased symbolic capital in contexts where English is valued.

Participant accounts frequently replicated ideologies of English native speakerism when describing their perceptions of Japanese women's *akogare* for English, Whiteness, and images of the idealized native speaker. For instance, many interviewees claimed that the Japanese women's acquisition of English and entrance into their host communities were facilitated by these women's *akogare* for the target and native speakers. Moreover, racialized desire within the discourse of *akogare* was presented as the strongest motivation for many Japanese female sojourners. Participant comments are reflective of both Kelsky's (2001b) and Takahashi's (2013) presentations of heterosexual female Japanese women's international narratives, where desire for contact with English and White English-speaking men were argued to be propelling factors in women's decisions to go abroad.

Participant descriptions of women's *akogare* sometimes acted as a tool to construct their own identity. At times, Japanese men were marginalized in the portrayal of Japanese's women's passion for English and host community men. As a way of claiming more powerful identities, some participants claimed more powerful identities by creating counter discourses about Japanese women - for instance, on occasions where *akogare* was seen as something dangerous, excessive or humourous.

Both study abroad and WHM programs provide a variety of opportunities for language learning and intercultural relationships. Becoming a recognized and respected member within a host community is often a primary goal of international sojourners and has been noted to significantly increase satisfaction with life abroad in addition to foreign language development (Block, 2009; Hendrickson, Rosen & Aune, 2011; Kinginger, 2009). In the case of Japanese nationals learning English overseas, Takahashi (2013) and Takayama (2000) claim gaining access to White, native English speaking communities can be seen as a sign of success in one's time abroad. There may even be a sense of pride in doing so – or envy among those who struggle to develop relationships with desired interlocutors. In contrast, spending ample time with one's own nationality while abroad can be seen as a failure of an international sojourn (Kinginger, 2009; Takahashi, 2013; Takayama, 2000). Reflecting on these ideas of 'successes' and 'failures' abroad provides a possible reason why some of the interviewees in this dissertation appeared somewhat jealous of what they perceived as Japanese women's ease in joining host communities.

Using Occidental discourses to describe Japanese women's interactions with Western men

The heteronormative discourse of Japanese women's widespread attraction to Western, particularly White men, has been observed in discussions of Japanese women's international narratives (e.g., Hirakawa, 2004) and Japanese women's English language learning inside and

outside of Japan (e.g., Kobayashi, 2018). When taken uncritically, this discourse suggests that 'the international' can act as a source of liberation and growth for Japanese women. Consequently, Japanese men, who represent restrictive domestic traditions, are positioned as oppressors whereas Western (frequently White) men are viewed as a path to freedom (Kato, 2007; Hirakawa, 2004). Several studies have analysed Occidental notions within the narratives of Japanese women that create essentialized images of Western men as more tender, respectful, romantic, and independent than Japanese men, in addition to being taller and more handsome (e.g., Hirakawa, 2004; Kelsky, 2001a; 2001b; Kubota, 2011; Ma, 1996; Takahashi, 2013; Takeda, 2012). The women's statements in these studies often construct a binary image of Japan and "the West", and of course, Japanese and Western men. Some of the interviewees in this dissertation appear to have taken up similar Occidentalist discourses when imagining the aspirations and actions of Japanese women abroad. This was done primarily through emphasizing both the differences and the appeals of Western heterosexual men in comparison to Japanese men, or at times more generally, Asian men.

Romance with a member of the host community is often perceived as a pathway to legitimate membership in that community, both for immigrants and temporary sojourners (Nemoto, 2009; Takahashi, 2013). In the context of this dissertation, intimacy with Western, English-speaking men in the host community was presented as providing symbolic capital to Japanese women through two status raising acts: (1) increasing English language acquisition and (2) granting legitimate membership within the host community. In this way, desire has the potential to lead to the construction of new identities. **"**[D]esire and passion for other people" claims Nemoto (2009), "is shaped socially and culturally, and often reflects a person's desire for self-realization and a social identity, and by extension a person's craving for certain social and

cultural powers" (p. 1). Simply put, romantic desire is not merely based on an attraction to an individual but also the status inherent in that person's intersections of identity. In the case of Japanese women dating White, English-speaking men in a context where the man's identity indexes privilege and power, a portion of the man's symbolic capital may be transferred to his Japanese female partner. As a result, Japanese women's so-called success dating abroad may have been a source of envy for this dissertation's participants.

Imagining Japanese women through the lens of White male desire

Heterosexual men in participants' host communities were important agents within participant accounts. In the case of non-European or non-Inner Circle countries, however, host community men were rarely spoken about. When describing the men from Anglophone or European countries, many participants used Occidentalist terms. Likewise, common Orientalist discourses where used to explain why they believed Japanese women might be appealing romantic partners for heterosexual men in their host communities (and sometimes in Japan). In other words, most participants described Japanese women's *moteru* status through what they imagined host community men (and sometimes non-Japanese men in Japan) were thinking.

According to several participants, part of the appeal of Japanese women to men in their host community was Japanese women's obedient nature and physical beauty. This was occasionally contrasted with images of the femininity of non-Japanese women (of non-Asian backgrounds). For instance, Natsuki saw Japanese femininity as superior to the femininity of the Canadian female students at his host university because of the ways essentialized Japanese femininity supported heteronormative masculinity. Nemoto (2009; 2011) argues that feminist movements in many Western nations have attributed to an anxiety about men's role in the workplace and family, resulting in concerns of 'endangered masculinity' in these cultures. She

further contends that the colonial history of White dominance between Western nations and Asian countries such as Japan, Vietnam, Korea and the Philippines lingers through essentialized Orientalist images of Asian peoples. Within these discourses, Asian women have been hypersexualized and portrayed as eager to fulfill the romantic and sexual needs of White men.

At the same time, Nemoto (2009) argues that the economic advancement of Asian nations and immigrants in the West has created a competing discourse: Asians as 'model minorities' in the West. Model minorities are compliant, hardworking and embrace traditional family values that anti-feminist movements claim are no longer commonly seen in Western nations due to the increase of egalitarianism. Asian women may therefore be viewed as "a cultural and sexual remedy for white men's masculinity crisis in the face of white feminism" (p. 24). Nemoto's (2009) example of Gary, a middle-aged American man married to a Korean American woman that he originally met in Korea, articulates these ideas well. When speaking about his wife, Gary states,

> In fact, many of my friends, non-Asian friends, actually say that they envy me because they understand that Asian women are very good wives and very nice ladies. They exhibit qualities that a lot of American women don't seem to have…[They are] family oriented, they are good mothers and good parents, loyal to the families." (p. 47)

Several of the participants in this dissertation replicate similar Orientalist notions when describing Japanese women as obedient and passive or easily dominated by their non-Japanese male partners. Such descriptions construe Japanese femininity as a force that builds up the masculinity of the men around them. Conversely, White femininity may be positioned as "as a pathology of sexual promiscuity, lack of discipline, or poor family values" (Nemoto, 2009, p. 81) and a threat to Western gendered traditions. Specifically in the case of Japan, Appleby's (2013a; 2014) interviews with White male university faculty showed how participants portrayed White

women in Japan as overly aggressive and even disrespectful in comparison to Japanese women. Overall, Japanese women were defined as much more suitable partners for both White and Japanese men. Appleby's interviewees' comments are reflective of Connell's (2005) assertion of the key role that women's affirmation have in the legitimization of heterosexual masculinity. This also suggests why the participants in the current study bestowed value to essentialized notions of Japanese femininity.

As particularly apparent in Natsuki's account (Excerpt 8.12), Japanese women were sometimes portrayed as possessors of idealized femininity through their physical characteristics. Interviewees connected the idea of Japanese women's femininity to a petite size and 「かわいい」 (cute) fashion style. Drawing on the socially constructed and relatively uncompromising ideals of women's beauty in the United States, Nemoto (2011) claims, "[i]n a culture that automatically equates long dark hair and a thin body with being 'feminine' regardless of race, images of the Asian female body are easily marked as representatives of a non-threatening femininity." (p. 223). Likewise, Natsuki claimed that Japanese women's slender figure generated a sense of physical power and duty among their Canadian male partners. Again reflecting on Appleby's (2013b) interviews of White male faculty in Japan, her conclusion that for many respondents, "Western women were unappealing – emotionally and physically – in comparison to Japanese women, who were said to display the hallmarks of a more traditional femininity in their petite statue and polite behaviour" (p. 786), mirrors similar comments to Natsuki.

Connell (2005) claims that the performance of masculinity is both "symbolic and kinetic, social and bodily, at one and the same time, and *these aspects depend on each other*" (p. 54, italics in original). Similarly, participants in this dissertation linked both the social and physical in their accounts; they drew on Orientalist discourses of submissiveness and the sexual appeal of

a petite frame when justifying Japanese women's supposed popularity with heterosexual Western men. In other words, several interviewees suggested that it was the potential to exercise both and emotional and physical authority over Japanese women that complements and attracts Western (primarily White) masculinity.

Another common Orientalist discourse, the eroticization and hypersexualization of Asian women, was apparent in the way a small number of participants spoke about Japanese women in their host communities and Japan, as evidenced by Excerpt 9.8, 9.9 and 9.10 from Shinya and Yoshi. These two men claim there is an 'easiness' of White men in 'getting' or sleeping with Japanese women, a feat accomplished primarily by the White men's race and linguistic capital. By sexualizing Japanese women who have relationships with White men and racializing their interactions, Shinya and Yoshi constructed a social hierarchy that disempowers Japanese women and decontextualizes their romantic choices. As a result, they also created more powerful identities for themselves through marginalizing Japanese women. Such notions are reminiscent of the sexist "yellow cab" discourse created by Ieda (1991) that condemned Japanese women who left Japan for overseas sojourns and sexualized these women by portraying them as engaging in 'sex tourism' with Western men (see Hirota, 2000).

In their descriptions of the Japanese female experience, the men in this study portrayed Japanese women through their image of the eyes of Western, White men abroad. Still, the question remains: How did the participants feel about Japanese women supposedly being picked up by host community members in terms of their own dating prospects? Did they feel anger over losing 'their' women to another group of men? Competition may occur among heterosexual men as they judge each other, and their own masculine standing, on the status of the women they are involved with (Nemoto, 2009). However, no participant in the current study expressed jealousy

or a sense of loss concerning host community men dating Japanese women. Instead, Japanese women were generally seen as a source of envy for having greater access to language resources and host community social networks.

Participants' motivation through perceptions of marginalization

According to participant accounts, "Japaneseness" took on a powerful form of symbolic capital for Japanese women that Japanese men did not experience. The majority of participants saw their identities as Japanese men as a hindrance to their social and linguistic development. This was contrasted with Japanese women, who had symbolic capital on the basis of intersections of their gender and nationality. Moreover, several men described a hierarchy of desirability abroad, with Japanese women residing above heterosexual Japanese men. A sojourners' interaction with a language and its speakers are reflective of the relations of power within a given community (Brown, 2014), suggesting that the perception of being marginalized may have negative impacted some participants' time abroad.

The ability to speak and to command respect clearly was linked to the gendered identities of several men in this study as they expected themselves *as men* to have skilled linguistic abilities to initiate or lead a conversation with others in English. Feeling unable to perform masculinity through speaking with the same authority as in Japan may have caused them to confront ideas of what their own masculinity indexed overseas, particularly for the men who attributed the ability to lead in a conversation or a romantic relationship to the role of a man. Coming into contact with new gendered cultural and linguistic norms abroad can have a major impact a newcomer's experience and identity development abroad. Pavenko (2001) argues that this takes place both in private and public spheres, and that the "reinterpretation of one's subjectivities in order to position oneself in new communities of practice and to 'mean' in the

new environment" (p. 133) is necessary for immigrant and sojourner integration. If the participants in this dissertation did not perceive themselves as 'meaning' legitimately in their host community, it could have led their time abroad as being constructed as a loss.

Alongside their descriptions of the struggles of Japanese men abroad, participants articulated a keen desire to be validated as community members and bona fide conversational partners within their host community. Yet, reflection on personal feelings of marginalization seem to have inspired some of the men to actively build their lives abroad in accordance with their desires of integration into their host communities. They began to assertively seek out contexts where they could claim the power to speak (Norton, 2000). Bonding with other international students, joining sports teams, seeking employment in English speaking environments, teaching Japanese and pursuing English language study groups are all examples of joining social networks that provided personal value to participants. This are also examples that challenge the discourse of *uchimuki* Japanese youth. Thus, it can be said that these men resisted both the unwanted discourses of a failed sojourn and undesirable images surrounding Japanese men abroad through exercising agency. While one's identity may be "a site of struggle" (Norton, 2000, p. 127), these participants also reveal the ways in which resistance and agency go hand in hand in order to establish desirable identities.

Reflections on Teutsch-Dwyer's (2001) study may further suggest a positive analysis regarding the current study's participants' English development overseas. Karol, of whom Teutsch-Dwyer conducted a 14-month case study, was a Polish man living in the United States whose primary source of English interaction was his American girlfriend and two English-speaking female co-workers. While this would appear to be the ideal environment for naturalized language development, Teutsch-Dwyer concludes that the women simplified and slowed their

speech for Karol's benefit, which ultimately resulted in a decrease in Karol's efforts to use error-free English. Although Karol was able to perform a masculine identity with these women as a boyfriend or jokester, his language development appeared to have halted. Overall, Teutsch-Dwyer suggests the possibility that linguistic development can actually be discouraged through the modified speech in romantic and friendly relationships. Therefore, within this dissertation, it cannot be presumed that the Japanese women described in participant accounts actually developed their target language skills significantly through interactions with host community men. In contrast, many interviewees claimed they had to assertively pursue their own opportunities for English usage in unfamiliar contexts. According to Brown (2014), exercising agency in language learning is an act of self-making and may help firm the establishment of a desirable identity overseas. In other words, joining communities where participants held legitimate identities was likely beneficial to their social networks and language development, despite participants' perceptions of Japanese women in their host communities being more successful in these fields.

viii. Summary

Chapter 9 analysed participants' individual and collective discursive construction of their experience through broad comparisons to the experiences of Japanese women. The men in this study drew on discourses reflected in other studies of the Japanese international and English-language learning community to frame the desires and actions of Japanese women. Such discourses included heterosexual women's passion for English language learning and Western cultures, and a romantic desire for non-Japanese, particularly White, native English-speaking men. Participants viewed the Japanese women abroad and the objects of their desire as mutually attracted to each other, allowing Japanese women to gain access to two very important goals in

study abroad and WHM programs: language learning and expanded social networks. The descriptions of Japanese women's supposed success even led some participants to articulate a sense of marginalization that limited their experiences overseas.

For some participants, however, marginalization was a source of inspiration that pushed them to assertively cultivate their own opportunities for English use and participation in their host community. Therefore, it is difficult to surmise if the men in this study actually suffered socially or linguistically because of their identity as "Japanese male".

When speaking about Japanese females abroad, participants frequently utilized essentializing discourses that presented these women as hyperfeminine, and in some cases, hypersexual. Interestingly, participants often described Japanese women through the imagined eyes of Western (mostly White) men. Japanese femininity was also constructed in relations to, and competition with, that of non-Japanese women in their host communities. Western men, in turn, were often described in Occidentalist terms that created a binary view of the West and Japan, and emphasized the essentialized appearance (White, tall, blonde, blue-eyed) and essentialized social culture (aggressive and confident) of these men abroad.

Within this chapter, opinions regarding the racialized romantic and sexual lives of Japanese women were shared by several men, in addition to the ideal of a marginalized status of Japanese men abroad as *motenai*. In the next chapter, participants' perceptions of their own desirability abroad will be explored, taking into account their intersections of identity including race, nationality, gender, language abilities and sexuality.

Chapter 10: Perceptions of Japanese Men and Racialized Romance Abroad and in Japan

i. Introduction

This chapter focuses on portions of participant narratives that contained discourses of desire and desirability concerning Japanese men. While ample research has examined notions of Japanese women and *akogare* for specific languages, cultures and relationships, few studies have analysed the Japanese male experience in-depth from this perspective. I attempt to expand the conversation on Japanese male sojourners' perceptions of desire through specifically analyzing how race and language interact with romance in their accounts.

By primarily looking at intersections of race, nationality, and gender, I explore how participants utilize discourses of Orientalism to create comparisons between notions of Japanese masculinity and Western masculinity that may marginalizes Japanese men. I draw on the work of Connell (2005) and Kimmel (2010) to display how hegemonic masculinities are created through otherizing non-hegemonic masculinities. By primarily referencing the work of Nemoto (2009), I look at the ways that Asian masculinity can be feminized and depreciated in comparison to discourses of White Western hegemonic masculinity. Ultimately, I argue that perceptions of this marginalization extends outside of Anglophone and European nations to affect some participants since their return to Japan. Descriptions in several participant accounts construct a racialized hierarchy of desirability where women in their host community, particularly White women, act as status-enhancing partners for heterosexual Japanese men.

This chapter also includes analysis of alternative discourses that are critical of perceptions of Whiteness and White femininity. Although critiquing notions of White femininity

was not frequent in interviews, including it in the presentations of findings helps illustrate the diversity of the Japanese male experience and challenges some of the common ideas that were present in other interviewee's accounts. Lastly, by drawing on my interview with Ryoma, one of the two bisexual men in this study, I discuss how Japanese men in the LGBTQ community may possess symbolic capital that differs from heterosexual Japanese men sojourning in Anglophone and European nations.

ii. Discussing Akogare for Western Women

Many participants spoke frequently of their ideas of the romantic lives of Japanese women abroad and in Japan in connection to heteronormative discourses of *akogare* for Western men. Yet, several participants (1, 6, 12, 13, 15, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24) spoke about an attraction to English, Anglophone culture, and romantic desires for Western women. The majority of participants described this a general desire they perceived among Japanese men, where as Nobu, Shinya and Tom described a personal attraction to these women.

In Chapter 9, White English-speaking boyfriends were linked to an increase in symbolic capital for Japanese women among their sojourner community. This was also suggested to facilitate the women's ability to claim identities as legitimate community members. Likewise, some interviewees suggested that men could also gain status through romantic relationships with women in their host communities. Nori, who spoke previously about the "high status" of a Japanese women having a foreign (White) boyfriend (Excerpt 9.2) also shed light on perceptions of a reversal of the romantic relationship – a Japanese man dating a White woman.

Excerpt 10.1: Nori – *"Did you get a blonde beauty?"*

L: So if a Japanese woman having a foreign boyfriend um is high status, do you think it's the same the other way? So a Japanese man=	L: So if a Japanese woman having a foreign boyfriend um is high status, do you think it's the same the other way? So a Japanese man=

N: Ah::=
L: having a foreign girlfriend?
N: (3) I don't think, um it's not high. Uh. Not as high as the female situation. But um, I think many Japanese guys try to, tries to show off? Like (.) the:: fact that they have a foreign girlfriend @ I think. So yeah.
L: Mmhm. Do you have any examples of that or?
N: Uh, do you mean my personal experience?
L: Yeah yeah yeah.
N: Okay um (5) Ah:: 実際にそのカップルになったわけじゃないけど。例えば (2) when I say to my friends or my 先輩 or, whoever, they always say to me, like, 金髪の美女できた？=
L：あ::はいはい=
N：とか。あの、なんかそういう発言はするから which means, um, having like foreign, sometimes especially like blonde girls. As a girlfriend is kind of 憧れ. Also for Japanese, Japanese men. So (6) yep.
L: Mmhm that is very interesting.
N: But I think あのなんか (2) 多分 there are [I have] many friends who are interested in like foreign countries とか。 その興味、関心ある友達が多いから、そういう話が多いかもしれない。けど、結構、その、having a foreign girlfriend は結構まぁ、なんか、自慢できることみたいな。
L: うんうん=
N: そして look nice されてる。
L: そうっかそうっか。
N: と思います。

N: Ah::=
L: having a foreign girlfriend?
N: (3) I don't think, um it's not high. Uh. Not as high as the female situation. But um, I think many Japanese guys try to, tries to show off? Like (.) the:: fact that they have a foreign girlfriend @ I think. So yeah.
L: Mmhm. Do you have any examples of that or?
N: Uh, do you mean my personal experience?
L: Yeah yeah yeah.
N: Okay um (5) Ah:: **I didn't actually have a relationship with a foreign woman. But for example,** (2) when I say to my friends or my **senpai [senior]** or, whoever, they always say to me, like, **"Did you get a blonde beauty" [girlfriend]?**=
L：**Oh**:: **I see**=
N：**Something like that. Well, because they make comments like that so** which means, um, having like foreign, sometimes especially like blonde girls. As a girlfriend is kind of ***akogare* [longing].** Also for Japanese, Japanese men. So (6) yep.
L: Mmhm that is very interesting.
N: But I think **well like** (2) **probably** I have many friends who are interested in like foreign countries **or something. Because I have many friends who have that interest, or are interested, so maybe that's why we often talk about these kind of things. But, very, um,** having a foreign girlfriend **is pretty, well, like, something that you can show off.**
L: **Yeah=**
N: **Do (show off) and seen as** look nice.
L: **I see I see.**
N: **I think so.**

Nori claims that although romance with non-Japanese women does not carry the same 'status' for Japanese men as it does for Japanese women dating foreign men, such a relationship is still marked in some way. Furthermore, he uses the term *akogare* when describing an attraction among Japanese men to "foreign" women. Race arises as a salient factor in his

account, as seen in Nori's recollection of his friends' comments of 「金髪の美女できた？」("Did you get a blonde beauty [girlfriend]?"). Blonde women, who frequently represent the essentialized image of White femininity (Nemoto, 2009; Russell, 2018), appear to be what some members of Nori's community imagine as a "foreign" woman. The comments of Nori's friends replicate essentialist discourses of Whiteness similar to those in Tani's comments of "blue eyes and blonde hair" (Excerpt, 8.3) when he describes his ideas of Japanese women's *akogare* for White men.

According to Nori, a blonde White girlfriend is something that Japanese men can "show off", suggesting that these women carry some form of symbolic capital that holds value among one's host community or in Japan. Although he notes that this *akogare* may be especially strong among his friends who perhaps have an interest in foreign countries, Nori follows this comment by reasserting that having a foreign girlfriend is something a man can brag about.

A rarity of foreign women in Japan, combined with their presence in Western film and media circulating in Japan, were commonly given as reasons for what participants perceived as a general heterosexual Japanese male fascination with White femininity. In the following excerpt with Tani, which was prompted by my direct focus on his host community of North America, Tani stresses how North American and European women's appearances in films in Japan solidifies a belief that all Western women are as beautiful as TV actresses. He claims that this increases the desirably of these women and the status of Japanese men who date them.

Excerpt 10.2: Tani – *"Good job!"*

L: So then like if um (2) I guess I am curious about the way Japanese men would see foreign women, or North American women? Or=
T: Ah::

L: Yeah. Because we talked about Japanese women having 憧れ **[akogare (longing)]**, do you think Japanese men=
T: Japanese men?
L: Do you think there's the same interest in=
T: Oh, definitely, definitely. Yeah.
L: Yeah, huh.
T: Yeah so this (3) this fantasy that (2) uh that women in the States or Canada or European countries. That everyone is so beautiful @@ like actress in TV show.
L: That image of Hollywoo::d?
T: Yes, yeah yeah @ right. So you understand that Japan is island right? Island. And they (3) So in the old days like we can't see the foreigners in daily life. The outside. We only see the movies and (2) television. We can see foreigners on television. They're really beautiful. Because they are actress @
L: Of course, they are=
T: They are models. @ Ah, they are beautiful.
L: I see I see.
T: @
L: So that's the image that people mostly see.
T: Mmhm.
L: So they have this image in their minds?
T: Yeah (2) So, so definitely, so:: (2) if one of my friend uh:: had a made a girlfriend who is from, who is a foreigner. Maybe was he was treated like, oh, やったな **[good job]！**
L: Ah:: I see I see.
T: @ Yeah, yeah?
L: So did your friends say that to you too? With your American girlfriend before?
T: Ah::
L: Were they like, "good job"?
T: Yes yes yes. A few friends told me so @

Just as Tani connected heterosexual Japanese women's *akogare* for White men to groups like One Direction flooding Japanese media (Excerpt 9.3), he claimed that the pervasiveness of beautiful Western actresses in TV and film have created a stereotype that all North American and European women are "beautiful @@ like actress in TV show". His account also reflects *nihonjinron* discourses that paint Japan as a secluded, homogenous nation with very few outsiders. Thus, the rarity of Western women and their media presence are seen as contributing to the construction of *akogare* for these women among heterosexual Japanese men.

It is unclear if Tani is speaking about all Western women (clearly an ambiguous term), or focusing on White as he did with blonde haired blue eyed men in his description of the object of desire of Japanese women (Excerpt 9.3). However, considering that the majority of Western celebrities in Japanese media are White (Creighton, 1995; Russell, 2017), there is a possibility that Tani is referring primarily to White women. The supposed beauty of Western women appears to be a status giving force in Tani's accounts, so much so that he suggests a male friend would be praised by other men for having a "foreign" girlfriend. This seems to be Tani's experience as well, who somewhat sheepishly admitted to me that he was also applauded by his friends for dating a White, American woman in Japan.

Shinya expressed an attraction to women in his host community, whom he described as "Canadian" and "non-Japanese". According to Shinya, the beauty of these women was a barrier to heterosexual Japanese men approaching them since it negatively affected the men's confidence. He even claimed these women are "too pretty" to speak to. This came as somewhat of a surprise to me considering that Shinya had previously spoken about his perception of the romantic popularity of Japanese female sojourners. This interaction takes place after Shinya had described his hesitation to speak with "Canadian women" at clubs during his study abroad.

Excerpt 10.3: Shinya - Beauty "beyond cloud"

S: Japanese doesn't have to:: (2) doesn't have confidence.
L: Ah.
S: Yeah to approach to Canadian. Really hard to be boyfriend.
L: Yeah yeah?
S: That's why (.) we hold back.
L: So why, why do you think it's difficult to approach? Or I should say, why is there a lack of confidence among a lot of the men?
S: Too pretty. @@
L: Too pretty? @@
S: In my opinion. Too pretty.
L: But you said many people say Japanese girls are su::per cute?

S: @ (2) Not same. Yeah. Beyond cloud @@

[Shinya discussing bar culture in Japan omitted]
[…]

L: So before you mentioned having confidence to approach like Canadian or America::n women or=
S: Yeah, non-Japanese I meant=
L: Yeah. Non-Japanese. U::m. Because you said, in <u>your opinion</u>, they're <u>too</u> pretty.
S: @ Too pretty @
L: Can I ask (.) why are they too pretty? Is it=
S: I think because I like big eyes, tall nose, and cute smile @@ That's why.
L: I see like a big smile?
S: Yeah. I like that smile. But I think Japanese girls has (2) Hm:: okay okay I don't say @@
L: You can say it if =
S: I think Japanese girls have narrow eyes. Not tall nose. Yeah. That's why.
L: So the physica::l features of the face.
S: Yeah. But I'm speaking of physically. Both of them has nice mental. @@

Although Shinya does not specifically refer to White women in this segment, he uses essentialized notions of Whiteness such as "big eyes" and a "tall nose", which are characteristics commonly used in Japanese discourses to refer to Whites (Creighton, 1995; Moony, 2014; Russell, 2017). Furthermore, previously in our interview he described these women as "Oh like you". The features attributed to these women by Shinya creates a fantasy-like quality reminiscent of *akogare*, as they reside on a level "beyond cloud" in comparison to Japanese women. Japanese women, on the other hand, are given physical characteristics Shinya implies are less attractive ("narrow eyes", "not a tall nose"). Shinya further emphasizes the impact of the physical allure of foreign women by stressing that both Japanese women and non-Japanese women have "nice mental" (nice minds), and yet he is still drawn to non-Japanese women. Shinya's idealization of these women creates essentialized images that, despite his praise, result in a distinct sense of otherness and separation. These notions of unattainable beauty and

difference therefore create a gap that Shinya believes prevents heterosexual Japanese men and non-Japanese women, particularly White women, from engaging in romantic relationships.

iii. Heterosexual Japanese men as motenai with Western women

As described in Chapter 8, the majority of participants portrayed Japanese female sojourners as desirable romantic partners for heterosexual men in their host communities. Japanese men, however, were rarely positioned in the same way, especially in North American and European destinations. Overall, Japanese men were not seen as attractive romantic partners abroad, especially for host community women of non-Asian backgrounds. This was largely attributed to an image of inferiority when placed in juxtaposition with the males in participants' host communities. Interviewees used physical, social, and financial justification for the supposed unpopularity of heterosexual Japanese men abroad. A variety of factors including: average height, muscle mass, personality, and the income of Japanese men were used to stress their assumed lack of appeal to Western women, both abroad and in Japan. Ryota, who provided the following example, described how a global standard of attractiveness favoured essentialized images of European males. This excerpt took place shortly after Excerpt 9.6, where Ryota claimed Japanese women have more chances to learn English due to their popularity abroad.

Excerpt 10.4: Ryota – *"That coolness is a global standard"*

L: Yeah yeah, you mentioned that they [Japanese men] don't seem as appealing or attractive. So can you talk more about that? Like, why, why do you think so?	L: Yeah yeah, you mentioned that they [Japanese men] don't seem as appealing or attractive. So can you talk more about that? Like, why, why do you think so?
R: [breathes in] Uh:: The the moment I felt the most is, at the club. Yeah.	R: [breathes in] Uh:: The the moment I felt the most is, at the club. Yeah.
L: Yeah.	L: Yeah.
R: Yeah they are ta::ll I mean, like White women are like average tall, like height average is really higher than Japanese. Japanese guys, Japanese guys or Asian guys	R: Yeah they are ta::ll I mean, like White women are like average tall, like height average is really higher than Japanese. Japanese guys, Japanese guys or Asian guys

are mostly sa::me or a little bit higher than the White or Black girl. I think. So that's um, still like uh (5) the beau::ty the perspective of beauty? Is a bit, like (4) um, @ ちょっと難しいけど=
L: 大丈夫、ちょっと難しい質問、確かに。
R: Like still, big, like ta::ll and the guy who has muscles. And uh, really like manish, manish guys are popular all over the world. I think I think. I mean Asians (2) Asians are maybe a bit different but I, I heard many girls said uh, like uh:: the White guys are really co::ol and handsome. なんかいっぱい。やっぱり、外人はかっこいいとか。まだやっぱりこう、外国人というか？その From me, from us. From Japanese guy からした外国人は、ちょっと背が高くて、tall and なんか筋肉があって。(2)で、やっぱり、そのかっこよさというのが世界基準で、は、やっぱりまだ Whites とか Blacks が、Asian よりある？なんかそういう人が多いから。そう、なんか、なんかなぁとか？
L: うんうんうん。
N:@めちゃ個人的な意見やけど。It's my, just my own opinion but.
L: Yeah yeah yeah. And =
N: うん。だから見た目とか。その Asian と European の違いというのモテ、モテ度？モテ度。 割と、関係してるんかなって。そう。まだ。

are mostly sa::me or a little bit higher than the White or Black girl. I think. So that's um, still like uh (5) the beau::ty the perspective of beauty? Is a bit, like (4) um, @ **It's a little bit difficult though=**
L: **That's okay, it is definitely kind of a tough question.**
R: Like still, big, like ta::ll and the guy who has muscles. And uh, really like manish, manish guys are popular all over the world. I think I think. I mean Asians (2) Asians are maybe a bit different but I, I heard many girls said uh, like uh:: the White guys are really co::ol and handsome. **Like, a lot. After all, *gaijin* [foreigners] are cool or. Still, foreigners are like, um,** From me, from us. From Japanese guy, **foreigners are a bit tall,** tall and **like more muscular. (2) And, you know, that coolness is a global standard, um, still yet** Whites **or** Blacks **have more (global-standard coolness) than** Asian? **Like there are many people (who think) like that. Yeah, you know?**
L: **Yeah.**
N:@ **This is my very personal opinion though.** It's my, just my own opinion but.
L: Yeah yeah yeah. And =
N: **Yeah. So something like appearance. Um, the difference between** Asian **and** European **attractiveness? Degree of attractiveness? Degree of attractiveness. Maybe it's pretty related. Yes. Still.**

Ryota's claim of "manish guys are popular all over the world" while simultaneously stating Japanese men are *not* popular, implies his belief that Japanese men are not "manish" (manly). Within his account, Ryota expands his focus from Japanese men to Asian men in general. He connects the idea of being manly to essentialized physical notions of masculinity by stressing differences in height and muscle mass. A preference for tall, muscular men is a

standard Ryota claims to exist "all over the world". Yet, Japanese men, who he saw as generally short and slim, do not reach this masculine standard. Ryota also demonstrated how the legitimization of masculinity can be challenged by the bodies of women. Here, the bodies of White and Black women were described as a similar height to Asian men, resulting in the denial of desirable masculine identities to heterosexual Asian men.

Heterosexual Japanese men were sometimes associated with unattractive personality traits that hindered them from dating non-Japanese women. These characteristics were those commonly associated with Occidentalist discourses that contrast Japan and 'the West'. For instance, perceptions of Japanese men as stoic, hardworking, and shy were contrasted with the gregarious and assertive nature of Western host community members. Such was the case with Tani, who not only shared his opinion of the average appearance of a young Japanese man, but also his personality. Focusing specifically on White women, Tani stated that Japanese men had a *motenai* image that came from their subdued personality and lack of confidence.

Throughout the interview, I was very interested in Tani's opinion about intercultural dating in Japan given that he was one of the few participants who had dated a non-Japanese woman. The next excerpt took place after we had briefly discussed the numbers of Japanese men dating and marrying East Asian women in comparison to the low percent of Japanese men married to Western women.

Excerpt 10.5: Tani - *"They have no sense of humour"*

L: Cuz you, you had an American girlfriend? So I am curious about your opinion.
T: (6) Let's see, the first thing is I think language. Language.
L: Hm::
T: The Chine::se or (4) or people from Philippines. Who are living in Japan, talks Japanese maybe 日常的な言葉 **[everyday words].**
L: Yes yes.

T: (5) [breathes in] As you know, Japanese people (.) have no confidence of speaking English. That's one of the reasons. So they can't go [breathes in] Or maybe the (2) the women from uh:: the United States or Canada? (4) Have no interest in Japanese men.
L: Ah, okay.
T: Hm:: I think so.
L: Why do you think they have no interest?
T: Let's see:: (6) In general, Japanese guy looks too quiet, so quiet. Too quiet (2) And they have no sense of humour @@
L: @
T: @@ (3) Always working.
L: 働きすぎ？ **[Working too much?]**
T: うん！ **[Yeah!]** (15) [breathes in] 後は:: **[Other than that]** (3) so I can definitely say that (2) the 白人の **[White]**, the 白人 **[White]** women, who got married to Japanese men, are (5) they have definitely have interest in Japanese culture. So not only she is interesting in him=
L: I see::
T: But also she's definitely have yeah interest in culture.

Tani's description of intercultural dating in Japan contains several assumptions regarding race and language. First, Tani states that East Asian female immigrants in Japan speak at least elementary Japanese and this opens up Japanese men's romantic access to them. Non-Asian female residents, however, are portrayed as not only lacking Japanese language abilities but also being English speakers. Tani describes these women as "Americans", "Canadians", or "白人" ("White people"). Tani's account seems to focus on North American women who are primarily White. This is likely connected to his own sojourn in the USA and his experience dating a White American woman. Another possibility for this focus is my question of how he believes "foreign women, or North American women" are viewed by Japanese men (Excerpt 10.2).

Tani's comments leave little room to acknowledge that non-Asian residents of Japan may speak Japanese or languages other than English. As he mentioned in Excerpt 10.2, he believes Japanese men lack the confidence to use English and therefore cannot communicate with these women. In Tani's account, notions of language and race intersect to create possible barriers for Japanese men interested in dating non-Japanese women. Moreover, Tani states that negative

traits such as overworking and a lack of humour are a substantial disadvantage to Japanese men who wish to date North American women. In fact, he asserts ("I can definitely say that") only the women passionate about Japan and Japanese culture enter into serious relationships with Japanese men. Such a relationship is not based purely on interest or attraction, but on what a Japanese man's nationality represents. In this case, Tani's comments are contrary to previously presented ideas of the *motenai* status of Japanese men considering that their nationalities, or more precisely, what their nationalities are thought to index, can be seen as an influential source of symbolic capital.

The final reason given by participants (1, 6, 12, 23, 25) for the presumed barriers in dating non-Japanese women was economic. Although Japan possesses the third largest economy in the world, the average annual income ranks 18 out of 35 OECD countries (OECD, 2018). This is lower than USA, Canada, Australia, the UK and several countries in the EU. Some participants who suggested a man's ability to be the primary breadwinner as key in constructing his desirability among women, therefore, stated that a man's salary was important in attracting a female partner.

Wataru spoke at length about the high possibility of linguistic communicative difficulties between Japanese male and Anglophone or European female couples. Wataru then extended his comparison of Anglophone or European and South East Asian women in Japan by referencing the importance of a man's economic appeal. This excerpt is a continuation of a lengthy exchange about how language abilities affect the compatibility of Japanese men and non-Japanese female partners.

Excerpt 10.6: Wataru – ***"It's not like they have status"***

W: 逆に、じゃ、なんで東南アジア。東南	W: On the contrary, so, why South East Asia.

アジアは別に日本語じゃないから、あの：：同じって思うけど、でも東南アジアの女性：：とかでもその、これは一般的に言われてることがやっぱり日本の方がその富裕層じゃないけど、お金が持ってる人が多い。だから自分の国の男性と結婚するよりは日本人の男性と結婚した方が、収入的にはやっぱり多くなるから。それも、日本人の男性と結婚したいっていう：：言われる理由だと思う。日本の収入、年 (.) だったら４５０万とか。そのぐらいかな。平均が。でも他の東南アジアだったら、その収入は半分だったりとか。まぁ、それは人によって異なって来るけど。一般的にはね？
L: うんうん。
W: 収入が低いから、多分その東南アジアの女性だって、収入が高い人と結婚したいというのはあると思います。まぁ、それは本当まぁ、一般的なこと。人によっては全然異なったりするけど。
L: うんうん。
W: で、日本人男性も東南、北、そうだね。北米だね。まぁ、欧州、ヨーロッパとか。だと、自分は話しかけられないという、こともあって。向こうの相手もその収入が、別に低いでも訳ではなくて@日本より高かったりする。別にステータスも別にある訳でもない。だからあまり相手にされないというか。相手にされない、まぁ、自信がない。っていうふうに思ってる人が多いと思うね。実際は多分向こうは何も考えて、そこまで思ってないと思うけど。

Japanese is not spoken in South East Asia, so:: I think they are the same, but East Asian women:: um this is generally speaking, people say that Japanese people are not rich but there are those who have money. So they (South East Asian women) can gain more income if they get married to a Japanese man instead of a man from their home country. I think that's one of the reasons why they say that East Asian women want to marry Japanese men::. In addition to that, the income in Japan, per year (.) is around 4,500,000 yen. Something like that, I think. On average. But if in East South Asia, the income would be half or something. Well, that would be different, depending on the person but. Generally speaking, right?
L: Yeah.
W: Because the income (in South East Asian countries) is low, probably South East Asian women, too, want to marry someone who has a high income. Well, that is really, um, a common thing. It can completely depend on each person though.
L: Yeah.
W: So, Japanese men too, South East, North, yeah. North America. Well, somewhere like Europe, Europe. In these places, they (Japanese men) can't talk to them. And it's not that the women's income is low @ but sometimes higher than in Japan. It's not like they [Japanese men] have status. So the women don't care about Japanese men or. They don't care, well, Japanese men don't have the confidence. I think there are many Japanese men who think this way. In reality, probably what they [North America and European women] think, they don't think about this that much though.

According to Wataru, the average difference in income between Japan and many Southeast Asian nations increases the appeal of Japanese men as romantic partners. He also

suggests that Women from places with higher average incomes than Japan would consequently not see the same appeal in a Japanese male partner. Interestingly, Wataru highlights the potential the agency of the (imagined) women in his accounts by emphasizing their ability to choose a Japanese man as a romantic partner while at the same time stressing the importance of a male's breadwinner status in a heterosexual relationship. This can be seen in Wataru's assertion that many Japanese men assume "the women don't care about Japanese men" because of the men's comparable or lesser salaries. At the end of this excerpt, however, Wataru states that he does not believe women from North America or Europe care much about a Japanese man's salary (「そこまで思ってないと思うけど」) . Through this comment, Wataru distances himself from the concerns that the "Japanese men" are described as having in his account.

iv. Critically speaking about Whiteness and akogare for White women

Several accounts described what participants viewed as a general attraction among Japanese men to women from Anglophone or European nations (particularly White women). However, a small group of men spoke very critically about the idolization of Whiteness or White women that they perceived in Japanese society. Some men did this through scrutinizing what they saw as a systemic preference for Whiteness in Japan. Others were explicitly critical of the actions and appearances of White women.

The prejudiced hiring practices of many language institutions in Japan that favour employing White, native speaking English teachers (see Kobayashi, 2018; Kubota, 1998; 2011; 2018; Ng, 2018; Rivers & Ross, 2013) was a topic that Yoshi and I spoke about at length. Yoshi connected biases for White English speakers to privilege in intercultural romantic relationships as well. As a result, I learned great deal about his views on the images of Whiteness within Japan. Moreover, he drew on discourses of race (Asianness) as opposed to only nationality

(Japaneseness) when speaking about racial relations between White and Japanese in Japan. This differed from most other participants who frequently merged notions of race and nationality when speaking about personal identity. According to Yoshi, a widespread global ideology of the superiority of White people over Asians in Japan facilitated White men's (sometimes referred to as 外国人, "foreigner") easy access to romantic relationships with Japanese women. However, he claimed that ideology acted as a hindrance to a Japanese man if he was interested in dating a White woman.

Excerpt 10.7: Yoshi – *"There is an image that Whites are kind of superior"*

Y: あの、外国人の男の人に日本人の女の人。これはよく見るでしょ？	N: Well, a foreign man and a Japanese woman. You see this often right?
L: うんうんうん。	L: Yeah yeah.
Y:でもその逆はあまり見ない気がして=	N: But I feel like I don't see the opposite (combination) much.
L: あまり。そうそう＝	L: Not much. Yeah yeah=
Y:それはその理由は多分さっきリビーが言った[7]やっぱり白人：：が優先。なんというの。白人の方がちょっと上 (.) みたいなイメージがある。日本人からとしたら多分そうだね。だから多分結構、あの:: 僕らからしたら @ 白人の女性をあの、彼女にするのはレベル高い @	N: That is, the reason is probably what you said before, still Whites:: are prioritized. What do you call it. There is the image that Whites are kind of superior (.) From Japanese person's perspective, that's probably it. So probably quite a lot, um:: from my perspective @ a White woman um, being in a relationship with a White woman is high-level [challenging] for (a Japanese man) @
L: @	L: @
Y: @本当に@	N:@Seriously@
L: はいはいはい。	L: Okay, I see.
Y: かなり難しいね。その逆は多分男の外国人とか白人やったら、超簡単じゃない？日本人の女性を@	N: Really difficult. The opposite, probably foreign man or White, is super easy, isn't it? With a Japanese woman@
L:そう＝	L: Right=
Y:そうそう。だからそれは簡単にできるけど、その逆は難しいね。	N: Yeah yeah. So that is easily done, but the opposite is difficult.
L: [breaths out] はいはいはい＝	L: [breaths out] Yes yes yes=
Y: だからやっぱ皆平等だって思ってるけ	N: So sure enough we think we are equal but,

[7] This is another example of how my previous utterance contributed to interview data.

ど。あの、実際は@平等じゃないね@ L: そうそうそう。 Y: 本当に。	actually @we aren't equal, are we@ L: Yeah. N: Really.

Yoshi claims that racialized attitudes within Japan preference White people in a variety of ways and this creates a hierarchy that disadvantages people of Asian backgrounds. He argues this allows Japanese women to enter into romantic relationships with "外国人" (foreign) men or White men much easier than for a Japanese men to date a White woman. In addition to addressing intersections of race and gender in romantic relationships, Yoshi also illustrates the heteronormative gendered expectations in communication where males are assumed to take the lead in pursuing a romantic relationship with females.

Yoshi went on to explain that his perception of the racial hierarchy in Japan was not limited to the minds of Japanese people but was also something that Whites are aware of, which in turn influences the choices they make in romance.

Excerpt 10.8: Yoshi – *"Oh, Asian men, no thanks!"*

Y:それ、でもね、多分、@リビーに申し訳ないけど。 L: ん? @ Y: あの白人達もわかってると思う。自分たちが maybe アジア人より上。 L: °うんうん° [breaths in] Y: 一般的にね。で、それはもちろん、アジアの人が、あの、思ってると同じ。白人の方が<u>上</u>。まぁ、歴史的にね。 L: うんうん。 Y: あの実際は関係ない、なくね。 L: そう、う::ん= Y: だから白人の女性は（.）あの、「あ、アジアの、アジア人の男はちょっといいわ！」みたいな。ってなんるんだと思う(.)	N: That, but you know, probably, @ I feel bad to you but. L: Hm? @ N: Um, I think Whites also know. They are maybe superior to Asians. L: °Okay° [breaths in] N: Generally speaking. And, that is, of course, the same as, um, what Asians are thinking. Whites are <u>above.</u> Well, historically. L: I see. N: Um in reality it is not related, unrelated. L: Right, u::m= N: So white women are (.) um, "Oh Asian, Asian men, no thanks!" or something like that. I think that's what's happening (.) I don't know.

わからない。

The idealization of White skin has been observed in many discourses within Japan, such as advertising (Creighton, 1995; Russell, 2017), study abroad (Nonaka, 2018; Takahashi, 2013), language education (Kubota, 1998; 2011; 2018; Ng, 2018; Rivers & Ross, 2013), women's online forums (Hirakawa, 2004), and pornography (Russell, 2017). Yoshi describes similar discourses and views these as occurring at the expense of the status of individuals with Asian heritage. Hirakawa (2004), in her analysis of public displays of Japanese women's international narratives, points out how novelist Matsubara Junko believed that Japanese people's "inferiority complex" (p. 442) towards Western nations and the English language inflates White people's sense of power over Japanese nationals. Similarly, Yoshi says that White may feel a sense of superiority 「上」 ("above" or "superior") over Asian people that creates status gap with Japanese men in the minds of White women. Yoshi's ironic comment of 「だからやっぱ皆平等だって思ってるけど。あの、実際は平等じゃないね」 ("So sure enough we think we are equal but, actually, we aren't equal, are we?") as he laughs is reflective of his perception of this power imbalance. Although White men's racial privilege may grant access to Japanese women, Yoshi feels racialized attitudes do the opposite for Japanese men who wish to develop romantic relationships with White women. Here, race is described as a major barrier that requires Japanese men to find other means to acquire greater symbolic capital to date within a racialized romantic hierarchy.

Awareness of the racial power imbalance among Japanese men and White women was also a central topic of conversation with Haruki, who spoke about dating in both Japan and his host community of Canada. He claimed to have seen many more White male – Asian/Japanese

female couples in Canada and Japan than the reverse. Haruki referenced a dominant image of White men as "Hollywood stars" that he believed circulates in Japan. This image, he argued, popularizes White men as romantic partners.

Excerpt 10.9: Haruki – *"Japanese people too respect the White people"*

H: Yeah. I think when Japanese people too too respect the White people.
L: Yeah.
H: They are very handsome they are very cute. I think it's exaggerated. So they should, they shouldn't @ do that. They should be proud my, our identity.
L: Or just like, kind of accept we are all beautiful, all @ beautiful.
H: Yeah.
L: This is a good question actually. Why do you think that white, white skin is so popular in Japan. Or so respected?
H: Even for me, I even kind of too respect the White people. For me the White, the White guy is more handsome than the Japanese guy I think. Like Hollywood stars=
L: Sorry? Like?
H: Like Hollywood stars. Like Dicaprio, George Clooney, like that.

Haruki is critical of what he perceives as a "Hollywood star" image attached to Whiteness in Japan since he believes this negatively influences Japanese people's ability to embrace their national identity. Within Haruki's interview account, his national identity as Japanese was regularly referred to as a source of pride. However, unlike his narrative of coaching the JC Baseball Club (Excerpt 6.6) which was largely rationed as a cultural experience, pride in being Japanese in the above excerpt was intrinsically linked to an ambiguous racialized identity as 'not White'.

Despite his disagreement that White people should be so "respected" because of their skin, a power status of Whiteness appears so deeply rooted in Haruki's psyche that he himself claimed to see White men as more desirable partners for women than Japanese men. Ensuing this topic, Haruki began to speak about his perception of how White women are viewed by Japanese men. He suggested that the rarity of seeing White women in everyday life sparks Japanese

heterosexual men's romantic interest. However, he termed this desire for White women a "misunderstanding".

Excerpt 10.10: Haruki – *"The grass is always greener on the other side"*

H: About White women I think (4) they are just different from Japanese women.
L: Uh huh.
H: So kind of kind of (2) uh:: kind of rare. Rare for the Japanese men so they pay attention every time they see the White women. And uh they think of they the White women is beautiful.
L: Mmhm. (2) That's very interesting. So because they don't see many White women=
H: Yeah yeah.
L: So perhaps that's kind of like that 珍しさ **[rareness]** =
H: Yeah yeah yeah.
L: Is attractive? Hm::
H: Yeah. Japanese guy misunderstanding about their feeling in their brain. I think. Do you know the ことわざ **[proverb]** the 隣の芝生は青い **[the grass is always greener on the other side]**? The next, next grass is (.) blue? Or green?
L: Green, yeah. Do you mean "the grass is always greener"?
H: Yeah.
L: Yeah yeah. On the other side.
H: Yeah, I think that situation is happening. To (.) to Japanese guys' mind.

Here, Haruki claims that the rarity and idolization of White women creates deception; Japanese men's minds mistake unfamiliarity with exoticism and desire. His argument also suggests the 'rarity' of White women in Japan adds to their image of desirability. Through self-comparison with the image of the essentialized Hollywood star (White men) and the exotic beauty (White women), Haruki's sense of pride in being Japanese comes into conflict with internationalized ideology of the superiority of White skin. As this particular topic in our interview drew to a close, Haruki commented, "Even I have that type, that stereotype in my mind. So I so, yeah I didn't approach to the White (.) women in the Canada. Maybe because of that reason I think. (4) I can't comp I can't be competitive with the White men. I think".

The previous chapter demonstrated participant perceptions of the possible appeal of Japanese women, particularly in regard to how participants viewed Japanese women as attractive romantic partners for men in their host communities. Natsuki was the most outspoken about how the physical appearance of Japanese women was superior to that of "Canadian" or "local" women on campus in his host community. As a result, Japanese men did not appear marginalized in relation to host community women in his accounts. Continuing directly from Excerpt 9.11 where he compared his perceptions of the physical sizes of Canadian and Japanese women, Natsuki recounts a "surprising" memory (一回びっくりしたのが) from his time abroad that furthered his comparison of "Canadian" and "Japanese" women.

Excerpt 10.11: Natsuki – *"This can't happen in Japan!"*

N: There is a convenience store on my first floor of my dormitory. And あの、そこにまぁ前行ったけど、pita じゃないけど、wrapping してるあの、野菜の wrapping してるやつ。
L: Oh yeah, うんうん。
N: そこにフライドチキン売ってたんよ。それをね、あの、この仲良い子と、この深夜 midnight に、そのコンビニの前に椅子が並べてた。そこ談話スペースなん、休憩スペース、rest room だって。そこで話してた時にカナダのね？この留学生じゃなくて現地の女の子が、そのフライドチキン食べながら(.) 友達と帰ってたのよ。帰る、あの、自分の部屋に go back. So they they were going back to their rooms eating fried chickens at midnight!
L: °Oh::°
N: これ日本じゃありえない！
L: なんで？
N:えっ？だって、すごい日本の女性って、so Japanese girl (.) um (.) are very careful, so cares for the calories. For their diet, for their

N: There is a convenience store on my first floor of my dormitory. And **um, I went there before but, not** pita**, but the** wrapping **one, um, the one wrapped with veggie**.
L: Oh yeah, **yeah.**
N: **They also had fried chicken there. That thing, um, with a close friend of mine, in** midnight**, there were some chairs lined up in front of the convenience store. So that was a chatting space, a resting space, or a** rest room**. When I was chatting there, local students, Canadians, not this international student, went back with their friends, eating that fried chicken. Go home, um, to their dorm rooms** go back. So they they were going back to their rooms eating fried chickens at midnight!
L: °Oh::°
N: **This can't happen in Japan!**
L: **Why?**
N: **Why? Because Japanese females are really,** so Japanese girl (.) um (.) are very careful, so cares for the calories. For their diet, for their fo::r to keep their style [figure], right? **So they would never do that. They don't**

fo::r to keep their style [figure], right? だからそのこと絶対しない。夜ご飯食べないし。ちょっとだけ、ランチとかもちょっと野菜と、すごい少ないご飯とか。	**even eat dinner. Just a little bit, for lunch too, they have something like a little bit of vegetables and a very small amount of rice.**

Drawing again on images of the ideal woman as slender and petite, Natsuki emphasized his perception of the effort and sacrifice that Japanese women regularly make in order to maintain their physique. He then contrasted this with the actions of his local female campus mates, who he implied do not endeavour to maintain their figures in the same way (as shown by their partaking in fried chicken at night). Here, strict bodily maintenance is presented as admirable and virtuous, and ultimately feminine. Natsuki's comments appear in opposition to numerous other participant accounts, which construct notions of beauty or admiration surrounding Western or White women. Instead, Natsuki often portrayed the Canadian women on his host campus as less physically attractive than Japanese women for both heterosexual Japanese and non-Japanese men. Natsuki's criticism of the Canadian women's actions and his praise of Japanese women's so-called restrictive eating presents female bodies as something to be controlled. In this way, he constructs a powerful identity over both Japanese and Canadian women.

v. Japanese men as *moteru* overseas

Conversations about Japan men's desirability abroad were limited to the experience of heterosexual Japanese men in Anglophone nations in the majority of interviews. A small number of men's accounts (3, 7, 11, 12, 14, 21) introduce alternative examples where Japanese men appeared to be very desirable overseas. These included experiences of Japanese men in the LGBTQ community, heterosexual Japanese men on Southeast Asian sojourns, and times when the soft power of Japanese pop culture provided symbolic capital.

Among this dissertation's participants, only two men openly identified as members of the LBGTQ community, with both men saying they were bisexual. Of these two men, one explicitly stated that his sexuality was not a significant factor in his sojourn. The remaining man, Ryoma, was very open in sharing about his time in San Francisco and Bangkok, two locations well known for their gay communities. While he has been in relationships with both men and women, Ryoma spoke exclusively about examples of men he dated abroad. This led to a discussion about the popularity of Asian men in the subculture of 'rice queens'.

Excerpt 10.12: Ryoma – "Rice Queens"

L: Can you tell me about your dating experience? I mean whatever you are comfortable with sharing.
R: Sure.
L: Yeah. In San Francisco or Thailand. Whatever you like.
R: Ok. サンフランシスコで、ま、誘われるのは、最初に私、日本人のゲイの colleague だね。ゲイの友達ができて、え:: と、クラブに行くようになって。一緒に連れてってくれて。クラブに行くようになって。そこであの::う::ん、ま、ひとつ、あんまり言い方失礼ですけど、rice queen っていう人たちがいます。
L: Oh:: I'm not familiar =
R: Rice queen?
L: Oh! Someone who =
R: Yeah, likes only Asian.
L: Yes yes.
R: Asians. Yeah @@ Kind of old (.) White (.) male. Yeah @@
L: はいはいはい。
R:という方を紹介していただいて @@
L: @@ なるほど。
R: @ で、その方と、その方が気に入ってくださって、もう何回かデートしたんですけど、あんまりまぁ私としては、別に (.)

L: Can you tell me about your dating experience? I mean whatever you are comfortable with sharing.
R: Sure.
L: Yeah. In San Francisco or Thailand. Whatever you like.
R: Ok. In San Francisco, well, the people who asked me were, the first was my Japanese gay colleague. I made gay friends, and u::m, I started going to clubs. They brought me there together. I started going to clubs. There, um::, well::, um, one thing, this word might be a bit rude but, there are people called rice queens.
L: Oh:: I'm not familiar =
R: Rice queen?
L: Oh! Someone who =
R: Yeah, likes only Asian.
L: Yes yes.
R: Asians. Yeah @@ Kind of old (.) White (.) male. Yeah @@
L: I see.
R: I was introduced to someone like (that) @@
L: @@ I see.
R: @ And then, with this person, this person liked me, so I went on a date with him several times, but for me, I wasn't really (.) our ages were very different too so.
L: Oh:: was he a lot older than you?
R: Probably around twenty (years) apart:: we

そんなに年も全然違うので= L:あ:: 結構年上でしたか？ R:多分、２０くらい離れてたかな:: ２０くらい離れてたので @@ L:そうですか？ @ R: あんまりそんなに、何回かデートして (2) いろんなとこに連れて行ってもらって。でもすごく良い方で。	were twenty years apart or so so @@ L: Really? @ R: I wasn't much, I had dates with him several times (2) he brought me to many places. But he was really nice.

According to Ryoma, the label "rice queen" is given to "old White men" who are only interested in dating Asian men. This description illustrates a racialized erotic desire among a particular subculture in the gay community. However, the term rice queen seems to be marked as Ryoma suggests using it is 「あんまり言い方失礼ですけど」("this word might be a bit rude but"). Ultimately, the age difference with this man proved to be a barrier to Ryoma developing a physical attraction him and the relationship ultimately did not last. Ryoma eventually dated an African American man for two years. When speaking about his ex-boyfriend, he said:

Excerpt 10.13: Ryoma – *"The charm of Asians"*

その後に、出会った方がいて。ま、黒人でした。その方は、黒人の。年はだいたい、４歳の上の人ですね。４歳。の方(2) で、彼が rice queen かはわからないですけど、多分、アジア人が好きなのか、アジア人の魅力を感じているのかな。	R: After that, there was someone who I met. Well, he was black. His age was approximately four years older (than me), four years. He was (2), I'm not sure if he was a rice queen, but probably, whether he likes Asians or he felt the charm of Asians.

Ryoma dated several other men during his three-year stay in San Francisco, including a Native American man. He stated that all of these men were drawn to, or could appreciate to some extent the 魅力 ("charm") of Asians. While the label of rice queen is most frequently applied to White men (Jackson, 2000), Ryoma's description of the diversity of his male partners' backgrounds who appear draw to Asian men evidences his *moteru* identity outside of White male

desire. Clearly it is impossible to generalize the bisexual Japanese male experience abroad through only one man's account, but Ryoma stated that he did not struggle romantically abroad. For him, his race appeared to be a benefit in dating.

Ryoma also compared his experience in San Francisco to that of an average heterosexual Japanese man living in the area. Like many other participants, he claimed "Japanese straight men" faced barriers in making friendships in their host community and developing romantic relationships with non-Japanese women. Following this, I asked him to share his perspective about the social networks of heterosexual Japanese men in Thailand.

Excerpt 10.14: Ryoma – "*Thailand is different*"

R: あんまりコミュニティが大きくないな::って、特に Japanese straight men の人は。	R: I felt communities were not really big, especially among Japanese straight men.
L: Yes yes. So if you compare with that with Thailand, 同じ感じでしたか？	L: Yes yes. So if you compare with that with Thailand, did you feel it was the same?
R: あ！それは違いましたね。	R: Oh! That was different.
L: タイは。なるほど。	L: Thailand was (different). I see.
R: タイは違いましたね。タイの、タイの場合は、あの (.) ストレートの男性の方が、ま、よく遊びに行く (.) うんうんうん。ので、圧倒的に (.) うん、うーん、まぁそうですね。で、タイの女性の方も、よってくる方が多いですね。	R: Thailand was different. Thailand's, In Thailand, um (.) straight men, um, hang out more (than men in San Francisco) (.) Yeah, so um, they definitely do (.) Yes, um, well I can say that. And there are many Thai women who approach.
L: う::ん、そうですか？	L: H::m, is that true?
R: あ:: ストレートの男の人の方が。	R: Oh:: I mean (they approach) straight men.
L: はいはいはい。	L: I see.
R: なんか多分、アメリカとかカナダとかの場合とはちょっと違いますね。うーん、それがまぁタイの、もちろんかっこいいっていう風に魅力を感じていく人もいるし、ま、経済的な理由？(3) で、よってくる人もいます。	R: Like, it's probably a little bit different from the cases in the U.S or Canada. Um, that is well, in Thailand, there are of course people who come to them [Japanese heterosexual men] because they find them [Japanese heterosexual men] cool, but also well there are people who approach them for um, financial reasons? (3)
L: うーん、で、それ見ましたか？	L: Um, well, did you see that?
R: はい。	R: Yes.
L: そうですか。	L: Is that so.
	R: Still, like, Japanese (.) are (.) um, there is

R: やっぱりなんか、日本人 (.) は (.) ま、お金持ち (.) のイメージがちょっとあるので。 L: はいはい。 R: ので、二つの理由。まぁそれがどっちかわからないですけど。	the image that Japanese are a little bit rich. L: I see. R: So, two reasons. Well, I'm not sure which one was though.

Ryoma's depiction of Japanese heterosexual men in Thailand diverges significantly from the accounts of participants who studied or worked in Anglophone and European countries. Ryoma described Japanese men as very socially active and frequently approached by Thai women and claimed the economic capital of Japanese men in Thailand converts to desirability among Thai women. This is reminiscent of Wataru's comments in Excerpt 9.6, where Japanese men's finances were described to be a key factor in their status as alluring marriage partners to Southeast Asian women. Furthermore, Ryoma states that unlike in the US and Canada, Japanese men are often viewed as 「かっこいい」("cool") in Thailand, which is not a term attributed to Japanese men abroad in other participant accounts.

The final reason given by interviewees (3, 7, 11, 12, 21) for a possible *moteru* image of Japanese men abroad was connected to the soft power Japanese pop culture was seen as having abroad. Some participants noted that Japanese music, tech gadgets, video games, idol culture, and anime and manga have found adoring niche markets in numerous communities outside of Japan. The consumption of these pop culture phenomena have been observed to improve the overall image of Japan among young people in South East Asia (Otmazgin, 2008) and the promotion of an image of "cool Japan" across the globe (Christensen, 2011). This interest in Japanese pop culture among host community members may therefore attribute cultural capital to Japanese sojourners they encounter. Such was the case with Tani, who recounts a time in Seattle

when he was approached by a "girl" and asked if he wanted to watch anime at her home together. Tani had a girlfriend in Japan so he did not date during his sojourn, but this excerpt occurs in response to my question, "did you meet anyone you might be interested in?"

Excerpt 10.15: Tani – *"Otaku girl"*

T: Let's see:: Oh actually (2) the uh one day I was at the library, reading the book. And then the girl who is really really otaku =
L: @
T: Really. あの、自分よりも日本のアニメが詳しい。**[Um, she knew more about Japanese anime than me.]**
L: すごいすごい。**[Amazing amazing]**
T: Yeah! "Ah, you're from Japan. And then uh, "you want to come home and hang out?" And then there was her mother as well.
L: Ah:: interesting.
T: Then they invited me to their house and watch lots of Japanese anime animation @
L: She was probably so excited to meet you.
T: Yeah yeah yeah::
L: Really. Do you think she was interested in you romantically, or was it more like =
T: I I don't think so. Hm.
L: Just wanna hang out?
T: Yeah @ Just curious.

Tani did end up joining the 'otaku girl' (*otaku* is a term used for a 'nerd' very interested in anime or manga) and her mother for dinner and anime at their home. Although this did not blossom into romance (the age of this "girl" is also unclear, especially considering her mother accompanied her to the library), the girl's assumption of Tani's nationality, in tandem with her own passion for anime, prompted her to approach him and share her enthusiasm. Thus Tani's being Japanese and his perceived connection to Japanese pop culture, or anime in this case, led to his construction as a desirable interlocutor. The soft power of Japan can also be linked to the image of Japanese nationals who go overseas among the subculture of individuals who embrace "cool Japan". This of course includes Japanese men, who may gain access to new social networks because of such symbolic capital. At the same time, Tani's account demonstrates how

the ‘soft power’ of Japan can act as an essentializing force that assumes all Japanese people are fans of anime.

vi. Discussion

The findings section of this chapter focused on sections of participant accounts that spoke about racialized romance in relation to Japanese men abroad. Similar to the construction of self through descriptions Japanese women in the previous chapter, the men in this study spoke about non-Japanese women in a way that also expressed their own masculinity and generalized ideas about Japanese masculinity. Participants’ perceptions of romantic (heterosexual) intercultural relationships will be the main focus of this discussion section. In the discussion, I will examine how binary views of Japan and the West, along with Orientalist discourses, were reflected in participant accounts when describing modern notions of Japanese masculinity. This is then explored in relation to ideas surrounding romantic relationships with non-Japanese women.

As previously argued, a small number of participants suggested Japanese men abroad can gain symbolic capital due to their nationality or race, resulting in an increase in desirability among host community members. First, I analyse this idea in relation to critique of perceptions of White femininity before speaking about performances of masculinity of Japanese heterosexual men in relationships with Southeast Asian women. Lastly, I explore a *moteru* status of Japanese men in relation the dominance of White male masculinity in the gay subculture of ‘rice queens’.

Racialized romance: Images of Japanese men and Western women

Through their descriptions of a wide spread romantic interest in Western women among Japanese men, the interviewees in this study challenge the notion of *akogare* as a yearning strictly possessed by Japanese heterosexual women for White English-speaking men. Some men expressed a personal attraction to Western women (like Shinya), whereas others perceived a

general desire among Japanese men to date a woman with blonde hair or blue eyes (like Nori or Tani). The way Western women were spoken about sometimes contained an overtone of fantasy and difference that both idealized and otherized them. In her analysis of language learning for leisure and consumption at Japanese *eikaiwa*, Kubota (2011) also challenges the limited perception of *akogare* by stating, "romantic desire can become a strong motivation for language learning regardless of gender or race of the parties involved" (p. 484). Although she refers specifically to language learning, Kubota's expansion of *akogare* can be applied to the narratives of international sojourners when considering the importance of target language acquisition and host community relationships in many interviewee's accounts.

Japanese media's construction and consumption of White women

Several participants connected a wide Japanese attraction to Western, particularly White women, to the prevalence of White models and actors in the Japanese media. In a study of non-Japanese nationals in Japanese advertising, Hagiwara (2004) found that 73% were White (as cited in Russell, 2018, p. 29). The Japanese media's overrepresentation of White as foreign residents in Japan strengthens the association between 外国人 ("foreigner") and Whiteness while also replicating the binary notion in the *Nihonjinron* discourse of 'us' (Japanese) and 'them' (White Westerners) (Creighton, 1995; Iwabuchi, 2005; Russell, 2017).

Creighton (1995) claims that White are primarily 'used' in Japanese advertising "to elicit eroticism, while they are at the same time portrayed as breaking Japanese conventions or humorously inept at Japanese life" (p. 138) and Russell (2017) states that this eroticism is often accompanied by images of elegance, mystery and transnationalism. Such discourses serve to both elevate the status of White skin while simultaneously strengthening a sense of difference between 'White people' and 'Japanese'.

According to Tani and Haruki, the rarity of everyday interactions with White women in Japan, coupled with the prevalence of beautiful White actresses in Japanese media, create an almost otherworldly image about these women among Japanese men. Likewise, Creighten (1995) observed in her interviews with Japanese advertising company employees that essentializing bodily discourses that compared Japanese women and White women were utilized to justify the use of White women in advertising. For instance, White women were argued to be more intriguing to viewers because of supposed long-legs, round hips, and varying hair and eye colours.

The White female body also experiences significant sexualization in the Japanese media. For example, through critically assessing the portrayal of White women in Japanese advertisements and television media, Russell (2018) concluded that, "it is the body of the white woman, like that of the black male, that is subjected to inspection as a masturbatory fetish and made a source of endless commentary in Japan's male-dominated mass media" (p. 35). In the past, White women were more frequently used in nude or near-nude advertisements (Creighton, 1995) and Russell (2017) notes of a niche of Japanese pornography called *kinpatsu bijin*/*bijyo* ("blonde beauties"). Notably, this is the same label used by Nori's friends to inquire about his dating status in the UK and Sweden (Excerpt 9.1): 「金髪の美女できた？」("Did you get a blonde beauty [girlfriend]?").

White women's bodies are sexualized and idealized through practices in the Japanese media that may contribute to their construction as objects of heterosexual desire for Japanese men. Nevertheless, White women's bodies are rarely presented as attainable to the average Japanese man. Russell (2017) claims that Japanese men in advertisements who are portrayed as attracted to White women are often mocked for a goofy and clumsy "Japanese male ineptitude"

(p. 39) that poises them as insufficient romantic partners to these supposedly captivating and sophisticated women. Therefore, the media's portrayal and the public's uptake of the images of White women may create the discourses of a femininity that is both alluring and unreal.

The marginalization of heterosexual Japanese masculinity

Further exploring participant perceptions of the relationships between Western women and Japanese men necessitates analysis through examining the otherization of East Asian masculinity in Asia and the West. Colonial and neocolonial Western discourses of masculinity have marginalized Asian men in a way that both feminizes them and simultaneously positions them as uncivilized (Knowles, 2005; Louie, 2003; Nemoto, 2009). Kimmel (2010) asserts that the establishment of Western hegemonic masculinity is "created against a screen of 'others' whose masculinity [is] thus problematized and devalued" (p. 144). In the case of East Asian men in Anglophone nations, this practice is paradoxically visible in the underrepresentation of Asian men in media and the existence of stereotypical media images of Asian men as geeky, weak and asexual (Lin, Haywood, & Mac an Ghaill, 2017). In many cases, the Asian male body is either erased completely or presented as physically inferior to the White male. Thus, the discursive construction of the body of the Asian male plays a central role in its marginalization.

Buchbinder (2013) argues that the Greek philosophical tradition that glorified young, sculpted, muscular male bodies remains strong within the Western imaginary of 'ideal' masculinity. Similar discourses were apparent in participant accounts, where the physicality of non-Asian men in host communities was regularly emphasized. Moreover, the body the Japanese man was often feminized and depicted as inferior in interviewees. Focusing on the fashion and appearance of young Japanese men, Darling-Wolf (2004) and Shaw and Tan (2014) observe an increasing trend of androgyny among younger men in the Japanese media, a look that is

aggregating popularity in together with the dissemination of Japanese pop culture across Asia. According to Darling-Wolf (2004), although 'the androgynous man' practices beauty habits that have been conventionally viewed as female –such as stylized hair and noticeable traces of makeup –the masculinity of Japanese male heterosexual celebrities who adopt these practices is rarely questioned by younger members of the Japanese community.

Nonetheless, the so-called androgynous Japanese man, who "adopts a delicate, meek and dependent posture" (Shaw & Tan, 2014, p. 312), diverges sharply from the physically-rooted "knightly masculinity" (Nemoto, 2009, p. 4) often attributed to European and North American men in pop culture. Several contemporary studies have concluded that essentialized notions of Western masculinity are ascribed significant status over notions of Asian masculinity both abroad (Nemoto, 2011; Takahashi, 2013; Takeda, 2012) and domestically (Hirakawa, 2004), which suggests that that Japanese masculinity may also be feminized domestically when compared to 'Western men'. Such is the case with many participants in the current study who felt Western ideals of masculinity were influential in the way they viewed themselves and Japanese men in general as romantic partners abroad and in Japan. Both physically and socially, participants frequently positioned Japanese men as inferior. This was done through effeminizing Japanese men by means of praising the muscle mass, height, and the assumed assertive, confident and social temperament of Western men. Thus, while new representations of masculinities such as the androgynous man may continue to form in Japan, they do so in competition with other powerful discourses of 'manliness'. As the majority of participants in this study alluded to, the act of being born biologically male does not equate to projecting a masculine identity. Instead, different performances of masculinities are in turn assigned values,

suggesting that not all masculinities provide the same level of power to those who enact them (Messerschmidt & Messner, 2018).

"[O]ur bodies", states Buchbinder (2013), "offer those around us a 'text' to be deciphered and read, and to be responded to (consumed) in terms of that reading" (p. 137). As a result, how we physically signify our identities – through our clothing, hair, voice and physical mannerism – is integral in revealing gendered traits, or a lack thereof, to our interlocutors. For the majority of participants in this study, the ways in which they described their bodies as being 'read' in their host communities led them to internalize marginalized positions based on intersections of their nationality, race and gender. Moreover, in the case of interviewees, their close contact with images of Western hegemonic masculinity continued to shape their perceptions of what denoted a desirable heterosexual man, even after their return to Japan.

Japanese male and White female partnerships

The idealization and othering of Western or White women by several participations in this dissertation was also observed by Takayama (2000) in his interviews with Japanese men studying English in Vancouver. For example, Takayama notes that one participant stated, "[w]hen I see White women, there is a sense of enchantment emerging from inside my body. It just makes me wonder why these people are so beautiful" (p. 104). This shares similarities to Shinya's comment in Excerpt 9.2 of Canadian women's beauty being "beyond cloud". Such comments illustrate discourses that not only prize Whiteness but "have reinforced the symbolic image of the white woman as a trophy or currency prohibited to men of color" (Nemoto, 2009, p. 107). In many ways, host community women, especially White women, seemed to be out of reach to many participants in this study. This was further emphasized through interviewees' perceptions of heterosexual Asian men's place beneath White males on a racialized romantic

hierarchy. While this finding has not been described in reference to the international sojourns of Japanese men, several scholars have observed a tendency of White male – Asian female partnerships to be more socially accepted among their participants than Asian male – White female couplings (e.g., Appleby, 2013a, 2013b; Kelsky 2001a, Nemoto, 2009; Simon-Maeda, 2011; Takeda, 2009).

A society's prevailing racial and gender norms reflect which couples are seen as acceptable within a society (Nemoto, 2011). Consequently, although intercultural marriages are increasing in Japan (Schans, 2012), not all partners appear equally available to everyone. This was recognized by participants like Ryota (Excerpt 10.4), Yoshi (Excerpts 10.7 and 10.8), and Haruki (Excerpts 10.9 and 10.10) who critically reflected on ideologies of the superiority of Whiteness that led to the idea that heterosexual Japanese men were generally inferior romantic partners for White women. As Yoshi and Haruki both clearly stated, interacting with these discourses caused them to be hesitant to interactions with White women despite being critical about their own marginalization. Reflecting on his experiences of interviewing Japanese women residing in Australia and who are married to Australia men, Takeda (2009) shares a similar revelation:

> I [a Japanese man] represented the negative stereotype of 'not the best kind of man to marry'. I had to accept that I was theoretically and culturally located in the discourse as a chauvinist Asian man as opposed to the theoretically sensitive western man. (p. 294, *square brackets added*)

Takeda also argues that Japanese men are commonly positioned outside of the discourse of intercultural dating and marriage, despite that the majority of international marriages in Japan involve a Japanese husband. Although 80% of international marriages in the country overall are between an Asian wife and Japanese husband (Schans, 2012), these men (and women) do not

easily fit into the common social imagery in Japan of interacting with the 'foreign' – which is routinely envisioned as 'White'.

Plentiful research has drawn attention to discourses concerning Japanese men as inferior romantic partners in comparison to Western men in the eyes of Japanese women (e.g., Hirakawa, 2004; Kelsky, 2001a; 2001b; Takahashi, 2013; Takeda, 2012), and the experiences of immigrant women of Asian backgrounds married to Japanese men (Faier, 2009; Nakamatsu, 2005; Yamaura, 2015). However, there is significantly less research about relationships between Western women and Japanese men, or how Western women may view Japanese men as potential romantic partners. Brown Diggs (2001) and Pover (2012) have published books that reflect some popular discourses around the desirability of Japanese heterosexual men. Brown Digg's book (2001) uses interviews with 30 American women married to Japanese men living in Japan and the United States to share the narratives of these women about their lives in intercultural marriages and as mothers to bicultural and bilingual children. Here, essentialized views of Japanese men as "a ruthless samurai, and of course, a dyed-in-the-wool male chauvinist" (p. 1) are both reconstructed and challenged through the romantic accounts of the women. Brown Diggs seldom critically analyses the binary portrayals of Japanese men and American women within interviews, and her analysis concludes that Japanese men and American women are culturally incompatible partners unless significant love, compromise, and effort are involved.

Pover's (2012) pop psychology self-help book, *Love with a Western woman: A guide for Japanese men*, is aimed at men residing in Japan and claims to be for "Japanese men who want to understand the international women of today, and find out how to please them ... in every way!" (back cover). Based on internet surveys of 150 self-identifying Western women of a variety of national and linguistic backgrounds, this book points out various flaws of Japanese

men that apparently prevents them from successful romantic encounters with Western women. These flaws include: a lack of confidence, unequal expectations of gender roles, an over-attendance to personal grooming, and projecting an uncomfortable idolization onto White women. A variety of voices of Western women are presented but Pover's overall analysis creates a shallow portrayal of "us" (Western women) and "you" (the somewhat hapless Japanese man). Pover suggests that Japanese men have a generally poor image among Western women overall, but some women are eager to date the 'right kind' of Japanese man. This man is someone who puts time into his appearance (but not too much time), is understanding and supportive, works hard (but rarely does overtime), and who is confident (but not arrogant). Despite her intentions at supporting intercultural relationships, Pover's presentation of survey data and advice for Japanese men replicates the idea of the adoration and unattainability of Western femininity through positioning Japanese masculinity as something that needs to be altered and improved.

According to Pover (2012), Western women in Japan are interested in both casual and serious romantic relationships with Japanese men. In the context of foreign women living in Japan, partnership with a Japanese man may be seen as particularly beneficial considering the insider status an immigrant can receive from marrying a Japanese national (Schans, 2012). However, Japanese male study abroad and WHM participants are likely at the biggest disadvantage in intercultural dating considering their short stay rarely provides enough time and opportunities to develop the cultural resources necessary to develop familiarity with host community dating practices. Many male sojourners may also be marked by a lack of class related privileges considering their status as full-time students or temporary workers in generally low-paying jobs.

Despite these barriers, both the challenge of dating Western women and the symbolic capital these women represented seemed to appeal to many of the men in the current study. Takayama's (2000) interviewees displayed similar desires through their descriptions of interactions with Canadian (White) women as something to boast about to friends abroad and in Japan. The image of White women as international and exotic, along with the racial and linguistic privilege they hold in some sphere of Japan suggests that relationships with Western women may offer Japanese male sojourners the potential to take on transnational, *moteru* identities, particularly among Japanese communities. Moreover, through intimate relationships with White women in Western nations abroad, Japanese male sojourns may be granted what Nemoto (2009) terms "honorary membership" (p. 108) into the world of Western masculinity. In other words, an intimate relationship with a White woman both abroad or Japan may have the potential to increase a Japanese man's social status.

Critiquing White femininity through alternative performances of masculinity

Chapter 8 introduced discourses that conflicted with the notion of the idealization of White femininity through using Orientalist imagery that painted Asian women as possessors of a docile and nurturing femininity more conducive to the construction of White men's masculinity. A small number of participants suggested that a submissive femininity is also appealing to Japanese men. Western women, who were generally described as more aggressive and independent, could therefore pose a threat to the performance of masculinity in romantic relationships.

The apparent incompatibility of Western women and Japanese men are often present through chauvinistic discourses that create binary oppositions of essentialized traits of 'East and West'. These ideas are further embedded in gendered expectations of men as wielders of

authority over women. In Japan, Suzuki (2007) locates these beliefs in the ideology that "instructs women to become homemakers and caregivers for their husbands and other (extended) family members and teaches men to become the "great black pillar" (*daikokubashira*) supporting traditional households" (p.434). In Nemoto's (2009) interviews with Asian American men, she provides the example of William, a Chinese-American man who claimed to prefer dating women in China to the United States because, "[i]n the US, women don't need men… they can choose what they want and make the guy less powerful" (p. 146). As a result, a woman's ability to assert agency in a heterosexual relationship can act as a barrier to a man's performance of masculinity if a woman is seen as reaching equal status or, even more threatening, a higher status than her male partner. Likewise, in this study, some participants described Western women as independent and assertive, which can put them at odds with the orthodox Japanese view of an ideal women's role as "good wife and wise mother" (Suzuki, 2007, p. 432).

Ideas of the independence of Western women also appears through bodily discourses, as apparent in Natsuki's recounting of the Canadian women eating fried chicken at midnight (Excerpt 10.11). Here, the women's actions are portrayed as self-serving and undignified in opposition to those of Japanese women who regulate their bodies to suit patriarchal demands of a petite female figure. Ong and Peletz (1995) argue that women's bodies have traditionally been a site of contestation for maintaining socially constructed conventions, and likewise here it appears that the 'large' bodies of the Canadian women act as an assault on Natsuki's perceptions of the acceptable boundaries of the female frame. This serves to both lessen the Canadian women's desirability and affirm Japanese femininity in his eyes. In addition to this, Natsuki uses the description of the bodies of others as a self-creating act as through disparaging the bodies of women in his host community, Natsuki produces counter-discourses to notions of desire for

Whiteness and White femininity. His narrative can be seen as a form of resistance to both a marginalized masculine identity and the purposeful marking of one's racial and national identity. Similarly, Nemoto (2009) presents a comparable example in the story of Leslie, a Vietnamese American who purposefully limits his dating prospects to women with Asian backgrounds as a way to signify his identity and group membership within the Asian American community.

Another way that heterosexual Japanese men have been suggested to articulate masculine identities in intercultural relationships is through dating and marrying women from countries less economically advantaged than Japan, particularly those in Southeast Asia (Nakamatsu, 2005; Ono, 2015; Suzuki, 2007). A handful of participants in the current study describe Japanese men as attractive romantic partners to women from these nations, particularly in relation to the financial contributions that Japanese men could provide within these relationships. Economic capital was therefore seen as increasing desirability in these cases. This allowed Japanese men to claim the valuable status of breadwinner, which was described as elusive in relationships with Western women. Assessing the importance of the male breadwinner identity, Kimmel (2011) states, "[a] man may be physically strong, or not. He may be intellectually or athletically gifted, or not. But the one thing that is non-negotiable has been that a real man provides for his family. He is a breadwinner" (p. 17).

Despite slow shifts in the expectations of gender roles, the importance of men to perform the role of breadwinner remains strong in Japan (Suzuki, 2007; North, 2014). Fulfilling a spouse's (or family's) economic need is therefore a key factor in the social construction of the prerequisites of a successful man. In his analysis of the narratives of Japanese men married to Filipinas in Japan, Suzuki (2007) concluded that some men first appeared drawn to their wives' financial and cultural struggles in Japan. Through dating and eventually marrying their Filipina

partners, the men felt they could financially and physically protect these women. The ability to financially support a woman in a vulnerable position can be performance of masculinity that "allow[s] men to enjoy a heroic sense of manhood" (Suzuki, 2007, p. 441).

Diverging from the Japanese heterosexual male sojourner experience in Anglophone and European nations

Ryoma's account as an openly bisexual man in San Francisco and Thailand opened doors to examine different experiences concerning a Japanese man's desirability abroad. Specifically, Ryoma introduced ways in which Japanese men (or Asian men in general) may be sexualized and eroticized by men in their host communities through the example of 'rice queens'. It may be the case that intersections of race, gender and sexuality have potential to raise a Japanese man's status in the LGBTQ community in a way that heterosexual Japanese male sojourners in Anglophone and European nations did not claim to experience.

Still, love and sexual desire cannot be analysed separate from power. Jackson (2000) argues, "the racialization of homosexual desire is not a democratic form of cultural diversity or an expression of equivalent modalities of erotic taste" (p. 183). Jackson describes how the feminization of gay Asian male bodies takes place through an Orientalist gaze that others Asian men through favouring White Western masculinity. These discourses bare resemblance to the way that heterosexual Asian masculinity has been positioned as inferior to White heteronormative masculinity. Another similarity, illustrated by Han (2008), concerns the asexual portrayal of gay Asian men. Drawing from various narratives of homosexual Asian men, Han highlights the ways in which racialized structures of power in the gay community do not position Asian men as agentive sexual beings but instead as sexual objects for White men. Citing an interview excerpt from Cho's (1998) study, Han (2008) writes:

> Alienated from our own sexuality, the only way we become sexualized is through the predatory consumption of a rice queen [White men who prefer Asian men as sexual partners]. With little presence in the Western erotic imagination, we find we have even less power when it comes to our presence on the sexual menu, except as 'boy toys' for White men… (p. 17, brackets in original)

Being sexually desired by this group of White men may not be empowering for Asian men considering that the label of 'rice queen' also carries a stigma within the gay community. A common image of a rice queen is an older, physically appealing man who is "mocked as a man whom 'only Asians find attractive'" (Jackson, 2000, p. 184). Such beliefs are reminiscent of the derogatory term "Charisma man", which describes a painfully average White man who becomes extremely desirable to Japanese women – but only Japanese women – upon his arrival to Japan as an English teacher (see Appleby, 2013a). The romantic popularity that Japanese men in the LGBTQ community may experience with White men overseas therefore needs to be critically analysed through the lens of intersectionality in the same way that relationships with White men and Japanese women have been approached (e.g., Appleby, 2013a; Kato, 2007; Kubota, 2011; Takeda, 2012).

vii. Summary

Chapter 9 provided an analysis of the Japanese male sojourner experience in relation to romance abroad with a specific focus on how participants saw the influence of nationality, race, and gender on their status as desirable partners to non-Japanese women. In many cases, participants challenged the common notion that *akogare* is found in solely in the narratives, aspirations and actions of Japanese women. Not only did English hold a significant place in many of these men's lives, but some also expressed an attraction to Western, primarily White women based on essentialized discourses of White femininity. Often, White women in the men's host communities were portrayed as symbols of ideal femininity through their appearance and

the symbolic capital that their Whiteness and culture represented. Yet such discourses also otherized Western women and saw them as inherently different from and unattainable to Japanese men. This was largely attributed to ideas of inferior Japanese male masculinity when contrasted with participants' images of Western hegemonic masculinity. These comparisons effeminized Japanese heterosexual masculinity and reflected Orientalist discourses of Asian men as physically and emotionally weaker than Western men. As a result, it appeared that many participants viewed Japanese men as not being adequately able to perform the role of 'man' opposite to Western women in romantic relationships.

At the same time, a small group of participants were critical of this racial hierarchy of desirability that places Whiteness and Japanese women above Japanese men. The men observed this both abroad and in Japan. Having a critical awareness of racialized romance allowed participants to challenge discourses of equality regarding intercultural relationships. Their awareness of this discrimination led them to take on marginalized identities or to draw closer to their national identities as Japanese. Such is especially the case with Natsuki, who challenged the idealization of White femininity through condemning the bodies and the dietary habits of Canadian (or "local) women in his host community. This presented an example of a patriarchal view that prizes the slim, petite and docile bodies of essentialized Japanese femininity.

Lastly, this chapter examined diverging discourses of the gendered experiences of Japanese men abroad. Ryoma's account suggested that Japanese men possess an increase in cultural capital in the LGBTQ community through the process of sexualization and fetishization in the rice queen subculture. Yet Jackson (2000) and Han (2008) assert that these relationships need to be viewed within structures of power that give preference to hegemonic White masculinity in the gay community. In the final chapter that follows, I highlight the conclusions of

this dissertation before examining the limitations and areas of potential research regarding the international narratives of Japanese male sojourners.

Chapter 11: Conclusions and Implications

i. Introduction

This dissertation explored the international narratives of young Japanese men who participated in study abroad and/or WHM programs, and have since returned to Japan. Through 25 qualitative semi-structured interviews, I analysed participant accounts in relation to discourses of gender, masculinity and desire. This study shed light how participants constructed their identities through replication or resistant of hegemonic discourses regarding the feminization of language learning and study abroad, the conventional male career path, and marginalizing images of Japanese masculinity. Participants also frequently constructed their identities through comparisons with important members in their host communities, such as Japanese women, and host community men and women.

In this final chapter, I summarize the key findings from this dissertation in relation to the research questions presented in Chapter 1. These questions were:

1) *How do young Japanese men with study abroad and/or WHM experience speak about being a Japanese man abroad?*
2) *Who are the influential agents in participant construction of identity?*
3) *How do participants speak about gender, masculinity and desire abroad and in Japan?*
    a) *How do participants replicate or resist wider discourses of gender, masculinity and desire that they encounter abroad or in Japan?*

After summarizing the study findings, I include how this dissertation contributes to the field of international sojourns. Next, I address the limitations of this study before ending with possible areas for future research. In the following segment, however, I readdress my theory of interview and the possible influence I had on the co-construction of data within research interviews.

ii. Co-construction of interview data

This dissertation used a constructionist approach to interviewing, which shaped the interview process, data analysis and presentation of participant transcripts. As was argued previously, the researcher/interviewer plays a vital role in the construction of interview data (Rouslton, 2010b; Talmy, 2011). My role is also present in the conclusions of a research project and this is evident throughout this dissertation. Upon reviewing the audio recordings of interviews and reading the written transcripts, it became obvious to me how my questions may have influenced participant responses. For example, directly inquiring about the racial backgrounds of the agents in participant interviews may have prompted participant use of specific racialized terminology to explain their experience. The same could be said about the frequency of the topic of Japanese women's *akogare* for English. By adding annotations around potentially problematic sections, I hope to have practiced reflexivity in relation to my co-construction of interview data.

Roulston (2010b; 2011) notes that from a neopositivist theory of interview, 'leading questions' and sharing personal experience with participants are seen as a disadvantage because it interferes with finding valid and objective data. In contrast, she asserts that leading questions can be used to promote dialogue with participants about a research topic, and that an interviewer sharing her experiences can help establish rapport. Likewise, my goal in this dissertation was not to obtain objectives truths but instead learn about participant experiences and perceptions in relation to ideas of gender, masculinity and desire. I address this potential problem more in the limitations section of this chapter.

Guillemin and Gillam (2004) describe the research interview as not only a jointly created interaction but also a place for individual reflection. Through directly asking interviewees about

their experiences and opinions, this research project provided participants with an opportunity to reflect on their international sojourn and connect it to their present selves. Block (2009) asserts that without prompted reflection, the identity development that occurred during an international experience (such as intercultural communication skills and empathy for different life experiences) will likely fade. Simply put, it is through sharing our perspectives and having them challenged by others that we grow. Such was the case with Natsuki, who later contacted me to apologise for what he saw as using too many 「ステレオタイプ」("stereotypes") in his interview. In this way, the research interviews in this dissertation may have acted as a place of reflection on personal identity in relation to not only one's international experience, but also how one's identity intersects with discourses of gender, race, language and desire.

iii. Summary of Findings: Question 1 and Question 2

Using the 'other' to describe the self

Participants often drew on broad categories of four main groups as influential reference points when describing their own experiences. These groups included Japanese women, host community men, host community women, and 'the typical' Japanese man. Participants' contrast of themselves with these groups highlights the fluid nature of identity (Norton, 2000) as they took on slightly different roles depending on who was being referred to. At the same time, most of groups that participants compared themselves with suggested an idea of deficiency around Japanese men as a whole. For instance, Japanese women were a symbol of internationalization through their supposed ease in speaking English and joining host communities. Interviewee assertion of Japanese women's high participation in intercultural romantic relationships also contributed to the image of the international Japanese female. Next, host community men were described as physically stronger, more assertive, and physically attractive –making them

appealing romantic partners for both Japanese and non-Japanese women. In some accounts, host community women were idolized and otherized simultaneously. As a result, some participants expressed a sense of both yearning for and separation from these women. However, these comments were also regularly connected with descriptions of inferiority, given that most Japanese men were described as undesirable partners for host community women due to supposed traits such as a lack of language skills, communication abilities, and sense of humour. Physically undesirable traits included being 'short', excessively slim and "looking young".

Analysis of interviewee accounts suggested that participants envisioned a hierarchy of symbolic capital in Anglophone host communities. Heterosexual Japanese men were commonly described as having the least symbolic capital, placing them at the bottom of this hierarchy. However, several participants presented ways that they could claim more favourable or powerful identities. Below is a image to illustrate this hierarchy of desire and how participants challenged it.

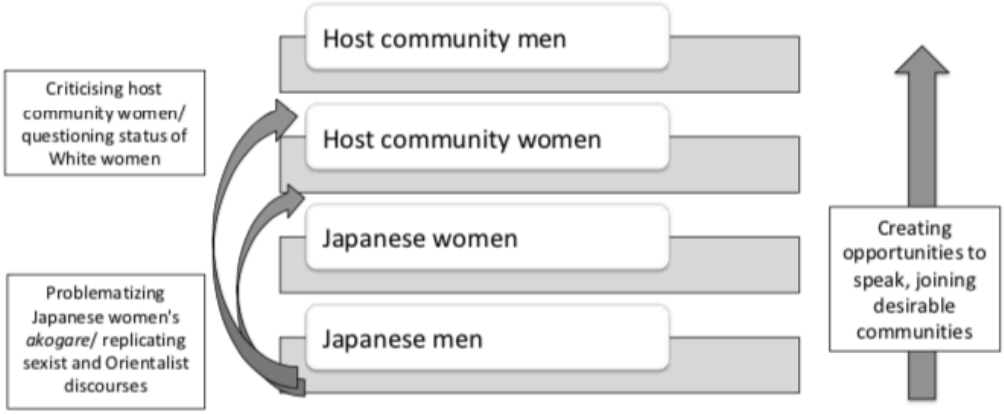

Figure 11.1 Hierarchy described abroad and methods of shifting identity (in regards to heterosexual Japanese men)

Participants' condemnation of Japanese women's desires abroad acted as a tool to frame themselves as more legitimate language learners (Wataru and Tom). Using sexist and Orientalist discourses to describe Japanese women also raised men's status by objectifying and therefore demeaning these women (Shinya and Yoshi). Some participants also challenged the status of White women by directly criticizing their appearance (Natsuki) or problematizing the privileged status of Whiteness holds (Haruki and Yoshi). Another way that participants constructed favourable identities was through enacting agency when they felt marginalized as Japanese men. This involved assertively creating their own opportunities to use English and actively joining or creating desirable communities.

iv. Intersectionality: Race, nationality, language and gender in identity construction

Norton's (2000) approach to identity emphasizes both the interconnectedness of social categories of self (such as gender, race, sexuality, class, and language abilities) and how these categories vary with different interlocutors. This study focused primarily on how discourses of language, race, nationality, and gender interacted to form identity in participant accounts.

Language

Narratives about language learning and use were a major focus in many participant accounts. Although some men pursued languages other than English (such as Thai, German and Swedish), English was by far the prominent language of study among participants. Many men commented on the racial, cultural and linguistic diversity in their sojourn destinations, and yet, English was still most frequently portrayed as the language belonging to White members of their host community. As a result, the cultural landscape of English, a world many participants sought to enter during their time abroad, was linked to essentialized White Anglophone culture

(culture(s) that participants viewed in American and UK media). Having a high English proficiency was one method of acquiring a passport to this world.

English also played a vital role in the analysis of discourses of romance. For many men, English language abilities were linked to the status of 'desirable romantic partner' to non-Japanese women abroad and women from Anglophone and European nations in Japan. It could be argued that for some, the ability to communicate in English was more important than being physically attractive (a topic that will be discussed subsequently). Even within Japan, non-Asian women were described as lacking Japanese language abilities and requiring communication in English. Teutsch-Dwyer (2001) argues that language competence in a foreign language environment is a prerequisite to lead in a romantic relationship, which makes language skills particularly important in the maintenance of masculine identities. Likewise, many participants in this dissertation viewed a lack of fluency in English as a hindrance to the creation of Japanese men's masculine identities in romantic relationships with non-Japanese women. In this way, language skills were infused with gender roles and the expectation of a man to govern within a relationship.

Race and nationality

Ideas of race and nationality were intertwined in most participant accounts. In other words, being a Japanese national was equated with being racially Japanese. Moreover, a Japanese identity was attached to a unique culture of 'Japaneseness' that in many ways appeared more formal, rigid and homogenous than surrounding Asian cultures. For some interviewees, 'being Japanese' was contrasted with static notions of Whiteness and Anglophone culture that evoked Occidental discourses of the discursively constructed West and its people as individualistic, liberal and freethinking. Such perceptions reflect *nihonjinron* discourses that

frame Japanese culture and the Japanese language as both unique and homogeneous, in addition to being distinctly separate from 'the West' (Liddicoat, 2007; Kowai, 2015; Kubota, 1998). Several men in the current study moved between criticizing what they described as an inflexibility in Japanese society and emphasizing *nihonjinron* notions –and thus their own their Japaneseness– in order to distance themselves from unfavourable practices or perceptions of their host communities.

Gender's intersection with race and nationality

The most frequent point of identity comparison for participants was their descriptions of the experiences of Japanese women, both abroad and in Japan. Whereas some participants did not see any unique struggles or benefits to being a Japanese national abroad, the majority described acutely different experiences between Japanese men and women. Just as Japanese women's combination of nationality and gender was seen as making them *moteru* abroad, it was heterosexual Japanese men's intersection of being Japanese and male was described as giving them a *motenai* status.

The ways in which masculinity is embodied can be observed within participant accounts in their descriptions of the 'typical' Japanese man –short, lacking muscle, thin, no facial hair, and effeminate. However, this illustration cannot be considered inferior unless through comparison to an allegedly superior masculinity. According to most interviewees, superior masculinity was articulated through an image of hegemonic Western masculinity. Host community men were described as 'cooler' than Japanese men. They were said to be taller, more muscular, and more rugged. Moreover, many participants painted Japanese men as remarkably shy and lacking humour in comparison to men in other cultures (particularly non-Asian cultures). While a small number of accounts extended these traits to Asian men in general, many participants saw

heterosexual Japanese men as especially undesirable romantic partners. In this way, gender's connection to race and nationality was crucial in the intersection of participant identities.

v. Summary of findings: Question 3

Replicating discourses of heteronormativity

Sexuality was rarely explicitly discussed in interviewees, with exception to the cases of the two bisexual participants, Ryoma and Shoma. Even then, it was only Ryoma who claimed that his romantic experiences and romantic desires abroad affected his sojourns. Sexuality for other interviewees was both paradoxically salient and hidden through the heteronormative assumptions of what constitutes a romantic relationship. On reviewing the interview transcripts, it is apparent that in many cases I rarely challenged participants' ideas of male or female romantic desire. In other words, when comments arose about Japanese sojourners and host community members being attracted to each other, I regularly participated in the assumption that all these characters were heterosexual. This contributes to a common discourse of heteronormativity observed in both Anglophone nations (Connell, 2005) and Japan (McLelland & Dasgupta, 2005).

Replicating discourses: Preserving the status of hegemonic Western masculinity

Overall, the men in this study upheld images of the desirability of Western hegemonic masculinity through their comparisons of essentialized images of Japanese men and the men in their host communities. The Japanese male body acted as a tool in this comparison; Japanese men were described as short, lacking muscle and facial hair, appearing younger than their age, and so on. In accounts, these physical traits became a weakness for heterosexual Japanese men when contrasted with host community men (most commonly described as White and occasionally Black). In contrast, terms such as "masculine", "manish" and "manly" were

regularly attributed to host community men. These images seemed to remain with many participants even after their return to Japan. Because host community men were described as more masculine, they were also labeled as more attractive partners for heterosexual women – both Japanese and non-Japanese.

Several participants also attributed an inherently assertive nature to Western men. This was reflected in the men's assumed ability to approach women without hesitation, tell jokes, and be openly romantic in public. These characteristics were also noted as signs of attractive masculinity that Japanese men did not have. Instead, Japanese men were constantly presented as shy, unassertive and adverse to public affection. In this way, interviewees frequently feminized the image of Japanese men through social and physical comparisons to Western men. This is reminiscent of Orientalist discourses that feminize Asian males (Nemoto, 2009). However, Japanese men were seen as having symbolic capital based in their masculinity in certain romantic relationships, primarily those with South East Asian women from disadvantaged backgrounds. In this case, Japanese men's financial stability and native Japanese proficiency increased their desirability and their masculinity. Moreover, as suggested by Suzuki (2007), Japanese men in romantic relationships with South East Asian partners may be able to enact masculine identities through the men's financial means and cultural and linguistic capital in Japan. Holding some form of power over women, whether it is physical, financial, or linguistic, appears to be key in perceptions of the creation of masculine identities.

Replicating discourses: White femininity and English speaking women's influence on Japanese male desire and desirability

Although the overt discussion of sex or sexuality was not frequent in interviews, a thread of desire and romantic attraction links many participant narratives. As Nemoto (2009) argues,

and as I highlight in the Findings and Discussion chapters of this dissertation, romantic or sexual relationships are an act of self-making; they are connected to the formation of our identities. Thus, interviewees constructed identities through speaking of particular aspects of their romantic lives or the lives of Japanese men in general. For many participants, the status of host community women, primarily White, English speaking women, conjured feelings of desire or admiration. Several cases arose where the women's race, their physical features, and their language abilities were all idealized. This is reflective of previous research that observed a privileged status of White femininity in Asia and the West (e.g., Nemoto, 2009; 2011; Russell, 2017; Takayama, 2000) in addition to images of the superiority of Whiteness and English in Japan (e.g., Kubota, 1998; 2011; Ng, 2018; Nonaka, 2018; Rivers & Ross, 2013; Takahashi, 2013). In other words, few interviewees challenged the widespread Japanese discourse of a preference for Whiteness and English.

Moreover, the described admiration for White, native English speaking women was strikingly similar to the experience of the Japanese men in Takayama's (2000) study. Some participants articulated a personal admiration for essentialized views of White Anglophone women, while others spoke about this admiration as a general discourse in Japanese society. Yet, this admiration was often intermingled with Occidental notions of difference. Similarly to Takayama's (2000) participants, the interviewees in this dissertation frequently expressed an attraction to White Anglophone women that both idolized and otherized the women. These images were often presented in tandem with ideas of Japanese men as inferior romantic partners for White English speaking women.

Resisting discourses: Critiquing idealized White femininity and images of Whiteness in Japan

Of course, not all participants were complementary of the women in their host communities or uncritical of the status of White, English-speaking women. Through criticizing their groups in their interviews, a limited number of participants challenged dominant discourses surrounding White femininity, Whiteness, and English native speakerism that can be witnessed abroad and in Japan.

Natsuki, for example, spoke candidly about his lack of attraction to Canadian female students (described as White women) at his host university. This appeared to be based primarily on their physical size which, which Natsuki described using words such as 大きい ("large"), 太ってる ("chubby" or "fat"), and 足が大きい ("large legs"). Instead of White women symbolizing an idealized and otherized femininity that Japanese men struggle to acquire (as was articulated by several other participants), for Natsuki, femininity was symbolized by a physical frailty that needed to be protected by men. In other words, he suggested that femininity should not present a challenge to masculinity, but instead uphold it. This is why Natsuki praised Japanese women for what he saw as restrictive eating habits and a devotion to maintaining a petite figure. Likewise, Connell (2005) argued that one of women's roles in the affirmation of heterosexual normative masculinity is their potential to be physically dominated by men. The limited research on discourses of White women in Japan generally suggests a fetishization and idolization of the White female body (e.g., Takayama, 2000; Russell, 2017), and therefore Natsuki's comments can be seen as a form of resistance to dominant discourses of race, desire and masculinity.

A more common form of resistance among the men in this study arose through the critique of a general Japanese *akogare* for Whiteness, as seen in interviews with participants like Yoshi, Ryota, Nori, and Haruki. For these men, their goal did not appear to be criticizing White as individuals but instead about recognizing the historic global social systems that give Whiteness privilege. All of these men described a potential for a White romantic companion to offer status to a Japanese person due to the powerful cool, cosmopolitan image that Whiteness and English hold. Nevertheless, as articulated by Haruki, this desire did not come without expense to one's Japanese identity. In other words, he saw the elevation of Whiteness and English as lowering the status of someone racially Asian, especially if they were a non-native English speaker. While these men did not openly state they challenged these discriminatory discourses in their everyday lives, their interview accounts present a form of resistance to the status of Whiteness and English in Japan.

Resisting Discourses: International sojourns as a form of resistance

Participant accounts suggested that men's international sojourns can be used as an act of resistance to hegemonic corporate masculinity in Japan. Numerous participants claimed to have left or delayed an undesirable domestic career to go abroad in order to pursue (or in search of) a goal that was not available to them in Japan. Resisting life in corporate Japan was often compared to resisting the *sararīman* path, which was described as rigid, exhausting and unfulfilling. Despite a general shift in working habits in Japan the decreasing desirability of the *sararīman* lifestyle (Dusgupta, 2010), participants' regular reference to *sararīman* and the pressure the image exerted on them suggests that *sararīman* masculinity still took a hegemonic form in their lives. These findings are also reflected in Kato's (2015), Ono's (2015) and Suzuki's (2015) research with Japanese male sojourners.

vi. Research implications

This dissertation's contributes to our knowledge of the international experiences of young Japanese men who have gone abroad. It provides insight to how Japanese male sojourns may be affected by hegemonic discourses around masculinity and desire and how this affects their constructions of identity and abilities to enact agency. Moreover, the research interview process affirmed the benefit of creating a space for returnees to reflect on and learn from their time and relationships abroad. Lastly, this dissertation's presentation of Japanese/English interviews provides methodological insights into the benefits of bilingual data and how translating interviews into one language may obscure meaning.

Diversifying the view of young Japanese men: Contradictory images

Studies that interviewed Japanese women (Kelsky, 1999; 2000a; 2000b; Takahashi, 2013), or American male faculty in Japan Appleby (2013a; 2013b), suggested a prevailing image of Japanese men who are adverse to risk and change, old-fashioned, and bound to Japan. The interviewees in this dissertation strongly contradict this image through their sojourns and continued interest in language learning and intercultural relationships. Eleven men (2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 15, 20, 23, 24) wished to leave Japan again for an extended period of time to work or study. These same traits challenge the discourse of *uchumuki* youth.

However, the interviewees in this dissertation regularly described "Japanese men" in similar ways as the above studies. Participants used these descriptions as a point of contrast to their own international experience. In this way, they replicated negative images of the "typical" Japanese man in interviews while resisting this image through their international pursuits. This also suggests that 'static image' of Japanese men is not limited to research but may even be held by young Japanese men with international experience.

Addressing heterosexual Japanese men's views of racialized romance

Another contribution of this study is its analysis of participant perceptions of intersections of language and race in relation to romance. Looking at participant perceptions of desire and desirability also allows us to examine structures of power in host communities and Japan. This can be done through examining the social capital held by agents in participant accounts. For instance, for some participants, host community women were seen as desirable because of their native English speaker status and White skin. Such accounts represent the privilege that English and Whiteness hold in certain contexts in Japan.

Learning about participants' interactions with perceptions of masculinity in their host also provides an avenue to analyse structures of power. As I argued in Chapter one, this is important to educators who wish to gain a critical understanding of how Japanese men may experience their sojourns. Interviews suggested that participants were aware of negative discourses about Japanese masculinity when contrasted with hegemonic Western masculinity overseas and in Japan. While a small group of participants were critical of such discourses, many participants replicated these commonly held notions of "Japanese men" as inferior to "Western women" or "Western men" in our interviews. Moreover, many interviewees described a discourse in Japan of 'racially acceptable coupling' that favoured White male and Asian female couples, while presenting White female and Asian male couples as strange or incompatible. The imbalances of power created through their perceptions of these discourses seems to have influenced Haruki's, Shinya's and Yoshi's dating abroad. Each of them explicitly stated it difficult to approach Western (or White) women because they were Japanese. This dissertation argues that heterosexual Japanese male sojourners who perceive these racialized hierarchies of desire may feel disempowered and limit their romantic experiences abroad.

Benefits of the use and presentation of bilingual interview transcripts

This dissertation presented its research interview examples in two forms: In the language(s) they originally took place in, and an English translation that attempted to reflect nuance as much as possible. Although this practice is lengthy and is not possible in all contexts, it provides bilingual readers an intricate understanding of participant utterances and the interactions that took place within the research interview. While the focus of this dissertation did not allow room for an in-depth analysis of all the interactions between participant and researcher, presenting bilingual research data opens avenues to examine topics such as how code-switching reflects one's construction of identity and desires for group membership. It can also illustrate how language use reflects shifting structures of power in a bilingual interaction between native and non-native speakers. This dissertation argues that bilingual presentation of data adds depth and clarity to analysis and discussion.

vii. Research limitations

In Chapter 5, I included the methodological limitations to the present study. In the subsequent section, I will discuss three other limitations that arose during the creation and analysis of this research project.

Researcher participation in the interview

The way that I framed questions and contributed to the construction of my research interview data can be seen as a limitation from certain approaches to interviewing (see section ii). This was particularly highlighted through my choice to present lengthy transcripts that included my own questions and comments. While the researcher always influences the construction of interview data and cannot be removed (Roulston, 2010a; 2011; Talmy, 2011), a different methodology may help alleviate this problem. For instance, instead of thematic

analysis, using conversation analysis or discourses analysis would allow this study to focus on not necessarily *what* topics participants spoke about but *how* they spoke them in interaction (Laihonen, 2008). In other words, this would be a useful tool to critically examine how I co-constructed interview data with participants.

Lack of voices from men in the LGBTQ community

As previous mentioned, this study's participants consisted primarily of Japanese men who identified as heterosexual. The experiences presented from men from the LGBTQ community were limited to two participants who described themselves as bisexual. As a result, there are no data from gay or trans men. Indeed, it is important not to generalize the experiences of the limited amount of men in the current study to all Japanese male sojourners. Unfortunately, I did not have the background in queer theory to comprehensively assess the heteronormative discourses apparent in the research interviews. Failing to critically approach these discourses may further normalize the already problematic notions of 'straight desire' as standard. Developing an extensive knowledge of queer theory and applying this in the analysis of romance, gender and desire would give this study more breadth while challenging possibly heteronormative notions of desire.

Limited Japanese reference materials

The literature used to support this study primarily comes from English language sources. A small amount of Japanese literature was incorporated in the analysis and discussion of modern notions of Japanese masculinity, but Japanese references and literature were primarily used to supply statistics and program and policy information about study abroad and WHM programs. While there are scarce Japanese language studies on Japanese male sojourners and romance, there are ample studies regarding relevant topics such as perceptions of English in Japan,

Japanese masculinity and work, and Japanese youth and internationalization. Incorporating more Japanese language material into the background and analysis of this study would increase the study validity significantly.

viii. Future directions of research

Expanding research of Japanese male sojourners outside of the Inner Circle

Through analysis of the current study's data, several possible new directions became apparent. First, as more Japanese sojourners choose the Philippines as their destination (JAOS, 2017), there is a growing need to expand research outside of Inner Circle countries. The participants in the current study are excellent examples of this, considering that several studied English in South East Asia. In addition, a recent boom of South Korean pop culture across Asia has sparked an increase of interest in K-Pop, Korean television, and language studies in many countries (Oh, 2017). In a follow up meeting with Ryota, he told me he was considering leaving his current job in the near future to pursue a WHM program in South Korea. Examining the educational, social and romantic lives of Japanese men who go to non-Anglophone nations will become increasingly worthwhile as the numbers of sojourners continue to grow. For example, questions such as "do Japanese men feel they have a higher symbolic capital in these nations in comparison to Inner Circle nations?"

Interviewing non-Japanese women about perceptions of desirability and Japanese men

The current study provided in-depth interviews with Japanese men regarding non-Japanese, primarily Western women, and desirability. Although many *akogare* studies mention Japanese men, very few academic studies have critically analysed the perceptions of English-speaking women and romance in Japan. Despite the dominance of foreign-Japanese couples being South Asian women and Japanese men and Western men and Japanese women (Schans,

2012), there nonetheless is a community of English speaking women from a variety of countries who chose to live in Japan and date or marry Japanese men. Interviewing these women and rigorously using critically theory to examine discourses of masculinity, race, desire, and gender would also be a valuable compliment to the participant opinions presented in this dissertation.

Including the experiences of Japanese male LGBTQ sojourners

Several articles and books have looked at the narratives and lives of Japanese or Asian men in the LGBTQ community (e.g., Lin, Haywood & Mac an Ghaill, 2017; McLellend & Dasgupta, 2005). However, there is very little research that looks specifically at male sojourners who participate in study or temporary work abroad. Reflecting on the limited data in the current study, the question was raised if a Japanese man who dates men has more romantic capital that a heterosexual Japanese man. Moreover, examining LGBTQ Japanese male sojourners' interest in foreign languages has received limited attention. Continuing to look at the international narratives of these men would provide significant depth to the analysis of Japanese male sojourners and notions of masculinity, desire, and *akogare*.

Chapter 12: Appendices

Appendix A Original Interview guide [8]

Background

1. Why did you decide to study/work abroad?
   なぜ海外で働こうと／留学をしようと決めましたか。

2. Why did you choose the country and city that you went to?
   なぜその国と市を選びましたか。

3. Please tell me about your daily life when you were abroad.
   海外にいた時の日常生活を教えてください。

Social Circles and Dating

4. Please tell me about your social circles/community during your study/work abroad.
   あなたが海外で働いていた時／留学していた時のコミュニティーについて教えてください。

5. How did you meet these people?
   どうやってその人たちに出会いましたか。

6. What did you do for fun in your spare time?
   休みの時は何をしていましたか。

7. Were you interested in dating while you were abroad? Why or why not?
   海外に時に交際する事に興味を持っていましたか。なぜ？なぜありませんか。

8. Did you date while you were abroad?
   海外中に交際をしていましたか。

9. If so, please tell me about your experience of dating while you were overseas.
   もしそうであれば、海外での交際経験について教えてください。

Being a Japanese man abroad

10. Did you feel anything unique about your experience as a Japanese man abroad?
    日本人男性としてあなたは何かユニークな経験はありましたか。

11. How do you think you were perceived by your social circles?
    あなたは、あなたの身の周りの人々に、どのように見られていたと思いますか

[8] This guide was only loosely used to guide interviews.

12. How do you think you were perceived in general during your time abroad?
海外中に、あならは、一般的にどのように見られていたと思いますか

13. Did you even feel your were limited by your identity as a Japanese man during your time abroad?
海外中に日本人男性という事でアイデンティティーを制限されているように感じましたか。

14. Did you ever feel your identity as a Japanese man benefited you during your time abroad?
海外中に日本人男性というアイデンティティーで何か良い面はありましたか。

15. Did you ever feel your experience was different than the Japanese women studying/working abroad?
海外中の経験で日本人男性の経験と日本人女性の経験の違いを感じましたか

Being a Japanese men in Japan

16. Can you describe a “typical Japanese man” in Japan?
日本での典型的な日本人男性について説明できますか。

17. If so, how do you think you compare to this “typical” image?
日本人男性の「典型的なイメージ」と比べると、自分はどうだと思いますか？

18. Do you think your study abroad affected your view of Japanese men, or your view on the expectations of Japanese men?
海外経験は、あなたに日本人男性に対する見方や日本人の期待についての考え方に影響を与えたと思いますか

19. Do you think your study/working abroad affected your view on gender roles inside and outside of Japan?
海外で働いた経験／留学経験は国内外のジェンダーについての役割ついてあなたの考え方に影響を与えたと思いますか。

20. Do you think your identity as a Japanese man changed through your study abroad?
あなたのアイデンティーは留学によって変わったと思いますか。

21. Do you view yourself differently through your study/working abroad?
海外で働いた経験／留学経験によってあなたは自分自身に違いを感じますか。

22. How do you think Japanese men are viewed in Japan?
日本で、日本人男性はどう見られていると思いますか？

23. Is this different than the way they are viewed in the country you studied/worked in?
これはあなたがいた国と違うと思いますか？

Reflecting on Study/Working Abroad

24. Imagine yourself before going abroad, and think about yourself now. Do you think you have changed?
    海外に行く前のことを思い出して、今の自分について考えてください。何か違いがありますか。

25. If so, how so? If not, why do you think you have not changed?
    もしそうであれば/なければ、なぜあなたの考え方は変わった/変わってないのですか

26. Please tell me about some memorable moments from your time abroad. What did you learn or gain from these moments?
    海外中のあなたの良い思い出について教えてください。何を学びましたか、何を得ましたか。

27. How do you think you could have improved your experience of being abroad?
    あなたの海外生活をどうやってより良いものにしましたか。

Appendix B Individual Interview Consent Form 個人インタビュー同意書

Title of Study 研究課題名

Young Men's Perceptions of Masculinity and Desirability Through Study Abroad and Working Holiday Programs

Introduction 序論

You are being invited to participate in two individual interviews about your experiences overseas. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in this study.

あなたはあなたの海外経験について二つの個人インタビューに招待されています。
このフォームをしっかり読んで、この研究の参加を同意する前に質問をしてください。

Purpose of Study 研究の目標

The purpose of this study is to learn more about the experiences and perspectives of Japanese men who have studied and worked abroad. This study also aims to analyze how life abroad affected participants views of themselves and their experience as men both overseas and since returning to Japan.

本研究の目的は、海外で勉強したり働いたりした日本人の男性の経験を見解について学ぶことです。本研究ではまた、海外での生活が日本へ帰国後の彼らの人生観や男性としての経験に、どのように影響を及ぼしているのかを分析することを目的としている。

Description of Individual Interview Procedure 個人インタビュー手順の説明

Joining this research means participating in two interviews led by Elisabeth (Libby) Williams, who is a PhD Candidate for the Graduate School of Human Sciences at Osaka University. Interviews will last 30 - 45 minutes. During these interview, you will be asked questions about your personal experiences and perspectives about your international student support group, and its impact on your university campus. These interviews will be **audiotaped and transcribed**.

この研究に参加するということは、大阪大学大学院人間科学研究科博士候補である工リザベス（リビー）ウィリアムスが手がけた二つのインタビューに参加することを意味します。インタビューは、30 分〜45 分続きます。このインタビューでは、留学生サポートグループの経験と見通し、キャンパスへの影響についての一般的な質問が行われます。フォーカスグループのインタビューは録音され、転写されます。

Potential Risks and Benefits of Participation in Study 潜在的なリスク、研究参加のメリット

There are no overt risks to joining this study, though some participants may feel uncomfortable sharing their opinions in front of the researcher.
While you will not be compensated financially for your participation in interviews, sharing your experiences abroad may help you learn more from your experiences abroad. The researcher has past experience leading reflective exercises with study abroad participants to help you think more deeply about your time abroad.

何人かの参加者は研究者の前で、意見を共有することに不快感を覚えるかもしれませんが、この研究に参加することに大きなリスクはありません。
インタビューへの参加しても報酬はありませんが、あなたの経験や意見を共有することは自分の海外経験をもっと深くわかるようになるかもしれません。
研究者は、過去の海外研修参加者との過去の経験を活かし、海外での時間をより深く考えるのに役立ちます。

Confidentiality 機密性

This study is anonymous. None of your personal information will be collected and you, your group members, your group name, and your university will all be given pseudonyms in the research.
All published information from this study, such as in the doctoral thesis, conference presentations and/or journal articles will be kept strictly anonymous.
The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Research records will be kept in a locked file, and all electronic information will be coded and secured using a password protected file with researcher and her supervisor's sole access to the audio data. The data will be used for educational purposes and will be kept on the researcher's personal computer and will be erased within 10 years by deleting the data from the computer.

この調査は匿名です。あなたの個人情報は一切収集されません。グループメンバー、グループ名、そして大学にはすべて研究の仮名が与えられます。
博士論文、カンファレンスプレゼンテーションおよびジャーナル記事など、この研究から発表されたすべての情報は厳密に匿名で保管されます。
この研究の記録は厳密に機密されます。研究記録はロックされたファイルに保存され、すべての電子情報は暗号化されます。
研究者とスーパーバイザーはその音声データへのアクセス権があり、パスワードで保護されたファイルを使用します。データは教育目的で使用され、研究者のパーソナルコンピュータに保存され、コンピュータから 10 年以内にデータは消去されます。

Right to Refuse or Withdraw 拒否権または参加の取り下げ

You are free to refuse to participate in this study or withdraw your participation at **any time**. This includes before, during, or after the focus group interview.
There will be no absolutely consequence to your withdrawal from the study, including your relationship with the researchers.
You have the right not to answer interview questions. Moreover, you have the right to request the researchers not to use any of your interview material.
この研究に参加することを断ったり、いつでも参加を取り下げることは自由です。
参加の取り下げは、フォーカスグループインタビューの参加前、参加中、参加後のいつでも可能です。
研究の不参加はあなたの研究者との関係や、調査結果について大きな影響はありません。
あなたは面接の質問に必ず答える必要はなく、さらにインタビューの資料を使用しないよう研

究者に要求する権利があります。

Right to Ask Questions or Report Concerns 質問をしたり懸念を報告する権利
You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by the researchers before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact Elisabeth (Libby) Williams at elisabethannwilliams@gmail.com or by telephone at 080-3119-2242 or contact her supervisor, Dr. Beverley Yamamoto at bevyamamoto@hus.osaka-u.ac.jp.
If you would like, a summary of the study results will be sent to you. Please contact Elisabeth (Libby) Williams to receive a summary.

この研究についてはいつでも研究者に質問ができ回答してもらう権利があります。
質問があれば、Elisabeth (Libby) Williams に Email または電話で連絡してください。
またはスーパーバイザーの Beverley Yamamoto 教授に連絡してください。

Elisabeth (Libby) Williams
Email:elisabethannwilliams@gmail.com
Tel: 080-3119-2242

Dr. Beverley Yamamoto
bevyamamoto@hus.osaka-u.ac.jp

調査結果の要約を希望の場合は Elisabeth (Libby) Williams に連絡してください。

Consent 同意
Your signature below indicates that you have agreed to volunteer as a research participant in two interviews for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above. You will be given a signed and dated copy of this form to keep, along with any other printed materials deemed necessary by the researchers.

以下の署名は、この研究の二つのインタビューの研究参加者としてボランティアに同意し、上記の情報を読んで理解したことを示しています。
控えとしてこのフォームの日付と署名入りのコピーと必要と思われる他の印刷物をお渡しします。

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

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