

Nostalgia, Soft Power and the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme

**by**

**Sharleen Estampador Hughson**

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# [Abbreviations](#Abbreviations)

AET: Assistant English Teacher

ALT: Assistant Language Teacher

AJET: Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching

BET: British English Teaching Programme

CIR: Coordinator for International Relations

CLAIR: Council of Local Authorities for International Relations

DPJ: Democratic Party of Japan

JALT: The Japan Association for Language Teaching

JET: Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme

JETAA: Japan Exchange and Teaching Alumni Association

JETAA-I: Japan Exchange and Teaching Alumni Association International Chapter

LDP: Liberal Democratic Party

MEF: Monbusho English Fellows Scheme

METI: Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

MEXT: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

MIC: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication

MOFA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

SEA: Sports Exchange Advisor

UK: United Kingdom

US: The United States

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# [Abstract](#Abstract)

Cultural exchange programmes such as JET have become part of a growing diplomatic agenda within politics and international relations. This study investigates how the participants process their experience on the programme to demonstrate the link between soft power, memory and nostalgia. The participants promote Japan abroad by portraying images and ideas of Japanese culture and society to others. Applying everyday life theory will reveal intimate connections that attach these individuals to Japan, which contributes to soft power.

This study contributes to the scholarly discussion by using the experience of 24 participants (alumni and present) on the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme (JET) and former BET and MEF schemes from the 1980s to 2010s. Through their narratives we can uncover how the participants contribute to the development of soft power from the bottom-up.

By using a theoretical framework consisting of everyday life theory, (everyday life and phenomenology), this research will explore how memory and nostalgia are a valuable process for soft power. JETs are able to compare their own routines and values with another that leads to tolerance and appreciation for their own identities and that of others. The participants share traits that follow a similar progression through their experience on the programme. This has led to thematic similarities tied to the experience:

* Seeking opportunity, youth and the backdrop of uncertainty
* Imagining Japan and its stereotypes
* Experiencing adversity and acculturating to Japan
* The reflection of nostalgia after leaving the programme**.**

These patterns are associated with the JET experience and lead to nostalgic memories that attach the participants to Japan.

# 

# [Chapter 1](#Chapter1)

# [Introduction: the JET Programme as a bottom-up approach to international diplomacy](#Chapter1)

## Introduction

This study investigates the experience of participants on a cultural exchange scheme known as the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme. The reason for this research is to determine how diplomacy is effective at the individual level. In terms of the JET Programme, academics have linked soft power and the programme as a successful means of diplomacy through creating bridges between nations, but have not carefully considered individual reflections.

Scholars have drawn a connection between soft power and JET through the context of public diplomacy (Metzgar, 2012, 2017; Nye, 1990, 2004, 2008, 2011; Watanabe and McConnell, 2008). When it comes to soft power and cultural exchange programmes, there is an underlying assumption that interest is bound to exist without looking into the complexities that tie a person to a place, through developed interests, experiences of adversity and everyday events that cannot be controlled. What has not been considered is a thoroughly detailed analysis of how and if these individuals remain attached to Japan.

This study expresses how nostalgic attachment to memories and the places where they were created becomes part of one’s personal narrative. Adaptation and its impact on identity is an important consideration when living in a different culture and society for a number of years. Therefore, the areas of memory, nostalgia and adaptation tie us to a place through past reflection. They are important areas for the diffusion of soft power. The argument of this study is that through adaptation, this process leads to attachment to the host community, leading to nostalgic memories that are disseminated abroad as soft power, whereby the participant will be able to compare and contrast their own cultural and social makeup with that of the host culture.

Experience abroad can have social and economic advantages, especially when trying to differentiate oneself from the crowd (Desforges, 1998). Cultural exchange programmes have become important for fostering cultural awareness and independence. They are important tools for communication, innovation and adaptability (Klooster *et al*, 2008). Self-discovery through traveling to distant destinations is a fixation of our globalising age (Crane, 2015; Machado, 2014; Thomson, 2015). For those from middle-classed ‘Western’ backgrounds, travel and living abroad can be an advantage through the accumulation of cultural capital.

This research consists of 24 participants. The material starts with interviews that span each decade of the programme, starting from the 1980s to the 2010s. JET was established in 1987, however before that MEF and BET schemes were up and running. Perspectives from participants on these earlier programmes contribute to knowledge on the JETs early formation, as these schemes merged to create the JET Programme. After organising and sifting through the interview material I found similar themes:

* seeking opportunity, and response to uncertainties
* imagining Japan and evoking nostalgia
* adversity and acculturation
* the commodification of experience through nostalgia

These themes make up the discussion chapters of the thesis. They reveal the formation of attachment through nostalgia and memory that contributes to soft power. The experience becomes part of the individual’s identity through a process of acculturation and biculturalism. This is where the participants are able to adapt and understand their host culture and society, essentially attachment through nostalgia, in addition to identity.

The next sections of the chapter will discuss the purpose and outline of the study, including the structure of the thesis, The significance of the JET Programme, Relevance of soft power, Relevance of memory and nostalgia, The account of subjectivity through autoethnography and life history and the conclusion.

To grasp the stages of the experience and their importance, the purpose and outline of this investigation need to be presented.

## Purpose and outline

The purpose of this research is to investigate how soft power is disseminated at the individual level. Little published research has been presented on this very subject.

Firstly, the importance of the dispersion of first hand experience through individuals as informal agents of soft power needs to be explored. The focus on soft power tends to be an approach as to how governments can fortify their standing within the international community. This is through the attraction of their cultural by-products and foreign policy; however this is deficient in recognising the potential knowledge correlated to events in the everyday. Debate continues on the noteworthiness of subjectivity in research. Despite this contestation, its importance needs to be determined. To demonstrate subjectivity’s contribution to research I will make use of my own experience as part of the research through the auto-ethnographic approach, a complimentary approach to the principal research approach, which is to hear participants’ stories through the life history method. Thus, this research is about a bottom up approach versus a more extensively researched top down policy oriented approach to studying the JET Programme and its previous incarnations (*Monbusho* English Fellows and British English Teachers).

Secondly, this dissertation will demonstrate the impact of memory and the optimistic and heightened development of nostalgia through distanciation of time and place. This very impact is crucial for the individual’s processing of experience that leads to long-term attachment and engagement with the host country.

Thirdly, I will demonstrate how everyday life theories, which include works from Lefebvre and phenomenology, are unresearched territory when it comes to their application to soft power. The significance that individual subjectivities yield through long-term engagement when living abroad, is an important component to soft power. Along with this are all the in between remembered experiences that give an individual’s narrative substance. The research examines the production of soft power within the context of memory and the everyday. It is important to explain how the thesis is structured.

### *Structure of the thesis*

As laid out is the preceding Contents, this thesis comprises ten chapters. Chapter 1, the introduction, explains the purpose, objectives, significance, originality and structure of the research.

Between the introduction and the conclusion (chapter 10) the thesis can be seen to be divided into two natural sections: Chapters 2-5 builds the argument and Chapters 6-9 discuss the results from the fieldwork.

Chapters 2 -5 will build the argument, starting with chapter 2, which will discuss the existing literature on everyday life theory and its significance to soft power; chapter 3 will present the methodology and the approach to the fieldwork; chapter 4 will look at the concept of soft power and its connection to the phenomena of memory and nostalgia. Chapter 5 will comprise the historical and present backdrop of the JET Programme. A more detailed discourse into the background, reason and purpose of the JET Programme is included as it necessitates an extensive explanation to fully grasp the organisational structure and responsibilities of the programme. Each JET-supporting organisation has their own aims and objectives for endorsing the programme; hence it would be suitable to elucidate these similar but assorted purposes here.

Chapters 6 to 9 will discuss the results from the fieldwork. Here I will untangle the web of information gathered from interviews taken from a life history approach, along with auto-ethnographic data from personal diaries. From this section, each chapter will reflect the common traits that the participants have gone through regarding the programme.

It will begin with chapter 6, the participants’ contemplation of their future and their reasons for seeking opportunity in the face of globalisation. Chapter 7 will discuss the images and stories of Japan and how they understood Japan or imagined it through these impedimenta. Chapter 8 will discuss the manifestation of alienation and difference during their experience, and the resulting adaptation that results from living in their host communities. Chapter 9 discusses the results of nostalgia and how the participants used the JET experience in their futures.

Chapter 10 will end with the conclusion. Interpreting these experiences will demonstrate how long-term attachment to place during our young adulthood, can facilitate soft power through nostalgia. How the JET Programme is significant to the study needs to be expressed.

## 

## Significance of the JET Programme

There have been a few well-established governmental cultural exchange programmes such as the American Peace Corps, established in 1961 (Peace Corps), and the English Programme in Korea (EPIK) founded in 1995. The latter is very similar to the JET Programme and also backed by the Korean Ministry of Education to assist with English language education and cultural exposure (EPIK, 2013). These schemes all have similarities regarding relationships and cultural competency at the grassroots level. However, compared to JET, the Peace Corps’ mission is primarily concerned with the promotion of American values and the provision of aid for developing nations (Peace Corps). Indeed, Japan is a developed nation and the third largest economy in the world according to its GDP (World Bank, 2016). Concerning EPIK, it is tied to the same goals as JET, though is less evolved and established than JET.

Arguments based on the JET Programme relevant to soft power have been primarily limited to ministerial underpinnings of internationalisation. The programme has been a steady example of the effectiveness of soft power, which has been heavily discussed by Nye (2011: 42), Watanabe *et al* (2008: 18-31) and Metzgar (2012), in relation to the programme. McConnell (1996**)** and Nye (2004) express that JET is one of the world’s high profile governmental exchange schemes. Previous schemes consisted of the Monbusho English Fellows (MEF founded in 1977) and the British English Teachers Programme (BET founded in 1978) (McConnell, 1995:80; 2000; 43; Meerman, 2003). Participants on these former initiatives eventually consolidated into the JET Programme in 1987. JET is managed by the three ministries consisting of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications *(Sōmushō*); the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (*Monbukagakushō);* The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Gaimushō)* through the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (*Jichidai kokusaika kyōkai)* (CLAIR, 2015h). As of 2016, the programme has recently celebrated its 30th anniversary (CLAIR, 2016a) further substantiating the long-term success of this initiative.

In recent years, the JET Programme has been an interest within Japanese politics. In 2012, Prime Minister Abe’s administration announced its goal to increase the number of JET participants, which is an important strategy for a country that has had issues regarding their future workforce. With an ageing and dwindling population, and with the misfortune of experiencing the disastrous Tōhoku earthquake, tsunami and Fukushima nuclear disaster, this is a massive implementation for a country that tends to keep foreigners at the fringe of society (Hsiao-Ying, 1995; Yamamoto, 2012). Scholars have labelled this tendency as stemming from the *Tokugawa* imposed *Sakoku* edict of 1639, where the *shogunate* purposely isolated Japan from the rest of the world (Itō, 2001: 8). Hence, scholars argue that the continuation of a ‘*Sakoku* mentality’ exists (Itoh, 1996; Kazui *et al,* 1982). However, the acceptance of foreigners within communities does seem to be changing (Flowers, 2012). The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) wanted to expand the number of JET participants to 10,000 in the three years following their announcement in 2012 (Mie, 2013b). The Tokyo metropolis decided to increase the number of ALTs (Assistant Language Teachers) to 100 for the years 2014 and 2015; a pronounced difference as Tokyo had acquired only five ALTs in 2013. Governor Inose hopes that by engaging native language teachers with high school students, it will help to promote the English language in time for the Olympics in 2020 (CLAIR, 2016c). In the same year of 2020, English is set to become one of the official subjects in the Japanese curriculum, which brings uncertainty to the role of ALTs who are not hired for their experience or educational background with teaching English language (Aoki, 2014). These participants are brought over as informal ambassadors of their home countries for the promotion of grassroots led cultural diplomacy and not necessarily as formal language teachers, hence the ‘assistant’ label. Through the present JET Programme and its supporting organisations ([[1]](#footnote-1)The Association for JET and JET Alumni Association) there is continued encouragement to remain engaged with Japan while being abroad (Todhunter, 1992: 6). Therefore, JET is an appropriate reference for considering the interplay of everyday life and memory within the context of a globalising world.

The three objectives of the JET Programme provided by the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations are to:

1. Create mutual understanding between Japan and the rest of the world;
2. Promote internationalisation within local communities by enhancing the foreign language curriculum, and;
3. Develop an international exchange within the local communities (CLAIR, 2010h).

This study concentrates on the first and third objectives of promoting internationalisation within the local community and into the wider world. By focusingon these two objectives, I aim to demonstrate how international exchange at the local level has an impact on the dissemination and formation of new ideas and cultural observations, also known as soft power. International exchange has the potential to flourish from the community level to a wider audience, even maintaining a long-term impact (Boulding, 1990; Nye, 2004, 2008; Watanabe, 2006; Watanabe *et al,* 2008). This signifies the first objective about creating mutual understanding between Japan and the world. The reason I have chosen not to focus on the second objective is because I am less concerned with the reciprocity of the education aspect of English in the classroom, which is another study in itself. As explained above, the JET programme’s primary objective is not to improve foreign language in the public education sector but to promote internationalisation at the local and global levels. I intend to research the efficacy of the JET Programme through the engagement of its participants. This results not in a top down approach, but the less researched bottom up approach to internationalisation. It has been proposed by McConnell (2000) that the approach of JET is a top down approach, but he does not discuss how it is better implemented as a grass roots approach to internationalisation. For these reasons, we need to understand the soft power process.

## Relevance of soft power

Nye has discussed the combination of soft power and hard power, known as ‘smart power’. In recent times, Nye (2011) has argued that soft power alone is not sufficient enough to defend a nation’s interest. He justifies the need for hard power through use of militaristic strategy, which he categorises under ‘dimensions of military power’. Basically, he argues that to maintain control, force is needed as a threat to demonstrate dominance and credibility. The need for the combination of soft and hard power come from the shift of war, where mass communication through social media now gives voice to those without advanced weaponry (Nye, 2011: 42). Regarding this research, I take a more sociological view of soft power concentrating on cultural diplomacy.

In Nye’s work on soft power he states in his section on ‘The shape of public diplomacy’:

Japan has developed an interesting exchange program bringing 6,000 young foreigners each year from 40 countries to teach their languages in Japanese schools, with an alumni association to maintain the bonds of friendship that are developed. (Nye, 2004:110).

Nye indicates the importance of cultural exchange and the prosperous connections that can be maintained by individuals as a collective, however does not deeply delve into this relationship. Indeed, it is through people and their formation of relationships with others and their significant contributions to cultural diplomacy are made (Nakamura, 2012). JET has been cited through Nye (2004) and Watanabe and McConnell (2008: 18-31) as a prime example of the utilisation of soft power. However, Nye (ibid) argues that the programme is useful within public diplomacy, whereas McConnell (ibid) believes that it is primarily influential as cultural diplomacy. For Nye (ibid), his description of soft power tends to be at a macro level approach. He perceives it as being able to influence an overall shift in perspective at a governmental level. Through cultural diplomacy, however, JET participants have a more balanced view of the experience and are not necessarily sympathisers of Japan. They have experienced the good and bad that comes along with engaging and living in a different culture. ‘The JET Program is not teaching people to like Japanso much as it is teaching them to communicate with Japanese’ (McConnell, 2008: 29). One of the areas of contention within soft power is its actual ability to attract others to governmental agenda. Japanese origami, sumo and sushi may be attractive and ‘exotic’ abroad, however this does not necessarily translate into any magnetism for Japanese politics, e.g., the passing of secrecy laws or Osaka Mayor Hashimoto advocating the need for comfort women in World War II (BBC, 2013; Pollmann, 2014). Boulding (1990: 114-15) has discussed power at the social level, where integrative power has the most influence. He connects the need for identity with power where identification leads to networks. We are connected to various networks depending on our various individualities, such as being on the JET Programme, going to a certain university, or even the rapport created from national identity, etc. These networks as a collective have power and influence. Both Boulding (1990) and Nye (2004, 2008, 2009, 2011) extol the necessity for legitimacy when it comes to influencing power. This research will look at cultural diplomatic power that is diffused from the individual, thereby promoting a personable image of Japan and furthering its legitimacy and attraction. To do this, it is necessary to look into the experience and how memory and nostalgia are important factors to the spread of soft power.

## Relevance of memory and nostalgia

A considerable amount of this research considers the subjective experience of the participants. Therefore, a theoretical analysis of everyday life will be beneficial and in terms of exploring the attraction of memory and nostalgia. This research will examine everyday life theory that consists of works from Lefebvre and social phenomenology. These theories look at the ‘taken for granted’ areas of life and the reasons why we retain, or are conscious of, certain memories (Lefebvre, 1991: xxvi; Schutz, 2014). What this acknowledges is that habitual commonplace events are hidden potential resources of knowledge. This source of knowledge can be perceived as soft power. Through memory and the everyday, the occurrences at the local and global level, produce and contribute to the dissemination of cultural knowledge.

The cycle that the individual goes through while living abroad is an important element to the creation and dispersion of soft power. Although scholars such as Nye (2004) and McConnell (1996, 2000; Watanabe and McConnell, 2008) have discussed how the JET Programme plays a role in the spread of soft power, they do not probe into the micro level approach of the individuals that are the agents of soft power.

If you can achieve your goals without having to force others into doing what you want but have them desire your objectives, this is a form of power. I argue that soft power is the outcome of the accumulation and dispersion of cultural capital, where the individual is the container through which nostalgia functions. Attraction exists in the form of the nostalgic past along with its attachment to where these memories were created, in the Japanese host communities. A cultivated awareness of Japan has shaped these participants’ existence and future purpose. Demonstrating familiarity with Japanese related ideas or things along with the desire to remain connected to the country could be a compelling form of attraction. How memory is important internally needs to be discussed.

Why is it that as time moves on, negative experiences become less impactful and perhaps even optimistic in reflection when we try to picture the future? For instance, the Proustian moment of tasting this cookie has been a major influence of memory studies. The reason for this is that his story describes the triggering of an involuntary memory that changes Proust’s emotional state.

She sent for one of those squat, plump cakes called *petites madeleines* that look as though they have been molded in the grooved valve of a scallop shell. And soon, mechanically, oppressed by the gloomy day and the prospect of another sad day to follow, I carried to my lips a spoonful of the tea in which I had let soften a bit of madeleine. But at the very instant when the mouthful of tea mixed with cake crumbs touched my palate, I quivered, attentive to the extraordinary thing that has happening inside me. A delicious pleasure had invaded me, isolated me, without my having any notion as to its cause. I had immediately rendered the vicissitudes of life unimportant to me, its disasters innocuous, its brevity illusory, acting in the same way that love acts, by filling me with a precious essence: or rather this essence was not merely inside me, it was me (Proust *et al*, 2004: 44-5).

Of course, it is not the case that every memory is imbued with positivity, as with traumatic memory which most memory studies research. This study is concerned with a more constructive, nostalgic reflection of the past. I will take into account memory’s changeability that has an effect on the individual’s narrative. We unconsciously shape our own narratives and how we perceive ourselves in the present (Sacks, 2012; Draaisma, 2013; Hammond, 2013; Fernyhough, 2013). It has been considered that an overestimated positive reflection of the future stems from human survival (Sharot, 2014; Hammond, 2013) The ‘optimism bias’ expresses that people tend to overestimate the positive state of the future. Individuals contemplate that the future will be better than the present (De Meza *et al,* 1996; Sharot, 2011). Hammond (2013) believes that this is a means of looking forward beyond present circumstances. Perhaps it is a reason to continue looking forward to the future and to distract us from the mundane. Additionally, emotion plays an important role in the accuracy of memory by enhancing certain details of that memory. When it comes to future thinking and the role of nostalgia, emotion seems to become more positive when contemplating the future (Schmidt *et al*, 2011).

To a conscious and unconscious degree, the Japanese overseas experience can be reformulated to become an even more positive phase of our individual histories, even if there were unpleasant experiences. Youth is another important aspect of nostalgic underpinnings.

The JET programme is described as a youth exchange programme (MOFA, 2015). The age at which we go through certain experiences is an important factor concerning the attachment we derive from specific memories. The psychological concept of ‘emerging adulthood’ is another applicable phenomenon for the agency of soft power through nostalgia. Scholars have specified that the time from one’s late teens to one’s twenties is considered ‘emerging adulthood’ (Arnett, 2000a, 2005; Chung *et al*, 2014). It refers to the period of instability and exploration that takes place at this demarcated age group. This period of uncertainty is a time of first time experiences that allows room for error in order for the development of the person we hope to become. This becomes more valid when one is living in another culture and society that is different to one’s own. In Japan, as an outsider you are not expected to fully adopt Japanese norms. In fact, even in today’s modern Japan there are many restrictions for foreigners (Asahi, 2008). Foreigners coming over to Japan could even be said to reinvigorate the Japanese identity, whether in everyday life or even in the media (Hambleton, 2011). This experience of exclusion is part of the process that has an impactful influence on memory. Indeed, it is the encounters that we experience in this period that remain influential.

## The account of subjectivity: autoethnography and life history

The concept of everyday life is about recognising the unfamiliar in our mundane, repetitive lives, which is an important approach to the development of social and cultural knowledge. The postmodern interpretation of subjectivity, which has transformed social research, reminds us that we should be mindful of objectivity (Ratner, 2002). Turner’s (1994: 9) clarification of postmodernism pronounces, ‘postmodernity refers to the extension of the processes of commodification to everyday life …’ He further states, ‘Postmodern methodologies are sensitive to the richness and complexity of local meanings of folk practices and beliefs.’ Seidman (1994: 2) claims that ‘Signs of postmodernity are visible in processes of “de-differentiation” (the breakdown of boundaries between social institutions and cultural spheres) and their “de-territorialization” of national economies and cultures.’ This cultural shift has drifted into academic practice and theory. Indeed it is acknowledged that the researcher will become immensely attached to his/her work. Choosing a topic of research already involves traces of the individual on the composition; therefore it is questionable whether we can truly be objective within our work. Since I was a former JET participant I found it useful to accommodate auto-ethnography as a research method. In truth, I thought it was important to be accountable for the fact that I have a background on the programme itself. Additionally, I have my own ideas and viewpoints from being on the programme. Brigg and Bleiker (2010) take the component of auto-ethnography as a vital part of any research, which stresses the individual as a tool for furthering potential knowledge claims within a body of work. JET alumni have varying accounts within different time periods, which for research purposes will contribute to the clarity of the overall collective experience of the participants.

For this research, I found it valuable to capitalise on the life history method. I found it relevant for appreciating the varying experiences of each participant. Indeed, it clarified the mechanisms that contribute to the reflective processes that lead to the transfer of soft power. Life history also comfortably parallels everyday life theory. What is remembered becomes a significant detail through delving into a reflective interview of the past. It demonstrates the in situ reference of the experience and how it has become part of the individual’s historical make up. Their awareness of the experience and how it has been digested is of great importance. The evidence comes from personal narratives taken from interviews that delve into the participants’ experience on the programme and other Japanese related influences in early life. The reason for this is to understand the shift in perception that these people had after their intimate encounters in the various cities, towns and villages around Japan (jetprogramme.org, 2016). Without a doubt, their knowledge and understanding of Japan will have shifted from their impressions of childhood to the present. It is important to unravel the progression of how the representation of Japan has touched these participants’ lives and become part of their personal histories. This intimate connection to Japan is important for the spread of cultural diplomacy, thus soft power. Adapting to life abroad in another environment is an interesting process that all the participant’s share.

The next chapter will discuss the literature related to the investigation to establish a research need, related to everyday life theory and soft power and concepts. It will also demonstrate this study’s originality by exploring past research on the JET Programme.

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# Chapter 2

# Making sense of the JET experience

## Introduction

To effectively progress with the study, it is essential to explain the gap in the literature. Academic investigation of JET has considered soft power through public diplomacy. This research signifies the overlooked bottom-up approach of soft power through JET’s cultural exchange. I argue that this movement is through nostalgia. It also identifies the link between soft power and nostalgia that has not been acknowledged in the current literature. Local and global pressures impact the participants and this needs to be accounted for.

Globalisation engenders social and economic uncertainty, which can be further clarified through everyday life theory. By doing this, the link of the individual to the soft power process can be unravelled. A discussion about the Japanese government’s reaction to globalisation through their efforts to internationalise need to be discussed to understand the historical roots of Japan’s cultural diplomacy. This chapter will indicate the theoretical and empirical scholastic lacunae concerning individuals as contributors to soft power.

The sections ‘The movement of soft power and JET’; ‘Japan, globalisation, internationalisation and the JET Programme’ will introduce the importance and approaches to internationalisation in Japan and in the ‘West’.The sections ‘Present uncertainties’, ‘Navigating the self through emerging adulthood’ will look at the choices for participation on JET and the overaching outlook of opportunity in a globalising world. ‘Historical roots of Japan and the West’, ‘Discussion of Japan reflected from a distance: The role of soft power and the nostalgic unfamiliar’ will look at the stereotypes and images and stories related to Japan that were influential for these participants. The sections,‘Reflections on Japanese uniqueness; Familiarity and acculturation’ and ‘Everyday life’s rhythms and acculturation’ consider how adaptation or acculturation to their host communities become part of the participants identity. It also addresses how othering their host community emerges. ‘Movement of nostalgia: distance, fabrication and remembering’; ‘Selling nostalgia through internationalisation: linking Japan to the present’ will explore the literature on how the JET experience is processed and effective after it ends. Lastly will be the conclusion. These categories illustrate the progression of the JET experience. They demonstrate and support the arguments for the answers found in chapters 6-9 and the confrontations that JET participants go through during their time on the programme and beyond. The concept and fixture of place is often only realised when we are confronted by the unfamiliar. The materialisation of soft power in a globalising world and past research on JET and soft power should be discussed.

## The movement of soft power and JET

McLuhan (2011: 170) states, 'Two cultures or technologies can, like astronomical galaxies, pass through one another without collision; but not without change of configuration (cited in Bartram, *et al*, 1994).' Soft power relies primarily on these three resources: Culture, where areas are attractive to others; political values, when it follows through with agenda domestically and overseas and foreign policy, when perceived as legitimate and morally correct (Nye, 2004: 11-12). It is the elusive movement of soft power that makes it effective. Soft power is about achieving one’s goals without having to force others. It is about painting a positive image of a society and creating sympathy for a nation. Soft power was a term coined by Nye (1990a), and has been described as organically cultural in nature, as it uses attraction to achieve its intended goals. The flaunting of culture and identity are used to attract others in such a way that it makes others want to identify or become part of that certain culture or society (Watanabe and McConnell, 2008). Nye (2004: 33) has recognised that soft power’s influence depends on how messages are sent and received by whom and under what circumstances, additionally, how it has an effect on how we go about getting the results we want. Soft power’s unpredictability is its strength, although it has been criticised for not being tangibly detectable or measurable for quantifying impact (Otmazgin, 2005).

As to the JET programme's influence on soft power, McConnell (2008) stresses the resourcefulness of JET as a method for instilling positive images of Japan overseas. He argues that JET is not effective under public diplomacy but valuable under 'milieu goals', where images of Japan are advertised through its culture and history. This is done to convey to the rest of the world that Japan as a nation is as industrialised as the 'West’. The government wants Japan to be seen as a promoter of democracy, open markets and human rights agendas and not under cultural diplomacy; cultural attractiveness does not necessarily equate attractiveness for a government or policy. McConnell (2008) and Nye (2004) have both mentioned JET as a source of soft power in building long term relationships with other nations. The process of soft power is one that is long term. It is perceived as lacking practicability as a governmental strategy, as it cannot be wielded as an immediate set of actions. Additionally, its receptiveness is not concentrated but diffused (Nye, 2004). This makes this type of power harder to detect and disengage from. Soft power can also have the opposing effect and possibly reduce support from the outside. There has been little research done on the capacity of the JET Programme as a resource of soft power for the Japanese government.

There are over 62,000 participants as of 2015 from 65 countries (CLAIR, 2015a) who have been on the programme since its initiation. In 1987 there were 840 participants from 4 countries. In 2016-17, there were 30 nations participating in the programme, a more detailed graph of this is found on the jetprogramme.org website (CLAIR, 2016a). Each participant is placed within Japan's 47 prefectures, 875 municipalities and into 922 organisations (MIC, 2009). A former Prefectural Advisor within CLAIR has stated that the ministries goal is to create *shinnichika*, or those knowledgeable about Japan.

…the JET Programme has been around for more than 2 decades now and there must be a very definite policy behind that programme, and the words like soft power, they’re not usually used in the context of JET, not by the authorities, like CLAIR, not so much. But it definitely is, a type of soft power or kind of diplomacy, so a better way to put it is like *shinnichika*,*wo sodateru* which means to develop resources, like human resources to understand Japan or who have a positive image of Japan who will be like, goodwill ambassadors of Japan after the JET Programme (Ranade, 2014).

JET may not have officially adopted the soft power terminology, however its objective relies on the same principles.

McConnell (2000: 267) has indicated that over time JETs have become sympathisers for Japan. In survey of 500 American JET alumni done by Metzger (2012: 7), she explains how the alumni shared a mutual feeling of commitment to convey to others their experience of Japan and Japanese norms. This connection to Japan and the JET Programme is further solidified through formal and informal blogs, magazines and books written and belonging to JET alumni. *JET Streams***,** which is a publication produced through CLAIR, which began in 1991: it is an international platform for sharing alumni experiences, changes to the programme and activities of JETAA international (JET Streams, 2010). The Department of JET Programme Management at the CLAIR office sent a message on their website describing *JET Streams*, ‘…as a means for alumni to share their memories and experiences, and also to promote the strengthening of ties between JET alumni and Japan (JET Streams, 2010).’ Another platform through CLAIR is *JET Letter*or *JET Plaza* (CLAIR, 2015d)that discusses the reflections of alumni on their experience and how it has impacted their lives. In one of these publications, Dendy (2016) sums up her experience by expressing,

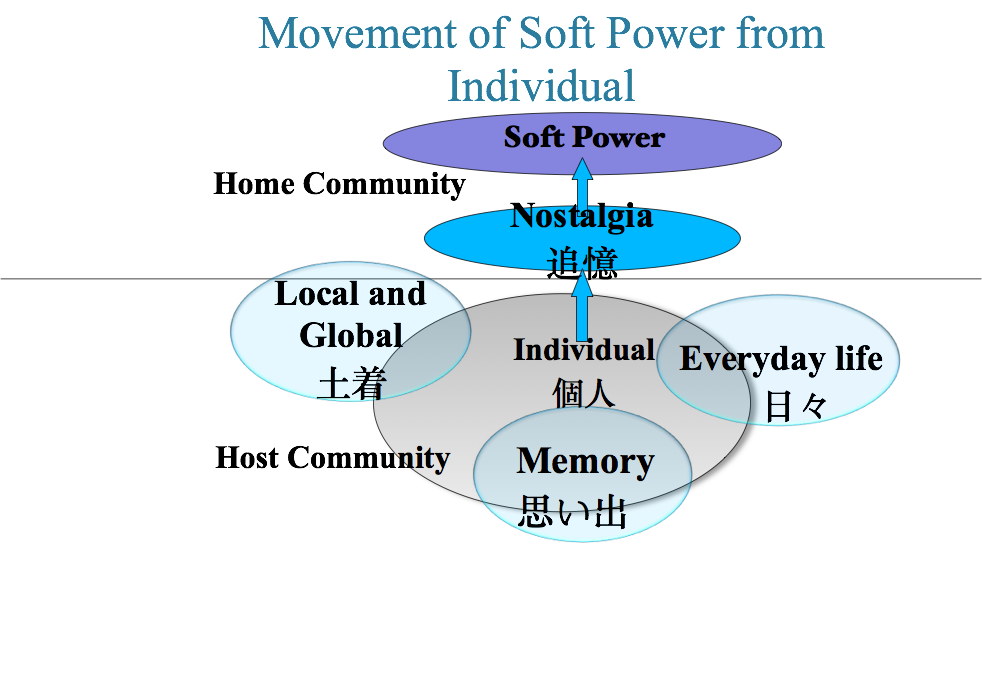
There is no doubt that without the JET Programme and its comprehensive network to support participants in coming to Japan, I would not have made the leap and would not be looking to dedicate my future to this country, and I am confident that the tens of thousands of past and current JETs who have done so too would say the same. The Programme provides an ideal platform for young people to develop their skills and to use these for the benefit of Japan, and I hope it will continue to do so for another 30 years and beyond.

Dendy (ibid) has expressed her sentiment of having done the programme, which she confidently states other JETs share. Other topics under *JET Letter*are: Connecting the Past and the Future: ‘Towards the 30th Anniversary of the JET Program (CLAIR, 2016b; Macgregor, 2016)’, ‘Why is JET so special? Reflections after 6 years back home (Burney, 2016)’; and ‘Reflecting on my JET Experience (Yuseco, 2015)’. The publications online are categorised from 2011, forward.

There are non-fictional literatures written by JET alumni. *For Fukui’s Sake*, by Sam Baldwin (2011) describes his time living in a rural Fukui prefecture. *Learning to Bow: Inside the Heart of Japan***,** describes Feiler’s (2004) year on the programme and the cultural clashes he experiences. *Ash: A Novel* (Thompson, 2001) is a fictional story created about a woman that teaches in Kagoshima on the MEF scheme. The novelist Holly Thompson was an alumna on the former programme (JETwit.com.b).

Informal literature includes sites such as JETwit.com the JQ Magazine (JQ), which is hosted by JETwit (JETwit.com.a), and the AJET Connect Magazine (2012) and drawings from the title ‘Life After the BOE’, drawn by Namisato (2011) a former CIR from Aomori-ken. Japan has been considered a cultural superpower with how it advertises itself abroad through the ministries and products.

Japan has been regarded as a cultural superpower according to Iwabuchi (2002, 2007), McConnell (2000), Nye (2004), Tomlinson (1999, 2006) and Watanabe, *et al* (2008). There are many avenues to the transference of cultural soft power, such as popular culture or cultural exchanges like JET (Yamasaki, *et al*, 2006). The programme wants participants to return to their home countries to paint a positive image of Japan. The overall impression of living in Japan will affect Japan's soft power and have an impact to the JET Programme and its participants’. Soft power, ‘…relies primarily on these three resources: Culture (where areas are attractive to others), political values (when it follows through with agenda domestically and overseas), and foreign policy (when perceived as legitimate and morally correct)’. (Nye, 2004:11-2; Watanabe *et al*, 2008; Yun *et al,* 2008). Otmazgin (2008: 76) believes that soft power is used to divert attention away from the truth of Japan's military operations and economic strength. Therefore, it is the elusive movement of soft power that makes it effective. The JET Programme is only one of the tools that the government uses to promote soft power abroad; Japan has initiated the implementation of a programme dubbed ‘Cool Japan’*.* Cool Japan is a strategy promoted by (METI) to promote the consumption of Japanese goods overseas, through a fashionable image of Japan in areas of consumer brands, fashion, food, lifestyle and tourism. These images reflect two areas of Japan: Japan's traditional past *minzoku bunka* (folk culture, locally produced by craftsmen) and Japan's popular culture or *taishu bunka* (commercially produced; no exact translation into English), a spectrum covering the Japanese past, present and future which is mirrored back to Japanese society. Through the consumption and distribution of Japanese products an ideology of Japan is created which shapes social influence in favour of the government's viewpoint (Clammer, 1995: 31-33; Otmazgin, 2007). METI states that this strategy is needed due to the decline in consumption of Japanese brands, resulting from competitive emerging economies, a lack of domestic demand, and a degenerating market. METI believes that the traditional modes of industry and economy are not enough to lift Japan out of its struggling economy (Ishii, 2001; McGray, 2002; Lam, 2007; METI, 2012). As a result the JET Programme also plays into this role of promoting business through consumption of Japanese products. Their paychecks are paid through the local allocation tax or, *koofuzei,* andthat for the most part is recycled back into the Japanese economy (McConnell, 1996). JETs’ consumer consumption is done within the borders of the country and through living in their communities and traveling they may adopt a penchant for Japanese goods, which becomes nostalgic upon their return home. Their emotional attachment and consumption demonstrate a positive perspective of the importance of Japanese products, which that is reflected back to Japanese society. Nostalgia plays a role in the consumption of Japanese products abroad from which they will most likely purchase. Soft power is generated from the perceptions of everyday life, history and memory and depends on the nostalgic attachment of the perceivers (Nye, 2004:95).



(The image above demonstrates how soft power moves from the individual, abroad. Created by Sharleen Estampador Hughson (2012))

Nostalgia is important from a JET perspective, as this is what is spread abroad as soft power. Interactions produce information, stimulated by nostalgia whereby through interacting with those that are counter to our selves, people and societies begin to understand and define their identities (Suzuki, 2007). Nostalgia as a cultural product is transported between individuals, communities and the wider world (local and global) and connected to the everyday person. How Japan approached internationalisation is an important part of the study’s argument.

## Japan, globalisation, internationalisation and the JET Programme

Academics from sociology to international relations have been concerned with the implications of globalisation and how it affects nations and societies. Bauman (1998: 60) states that, ‘Globalisation’ is not about what we all, or at least the most resourceful and enterprising among us, wish or hope to do. It is about what is happening to us all.’ Robertson describes globalisation as *‘*a concept (that) refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole (Robertson 2000: 8, 2011),’ yet if we refer to the Merriam-Webster’s (2013) online definition to describe one of the various definitions the well-educated reader may fall upon, it states globalisation as ‘the act or process of globalised, especially: the development of an increasingly integrated global economy marked especially by free trade, free flow of capital, and the tapping of cheaper foreign labor markets.’ While Robertson’s definition is used to refer to the cognisance of a shrinking world, the latter refers to the importance of capitalism in our current climate, however it does not take into account the sweeping social forces, which are vital to this amplification of consciousness. Perhaps, the increase of interconnectivity has unmasked many forms of knowledge that can no longer be concealed. People are now able to communicate without much interference as the flow of information is becoming less constrained.

This study expresses how the participants reflect on their identity within a globalising world. By identity, as Berger *et al* (1973: 76) has described it to be, ‘…the manner in which individuals define themselves…identity is part and parcel of a specific structure of consciousness and is thus amenable to phenomenological description.’ Taking Berger *et al’s* (1973: 98-102) concept of *carrier* and *package, carriers* being individuals that create and convey a certain aspect of structured conscious, and *package* being the connections we make consciously that are tied to established norms and ideas. These projections of social consciousness come from a top down or bottom up movement. These circulated ideas are created because of necessity or unintentionally. Consistency of these connections between established norms and groups, also adhere to the local and global spheres. JETs can be viewed as a part of this process of carrier and package. The package being the ministries and home institutions that select and educate them on the purpose of the programme and the carrier being these individuals as a group and the conscious connections they share and disperse. Thus, this would include the JET shared experience and the majority of ‘Western’ familiar values and norms. Another concern of our globalising world is where to place the necessity of internationalisation.

Coming into contact with perceived difference may result in reflection of one’s social world. However, those on exchange programmes, such as JET cannot easily escape this difference in their daily life, resulting in a long-term impact. The meaning and presence of place is connected by peoples’ everyday, minuscule happenings. For JET participants as foreign elements within their host communities, it is challenging, nevertheless confrontations are memorable and defining moments. It is through the process of reminiscing in the everyday where nostalgia emerges. Indeed, the programme thrives on this process. In the fast-paced routines, most of us find ourselves a part of; perhaps memory and nostalgia become elevated concerns that displace our identities (Boym, 2001). How is memory and knowledge in a globalising world captured and processed in our world today? The JET Programme and related schemes are part of conveying the bidirectional knowledge at the local and global level, although this study limits the investigation to the perspective of JET participants,

As JET is a cultural exchange programme, it is important to address the Japanese government’s internationalisation strategy. Internationalisation as a response to globalisation has been a defensive manoeuvre or emerged to address the need for cultural tolerance. It has been a tool for controlling the perceived threats of globalisation (Maringe, *et al*, 2010). From a positive angle, ‘the encounter with otherness is an experience that puts us to a test: from it is born the temptation to reduce difference by force, while it may equally generate the challenge of communication, as a constantly renewed endeavor.’ (Melucci, 1996: 129; Bauman, 1998: 10) Internationalisation supports and defends a society’s cultural capital, which can no longer be restrained to institutions and is encapsulated within the individual. This is recognisable apropos of JET participants. Japanese related goods such as: *manga*, *anime*, *sushi*, along with exported ideas have become global. In the 21st century, it is the dynamic and fast-paced innovative communication at the local and global level that exposes us to other realities.

The importance of being able to grasp the global while maintaining a firm hold on the local is a predicament of modernity (Giddens, 1995; Robertson, 2000; Tomlinson, 1999, 2006). In a globalising world, overseas experience is thought to be a significant investment into maintaining buoyancy in a competitive labour market. Young adults face many choices leading to different destinations. Their futures are not clearly marked. Preparing for survival in a world perceived as full of choice and opportunity ostensibly creates more anxiety as the reality of that freedom becomes limited within national boundaries. Giddens (1995) and Matanle (2001) declare that modernity pushes us to discover our dreams and future, however, this success is not without struggle. Giddens (ibid: 73) proclaims, ‘Taking charge of one’s life’ involves risk, because it means confronting a diversity of open possibilities.’ The access to success is often misrepresented as painless in the over commercialised world we live in. It is through the struggle and understanding of alterity or perceived difference (especially in society) that the unraveling of our present and future selves can be revealed (Winkler, 2016). Successful economic development has moved society towards freedom of expression along with it a tolerance for the wellbeing of others. Cross cultural experiences are regarded as marketable skills from Western educational institutions, government, non-governmental agencies and multinational companies, as the long-term overseas experience tends to create independent, adaptable and communicable individuals who become increasingly aware of cultural differences (Klooster, *et al*, 2008). The importance of this international experience is beneficial as the movement of labour and opportunity abroad encourages people to address other cultures, values and mind-sets. The movement of ideas through individuals is becoming significantly recognisable as nations find the importance of exchange programmes vital for promoting a positive standing on the global scene. Certainly, the JET Programme could be seen as one of the methods of how Japan tries to balance its standing on the global scene while safeguarding their cultural and social assets. As to Japan’s internationalisation, it is portrayed either as gradually coming to terms with cosmopolitanism or as impenetrable by the rest of the world as they defend their society from outside influence by sustaining national reservations (McConnell, 1996: 447). Hood (2003: 77) explicated Nakasone’s willingness for encompassing ‘healthy nationalism’ into an internationalisation agenda.

Each country has a long history culture …its heritage. That is the foundation…It is to love the long history, traditions and culture. On top of this, it is then to use them to contribute to the rest of the world. Without knowing the foundation, you cannot exchange with other countries…it is to plant a flower of Japan in a global garden (Nakasone, interview, 15 March 2000; Hood, 2003: 77-78).

One of the many overlooked strategies of JET is to influence youth that will enter leading positions back in their home country or enter Japan related careers. This is the other type of internationalisation that Japan exercises. It is easy to see how this is another promotion of soft power through JETs as agents, spreading an image of Japan abroad. Hood (ibid: 84) compliments JET by stating,

But overall, the impact of the JET Programme on developing goodwill, international understanding and human cooperation is huge and immeasurable, especially when we take into account the ripple effect of JET alumni.

*Kokusaika* is a worthwhile strategy for the Japanese economy, higher education and government (Ichinose, 2014). To understand the Japanese government’s investment of JET, the Japanese internationalisation agenda needs to be explained, along with its difference in definition from its ‘Western’ counterpart.

The term internationalisation differs slightly, whether it is being applied to business or higher education. If outlined through the business sector, it refers to the search for niche markets for foreign investment, promotion of product innovation, human capital as a resource for international development (Castaño *et al*, 2016). Within higher education, internationalisation can be explained as the exportation of ideas, the outsourcing and insourcing of students and the development of reputation abroad that contributes to a university’s foreign direct investment (Engwall, 2016: 222-29). Thus, for national governments, such as Japan, internationalisation of both the educational and economic sector is seen as essential for survival in a globalising world. McConnell (1996: 454) argues that the Western developed nations (the US, Canada, UK and Australia) tend to approach internationalisation by hacking away at the barriers that preserve difference within ethnicities and cultures, in contrast to building bridges. Befu (1983: 244) states that,

Here is a classic case of mutual misunderstanding: a foreigner’s wishful thinking is that internationalisation obliterates the line between him and the Japanese, whereas for the Japanese, internationalisation compels them to draw a sharper line than ever before between themselves and outsiders. Japan’s social handling of internationalisation is not about breaking boundaries and accepting other ethnicities and cultures, but about being accepted as a part of the international community and to be perceived as cosmopolitan. To pinpoint where Japan developed this idea of internationalisation, we need to look into the historical developments of Japan and the ‘West’.

In 1942, the advancements of Western Europe and the US threatened the Japanese nation-state leadership. It felt compelled to overcome what it interpreted as Western modernisation. The government did not want their society to be tarnished by capitalism, individual freedom, or a self-seeking approach to knowledge. The intellectuals in Kyoto felt that Japanese culture was transcendentally and intellectually superior to their antithesis in the US and Europe, who were described as indifferent, superficial and fragmented. Thus, during the Meiji Restoration that began in the 1850's an appropriation of technology and knowledge was taken from the West under the banner of *Bunmei Kaika,* or civilisation and enlightenment (Buruma *et al*, 2005: 2-3). Those in power were able to tactfully learn from the West while keeping them at a safe distance. As Ebuchi (1989) states, the verb to internationalise in English implies action on others, whereas its counterpart in Japanese, *kokusaika* involves a progression of acceptance by the outside world (McConnell 1996: 455). Differences to the approach of internationalisation, along with the misconceptions from a local/global standpoint may be dissimilar, but have not hindered the long term effects of the production of social/cultural capital and the personal relationships that have been created between the designated 'West' and those within Japanese communities.

For the JET participant, they may feel the boundaries between themselves as outsiders to a seemingly homogenous community, although how each JET feels and reacts to this barrier is significant. Participants will have similar but varying journeys with many living in slower paced villages and towns, where perhaps, traditional values are more prominent. Others are placed in bigger energetic cities. Becoming aware of the unfamiliar paces and rhythms of another culture stimulate the faculties of the mind. The JET Programme is a strategy that acknowledges the importance of cross-cultural experience to promulgate economic, cultural and diplomatic progress (Jain, 2005: 82-6).

Memory plays a significant role in the JET programme’s internationalisation agenda, whether intentional or unpremeditated. Impressions taken from memory produce nostalgic desires for the exotic unfamiliar and past recollections **(**Lefebvre, 2004). As Nora (1989: 8) expresses, ‘Memory, insofar as it is affective and magical, only accommodates those facts that suit it…’ Transmissions from social media and contact with others kindle an awareness of the larger world to local communities.

As the production of knowledge is becoming more dependent on the basis of economic progress, older knowledge is deemed of less importance. It is a tragedy regarding the preservation and foundation of knowledge, as we no longer have the luxury to process and grapple the erudition of our fore bearers. Society today runs on short-term memory where only up-to-date information is seen as imperative (Morris-Suzuki, 2005). Nostalgia haunts the present as we pine for a slower pace of life and a bond to tie us to the past. The briskness of life, and movement of people across many corners of the world has removed the connections that have tied us to the past. Confronting the unfamiliar is a beneficial process to the expansion of the human mind. In ‘*The Future of Nostalgia*’, Boym (2001) pinpoints how globalisation has become a tool in shaping nostalgic tendencies in a jumbled, technologically driven world where we have the capability to peer into our shared past. To understand the decisions made to enter an exchange programme in a globalising world will be considered in terms of risk.

## Present uncertainties

Everyday life’s present uncertainties are about how feelings of uncertainty give rise to insecurity and risk. It is argued that, whilst interacting with 'mediatised' flows of information about a world of imminent danger and impending catastrophe, the populations of modern societies are bound to experience a heightened sense of existential anxiety with regard to their social purpose, cultural identity and future prospects (Mitchell *et al*, 2004; Wilkinson, 2010: 3). These uncertainties are at times the cause for our own actions and the agent behind the choices we make in the present. Chapter 6 will discuss the evidence of uncertainty and how JETs are impacted through seeking opportunity. It is the first reason for contemplating the opportunities of going abroad and considering JET. For JETs, they may not be aware of the insertion of risk that has crept into our everyday realities. Their need to establish and find an identity is proof of instability. Globalisation and technology have intensified the interconnectedness of societies, nations and economies through technological innovation. While this has opened up a number of possibilities and perhaps created a global village, it has equally given our lives more uncertainty in a sea filled with overwhelming choices. Risk is an imminent and pervasive factor embedded within our social lives (Giddens, 1995; Beck, 1999, 2011). The pervasiveness of risk stems from the individualistic tendencies within modernity where we must be responsible for constructing our future and place in life. There is an increasing trend where individuals feel compelled to leave their familiar home and family to gain the lucrative skills and experience found abroad (Mitterauer, 1992; Brannen *et al*, 2005). This feeling of risk has become more prominent within the post-traditional world of modernity where the main operative is to question and doubt the present order and methods. Themes of security and trust become an issue in an unstable social environment where the search of ontological meaning has become a concern. To lessen the chance of falling into instability the calculation of risk is important when we make choices that will affect the outcomes of our future. Risk in everyday life influences the choices we make and influence the management of our life's priorities. The dynamics of globalisation are thought to bestow the individual with a haven of choices; nevertheless also creates insecurity (Giddens, 1995). In this reflexive social environment the individual searches for structure to avoid the pitfalls that modernity allows. Modernity creates the opportunity for choice and reflection, but equally the marginalisation and suppression of the person (Barke *et al*, 1997).. Risk and its dominance on our life choices can be affected by the overall structure of our prevailing culture and society, which in turn is affected by the history presented before us. Societies and individuals are affected by traumatic events of the past that leads them to avoid such a repeat. As Newark (1995: 229) has stated, ‘…to make life secure wins out over the need to live.' How risk is dealt with and perceived in the Western world compared to Japan should be considered. Whether it is the concern for an economically stable future of the individual or the survival of society, culture and differences can be regarded.

It seems that Japan has kept the West as a separate entity, never fully embracing Western influence but transforming them as they enter the society and culture. Japan has reacted to the outside ‘Western’ world as a threat; the West is revered, especially the US, but is still seen as a risk to their society. Some Japanese attribute this to the fact that they are an island nation and describe their country as *semai* or narrow when it is actually a frame of mind and not a reality (Kerr, 2001: 354). In reality, Japan is actually bigger than some Western nations such as Italy (Asia for Educators, Columbia University, 2013). Clammer (1995: 86) believes that the concept of *amae* (dependence) is an anti-alien device meant to keep foreigners from becoming too familiar to Japanese ways. Those of us living in ‘Western’ developed nations, such as the UK and US are more or less told that our future is within our control. If it turned out differently, we can only blame ourselves for our failures and not on something socially or politically systematic (Giddens, 1991: 74-77). Giddens (1990:177) explains that modernity and the tendencies of globalisation is, ‘…a process of the simultaneous transformation of subjectivity and global social organisation, against a troubling backdrop of high-consequence risks.’ Certain choices are made to attract opportunity and make the individual flexible. A common trait of successfulness in today’s world is someone who can quickly adapt to any given situation (Giddens, 1990; Bauman, 1992, 1998; Beck, 1991). Giddens (1990, 1991), Beck (1999, 2012) and Bauman (1998) have certainly emphasised the presence of anxiety and risk within the current phase of modernity. Less emphasis has been on the positive attributes of risk have been presented. Finucane *et al.* (2000) have found through investigating the factors of risk taking between white men and women and those of other backgrounds within American society. What they concluded in their investigation was that white men have less concern for various types of minimal risk compared to non-whites. The importance of this finding is to identify how socio-economic backgrounds, including culture and social standing, affects risk perception (Finucane *et al.*, 2000: 2; Lupton *et al.,* 2002). There is certainly a power correlation whether perceived or actual when it comes to making decisions about risk and their effects. None of the participants interviewed were fearful about returning to their home country. Berger *et al*., (1973: 72-74) speaks of the importance of a ‘life plan’ that has become a modern preoccupation. Without one, there is a feeling of disorientation and anxiety. It is something that needs to be re-amended throughout one’s life. Giddens (1991:75) also maintains, ‘The self forms a trajectory of development from the past to the anticipated future. The individual appropriates his past by sifting through it in the light of what is anticipated for an (organised) future.’ Thus, our biographies at least, from a Western American, British social standpoint play a big part in how we define ourselves. Success and failure are the responsibility of the individual. We even have universal rights that protect this freedom, which are covered by the United Nations Universal Declarations on Human Rights (United Nations, 2015). The gravity of this free choice, granted as an innate moral principle, bequeaths control to the individual. While this is viewed as an act of liberty to be able to pursue the direction of one’s life existence, this human condition engenders a ‘permanent identity crisis.’ (Berger *et al*, 1973: 78). Seeking opportunity, with measured calculated risk has become a phenomenon of this reality. Uncertainty of what the future holds is exciting but also daunting. Having a life plan curtails that uncertainty by relieving one’s mind in the present. Lupton *et al.*, (2002) found that risk was not always negative in context. Through their interviews of 74 people from 1997-98, from people from all stages of life living in Australia, they found a positive positioning of risk. Substantially, they found that risk was positive when it came to the perspective of self-improvement. One of their participants stated, ‘‘I think risk is stepping out of your comfort zone and leaving familiar territory and going off into the unknown, or doing something you haven’t done before.’ (Lupton, 2002: 117). They have added that the emotional context of controlling one’s feelings when participating in risk related activities were also viewed as positive. Thus, for the participants of JET and those on former programmes, it may have been done to challenge and confront risk from a positive positioning; this is demonstrated in chapter 6. Choosing to participate on an international teaching programme in Japan for all participants is a calculated risk. Gephart, *et al.* (2009:141) through a positivist approach explains that, ‘Risk taking was seen as necessary to realise opportunities. Potential hazards were more or less known and expected to be cured or at least mitigated by future progress.’It is in the ‘Western’ modern world where we are no longer tethered to the social status and occupation of our parents. We are more or less free and encouraged to explore ourselves to shape our identity (Giddens, 1991: 74-5). Bauman (1998: 104-5) adds another perspective, by looking at the power relations disguised in social dynamics. Just like economic capital, which needs the flexibility to come and go for the sake of profit and human capital flows have the same tendencies. However, the path forward will always remain uncertain until it transpires.

### Navigating the self through emerging adulthood

The JET Programme, is a youth exchange scheme. This means that many of the participants have gone onto the programme soon after finishing their undergraduate degrees. As discussed in the methodology, this age is a time when the weight of responsibility is of less importance and a time for self-exploration through the engagement of experience (Arnett, 2000a, 2004a, 2004b). It is perhaps a reason why going to Japan seems like less of a risk, at a time where the experience can play an important role for expanding the horizons of a person. In fact, it is a time when taking risks and testing the boundaries is often encouraged (Arnett *et al,* 2012; Sussman, *et al.*, 2014). While these participants may not consciously acknowledge the state of risk looming in the background, risk is certainly part of their social world. Emerging adulthood is a transitional period in between the teenage years and young adulthood. This has been noted to be between 18 to 25 years of age (Arnett, 2000a, 2000b, 2004a, 20004b, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2011, Sussman, *et al.*, 2014). We must keep in mind the variables that are present during the decision to leave our home and its familiarity behind, which may be different for each individual. There are shared variables, such as being in one’s early twenties, the tendency to want to live abroad, and the fact that the majority come from Western English speaking countries. Of course, it is from the industralised ‘West’ where these values of risk taking and the importance placed upon individuality are endorsed (Beck, 2012). This transitional period is a considerable juncture for the movement of soft power through the individual. This is to indicate the various thoughts that were present, while regarding the overarching pressures within their situated place and time. It also substantiates what was important when considering this life changing choice and what was remembered. It is significant to understand how these participants used JET as a platform for their future. In an article of *the* *Atlantic*, Machado (2014) considered the millennial group’s grounds for traveling overseas. Similar to the age group specified by Arnett (2000a) when referring to emerging adulthood, the millennials fall between the ages of 16 to 34. That fact was revealed by the Boston Consulting Group in which they describe a 23 percent growth in travel by contemporaries compared to older generations. Furthermore, not only traveling, but also investing time living abroad has become a contemporary preoccupation. One of the major reasons for this engrossment from an American standpoint is the reality that life may not be as secure later down the line. The economic recession has left many Americans with an unstable pension to rely on upon retirement. This has created a massive drive to travel and live in the moment because the future may be bleak. The younger generation does not just want a vacation abroad, but to find ‘meaningful experiences.’ What this entails are vacations that last longer than a few days and are affordable. (Machado, 2014). Time abroad is an alluring idea, but we must also consider the fascinations of Japan and JET for that matter.

## Historical roots of Japan and the West

To better understand the stereotypes conveyed by the participants it is important to understand the historical background between Japan and what they considered the West. Evidence of this is in chapter 7. In the early 1700s the Japanese government had acquired knowledge of the ‘West’ through Spanish, Portuguese missionaries and Dutch traders. In 1853 and again in 1854 Commodore Perry came to Japan to ‘enlighten’ and trade with its people (Buruma, 2003: 12-15). During the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the emperor was again given reign of the Japanese state. Western ways of dress, Gregorian measurement of time, bureaucracy, politics and militarisation were appropriated to become a recognised modern state. *Bunmei kaika* or ‘Civilisation and Enlightenment’ were frequently articulated. During the *Tokugawa* era the family was considered the primary bedrock of society and individualism was irrelevant when it came to maintaining the hierarchical roles of the house. The cultural and social development of this divisive tradition stems back to the *ie* system of the Tokugawa era. Men were the dominant figures of this social scale with the eldest male taking control of the family and finances and when the Meiji restoration came to pass, this system was reinforced. It is one of the many reasons foreigners have been kept on the fringe of society throughout Japan’s history, although respected and consulted for their technological expertise (Davies, et al., 2002; Gordon, A. 2003; Nish, 1998). The state adopted a criminal civil code that was based on French and German design. At this time, foreigners were hired as consultants to the government, known as *oyatoi gaikokujin* (McConnell, 2000: 8-9; Wilkinson, 1990; Wittner, 2007:28-30). The privatization of certain sectors in chemicals, glass, textiles, etc. was done to maintain the government’s heavy spending in the 1880s. In 1894, the modern west, decided to recognise Japan as a modernising nation, however not as an international power. During the *Taisho* democracy from the 1920s, Japan was a liberal place. They enjoyed universal voting rights and more equality for women. In Tokyo, Western fashion was abundant and places of leisure were replicated into German and Parisian style eateries, bars and cafes. Individualism was at an all time extreme. Art, Western philosophy and Hollywood films were consumed for pleasure. However, after Pre-pacific war issues in Manchuria, China and Japan’s bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, Japan shifted to a militaristic role and the grotesque consumerism halted (Buruma, 2003: 44-70; Columbia University, 2009; Silverberg, 2006:3). These historical images have been transmitted abroad between Japan, the US and Europe over the centuries. To a degree, these depictions have remained up to the present day. These impressions are crucial for the role nostalgia plays in both attracting the West and for keeping unity amongst its nationals.

### Discussion of Japan reflected from a distance: The role of soft power and the nostalgic unfamiliar

In this study, Japan is a material place that is assigned meaning. That meaning is loaded with certain stereotypes and information that are signaled across boundaries. That has been revealed in many of the responses discussed in chapter 7. This has changed due to fluctuations in time and place as in each decade the representation of Japan has shifted. Japan has gone from being an innovative economic powerhouse, however relatively mysterious, to one that has shifted their image as a producer of video games, technology, anime, to traditional arts such as geisha and sumo. Hello Kitty has become part of a *kawaii* (cute) culture that has become a captivating and exotic label of Japan abroad (Morikawa, 2015). Those that have had introductions to Japan related culture in their home countries have said they feel familiarity with the culture in some sense, yet have felt a longing to experience it for themselves. METI has invested in the appeal of Japanese products, music, arts, *manga* and tourism through ‘Cool Japan’, to popularise its culture, fashion and products abroad. Exchange programmes between academic institutions and programmes such as JET and localised exchanges, such as Japan Tent[[2]](#footnote-2) is also part of this attraction (Japan Tent; METI, 2012, 2014). For soft power, this attraction may result in the emphasis of culturally attractive areas (Hello Kitty, *Harajuku* fashion, martial arts), and less on disagreeable political issues (response to Fukushima, passing of secrecy laws, etc.) (BBC, 2011; Pollman, 2014). For ‘Western’ defined societies such as, the US, UK, Australia and Canada they are heterogeneous, and multicultural in makeup. Hannerz (1990: 237) explains this as, ‘…sub-cultures as it were, within the wider whole; cultures which are in important ways better understood in the context of their cultural surroundings than in isolation.’ In these types of societies, appropriating certain cultural norms is not abnormal. Indeed, this is influenced by the interconnectedness of many localities in the face of globalisation. In many of these societies, communities stemming from different parts of the world crisscross the same landscape. It is normal to see Chinese, Sushi and Indian takeaways, fashion magazines appropriating native attire, and facilities offering acupuncture, karate and yoga etc. Coming into contact with other cultures is part of the everyday. Therefore, it is understandable that someone can feel as if they identify with a particular cultural meme, however have not had long-term, intimate contact with that particular society and originating place. Many of the participants have acknowledged that they did not see Japan as their only option, which is evident in chapter 6. Hence, early familiarity with Japanese related culture may or may not have had an immense role in their choice to participate on JET. Perhaps it was the opportunity presented by JET and the forthcoming adventure of going abroad while earning. Yet, the imaginations of what Japan represented and all the images that were presented throughout their early lives will have been an influence.

Naturally, as people reflect on unfamiliar places and societies contrasting views will emerge. This entails comparisons between there and here, which is observed in the concept of ‘othering’, where discontent with one’s present time and place materialises and thought to be better in another. In truth, it can be a search for a utopia that may exist somewhere else, a sort of nostalgia for an imagined place. As discussed in the chapter ‘Soft power, memory and nostalgia’, nostalgia can be used to mitigate declining self worth in the present and to give meaning to one’s life (Routledge *et al*., 2011, 2012; Sedikides et al., 2009; Vess et al., 2012). Sedikides, et al., (2009) discussed the role of nostalgia for immigrants in fending off loneliness, depression and buffering against racist attitudes of the adopted country. Although they broadly use the term immigrants, they are also describing the experience of refugees when they point to people leaving their homes due to ‘poverty, human rights violations, famine, natural disasters or wars (351).’ Obviously, JETs are nowhere near the same category, as they are not fleeing from peril and have the liberty of choosing where their life may lead. However, there are similar stages of stresses that occur through acculturation, especially when moving to a new environment. For JETs, nostalgia has perhaps played a role in earlier parts of their life as they imagined a representation of Japan. Thus, nostalgia can be used to look forward to the future and what it could become. It is optimistic in that it promotes positivity, self-esteem, bestows self-worth, the value to continue living and solidifying and receiving social relations and support (Sedikides et al., 2009: 355-6). These aspects mentioned are also applied to the participants as motivating factors to continue striving for their future. Academics have discussed the power of nostalgia in the face of a modern and fast paced world. Nostalgic attachment to another place, perhaps a place that exists in the past can help relieve the loss of place and meaning we seem to be lack in our present realities. To some Japan may represent not just an exotic and unexplored location, but also a longing for something missing in our lives. It may represent a place where traditions, magnificent sceneries of cherry blossoms and mountains and the act of self-control is a living philosophy. Perhaps, these views are stereotypical, however for others it may represent another existence that is absent in their reality. It may give them a longing to be in an imagined place transmitted through stories, books and mass media (Bonnett, 2015; Boym, 2001).

## Reflections on Japanese uniqueness

The term, *nihonjinron* has been introduced by the participants in chapter 8. Hence, historically fabricated stereotypes remain intact. According to Befu (2001), the extent of this term has been applied to a number of Japanese cultural domains including lineage, language, habitat, and politics (Slater, 2003: 276). One of many examples of this restraint can be understood through the use of *katakana,* or foreign borrowed words (Slade, 2009: 56). Foreign ideas, technologies and products are filtered through a native theory known as *nihonjiron.* It can be described asideas of a shared Japanese identity that only natives of this society and culture can understand. It is a concept that promotes Japan as unique; a unique shared culture, society and people. There has been argument on the validity of these concepts. Doi (2001) has written substantially on the topic of *Amae.* What this term entails is the psychological behavior maintained in Japanese identity; ‘depending on the benevolence of others.’ (Doi, 2001: 17; Davies et al, 2002: 9; Lebra, 1976) In 1979, Tadanobu argues in the distinctiveness of the Japanese brain compared to other ethnicities.

My tests show that the left cerebral hemisphere of the Japanese receives a wide range of sounds: not just the linguistic sounds (consonant and vowel sounds), but also such non-linguistic sounds as the utterance of human emotions, animal cries, Japanese musical instruments, the sounds of a running brook, wind, waves, and certain famous temple bells. The range of sounds Westerners receive in the left hemisphere is conspicuously narrower, apparently limited to syllables made up of both consonant and vowel sounds. The same is true of Chinese, Koreans, and almost all Southeast Asian peoples. The calculation function, however, is handled in the left side in every case, Japanese or non-Japanese, in an almost identical manner (Tadanobu, 1979: 861-2).

In Ikegami’s (1991) tome on semiotics, a diverse group of Japanese academics discuss the exceptional cultural interpretations of Japanese mentality, landscape, music, architecture and so forth. Within the field of Japanese studies, these assumptions were about to be challenged. Shepherd (1991: 187) has challenged this conviction by scrutinising the ideology behind *nihonjinron.* He arguesthat it originated during World War II to proclaim Japanese as somehow remarkable in comparison to others. In Dale’s book, *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness*(1990), he illustrates the biases and Japanese national fervour that is clearly present in *nihonjinron* postulations. Essentially, the constructed stories and myths that embody these convictions of uniqueness need to be reconsidered. Indeed, Dale (ibid) argues against this assumption and contemplates how other academics, proficient in Japanese have continued to believe the notions spread by *nihonjinron.* Clearly, Japan is not the only place where there is resistance to outside influence. It is found in all areas of social life from the obstinate individual, the household, to ethnic and national groupings that have a shared heritage and culture. There has even been a book written by Fox (2005) that discusses what it means to be English from anthropological perspective. On a national level, resistance to globalisation, or what some nations perceive as masked Westernisation, is a threat through intervention of international organisations and capitalistic agendas (Barber, 1992; Holton, 2000; Huntington, 1995). Characterisation of this can be found in Kuwait, where the English language can be seen as a threat to the local culture (Hasanen *et al*, 2014); in Malaysia where there was rejection of certain aspects of globalisation during the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997 with the removal of foreign labour and prioritising Asian alliances over Western ones (Welsh, 1999); and in Europe where a division between successors and failures within Central, Eastern and Western could be influenced by globalisation (Teney *et al*, 2013). Horne (1998: 38) specifies that what makes Japan distinctive from other societies is its need to pinpoint what it is to be Japanese. Concepts of *nihonjinron* can be perceived as *occidentalism*, where participants may feel that their host counterparts consider them as an external threat. The notion of *occidentalism* entails the belief that Western ideals are threatening to their society’s culture, traditions and beliefs. In Japan, July of 1942, a meeting took place in Kyoto that involved the Japanese Buddhist intellectuals, along with the Romantic group. These loyalists came to discuss a strategy to keep what they saw as ‘modern’ or the ideas of the ‘European West’ from tainting their native beliefs and traditions (Doak, 1994). These ideas that were cultivated during this meeting were used to create the idea of a distinctive Japanese psyche. These intellectuals saw Western capitalism and materialism as a threat to Japanese spiritualism. Buruma *et al* (2005:1-12) argue that this has occurred because of the over absorption of Western practices. The romantics were nostalgic for a time before Western knowledge appropriation. In fact, during the Meiji Restoration, ideals that involved Shintoism created the Emperor as a god, to which Japanese can trace their lineage. Additionally, this notion came from Christianity and the belief in one god. The implementation of Japanese *Occidentalism* can be detected in the early 1900s through the notable Meiji author Negai Kafu. Kafu described the image of Japanese culture and society by comparing it to the ‘West’ or Europe, particularly France and the US. He dichotomised the West as the distant other and Japan as the Orient, where he aggrandised nostalgia for Edo Japan. Comparatively, another influential Meiji writer, Fuzukawa Yukichi went abroad during the 1862 Tanouchi assignment to attain European knowledge on society and manufacturing. Fuzukawa saw Europe as representative of the West. He thought of Europe’s cities and villages as unencumbered by hierarchy and a place where opinion and merit were praised. This comparison was used to disintegrate the power held by the elitist class. However, this adaption of Western ways was also a survival mechanism. Japan’s intellectuals were terrified of their country becoming another colony in service to the Western nations (Bonnett, 2004; Wilkinson, 1990: 55-60). Thus, the cliché ideas that the West had of Japan were to become symbols of self-admiration (Hutchinson, 2011: 2-5). Although the Japanese tried to counteract Western practices, they equally appropriated them to maintain their own uniqueness. Aversion to outsiders can make life uneasy at times.

Undeniably, as non-natives live in an unfamiliar place othering will occur on their end, where societies or other groups may be fetishised and/or judged based on unaligned practices, values and beliefs. Even in the novel *Ash*, written by a MEF participant in the 1980s, the main character voices her dissatisfaction as an assistant English instructor.

Caitlin said wryly. “Entertainment, putting myself up for display maybe . . . I’m one of those teaching fellows they send around the prefecture. You’re at the university, right? How’s that?”

“Good, actually; easier than what you’re doing. Unfortunately you’re really just a figurehead in that program, you know, the foreign face to make the government look good (Thompson, 2001: 43).

In a summer edition of the JET Journal (CLAIRa, 1992: 2), Matanle and Nakatani explain that contributors should be reminded that, ‘Criticism is appreciated, so long as it is constructive, since it is through the airing of constructive criticism that some of the most telling improvements in society are achieved.’ This highlights the fact that disagreements and misunderstandings will exist however; they need to be put into perspective. In the same journal, Pinnell reflects on his experience on the programme for two years. He states,

Since I will always be a *gaijin* in Japan, living here has made me acutely aware of my foreignness, and I found that I am much more shy and paranoid now than I was 18 months ago. Japanese life is too regimented and impersonal for me. I need to live somewhere where I can express my own personal identity and individuality more freely, without worrying about whether or not I fit in with the group (CLAIRa, 1992: 8).

There are blogs that discuss both the positive and negative aspects of the JET Programme, such as tofugu.com. Richey (2015) discusses the positive and negative reasons for joining JET. Some of these points on the negative spectrum include the fact that every situation is different.

This was the previous mantra of the JET Program, sometimes abbreviated as ESID. Though CLAIR no longer officially supports this catchphrase, it's still a fact of life on JET. The organization is so large and sends ALTs to such disparate locales, it's impossible for them to predict what will happen to you when and how. On some levels this is understandable, but it came to the point that CLAIR and other JET entities used this idea to deny responsibility or take action when there was a legitimate issue. While it's encouraging to see this motto dropped, it's probably still ingrained in the wiring of the organization (Richey, 2015).

Other reasons include being placed in the countryside, culture shock, inadequate training, hardship faced when adapting to the schools, issues at the doctors office, being bound to the same rules as a government worker and not fully comprehending Japanese norms (Richey, 2015). It is essential to illustrate that measures of exclusion do not necessarily negate feelings of empathy and intimacy connected to the experience, and its association to Japan. Long-term residents of Japan have found an appreciation as outsiders of the society.

## Familiarity and acculturation

In the JET Journal, D. Elizabeth Rigsby, an ALT in Fukuoka defines internationalisation by describing what it actually signifies on the JET Programme. These beginnings of familiarity as an ALT often merge with the personal everyday. These kinds of interactions may happen in the street, at local festivals, or shopping at one of the town’s grocery stores, when living in small municipality.

Curiosity is an encouraging practice that fosters the desire for understanding. As Yeoh, *et al.* (1996: 53) has expressed,

People are active participants in the historically contingent process of the making of place: within the context of their times they construct places by investing them with human meaning.

This inquisitiveness is a stimulus for adaptation and to seek a humane common ground. The last section discussed how adversity plays an important role on the path to familiarity. This section will be a discussion about acculturation and the acceptance of one’s place, while living in a society and culture that is different to one’s own; in this case Japanese host communities. This conceptualisation of biculturalism has been explained to be absorption of certain norms and ideas of the host society or culture. It is the ability to confidently incorporate one’s own culture with that of the host country (Schwartz *et al*, 2010). Acculturation is the process by which a person assimilates to another culture and society. The long-term result of this activity would be the end product of biculturalism. Scholars have considered biculturalism within cross-cultural psychology, psychotherapy, sociology and in human development (Smokowski *et al,* 2009; Ng and Lai 2011; Padilla, 2006; Schwartz *et al,* 2010; Waehler, 2013). Chapter 8 will look at the how biculturalism is a positive process that contributes to mental and often flexible viewpoints of the individual. It also contributes to nostalgic attachment, as engagement with another culture creates a profound understanding of both the home culture and the other. Thus, this long-term engagement that has challenged our ideas of where one fits in the world, results in longings for a past that existed in a particular place and time. The nostalgic attachment to these memories and the places where they were created becomes part of the personal narrative. To prompt memories of earlier times adapting to Japan, questions asked were, ‘How have these memories influenced your life and future?’ To address the area of biculturalism I prompted the participants by asking ‘Are there certain things you do the ‘Japanese way’ after having lived in the country? Do any habits or thinking processes change after your experience in Japan? It is important to add that because this study takes a life history approach, there have been other questions asked to trigger certain memories. Thus, the strategy to obtain the information needed to find evidence of adversity and acculturation is not clear-cut and there were other questions used to acquire the material.

## Everyday life’s rhythms and acculturation

According to Nguyen *et al* (2013:122) in the last decade, biculturalism is becoming an important component within cross-cultural psychology. Acculturation is part of the process of biculturalism, which can be defined as the ability to understand and adapt to a host culture (Berry, 2003, Nguyen *et al*, 2013: 123). Biculturalism is attained through acculturation. According to Ngyuyen *et al*, there are four ways this can be accomplished: bilinear, two-directional, multi-domain and through a complex approach. Indeed, due to globally increased interaction it is progressively easier to reach places across the globe almost instantaneously through media, the Internet and by air travel. Certainly, this has resulted in an increase of people who grow up or experience living long-term in different societies and cultures. Individuals in this bicultural or multicultural category are made up of ‘immigrants, refugees, sojourners (e.g., international students, expatriates), and even indigenous people, ethnic minorities, those in interethnic relationships and mixed ethnic individuals (Berry, 2006, Padilla, 2006, Ng *et al*, 2011; Nguyen *et al*, 2013: 122). Padilla defines this as ‘dual-culture personality’, or a person who grasps both cultures (Padilla, 2006: 469). Social identity had typically been constrained to acceptance into one ethnic group. In recent times, familiarity or having the advantage of multiple backgrounds, such as those on JET and related participants, have an advantage in adapting to change. Having the ability to switch between different cultures creates flexibility in character, resilience and resulting in empathy for other humans. I also argue that biculturalism also extenuates to an understanding that one may not become, or be recognised as a native of that society and culture. Nonetheless, there is still a level of contentment and satisfaction. There were a few notable individuals that expressed perceptible levels of biculturalism in the 80s and 90s. Since these individuals have been living in Japan for two or three decades, biculturalism is most likely to be strongest in these decades, comparable to the 2000s and 2010s decade.

The ‘dual-culture personality’ is one of the ideas under this concept. It expresses the ability to make sense of two cultures although; discernibly individuals can have the ability to comprehend more than two. Some of these participants have remained in Japan or returned after its completion. A deeper level of acculturation varies amongst the participants depending on the level of engagement with their local communities and the length of time or experience they have in Japan. While acculturation may not be educational concerning the scholastic, it is truly a valuable educational experience. Cognitive flexibility and the ability to comprehend another culture, like Japan, is a shared feature that binds the participants. Reminiscing back to memories of living in Japan may result in appreciation for the experience, a time that will forever be remembered. Regarding soft power and cultural diplomacy, these acculturating benefits are remarkable ingredients for soft power’s movement from the micro to the macro level; the individual to the global. As to shared experience, there are acculturating rhythms that each individual passes through. These areas include:

There are levels of acculturation that have been expressed, found in chapter 8, although they may not have become completely immersed in both cultures. Some of those who have continued to live in Japan have felt they have changed insignificantly through living in Japan. There is a sentiment that a preservation of the self has been well balanced by living in Japanese society.

## Movement of nostalgia: distance, fabrication and remembering

Loss is an important implication when it comes to the movement of nostalgia. Chapter 9 will discuss the evidence discussed in this section. Nostalgia is about loss as much as it is about reminiscing about the good old days. It colours our memories, which can be infused with a sense of melancholy. As discussed in the chapter on memory, our memories are constantly changing. This is noticeable when examining the participants’ recollections. Japan’s countryside has represented Japan’s idyllic past in contrast to an urban space that is a represented through modernisation, and often as Westernisation.

The Japanese countryside is a selling point for s both international and domestic (Yamamura, 2009). To survive, the *inaka* or countryside has had to create unique advertisements that drive images of nostalgia both internally and externally. This has been documented in the 1991 campaign through All Nippon Airways, where they suggest that through travel you can have access to urban and countryside living (Creighton, 1997: 240). In fact, from the 1980s onwards, populations existing in the countryside were losing their youth to the cities. The concept of *furusato*, although a Japanese word, becomes important. For the participant it does not represent the Japanese meaning of hometown, however there is a similar connotation. For the participants, their host communities become their adopted hometown. They increasingly feel that their host communities have become a second home for them, a place where another part of their identities have become tethered. *Furusato* began to be associated with the loss of a spiritual Japanese motherland, the time before modernisation (Robertson, 1988:500; Creighton, 1997: 243). These areas have had to survive by promoting distinctive traditional products and activities to compete with other settlements. Take for example, the *penshon* in Wakayama prefecture in the resort area of Kawayu, these buildings have been based on the Swiss stylised guesthouse. Urban dwellers would visit these guesthouses to ‘experience’ countryside living, however they would not interact with the locals. Another example of this is close to Kyoto in *Tamba-cho*. These areas adopted Danish architectural design for their administrative buildings; the reason being, to distinguish them as both an idyllic haven that is also innovative and modern (Knights, 1993: 208-14). An international atmosphere through accommodating foreign design shows a different approach to the Japanese native past. Thus, participants are a driving force to promote parochial Japan both globally and within Japan. The JETs and past developments have a unique position to advertise various areas of Japan to the rest of the world. Memories that were created in these areas always occupy a remarkable place that will always be remembered. Thus, *kokusai kouryu* or ‘international contact’ is both reflected in the local population and for those living in these areas from abroad (Knight, 1993:204). This is another example of why the BET/ MEF/JET participants consider their temporary host communities in Japan as a second home, or in Japanese, *dai ni furusato* (Knight, 1993: 211)*.* While the foreign temporary residents are not native, they may feel commonalities with their estranged urban Japanese counterparts. The allure of Japan’s exotic past, which the countryside is representative of, is a nostalgic attraction for both Japanese and the participants that have been resident. Rea (2000: 642) points out that *furusato* have been used as a political tool through the LDP. The pureness of Japanese identity was tied to the countryside as a form of ‘cultural administration’. As urban migration increased and modernisation divided the city dwellers from their rural traditions and culture over time, *furusato* became an inventive image for keeping the Japanese spirit tied to place. JETs are unique in this role, as their experience may reconfirm to those in their community what being Japanese is, when confronted with an outsider.

The participants are also influenced by their experience in their host communities, which also become nostalgic attachments to Japan as a place and a time in the past (perhaps, an additional home that has become portable regarding memories). Nicholas Klar was a JET from 1995-97 and wrote a short article for the 2007 JET Streams newsletter under the ‘Alumni Voices’ called ‘I Remember When’. He states that, ‘It was a time like no other, a time that will never come again.’ This was referring to his time on JET and to the fact that he had the time to explore his interests. Nicholas continues to describe that he was fully conscious of the fact that his time there was temporary, ‘…a way station on my travel through this earthly coil.’ Inevitably, we move on from our experiences and take something along the way. Nicholas discerningly proclaims that,

…Japan is still always in our minds and hearts. One day we will return ‘home’ again or onto some other exotic location. Then I’m sure we will miss here and inevitably compare what is the same and what is different, what we miss, all those things we are happy to have once again, and what we are glad is behind us. Perhaps time has tinted my glasses to rose colored, but I have a lot to thank the JET Programme for.

## His commas emphasising ‘home’ reveals the untethered meaning attached to the concept of belonging and place. In a globalising world, home is fluid and portable. Conceivably, every time Japan is revealed in our everyday lives through stories, news, meeting Japanese and eating Japanese food, we remember home; a place that has intimately shaped part of our identities.

## Selling nostalgia through internationalisation: linking Japan to the present

The focus of Japanese internationalisation in the 1980s has not deviated incredibly. As stated in chapter 5, the ministries deliberately try to create *shinnichika*,or goodwill ambassadors for Japan (*Keizai Doyukai,* 2014; Ranade, 2014). The last section discussed JETs as influencers of the nostalgic countryside and how they are additionally, part of that tourism. They are perhaps selling its image to the Japanese and to themselves and the outside world. This section will explore the local and global influences of Japanese internationalisation on the participants.

Mikuni and Murphy (2003: 3-4) stress that,

…their aim was not to purchase prosperity for Japanese citizens; it was to buy protection in what they saw as a hostile world…they measured their success by the technological and manufacturing prowess of Japanese companies and the size of Japan’s trade and current account surpluses. That remains true to this day.

JET became a tool for the promotion of internationalisation within the public education sector and equally an economic strategy (Burgess *et al*, 2010). Befu (1983: 233-41) has stated *kokusaika* as extending to,

Western impact on Japan, trade liberalization, Japanese investment abroad, foreign language competence, association with foreigners, understanding foreign cultures, enhancing the cultural understanding of Japan abroad, and increasing the Japanese contribution to the world order. (Knight, 1993: 204).

Contrasted to this is the defensive stance of maintaining Japanese culture and homogeneity (Iwabuchi, 1994, 2015: 69). To better understand these phenomena, Robertson’s (2012) ascription of glocalisation best describes this perspective. He maintains that particular and universal tendencies are influential factors to global society and not solely homogenising effects such as Ritzer’s McDonaldisation (Ritzer, 1983). There is some truth to Ritzer’s article ‘Islands of the Living Dead: The Social Geography of McDonaldization (2003)’. Here he discusses the phantasmagoric islands found society as representation of consumer outlets, such as Starbucks, McDonalds and Taco Bell. These places are alive, in that consumers go there to live in a sort of fantasy that is not a representation of reality, but a sort of sterile Disney World. They are dead in that they do not conform to other segments of natural routine, but one goes there to escape the feeling of risk in our everyday life. These places are increasing worldwide in consumer driven areas of society. While this perspective can be recognised, Robertson’s (1990, 2012) emphasis that globalisation does not ameliorate local tendencies, and perhaps amplifies them along with the global through glocalisation is understandable. Thus, for Ritzer, he could be interpreting these fantasy islands as selling nostalgia as exotic representations, whereas for glocalisation, individuals’ perspectives and memories may still retain luster, even in these places. Everyday interactions, events and memories occur and remain part of the local, tied to individuals, even in these ‘fantasy islands’. Thus, they can still contain authenticity of the local that is tied to memory. This relates to Japan’s internationalisation for soft power, where global tendencies homogenise images and products that rely on cookie-cutter, glamorised images that are easily digestible.. Seong-Hun *et al*. (2008) express,

 …knowledge of social processes in foreign countries is still supplied by the powerful mass media, images of peoples are subject to a more complex and situated formation process with the evolution of sociological globalization. The global dimension of human mobility has created sites (multiethnic immigrant countries) of constant contact and interaction (among peoples, who used to be isolated from each other in their own national territory.

Therefore, soft power’s influence is transferable through second hand information, and through mass media, due to globalisation. For the JET participants they were perhaps sold this exotic imagery of Japan and East Asian, and after their intimate experience in Japan they will forge memories attached to ‘authentic’ representation of Japan, brought to life again by the exotic images glimpsed in their everyday life. Thus, because of their familiarity with Japan, these images conjure a personal depiction that is nostalgic in nature. For the Japanese ministries and governmental bodies JETs are temporary residents who are given access to local communities to then represent to others the regions areas of Japan. They may not become permanent appendages of Japanese society; yet have a long-term attachment to it through their experience.

The Japanese governmental approach to internationalisation is an attempt that is both global and local. The governmental ministries demonstrate their motivation to be an active member on the world scene, however keep a protective stance by preventing Japan from becoming too global in character through the myth of Japanese homogeneity (Brody, 2002; Goodman *et al.,* 2003:2-4; Herbert, 1996; Kaneko, 2015). Globalisation, to the Western eyes would be defined as the promotion of an open economy where trade crosses over borders. It extends to a welcoming attitude to the expat and an invitation to express cosmopolitan attitudes (Robertson, 1997).For the outsiders, this partition that exists in Japanese society makes the experience unique. Creating home in Japan by recognising their place in Japanese society and culture has made an impression on the participant. In fact, many of the participants have felt their host communities becoming a second home. The term *furusato* comes to mind when reading through the narratives*. Furusato* can be defined as hometown or native land. It can be envisioned as the parochial Japanese countryside where rice fields, rivers and mountains coexist (Robertson, 1988). *Kokusaika* is about maintaining an influencing force on the global scene, whereas *furusato* can be represented as a form of localisation. This is where memory and parochial tendencies becoming interesting. For the JET participants, tendencies that are rooted to identity from their home culture are transported to Japan. This is what the JET Programme deems as ‘grass-roots’ internationalisation. Especially, as the participant becomes intimate with their communities they start to tie themselves to their experience. Thus, this particular place and time becomes an impactful period as they their identities are challenged while living in a different cultural and social environment. Indeed, when the experience is over, they now encompass, not only memories and identities of their home countries, but also the familiar developments fabricated in Japan. These are then transported by the individual through memories that are imbued with nostalgic recollections. As mentioned in the previous section, *furusato* has become the local representation of glocalisation. It is representative of the nostalgic feelings that tie the participants to their Japanese version of a hometown. The reason these concepts are important is because the same process works for those on the JET programme and former initiatives. As mentioned previously, the concept of selling nostalgia in Japan is not something new. It has been a directive of the tourism industry to entice urban Japanese to the countryside (Creighton, 1997). Perhaps, the JET participants’ engagement with the wider world, through the telling of their experiences living in various regions of Japan has an impact on Japanese society. They not only attract outsiders to Japan, but also maintain Japan’s narrative of having a unique society and culture. Befu (1983) and Knight (1993: 204) consider another consequence of *kokusaika.* Internationalisation brings about the opportunity to contemplate about where one fits in the world. What distinguishes me, or my society and culture from the rest? This perhaps, further feeds into defining Japanese uniqueness.

While it as an attempt to deparochialise the nation, *kokusaika* is actually both a sophisticated form of cultural diplomacy directed at other countries, and an ideological campaign aimed at fostering nationalist sentiment among the domestic population (Knight, 1993: 204).

Goodman (2007) further discusses the supplementary meaning of *kokusaika*, where the *kindaika* or modernisation became outdated. In the late 1970s *Kokusaika* expressed the future needs of the society and nation. Japan was able to accomplish modernisation, however, the government knew that to survive they would need to display substantial concern for joining the international forum. Through the programmes, it could be that the individuals, as a collective sell their stories back to the Japanese, as it validates their distinctive attitudes and presumptions, creating a long term cycle that is both global and local. Goodman (2007: 73-4) brought up the JET Programme as an initiative that used the rhetoric of internationalisation. The Ministry of Home Affairs, The Ministry of Education (presently known as the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs all have their own purposes for internationalisation through JET. This was discussed in the chapter on the background to the JET Programme. Why this is important to note, is the soft power movement that works through the local level and extends to the national level.

## Conclusion

Communication at the grassroots level has the viability to sow seeds of understanding, naturally spreading around the wider world. It is through communication and engagement with others, especially a dissimilar one that challenges preconceived assumptions that paves the way for introspective transformation. Giddens (1995: 12) recognises the need for the individual to work through a process of ‘active intervention and transformation’. This struggle is needed in the unstable reality portrayed in modernity where individuals need to ‘find themselves’ and reinvent themselves in a world open to risk. This risk influences our social and personal lives as we try to become adaptable and flexible to meet the needs of a society where everything is open to change. Individuals like JETs, are open to going abroad for opportunity, to escape, to find adventure and to find their future callings. Literature on the JET programme has not addressed this issue of engagement and transformation at the everyday level.

JETs have the chance to see how time is perceived from their own rhythms by living in Japan.

Nostalgia is an important link to the soft power process as JETs’ memories and the experience of living in Japan has an impact on identity. The concept of ‘othering’, which is highlighted by ‘orientalism’, is a crucial component to nostalgia. It is impactful at both the individual and global level through imagining the ‘other’ (Japan), experiencing adversity, and through the influence of stereotypical images transmitted abroad. While ‘orientalism’ can have an adverse effect, such as projecting difference, it can have an alluring quality for those curious about an unfamiliar place. Experiencing uncomfortable situations living in Japan does not necessarily decrease the attraction to the country. JETs have attained first hand experience living in Japan and do encounter unpleasant situations. However, this does not necessarily result in the interruption of the soft power process. This study establishes a need for investigating the grassroots approach to soft power, indicating nostalgia as a component to this process that has not been researched within its link to cultural diplomacy.

The next chapter ‘Approaching the power of nostalgia as soft power’, will lead into a discussion of the methods used for collecting the data, the theory and background of everyday life, participants and ethical issues.

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# Chapter 3

# Approaching the power of nostalgia as soft power

## Introduction to the methodology

The last chapter addressed the originality and contribution of this study through the power of memory and nostalgia as a means of soft power. It discussed the existing literature on JET and the supporting arguments for the responses found in chapters 6 to 9 that are based on the JET experience. It demonstrated the gap in the literature that this study fills, and builds an argument for why it is necessary to answer the research question: How is soft power dispersed from the individual level?

This chapter’s emphasis is about explaining the specific methods chosen to answer the research question. Within the introduction of this chapter, I will briefly mention the reasons for taking a qualitative analysis. This research emphasises the formation of identity through experience that ties oneself to locality.

Encountering the unfamiliar can later lead to attachment to a certain place and period in the past. It is distanciation in time and place that can result in nostalgic attachment. The paradigm or worldview that this research takes is related to phenomenology and everyday life theory explained in this chapter. The methodology looks at the life history approach, which substantiates the ontological and epistemological approach of the theory. The objective of my research was to investigate nostalgic attraction as an effective form of soft power. Thus, having a fluid structure to my interviews is an important strategy to my method. To approach the field for gathering empirical data, semi-structured interviews were administered. To understand the participants’ engagement with Japan, these interviews will facilitate and engaged a retrospective process. Simultaneously, it is the revelation of this intimacy with time, place and memory that is critical. The emphasis is not focused on the commonalities of the experience but how each person’s personal engagement with Japan has generated attachment. This may be due to factors such as opportunity, struggle through engagement with the unfamiliar, or cultural and social unfamiliarity/familiarity. While each individual I have interviewed is an important component to the research, it is still important to organise the data, which will be explained in this chapter.

There were two qualitative methodologies used to answer how soft power is produced at the individual level: the main approach is life history, and the second autoethnography. This paper does not intend to take an objective or positivist view to the research. Alvesson (2002: 3) effectively articulates,

The fact that human interests and cultural, gendered and political ideals put their imprints on methodological ideals, as well as on research practices and results, makes it very difficult to see science as a pure activity, neutral and objective in relationship to the reproduction or challenging of social ideologies, institutions and interests.

The reason against positivism is that objectivity requires the belief that subjectivity is a remote sphere to the researcher. It also means that individual actions are being filtered through the universal rules of social scientists, which fail to understand individual circumstances and processes (Hekman, 1980: 342). Due to these failings along with the belief that subjective knowledge is valuable to understand our social world, relational qualitative analyses are the methods chosen to interpret the material. Habermas (1972) explains that knowledge is grounded in human interests and as Heidegger (1988: 6)quoted, ‘Our world-view is determined by environment, people, race, class....’. He suggests that there are classifications within the social world that shape our identities. Postmodern critical theories are a critique against positivism, in which positivism views the world as rational and quintessential (Agger, 1991:109-12). The qualitative methodologies, which were used in this research, are autoethnography and life history to investigate everyday life phenomena that were used to understand how JETs’ experience contributes to soft powe through nostalgia. These methodologies were used in support of everyday life analysis, as they take the individuals’ experience as an essential component of knowledge. The phenomena observed, are those that occur within everyday life, include the processing of memory and nostalgia. The methods used to collect the data were from semi-structured interviews..I consider my own background on the programme through autoethnography.

Through autoethography, my experience on the JET Programme is acknowledged, however does not play a significant role in support of the research question.. The paradigm of this research is interpretive and subjective based, to look past the prevailing discourses of the JET Programme. Most studies on the programme have focused on the effectiveness of English in the classroom (Lai, 1999; Meerman, 2003; Miyazato, 2009; Teshima, 2011). However this study is about understanding how the formation of identity through JET eventuates to a larger process of cultural diffusion through remembering the past on the programme. It is at the individual level where the real process of ‘internationalisation’ occurs (Knight, 2004) and where the development of soft power begins. Understanding how soft power is created at the individual level means peeling back the layers of a past that exhibits an experience that personally ties oneself to a certain past and place. This can create an agency of human capital, which through nostalgic reflection, converts into soft power. Understanding the connection between the variables being analysed and the rationale for using particular methodologies needs to be presented.

The main discourse of JET is about English improvement in public education and less on internationalisation through the local communities. International relations and politics have focused on the growing awareness of how culture plays a role in power dynamics (Nye, 1990a, 1990b, 2004, 2008, 2009; McGray, 2002; Takacs, 2013). A country’s popularity can be increased through cultural goods on a global scale to increase a nation’s soft power; thus making a country or culture attractive politically, economically and in pursuit of human equality. This concern with national attraction is intensifying around the globe (Nye, 2004). To understand this process, descriptive and hermeneutic methodology, which involves examining the lived experience, is essential (Pascal *et al.*, 2011). The value of intersubjectivity needs to be stressed as it solidifies the bond between the researcher and the participants being examined (Heidegger, 1995; Pascal *et al.*, 2011).

The structure of this chapter will start with an analysis of the epistemological investigation, data analysis used, background and reason for using the theory of everyday life. Discussion of everyday life theory, including phenomenology, memory and nostalgia, rhythms and patterns, the concept of orientalism and ‘othering’, are necessary to make sense of the soft power approach of this study. These theories and concepts have yet to be linked to the study of soft power within academic research. Analysis will continue with an explanation into the JET participants, and a discussion into similar methodologies including how others have used soft power in their research. Following this dialogue is a layout of the instruments that were used and the reason for choosing the participants as regards the methodologies and ethical concerns. This chapter will end with the conclusion.

## The epistemological investigation

This research will study former and present participants to understand identity formation and the phenomena influencing their lives, including BETs/MEFs in the 1980s. The reason for this is to understand the varying objectives of the programme and how this is reflected through the individual. To understand the historical context involved in the progression of the programme, JETs usually participate on the programme at a young age, many in their 20s, as it is classified as a youth exchange (JETProgrammeFAQs. 2010). By acknowledging the individual narratives, spanning from different time frames, a picture into the relationship of the Japanese government and the JET Programme as a tool for soft power can be demonstrated. To better understand the objectives of JET over the course of its 30 years it was beneficial to access an interview with a CLAIR official. Newcomers to Japan have an unfamiliar outlook of Japan found in travel magazines, books, manga and the images created through the media. Life as a newcomer to Japan is filled with anticipation and adventure,

JETs understanding of Japan occupies the honeymoon stage where everything is a curiosity. By examining individuals on the programme the process of identity formation through being situated in an unfamiliar place and engaging in various dialogues can create a long lasting attachment to locale, culture and people. The transformative process of experience is personal and emotionally charged, therefore acknowledging my own observations, as a part of this process is important. Explaining the data analysis of this study is required.

end (Livesey, 2010).

## The JET Participants

In the early 1980s, the BET and MEF initiatives were active before being merged into JET. Therefore, a few of these participants were from these earlier programmes. Interviews include those in the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, 2010s and those presently on the programme as of 2014. I will divide the qualitative interviews into six groups along the timelines stated above. Doing this will give me the flexibility to compare and contrast the different life experiences into distinct reference points for comparison purposes. Those in the former programmes in the late 1970s experienced a Japan that had its own economic prosperity where Wilkinson (1990: 5) documented, ‘By 1978, Japanese GNP per capita had overtaken the average of the EC[[3]](#footnote-3) (12), and by 1987 had overtaken the USA.’ From the time the programme was established in the late 1980s, there will have been a cultural, social and economic shift. These particular participants will have material formed and influenced by their times which contribute to the present programme.

The reason for dividing the JETs by decade is to bracket the experiences into different time reference points. This strategy will illustrate the ways in which JET has progressed over the years and JET as a diplomatic today. Therefore, it is essential to interview participants who can give an impression of how JET was run in the past, and their experiences in that time and place. The reasons as to why these individuals decided to participate on the programme will most likely be different to the reasons of JETs today. It would be of interest to discover how these individuals have kept Japan in their lives.

To proceed, I have interviewed those presently living in Japan and those that left, and participants past and present. To approach the field I have used the ‘snowball technique’ (Potter, 1996:107), of asking participants to introduce me to others on the programme. Since I was a former JET it was easy to get in touch with the JET community through Facebook, the British JETAA and through informal communication. However, it proved challenging to find both diversity in interviewees (gender, ethnicity, home country), and access to those who had participated in the 1980s. Finding difference in opinion (those opposed to the experience) had also been difficult, although excavating diversity in each individual’s experience has been favourable.

JETs in the 1990s came into the programme at a time when JET was trying to solve materialising issues in the early days of the programme. Issues to do with cultural misunderstandings, along with a defined and structured agenda needed to be perfected (Chandler *et al.*, 1999). JET was initially established to improve the economic and closed off image of Japan abroad (McConnell, 1980). McConnell (2000:55) had emphasised that initially, the JET programme desired graduates from Ivy League schools, however it eventually expanded to those from other countries of varying backgrounds. Those in the 1990s came from diverse backgrounds educationally, culturally and economically compared to the decade before.

JETs from the 2000s have another understanding of JET and Japan. This is a decade in which JETs extended the maximum participation on the programme from three to five years, depending on the contracting organisation (JET Program USA, 2016). The slogan, ‘Every situation is different’, became out-dated (Rohan, 2014). In 2010 JET was considered disadvantageous to the educational system as English in the classroom did not improve, however this perspective changed when the Liberal Democratic Party headed by Abe Shinzo announced that they would increase the number of JETs by 10,000 starting in 2012 to increase Japan’s internationalisation. Recently, The Japan Times would use the term ‘soft power’ to describe the purpose of the JET Programme (Hosaka 2010, Mie, 2013a). Speaking of JET and soft power, it has become a trend in media outlets, like the Japan Times. Indeed, the experience of the participants is important, in addition to the perspective of CLAIR officials.

## Supplementary informants

For this section, I will address the formal and informal informants interviewed for this study. During my fieldwork I was able to interview a CLAIR official and former Prefectural Advisor, employed by CLAIR about the JET Programme. From these interviews I wanted to gain an overall impression of CLAIR’s role in the function of JET (Interview in Appendix B). The interviews gave clarification of CLAIR’s support in internationalisation through JET and its relationship to the other ministries (MOFA, MEXT, and MIC).

## Autoethnography, framing myself in the research

One of the methodological approaches used in this research was autoethnographic reflection. It is considered one of the most subjective methods as it draws on the researcher’s experience. Doloriert and Sambrook express, 'The autoethnographer knows when quality is embedded in the practice of completing the autoethnography as this is grounded primarily in a felt change experience: feelings of moving from old selves to new selves, feelings of having experienced critical moments' (2011: 596. It is about extending sociological knowledge from the personal experience of the researcher (Holman Jones, 2005; Wall, 2008; Zussman, 2000). The main difference between ethnography and autoethnographic reflection is understood by Duncan to be that, ‘The researcher is not trying to be an insider in the research setting. He or she, in fact, is the insider (Duncan, 2004: 3).' This viewpoint diminishes the othering of the participant's experience, unlike ethnography, which was formulated to understand the 'other'. Ethnography is a method used to understand a particular society, person or culture that is perceptively distanced from the researcher, whereas autoethnography is voiced from the inside and not through an externalised voice.

Within the social sciences and other related fields, objectivity has been a long-standing issue. It is difficult to be truly objective when we must certainly acknowledge that the researcher will form an attachment and develop certain opinions about their topic of research. Already, choosing a topic of research involves the individual; therefore it is questionable whether we can truly be objective within our work. Objectivity within research is thought to distance oneself from bias and emotional attachment that is thought to obstruct the derivation of truth. Mauthner e*t al,* (2013) argue that the researcher's epistemological, ontological and theoretical suppositions influence the interpretation of data. Their position is that through the positivistic approach the researcher is erased from the material, which is not feasible.

Another advantage of acknowledging my own experience is that it may lessen the gap between the researcher and the participant. There are many issues that come across when doing fieldwork. People come from many different backgrounds, which create distance between the researcher and the participant. Indeed, there will be biases that one has to consider when doing interviews. Biases may form based on the affiliation of the researcher, their cultural make-up, their interests, time and place (Mouton *et al.*, 1996: 83). However, because of my shared experience, I am inclined to understand the participants’ point of view, which will enable me to create a trusting relationship. Biases cannot be erased and by acknowledging them it may unearth information that should not readily be dismissed. I did not use my experience as an overgeneralised approach to the study. Next, an analysis of the theory of everyday life and how it is valuable to the study will be presented.

## Everyday life theory, phenomenology, memory and nostalgia

What we remember about the events and mundane events in our lives tells a story. It is a story about who we are, our origins and what we hope to be in the future. The remembered events that we tend to emphasise give meaning to our identities. Tuan suggests (2001: 9),

Experience thus implies the ability to learn from what one has undergone. To experience is to learn; it means acting on the given and creating out of the given. The given cannot be known in itself. What can be known is a reality that is a construct of experience, a creation of feeling and thought.

The epistemological paradigm of this study is phenomenological in nature, demonstrating the interest in the subjective and everyday life setting. Phenomenology itself is a philosophy set in exploring the mundane, everyday events and the social spaces where they occur. Coming from this perspective, it is easy to conceive how this ties into the theoretical framework of everyday life, and Schutz’s lifeworld. (Schutz, 1967; Goulding, 2005; Eberle, 2012). This paper is concerned with the impressions of memory, nostalgia, and internal reflection on identity that are essential components of this investigation. These components are needed to explicate the JETs reflective experience. Through these theories and concepts I hope to demonstrate how attraction through soft power can be distinguished. For JET participants this concern of remembered events is significant. It clarifies how the JET programme and the experience on this overseas experience have had an impact on these individual lives. It demonstrates how these events are conveyed to others, resulting in an image of Japanese society and culture. Thus, through looking at certain phenomena in the everyday, we can see how soft power works at the individual everyday level.

Due to the fact that phenomenology is so extensive, there are many issues into what it exactly defines. There seems to be a variation of influences within phenomenology. Phenomenology is a philosophy and methodology (Goulding, 2004:294) originating from Husserl (1999) and later being interpreted through other intellectuals such as Merleau-Ponty (2004), Schutz (1967) Levinas (1995), Garfinkel (cited in Heritage, 1984), Berger *et al* (1991), and Heidegger (1995). 2). Husserl (1990) proposes that the scientific method of the natural sciences should not be applied to psychological investigations (Laverty, 2003: 22). The consciousness of certain moments and memories in the present are informative, particularly when it comes to how we use these events to define our selves. When phenomenology is linked to everyday life theory, both areas grasp the ‘taken for granted’ part of reality that we often do not legitimise (Lefebvre, 1991: xxvi). Troublesome or even stagnant periods are not emphasised as important. Husserl, the founder of phenomenology is concerned with ‘intentionality’, what we choose to emphasise and remain conscious of in our everyday lives. Phenomenology’s aim was to remove the divide of an objective and subjective reality that was advanced by Cartesian dualism. (Husserl, 1990; Laverty, 2003:23). Descartes believed in a world that consisted of an objective and subjective reality, one where we perceive reality and one that is spiritual (Descartes, 2003:106-21). For Schutz (1967), he emphasised, what he called the ‘life-world’. It is the social reality we find ourselves emerged.

Lefebvre (1991, 2002, 2004) considers space within the physical, mental and social cultural arena, while appreciative of the alienating processes that occur within the experiences from the individual and the social (Shields, 1999: 160-1). Phenomenology adds to the theoretical basis on the everyday by its concern with the intersubjective processes by which persons define themselves through the assumptions of others (Wilson, 2002:192-5). Lefebvre's theory brings significance to the invisible and mundane routines of our lives, phenomenology highlights the influences of others for the reasons we create something as meaningful. To further explain, phenomenology tries to understand the difference between unrecognised and perceived reflection. Everyday life probes the unrecognised patterns and reflections involved and how from an unfamiliar point of view these can be recognized (Lefebvre, 1991; Schutz, 1967).

To explain the justification of using phenomenology to investigate the everyday, it is best to demonstrate how it is useful for this research. Firstly, I should explain the arguments of phenomenology as a methodology and subsequently, evidence of phenomenology being used empirically within the research. Next, what could be the disadvantages of using this methodology including other fields that could have been used, and lastly how this ties into the whole framework with autoethnography and life history.

Experience is both recognised as reflected and un-reflected experience. Additionally, phenomenology is also concerned with intersubjectivity (Husserl, 2005: XLIII; Schutz, 1967: 32). This is significant for this inquiry as JETs share similar experiences that are not limited to any one individual. People define their internal thoughts through the reflection of others, which is the reason intersubjectivity is a major component to experience (Wilson, 2002:193). Schuertz (1945) gathers that meaningful experiences are either overt or covert *conducts*. These conducts are the spontaneous experiences we either acknowledge, or do not, because we are not engaging in a reflective nature as they are happening, such as blushing, and blinking etc.… We are aware of these actions but do not necessarily consider them as important (Schuertz, ibid: 536). Bergson (2005) also addresses this attention or inattention to experience as *wide-awakeness* verses passiveness (Schuetz, 1945: 538). This difference is concerned with the internal reflection where one passively experiences something with an experience that is acknowledged and reflected upon (PASC, 2005). Schuetz explains that individual interpretation comes from the compilation of experiences and teachings from others that create our personal source or in Schuertz’s words ‘knowledge at hand. (Schuertz, 1945: 534, Schutz, 1967).’ In recent times, phenomenology has been used in varying research fields. To understand how it is implemented as a methodology it is important to consider these works. Phenomenology as a method is concerned with description, reduction, essences and intentionality (O’Donoghue et al, 2003:44). As a methodology phenomenology has been used in the medical sciences and within education, sociology and tourism studies. It gives voice to those under investigation and has been used to show the perspective of *‘sensory integration.’* Connolly *et al,* (2002) use phenomenology to understand the perspective of those without the *‘normalising’* tendencies of the anatomical body; the taken for granted, invisible aspect of the body when *sensory integration* is fragmented.

Literature on everyday life has been extensive. Everyday life as theory is about the emancipation of the individual from the tediousness of the everyday to derive truth and significance from personal accounts. It tells the stories of many by glimpsing onto the busy crowded street, signifying the erratic on goings of the dirty boulevards and sidewalks (Pinder, 2010). Thus, it is the common ground where nothing is hidden and where all paths meet. Prakash and Kruse (2008) provide an array of work done by various academics concerned with the link of everyday life and globalisation, and the transformational capacities that individuals have on the urban city centre. In Japan the closest approach to everyday life was 'modernology' or *kōgengaku.* Wajiro investigated the classification of everyday commodities. He was concerned with the study of everyday life or *seikatsu* of civilised peoples. He explains his interest as the 'architecture outside of architecture'; and thus, the exterior pluralities of the moment (Silverberg, 1992: 36). To further explain, he was interested in the social on goings and behaviours that unfolded within the household from moment to moment. However, the focus of his research did not compel him to undertake a study of differing social realities, as his main focus was on the upper class. Lefebvre (1991, 2002), de Certeau (1988) and up to more recent times, Harootunian (2000; Harootunian *et al*, 2003) have also contributed to the literature on everyday life. The search for self-identity is important in our day-to-day lives. Giddens (1995: 14) expresses that we not only have to ask ourselves how to live, but how to behave, and what to eat and wear; all these questions relate to our identity. Our character is revealed through our memories and it is through the recollection of the past; both conscious and unconscious that determines our reality in the present. The significance of this reflective behaviour is vital to understanding our everyday circumstances and consequently memory is another important theme to this study.

The phenomena investigated are related to everyday life and consist of nostalgia and memory. These reflections can be troublesome, shocking, nostalgic and mundane. However, together they paint a picture of life as an outsider in Japan, as well as a picture of these peoples’ lives and how they fit the JET experience into their identities. Their present circumstances also tell a story of how fully Japan became part of their lives, some still living in Japan, working with Japan, or unrelated. Nostalgia is a desire that longs to live elsewhere, not in the present. It represents the past and or a place that may or may not exist. In terms of international exchange programmes, there is a clear lack of research using everyday life theory to investigate the individual’s contribution to soft power and diplomacy. Memory and nostalgia are important components of this dissemination.

Memory studies attempt to explain why individuals and society involuntarily and tactfully neglect to remember and record certain past events. For society it can be for political reasons, as means of historical responsibility, or to promote a nationalistic agenda. For the individual it could be neurological decay or done unconsciously (Newark, 1995; Boym, 2001; Levy, 2011; Morris-Suzuki, 2005). Our perception of reality is constructed on the knowledge that is presented to us. Durkheim (1974: 4) speaks of memory as an organic fragment, a vibration left behind after the original occasion ceases to remain. What is left is the vibration that has left an imprint on the nerves of the body. During Durkheim’s time science and the humanities were not divided as they are today, thus his description of memory is both neurological and social. Memory studies have been an interest in both the scientific community and the social sciences. Within the scientific field Riccio *et al*, found through the observation of animals and human subjects that, the further away memory becomes the less discernible the specific features linger in our mind. As time passes, the memory becomes vague and more uniform, resulting in the inability to distinguish one event from another (Riccio, *et al*, 1994). Distanciation of memories has reverberations that can alter an individual’s narrative.

Literature on memory seems to dwell on the inconsistencies of memory and how outside factors influence how we remember our past. Memory has a habit of interrupting our present, bringing the past closer to the present. It can often influence the decisions we make in the present and affect our future. The relevance of memory studies has predominantly focused on memories of victimisation and trauma, and while rather meaningful, it fails to grasp the commonplace, abstruse tensions that exist in our ever-increasing transient world. This study examines the tension of memory within the everyday. Memory becomes less accurate the further away it is from the present. It ties us to the present through its constant reconstruction that colours the present. Morris-Suzuki (2005: 2) explains that we are constantly refitting pieces into patterns of understanding to explain our present origins and realities. Nora states that,

Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past. Memory, insofar as it is affective and magical, only accommodates those facts that suits it, it nourishes recollections that may be out of focus or telescopic, global or detached, particular or symbolic…(Nora, 1989).

JETs will go through a process of past reflection that will continue to define their future throughout their lives when thinking back on their time on the programme; resulting in a metamorphosis of the individual. This process is demonstrated through the JET participants in my fieldwork analysis. The dialectical production of knowledge within the everyday and memory produce cultural capital known as soft power. How nostalgia is effective for this process, along with its background needs to be conceived.

Kerr expresses,

Even stronger than censorship is the power of nostalgia...Incurable nostalgia rules the field, and this is why Zen and tea ceremony experts recite to us many an exquisite haiku demonstrating Japan's love of nature but do not speak of the concreting of rivers and seashore. (2001:7).

The capability and capacity to imagine and long for some part of the past is one of mankind’s extraordinary talents. However, it can also develop into a disregard for inconvenient issues. Less regarded is nostalgia’s power to reach people, societies and transcend cultures. Nostalgia was once defined as a sentimental feeling, to which the power of its attachment was formerly diagnosed as an illness, a ‘hypochondria of the heart’ (Boym, 2001:7). It first appeared in the 17th century as ‘homesickness’; the feeling brought on by the separation from one’s heart and home (Davis, 1979; Nosco, 1990; Vess *et al*, 2012). It was a documented illness recognisable by the symptoms of longing for family and home by soldiers from the towns and villages during the American Revolution. In contrast to the city folk, the sickness did not seem to affect them to the same extent. Nostalgia comes from the combined Greek words, *nosto*s and *algos*. Nostos connotes return to the native land and *algos* signifies suffering and grief (Nosco, 1990: 3). Today this feeling is further induced by the disembedded nature of a globalising world as people are becoming more dispersed throughout the world. Although the context of the local can be found in the global, it is to an extent for the allowance of sentimentality, although not enough to fully satisfy one’s longings. Nostalgia is the reflection of frailty in our everyday life, which is often smothered by contemporary structures that salute the strengths and over-comings of the past (Boym, 2001). It can be seen as a longing for the magic lost in our routine driven lives, where we try to control and predict our future. Lord Byron’s writing that initiated the development of Romanticism and place acknowledged the nostalgic association with feelings of sentimentality related to place (Cheeke, 2003). Nosco (1990) describes it as a condition where we feel disembedded from time and space further induced by our multifaceted, changeable and temporary realities. Our daily lives are organised through schedules that make time spent less spontaneous and more predictable. The hordes of people that make up the workforce are one machine, driving society forward in the neo-liberal sense. While there is liberated time, there is less room in the world for the contemplation and reflection of the wondrous and spontaneous unknown. Progress in a capitalistic sense is the motive for sustaining and securing the future, thus nostalgia is that interruption to remind us of that lost time, and former possibilities that are shared with all, past or present. As Boym (2001) suggests, it is yearning for the particular that is lost in the assumption of a determined, organised world. We seek belonging, some type of anchor to hold us in place in our vast, dynamic realities.

Vess, *et al* (ibid) found that nostalgia carried positive gains that could be beneficial to the individual. Nostalgia can protect the mind from the insecurities of modernity's risks such as: the overwhelming quandary over one's existence, future prospects and mortality. Nostalgic reflection benefit the individual by promoting a positive outlook and distancing negative events by constructing positive events that are easily accessible to the present self (Vess, *et al*, 2012: 274-81). The affect of these subjective substances through our senses is not immediately recognisable. It takes acknowledgment and careful consideration to grasp the wisdom gained from experience. The participants’ history on the programme is used as a buffer and opportunity for their future.

Nostalgia, which contains sentiment and longing, is produced by the malleability of memory that is affected by experience and reflection. Generating soft power at the individual level happens through nostalgic reflections, but cannot be concretely measured in terms of good will towards a society or country. This study will illustrate how it can work at the individual level, through looking into JETs’ experiences.

### *Rhythms and patterns*

Everyday life’s complexities emerge from the rhythms of organised time that are divided into 24 hours. It is organised in such precision to be systemically spread across the world map, so that time can be adjusted synchronically, to maintain a regular organisation capable of reaching areas in distant spaces. Time would be integrated throughout the globe and divided into hours, minutes, and seconds (Levine, 1997: 56-8). Modernity and the growth of industrialisation advanced this view . The flow of capital on a large scale required this type of synchronisation to be accessible through space, to standardise the workweek of an industrialising, modern society (Harootunian 2000: 5). As a whole, society has its own clockwork, cadence, ebb and flow, like machinery. In essence it has a rhythm and follows a series of patterns. Within the city, rush hour proceeds at a certain time and place, calms down, and then once again follows the same sequence when the workday is done. This pattern is continued throughout the workweek and follows the same interminable sequence (Lefebvre, 2004). Each place, and society has its own rhythms whether it is the city and the suburb, or the nations of Japan and England. Our forefathers’ impressions of time must have been significantly different from the way our world thinks of time today. The observation of history has dramatically evolved from the Italian Renaissance, extending past the Enlightenment and towards the present (Olick, 2011). Before the present age of modernity, history tended to be less defined and was cyclical in nature as it was an organic process of the everyday. In the past, time was defined by seasonal changes and by the setting and waning of the sun. History was far less removed as the immediacy of the present was influenced by natural occurrences that threatened the livelihood of those of that time (Olick, 2011: 146).

Lefebvre (2004) brought the attention of rhythms into the theory of everyday. He argues that there is a production of energy through the interaction of place and time, which results in the creation of rhythms. These particular ‘rhythms’ can be classified as occurring in the private, public, imaginary and dominating-dominated areas of life. Private includes psychological happenings, our memories, conversations and things that are known and unknown of our inner selves. Public refers to festivals, ceremonies, calendars, and even the exposed expressions such as laughing, and boredom. Imaginary rhythm are composed of learning processes, the verbal, the fabricated self, even the future plans that have not come to be, and thus imagined. Dominating-dominated are purely concocted rhythms that occur in areas, such as speech and music. This type of rhythm demonstrates a desire for its duration to continue, perhaps because it is enjoyable or necessitates release (Estampador, 2010; Lefebvre, 2004: 15-8).

Our life has as rhythm: cyclical, linear, and inattentive time, known as appropriated time. Cyclical time can be anything from the annual repetition of the seasons, our biological rhythms such as the beating of the heart, our sleeping patterns and habits, and so forth. Linear time is about the monotonous durations such as waiting in line, time traveling from one place to the destination, or even the conclusion of a leaf falling to the ground. Appropriated time is time that is forgotten by time. One is so satisfied with the present activity that time is forgotten, whether it is work, playing a sport or listening to music (Estampador, 2010; Lefebvre, 2004: 76-7). Linear time can be inside cyclical time, such as the linearity of a child becoming an adult within the cycle of one’s life from birth to death. Lefebvre (ibid) states that we only become aware of these rhythms when something goes wrong, when we are distressed. Like an ailment within our bodies that we are not always aware of until the symptoms appear; this also happens in our everyday life just as it happens within our own bodies (Estampador, 2010; Lefebvre, 2004c: 88).

Life is a symphony of these rhythms or polyrhythmic (Lefebvre, 2004: 89). People gathering at a busy intersection at the start of the workday, the humdrum of midday, until the working day ends and the return of rush hour are rhythms. With the commencement of modernity our natural rhythms have been altered to fit fixed rhythms. Our homogenous lives seem to only record the pinnacle areas of our lives, and ignore the in between times from one spectacular event to another.

Boym (2001) and Nora (1989) propose that the fast paced growth of industrialisation formed the desire for the opposite; a slower paced life along with the yearning of the particularities that maintained tradition. There was at a time when tradition was a lived experience and it did not need to be honoured and preserved. Time before the Renaissance was not calculated by productivity. There was neither the necessity for an emerging awareness of tradition since it was an organic part of one’s life experience.

The patterns and rhythms between Japan and the West developed disparately, although the West had a strong influence on Japanese society. JETs are coming into a different world where society and culture developed differently to their own. How these rhythms are different need to be addressed, as understanding different patterns is important to observe one’s own taken for granted norms. Everyday life in Japan began to follow the Gregorian calendar in 1873 to join and access the dialogue on ‘civilised thought’. During the 1930's in Japan, *kindai* became the definition for present temporality, which became synonymous with *modan*, a 'post-traditional' world made prosperous by the drive of capitalism through space, unperturbed by national boundaries and unfading traditions. With the onset of the industrial revolution, time became standardised, synchronised and organised on a worldwide scale, which developed late in Japan. Before the 1920s Japan's everyday life was fleeting and not immediately concerned with everyday necessities (Silverberg, 2006). The Renaissance did not reach the shores of Japan as it was secluded from the rest of the world for almost 200 years. This was from the mid 1600's till the mid 1800's when Commodore Perry's ships arrived (Okakura, 1905). Hence, the consciousness of time and tradition did not affect the lives of the Japanese as it did in the West. When Japan finally opened up to the West the Tokugawa shogunate limited their boundaries with society and country, but appropriated the technical knowledge from abroad in agendas such as the Iwakura campaign where delegations were sent to Europe and America to procure proficiency in all things Western (Nish, 1998; Kunitake, 2002). Today Japan has adopted the global standardisation of time, but due to the incompatibility of rhythms, the two have not always efficiently synchronised.

Other areas of cyclical and rhythmical movement occurs in the mind and consequently, transforming identity. ‘Memory installs remembrance within the sacred; history, always prosaic, it releases it again (Nora 1989:9)’. Newark (1995) addresses the individual's everyday circumstances in a globalised world and the over stimulation of information, opinions and values that penetrate our consciousness. When we reminisce we lose the aptitude to distinguish every last detail of the past, however the sensations remain and become more impactful in time.. Newark (1995: 237) also contends that an individual must protect him or herself from the bombardment of information by preventing it from latching onto the individual's past and collective memory. He presents Benjamin's idea that 'atrophy' between the individual and collective memory begins to take place. In essence, the divide between the local and global memories are blurred, as the collective universal transforms the original (Kansteiner, 2002). Thus, there is a coalescence of past and outside knowledge that forms an altered past. The traditional role of a subjective linear memory before the entrance of modernity has been transformed in a reality where the past is ever present. There is a shift between memory and the conscious present where focusing on the past requires a constructed dream-like state to maintain control of the past event. It is the interplay of a constructed dream-like memory and the interruption of shock that modernity brings with it, where we must constantly be forced to self-reflect on the past to incorporate it into our present identity. The past becomes hazy as it loses the freshness of its first happening. Newark observes the poetry of Baudelaire and finds the symbolic interplay of memory and everyday life (cited in Newark, 1995: 236-255). Baudelaire exposes the constant need for self-reflection:

I simply want to share with the reader some of the reflections that have often come to me on the subject of this peculiar genre. These reflections had become a kind of obsession for me; I wanted to relieve myself I have made every effort, moreover, to introduce a certain order into them and this way to facilitate their digestion. (Newark, 1995: 243; Baudelaire, 1976: 525).

Baudelaire's (ibid) reflections signify the constant cycle of alienation and reconciliation that brings the past into the present. He 'facilitates the digestion' of his reflections to reunite them into his character. This is the cycle of not only the past into the present but of recently recognised values and norms into one's present character. There is a cycle of alienation and reconciliation that becomes apparent within modernity; it connects the unfamiliar construction of memory with the sphere of everyday life. Modernity has transformed the traditional forms of memory, which has brought with it the constant need for self-reflection juxtaposed to the human condition's constant need for familiarity. Durkheim (1974: 21) acknowledges this cycle of alienation and reconciliation when he describes how our prejudices influence our actions and judgments. Our reality does not always equate the same reality in our minds and as Durkheim (ibid) proposes there is a 'positive contradiction' such as when we truly believe we do not care or love someone, although our actions demonstrate quite the opposite and we refuse to admit our true feelings and nature. Thus, the process of alienation is done unconsciously and when it finally surfaces, through introspection we can unite these contradictions into our consciousness.

Everyday life theory recognises the ‘taken for granted’ areas of routine, mundane life. As I have explained in my previous work on everyday life theory, this process is natural, yet we do not stop to think about it (Estampador, 2010). Cook (1998) explains this through his analogy of the Minotaur. This beast is represented as both a myth and threat to the ‘pureness’ of society, where pureness represents the accepted social norms. The struggle against unified ‘pureness’ to society, brings up the dilemma of where to place the variants; how to reconcile the alienated within the whole. To better describe the two polarities, it is a struggle between form and substance. A cyclical process begins with ‘form’, the form of an idea, for example, and then is transformed into substance when accepted as a norm. We embody a contradictory existence that becomes divided into positive and negative attributes. These two areas of the everyday are represented as the ‘taken for granted’ and the 'living history'. They are the alienated part of our world, the monsters, contrasted with the represented ‘pure’ society (Estampador, 2010; Cook, 1998: 2-3). For JETs this is represented in the cycle of adversity and acculturation.

For JETs, this process of rejection and assimilation exists. An example of this is documented by Baldwin (2011) who tells the narrative of his life in the Fukui prefecture. The locals of his village were gathering for the annual market where local goods were being sold. He noticed that his appearance was making quite a commotion as the locals were gawking at him in astonishment. Seeing a foreigner in their mist must have been a rarity. Eventually this novelty wore off and the stall vendors concentrated on selling their products. This experience must have been odd for Baldwin (ibid) who must have had this experience on a regular basis. Since this kind of thing probably did not happen in his home country it must have been a peculiar experience that he reflected on when writing his book. The oddness of his appearance must have stood out to the locals, however he soon became part of the scenery, at least for that moment. Reminiscing contains friction between identification and interpretation and in the social every day there is a struggle between unified society and alienating elements that need assimilation (de Certeau, 1988; Lefebvre 1991; 2000). The past has always been important when defining our present as it is seen as the foundation that gives our society, culture and selves a form of identity and collective consciousness (Levy, 2011). The regularity of life contains habits and rhythms that are observable but taken as insubstantial. To understand how everyday life is useful for understanding experience, a summary of Lefebvre’s work should be summarised.

Lefebvre’s tomes consist of the *Critique of the Everyday: Volumes I-III* (1991, 2002, 2005). In these works, he describes the alienating social forces that are present in modern life. Volume I (1991) describeLefebvre’s aim to pave the way for a sociological analysis of the mundane everyday; to find the process of revolution within the individual.In the second volume (2002), Lefebvre descriptively lays down the critiques and theories for analysing the everyday. He emphasises that mundane time is expanded through technology (washing machines, vacuums, etc.), which are supposed to assist in freeing up time, however, become a predicament with how to spend that time. The political has come to penetrate private life of the everyday, which results in the politicisation of the private realm (2002: 3-5). Once we have this time, what should we do with it? It is easy to take it for granted. The third volume is the concluding series where Lefebvre speaks of how the everyday has influenced fields of anthropology, sociology and psychology. The critique of the everyday life can be understood as a micro-sociology or psychology in contrast to the macro versions (2005: 4-5). He continues to discuss the overarching political state as an influence that directly and indirectly influences its citizens. Pushing abnormal areas to the fringe, along with a ‘personalisation of authority’ has become an unquestioned norm. Today, information and certainty are taken as a given when information has become increasingly accessible at every level of society. This leads to the search for authenticity in the unrevealed areas of life, which Lefebvre believes can lead to ‘mystification and deception’ (Estampador, 2010; Lefebvre, 2005: 102-3). This deception can be represented as ‘othering’, the mystique that individuals seek. When we are vulnerable to the deception of superimposed images. This is the gap that soft power fills. That tendency to imagine, taken from ideas and images of another place and society. It is alluring and a psychological tendency to imagine and contrast. It is this tendency that is also transformational at the individual level and what will be further explained and argued in this thesis. Lefebvre’s (ibid) desire is to portray the importance of nonconformist occurrences that are fundamental to social knowledge. The positive and negative parts of our mundane lives interact by creating and destroying the other, an emerging pattern (Estampador, 2010; Lefebvre, 1991: 12-3).

When JET participants become inculcated in Japanese society there will be a struggle and confusion with their own core values and beliefs with those of the Japanese. This process of grappling with stress and confusion enables the individual the capacity of awareness and thus creates flexibility within character (Hottola, 2004; Klooster *et al*, 2008). These differences stem not just from culture, believes and values but from the patterns within everyday life. Patterns or rhythms have the tendency to lose consistency and go off beat; this is where the consciousness of difference becomes clearer. Nostalgic imaginations and the tendency of othering need to be explored.

### *Nostalgic imaginations and orientalism*

Regarding imagining, such as JETs venturing off to a new country and future, the appeal is the unknown. Perhaps this journey can contain something that seems magical, and uncontrollable. In our routines, it may be a welcome uncertainty. Imagining another, place or culture, or desire to experience another place expresses our present discontent. When we do not fully grasp another peoples’ ways of being, it is easy to condemn them, especially if they are far removed from us culturally and socially (Lefebvre, ibid: 20-1; Estampador, 2010). However, these judgments and feelings of discontent are points for learning and readjustment. What was at one point incomprehensible because of lack of insight can slowly be understood and acknowledged. For the JET participants, they will go through this process of imagination, misunderstanding when living in their host communities and learning to appreciate their experience.

A thought-provoking study was done through the Association for Psychological Science (Ashton-James *et al*, 2009) which demonstrated through a series of experiments that positive conditions permit the mind to become less constrained by one’s cultural values, compared with negative conditions which pull the mind back to the assertiveness of cultural values. What the researchers discovered was an interesting reaction stemming from Western and East Asian participants. Those coming from the West became open to conformity, the exhibited patterns associated with East Asian cultures (Japan, South Korea, and China) vis-a-vis those from East Asia which had the opposite reaction of becoming independent and individualistic. The experiment demonstrates a scientific explanation of the internal struggles of the appropriation of values that exists within the individual. It could also explain how nostalgia can be affective when it is associated with positive feelings. JET participants coming from the West through nostalgic feeling can relate to the East and vice versa even if there is a struggle of values, and culture while living in a foreign environment.

It is a human tendency to carry internal assumptions taken from experience and environment; JETs are no different. In a world where information is less constrained and individualism runs rampant we have inherited perceptions of what the structure of the world contains. In *The Structures of the Life-World*, Schutz (1967) and Berger, *et al* (1991)takes the idea from Husserl (1980: 32-47, 2005) about the idealised everyday as a constant reality where its fundamental structure remains fixed. The example being that success and the acts of becoming successful within the real world can be repeated and thus reflexive. The idealised assumption here being that reality remains a space that one can act on and rely on to react the same way based on experience (Schutz, 1975). Our feelings are a fundamental influence and reaction to the way we perceive our social world. Hegel examines the process that leads to the determination of the present by subsuming all the experiences that an individual or society contains to manifest itself as a self-determined entity. These experiences are fundamental to Hegel's philosophy of individual self-realisation that leads to independence of humanity from nature, meaning instead of being defined by the fluctuations of the seasons, we now determine our own will. He stresses that the individual defines the universal through the individuals' calling or the individual's romanticised life vocation. It is through this search and fulfillment of life's calling that determines a universal idealised framework. Hegel believes this is supported by free expressions and desires that are drawn from social institutions (Church, 2012). However, in a world where the local is being interrupted by happenings of the global, chaos within society can occur within, where flows of information from social media can reach over borders. One's calling can now be found to transcend borders and this gives rise to instability in one’s locale. Expressing the desires of a collective whole is hard to determine in a world where individuals are divided and disembedded (Eriksen, 2014). When we idealise other places and people, it is an expression of our desires, and constructed memories may not reflect reality. Being aware of the prosaic through idealising the past leads to a re-interpretation of events. It moves us forward and results in individual transformation and this is demonstrated through the participant’s experience. This process leads to flexibility and elasticity of identity that benefits the individual in an insecure world. The modern individual must seek reflexivity and the ability to handle change (Murphy-Lejeune, 2003). The ability to idealise and dream in our everyday life cushions the individual from reality. At the same time the embedded individual is able to see his or her surroundings of the unfamiliar as an innocent child by being engaged in a cycle of relearning. New ways of being can be appropriated into the fluidity of identity. The child does not see the border between an animate and inanimate world (Sand, 2008: 386). It is this ability to idealise and imagine in the face of unfamiliarity that is necessary for survival in this world. This is a mechanism that the participants perhaps learn and develop through living in Japan. Looking to the future is part of human survival as Sharot (2011) explains in her journal the ‘The optimistic bias’. The globally integrated world appeals to those who have experienced interaction with the other. How othering is a constructive element of experience should be further detailed.

In our globalising reality the West looks less to the future and reflects on the ‘oriental’ other’s present and past found in other places, societies and disassociated pasts. While the West emphasises the exploration of identity and individuality, the Japanese want to preserve a homogenous society linked to the same ethnicity, cultural values and inherited homeland (Iwabuchi, 2004). The Japanese government uses the JET Programme to promote the idealised culture of their present and past to the outside world as a way of transmitting back to society the idealised image of Japanese society, although this reflection may be fabricated. When JETs report their life over social media and return to their home country or during their travels, this is how their reputation is promulgated abroad. This is the spread of soft power, promoting an image of Japan, while simultaneously within their society (Iwabuchi, 2004). The Japanese government (ministries) and society are fed back these images that outsiders have of their society and culture (Creighton, 1997). This process was further discussed in chapter 9.While the foreigner may have come with his or her own ideal of Japan this construct is slowly taken down while being embedded in Japanese society.

Individuals living transient lives abroad, interact with a society that is quite different to their own. This could include preferences, values, attitudes and physical make-up. As they live in homogenous societies such as Japan and even China they are expected to play a specific ‘foreign’ role, and have a tendency to stay fixed in this role. The local community may have their own assumptions about the tendencies of foreigners. For locals, they may represent a fixed position related to geographic location and at the same time, a semiotic representation of the foreign culture (Stanley, 2009:3-4). Being exposed to another culture and society peculiar to one's own is a liberating and out of the ordinary experience. It is an opportunity for transformation by pulling apart and divulging one's strengths and weaknesses. Coming face to face with difference is impactful for character development. Once you understand the ‘other’, then there is a need for reconfiguration of the self, which opens up a number of possibilities for transformation and flexibility of identity. Indeed, a person contains the representation of the ‘other’ within the confines of its identity and within the components of culture, values, and language. Even with the division of identity there is a unification that is always being maintained through reintegrating these polarising elements. Through seeing inequality and facing difference, this could propel the individual to find meaning and purpose. This constant reconfiguring of the internal being is what brings about change and transformation. ‘Culture is never monolithic but is acculturated from a variety of peoples and societies, thus ‘a culture of oneself as the culture of the other’ (Derrida, 1992:10-11).

Within Newark's analyses of Baudelaire's poetry, there is a descriptive example of this transformation, or congnisance of change revealed through expression of laughter. Laughter is a break from the quotidian and in itself a form of 'othering'. To laugh is a force that is at times uncontrollable, an occasion where one finds something comical and thus unfamiliar. It is a break from the continuity of the moment; a release from even oneself. Baudelaire states:

'The comical the power of laughter that is, belongs to the one who laughs and has nothing to do with the object of laughter. It is by no means the man who falls who laughs at his own fall, unless he is a philosopher, a man who has acquired through force of habit the capacity to split himself rapidly into two [la force de se dedoubler rapidement], and to look on the phenomena of his own self as disinterested observer.

(Newark, 1995:246-7; Baudelaire, 1976: 532)’

Thus, this represents a splitting of two in regard to the individual. Essentially, what Baudelaire intends is the recognition of being conscious of two frames of mind, where one form constitutes the representation of an ‘other’. It can be a separation of the self, similar to the Japanese concepts of *tatemae/honne* and *uchi/soto* (Horne, 1998; Sugimoto, 2010). This contradiction of having an inner and outer psychological and social demarcation demonstrates how the unfamiliar can surface at a psychological level.

The act of laughing can be internally seen as absurd; which provides a window to objectively and subjectively discern a split reaction to the event at hand (Newark, 1995: 248). Thus, for individuals, transformation at the psychological, individual level, there are unfamiliar elements of ‘othering’ that are reintegrated into what we recognise as identity.

For individuals, transformation at the psychological, individual level contain unfamiliar elements that are reintegrated into what we recognise as identity. This is the case for JET participants living in host communities in Japan, where new ways of being are observed and become familiar. If we are to understand the concept of ‘othering’, orientalism should be considered.

Orientalism stresses the perspective in which the West exploits the non-West (Said, 2003). Said explains this as Western Europe and the US as representative of the West, and the non-West representative of Asia and the Middle East. Said (ibid) has stated that Western society is used to the reaction of shock and provocation that creates phantasmagoria and perhaps, fear of the ‘other’ (non-Western). This has occurred throughout history during post colonialism (gazing at the ‘other’ from a superior ‘Western’ position) (Johnson, 2010) and even today, where post 9/11 Muslims and refugees are represented as a threat to Western societies. This has been in the context of,

…good vs. evil, civilised vs. barbaric, rational vs. irrational, progressive vs. backward – have been invoked. These binaries are deployed in US War on Terror discourse in ways that are gendered and orientalist, that is, through harnessing and manipulating perceived differences in gender, gender roles, and sexuality, along racial lines (Khalid, 2011).

It had to be unique so that Western society could not relate to the non-West. These foreign objects and people became distant from the viewer, imagining and reconstructing the lives of the ‘other’ from a distance. The West’s objective remoteness demonstrated dominance over their subjects. It is still clear even today that the West’s standpoint is taken as superior over the rest of the world. Said (ibid) reveals the other as a masked, exotic place of fantasy, magnificent landscapes, with people that have a sense of mysteriousness about them. It is an area that is strange to the Western eye, but an area that provokes the Western ego to explore and challenge, and dominate it. Although it seems that the West has been the dominating power over the non-Western, they have a dependent relationship on one another where one defines the other.. How the West others Japan should be considered.

Orientalism can have a romantic view, which can be demonstrated through Okakura (1905).

Japan has been more or less of an enigma to foreign observers. She is the country of flowers and ironclads, of dashing heroism and delicate tea-cups, - the strange borderland where quaint shadows cross each other in the twilight of the New and the Old World. Until recently the West has never taken Japan seriously... in the mysterious nothing is improbable. Exaggeration is the courtesy which fancy pays to the unknown...Has not the West as much to unlearn about the East as the East has to learn about the West? In spite of the vast sources of information at the command of the West, it is sad to realise today how many misconceptions are still entertained concerning us. (Okakura 1905: 3-4)

Orientalism can portray an imaginary landscape that is often filled with romantic, mysterious views of another. Okakura (ibid), is right to declare that we have much to learn from one another by peeling back these misconceptions.

Non-natives and their nostalgic view of Japan could be a persuasive tool for the development of soft power. It is through the outside world an appreciation for Japan and its traditions can be preserved. Japanese politicians throughout history have had a strategic objective of distancing the country from the outside world through the myth of Japanese uniqueness. This has had a positive affect from the curious reflection of the outside world, trying to understand Japan’s success, which then promotes its uniqueness back to the Japanese (Katz, 2015: 4-16; Pilling, 2014). JETs as young undergraduates are invited to temporarily reside in Japan, where their temporary status, and youth are helpful for long term attachment to the experience. This experience is reflected in their identities that tie them to the country. Thus, they will experience situations of othering and alienation, but reconciled after the experience, through a constructive outlook, containing nostalgia. How phenomenology and life history are connected will be discussed.

## Phenomenology and life histories

JET narratives are needed to understand a microscopic type of knowledge; the often unacknowledged mundane themes which are not widely generated, but which are, however useful for understanding the larger soft power process. Narratives give individuals power where the personal and mundane are underrepresented as a form of knowledge (Cameron, 2012). Phenomenology as an approach to examining everyday life is essential to the theoretical framework of the study. It ties together the phenomena of experience and the internal reflection of subjectivity (Hyner, 1985). The approach I have taken to examine the data is through phenomenology. Semi-structured interviews will be used for collecting detailed and significant data from individuals, focusing on specific narratives of their lives. Memory and nostalgia are vital areas to the research, which concerns a reflective approach to the interview. This indicates that the reflection of experience is not a simple engagement. Identity, and the recollections of how it has changed through time, requires a flexible strategy. It is also the reason why semi-structured interviews remain an important method to collect the data. Galletta (2013: 24) has quoted, ‘A key benefit of the semi-structured interview is its attention to lived experience while also addressing theoretically driven variables of interest.’ Life history, as a template to the collection of interviews was necessary because it recognises the reconstructed narration of the lived experience through the participant’s point of view (Rosenthal, 1993). Dryburgh and Dauncey (2013: viii) have explored life stories to demonstrate,

…social change, eye-witness accounts of historical events, challenges to hegemonic narratives or supplements to fragmentary archival records − and the challenges inherent in drawing these personal stories into understandings of wider changes.

To understand the motivations participants had for applying for the JET Programme, it will be necessary to probe their past before their time on JET. Subsequently, the reflective process initiated through interviewing will relay vital information about their time on the JET Programme and their future decisions after leaving. For the discussion chapters, these results will be presented in chapters 6 to 9. These will be divided in the results of the fieldwork into major themes: ‘The results of seeking opportunity: emerging adulthood and uncertainties’, ‘The results of imagining Japan and evoking nostalgia’, ‘The results of adversity and acculturation’, and ‘The commodification of experience through nostalgia’.

There were various qualitative approaches that could have been used in this research. Symbolic interactionism could have been a viable contribution to the research. Life history itself is an umbrella term that describes oral history, life story and biographical interviews (Connelly *et al.,* 1990; Titon, 1980). There have been debates about the differences between these approaches, but they retain the same approach to understanding subjective experience. Morse *et al,* (1995) have described life history as a method to explore a particular time frame of an individual’s life (Gramling *et al.*, 2004). Adriansen (2012:43) has also stated that it can be used to understand a significant event prior to birth, which can end with the present, or future. Adriansen (ibid) structures life history interviews by conducting a timeline. The timeline usually begins with a particular starting point, which can be from birth, or from a significant event related to the research. This research loosely follows a timeline to structure and examine the lives of the participants. The interviews are semi structured and will not follow a historical linear process of questioning. However, the later analysis of the interviews will give detail to the process of identity formation over time. These interviews will then be grouped by decades reflected by the establishment of the JET Programme in 1987. By this method, I hope to demonstrate how, through semi-structured interviews, the life history of the individual can be indicative to understanding soft power development. The intention of this research is to demonstrate that, although MEFs’, BETs’ and JETs’ experiences and backgrounds may be disparate, there is a common connection that intimately ties them to Japan. Their town, village engages them in the local experience, which becomes defined as Japan as a whole. This has immense power, which is the power of nostalgic attraction.

The method of lifelines could have been used to support my research but diaries and interviews are nostalgic in reflection than drawing a timeline of one's life. This type of method is used in clinical and nursing practices and research (Gramling and Carr, 2004). As with life history, the disadvantage of ethnography is time constraint. It may take time to be accepted and for the interviewee to feel comfortable to let the interviewer into their world (Bell, 2010). As regards the participants’ anonymity, I will give them pseudonyms to protect their identities.

While autoethnographic reflection takes the researcher's voice into the analysis, life history gives voice to the individuals being investigated. Phenomenology and life history are compatible fields, since they are both concerned with subjectivity and identity; phenomenology also being concerned with intersubjectivity. Both of these methodologies are concerned with the experiential subjective meanings that are present in everyday life. Thus, these mundane based methodologies link the theoretical to the empirical; the theory of everyday life to the experiential everyday. To understand life history’s relationship to the research life history as a methodology will be discussed, followed by examples of how it has been implemented, the possible disadvantages and other methodologies that could have been implemented and then how it fits into the methodological framework.

Life history is a reconstructed narration of the lived experience through the participant’s point of view (Rosenthal, 1993). This methodology is used to explore the past of a person within a particular frame of time. Gramling and Carr (2004: 209) use life history through lifelines to understand and follow the experiences of individuals under clinical observation, specifically those undergoing ‘psychosocial developmental transitions.’ It has also been a popular field within the social sciences. Moore (2010) used life history to detail the lives of Japanese elderly couples. She did this to understand the lives of men and women to understand how their sense of selves were constructed by subjective experiences within their relationships and how over time this has had an affect on sex and aging. Although life history can give great detail on a minuscule level, it has its debates.

Some of the debates surrounding life history has to do with the in depth interview process and the involvement of trust that is needed for the interview. It may take time to get a proper story, as there could be intimate revelations that the interviewee does not want to disclose. The problem that could be faced during the research would result in the constraint of time for collecting the data (Mauthner, *et al*, 2003; Livesey, 2010). Even with these constraints in mind, life history is a fitting methodology for pairing with autoethnography and phenomenology. How life history was used in this research is of importance.

The life history approach was used through the collection of interviews and diaries. The reflective process initiated through interviewing will relay vital information about their time on the JET Programme and their future decisions after leaving. The narratives I collected were divided into themes that were introduced in the literature review to demonstrate the introspective struggles of the individual. The advantage of the narrative is that it allows the participant to freely tell their personal stories, with the guidance of the interviewer, to construct a linear progression from beginning to end (Livesey, 2010). To understand the everyday experience in the everyday events within the life history approach, phenomenology has been applied.

### *Phenomenology and the participants*

I hope to reveal the relationship of the subjective and intersubjective to observe phenomena within local and global contexts. Schutz (1967: 105) explains intersubjectivity by articulating,

My lived experience of you, as well as the environment, which has already been interpreted from my subjective standpoint. I thus presuppose that at any given time we are both referring to the same objects, which transcend the subjective experience of either of us….the world of the everyday life in which we assume that you are seeing the same table I am seeing.

The observable world can be universal, such as with the observation of objects as a table; stated above. However, how we interpret what we perceive can differ for each individual. Therefore, it is reasonable that our histories and identities are influenced by interactions in the everyday. In our hyper connected realities, we as individuals are affected and influenced by global and local happenings. In the 21st century the world feels easily traversable (Goldin, 2013: 160). However, venturing face to face to live in a different society and culture is a different story. You can easily turn off the computer or TV when an experience becomes uncomfortable, however switching off is not an option when living in and surrounded by a foreign environment. Thus, encountering the unfamiliar is part of the development of the individual, where challenging situations can be transformational. A new place, society and culture, which one has never witnessed before, can have a profound impact on our internal narratives and how our experience is remembered. These everyday remembered moments are carried and distributed; thus contributing to the transferral of soft power. In this study, this would be in support of the JET Programme’s ministries public diplomacy agenda.

The phenomena I am investigating through memory, nostalgia can emerge from the reflection of personal experience. Phenomenology involves the process an individual undergoes when they reflect and create meaningfulness through this reflection (Hekman, 1980: 345). Perhaps dimensions of the local and global are reflections of spatial cultural surroundings being occupied by the individual, whereas the global is the familiarity found in the local unfamiliar. As regards, phenomenology, personal experience as a starting point to approach the research is acceptable (Van Manen 2016; O'Donoghue *et al.,* 2003: 56). O'Donoghue *et al.,* (ibid: 58) and Van Manen (2016) make clear that what phenomenology seeks is the actual phenomena itself, and not solely on the subjective emotions and experiences of an individual. Additionally, phenomenology will give structure to the experiences of the participants being interviewed. To use phenomenology I will have to be conscious about the chosen participants. This is because I used an in depth approach, which means I need to carefully choose the sample size (Patton, 1990). This is crucial to understand the connection of everyday experiences and their relationship to memory and the subsequent feelings of attachment that develop for a certain culture or place (nostalgia) while living in a foreign environment. Reflecting on one’s identity while living in a foreign context can generate a certain knowledge that crosses cultural boundaries. This knowledge can be regarded as soft power, as it can be spread to others by means of communication. For these reasons, the methodology of life history was used as an approach to understand the phenomena. What was extracted from the interviews are the perceptions of the subject to understand their reality of Japan and how it is connected to them on a personal level. These extractions are cultural familiarities that will most likely be imparted to other individuals, which shape the image and reality of Japan, both abroad and within the nation. The graph below represents each interviewee divided by decade along with the age when they started JET and how many years they were on the programme.

*The participants*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1980’s | Marty  UK | Cora  UK | Natalie  USA | Shannon  USA | Bart  USA | Alfie  USA | Terrance  UK | Nina  USA |
| Country of origin |
| Starting age | 23 | 22 | 22 | 22 | 26 | 22 | 22 | 29 |
| Programme  Years as a participant | BET  2 | BET  1 | MEF  2 | JET  2 | MEF  1  JET  3 | MEF  3 | BET  1 1/2 | JET  1 |
| 1990’s | **Patrick**  **UK** | **Elaina**  **USA** | **Abigail**  **UK** | **Jackson**  **New Zealand** | **Reina**  **USA** |
| Starting age | 26 | 23 | 22 | 25 | 22 |
| Years on JET | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2000’s | **Mark**  **UK** | **Jill**  **UK** | **Jacob**  **USA** | **Thomas**  **USA** | **Eunice**  **UK** | **Maurice**  **USA** | **Reina**  **(Same as 1990’s)** | **Lorna**  **USA** |
| Starting Age | 24 | 22 | 23 | 22 | 20 | 28 | 35 | 24 |
| Years on JET | 5 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| 2010’s | **Taylor**  **UK** | **Elle**  **USA** | **Simon**  **Australia** | **Lorna (Same as 2000)** | **Laura**  **UK** |
| Starting age | 23 | 22 | 23 | 29 | 23 |
| Years on JET | 4 | 2 | On 2nd year | On 1st year as returnee JET | On 1st year |

The participants comprise 24 life history interviews. Refer to the graph above, the category of each individual’s programme is noted and introduced in the 1980s, and not in the preceding decades, because of the amalgamation of BET and MEFs in 1987. Thus, this decade is comprised of MEFs, BETs and JETs. A few of these participants have remained in Japan since that time. For the 2000s and 2010s decades, two participants, Reina and Lorna, have been on the programme twice. For that reason, Reina is presented in the 1990s and 2000s, and Lorna in the 2000s and 2010s. Introductions of each interviewee and their background are an important aspect of life history.Therefore, further details about the participants are inserted in the appendix A, sorted by decade. The reasons for embarking on a qualitative focused methodology is understood through recognising other methods scholars have taken to soft power.

## Other empirical approaches to soft power

There have been a number of studies done on the soft power approach within political science and international relations. On the whole, many academics have stated the ambiguity of measuring and defining soft power. Holyk (2011) uses a public opinion poll (Chicago Council on Global Affairs) to average the global outlook of Chinese soft power in East Asia. Factors including economic, cultural, human capital, political and diplomatic were used to measure China’s soft power in China, South Korea, Vietnam, the US, Japan and Indonesia. This was done to back up the perceived and actual influence of Chinese soft power through a survey of questions taken in each of the countries mentioned above. The research mentions the correlation analysis undertaken for substantiating individual opinions and contrasting them with the perceived soft power drive. Takacs (2013) takes the soft power investigation into the Hekmati Case by pointing out the obscure divide between soft and hard power. President Obama opted for the need of both hard and soft power to defend US interests in what is now known as ‘smart power’. Thus, Takacs’s argument is that soft power in the case of US strategy is. in effect, an extension of hard power. The arrest of Hekmati in Iran was reasoned to be because of his involvement with a gaming company seen as promoting American militarisation. The Iranian government perceived Hekmati and the game company as a threatening CIA operation that used video games to promote American’s dominance through civil society. Soft power can be used through the media to penetrate societies in covert methods. Indeed, this does not necessarily create a straightforward divide from hard power. It is not surprising that soft power could also be measured through other culturally sensitive areas such as the formation of ideas through sociolinguistics. Focusing in the US, Mattern (2005) takes on the theoretical framework of constructionism to explain the sociological implications of soft power with regard to attraction. Thus, it is through a theoretical based lens Matten discusses the problematic with soft power really being ‘soft’; a similar conclusion to Takacs’s argument. Soft power is seen as a tool to extend the influence of a nation’s military power that could be influential through the continual construction of reality through language. Interestingly, Matten (ibid) points out that it is the fight over the sociolinguistic constructions that define reality which can produce insecurity and therefore make way for coercion. Another postulation is the premise that soft power can be formulated from an effect-emotion gap, and anthropological analysis (White, 2011). From this perspective, soft power’s aesthetic production is filtered through the Japanese everyday bureaucratic culture and into the society. He argues that anxiety and hope for Japan’s future are perpetuated and maintained by the belief of ‘Japanese culture’ (White, 2011:8). White argues this point in his thesis and concludes that this bureaucratic filtering actually destroys governmental control. Magnusson (2002) reflects on the soft power of Tibet through participant observation to find evidence of reverse orientalism. To promote Tibet's freedom from China's grasp many exiled monks use their practice to gain followers in the 'Western' world. Reverse orientalism is used as a tool for soft power where the Tibetan monks promote ideals that are seen to be lacking in the West. What is thought to be a distant 'other' is transformed into something attractive. The impression of Western societies is that they are of a materialistic and distrustful nature. This opinion must be shared both externally (consensus) and internally (individual constitution) for the romanticism with Tibet to blossom. Therefore, to some in the West, Tibet is the utopian paradise of spirituality that they see as lacking in their own society. Another impression is that Tibet is some inaccessible destination far away from the reaches of globalisation. The Dalai Lama uses Tibetan Buddhism, human rights and environmental concerns to promote the cause of a free Tibet, particularly in contrast to China (Magnusson, 2002: 205-11). Thus, the image of a spiritual, global and environmentally consciousness Tibet is used for soft power promotion. Magnusson (ibid) points out that this is done to promote an independent Tibet, culturally and spiritually dissimilar to China. Yun *et al,* (2008) use secondary data to create a three-predictor regression model that measures the outcome of proposed hypotheses. Their argument being that in today's global world, ethnic and national relations can impact soft power. While the immigrating country has a high level of attraction, it is also the case that the immigrants intermingling abroad have an influence on the image of their home country.

The literatures mentioned above, to an extent interpret the connection of the individual to the soft power process. However, none of the research mentioned have deeply analysed the subjective experiences of those going through a cultural exchange with the potential of dispersing attraction through the individual. There seems to be a significant lack of literature regarding an understanding of soft power through a heuristic, ontological and theoretical perspective. Additionally, there is the concern of soft power being analysed solely through the lens of American strategy, as with Iran where 66 million dollars were fed into the ‘transformational diplomacy’ endeavour to promote democracy and freedom as a covert operation of soft power (Takacs, 2013). It is hard to deter our glance from the American soft power perspective, as the concept itself came from Nye (1990a, 1990b, 2004, 2008, 2009) a highly regarded American political scientist. However, before Nye (ibid) even coined the term and delineated the strategy, as it is known today, it was already happening. In 1987 the JET Programme was inaugurated and was combined with the former BET Programme, and the *Monbusho* scholarship programme’s *Monbusho* English Fellows (Metzgar, 2017: 113-130). Obviously, the JET Programme and its predecessors are not the only international exchange programmes that have been established. The point is, these covert strategies, which are defined by soft power, have been in operation for some time now regardless of the American strategic lens that we now view them through. It is only after Nye determined the strategy, that it has now become an important operation regarding a defence tactic within international relations.

The appeal of attraction is the main argument for the difference between hard and soft power, as one is lured to co-opt the ideas and policies and should not be felt consciously pressured to do so. The insecurity of placing ourselves and society in the global structure of the world today is used as a course of persuasion which has been mentioned in all the academic literature mentioned above. Each work mentioned has taken an interest to the importance of the individual’s relationship to soft power. Framing research of the self to soft power has been an important endeavour for many academics trying to grasp its indeterminate development and implications.

## Acknowledging other methodologies

JET alumni have varying accounts within different time periods, which for research purposes will contribute to the clarity of the overall collective experience of the participants. There are a number of qualitative and interpretive methodologies that could have been used in this research. Other methodologies, which could be useful are ethnography, autobiography, semiotics, grounded theory, multi-method research, and triangulation. While they all come from a qualitative and epistemological background, their perspectives and theoretical underpinnings are different (Pascal, 2011:174). Qualitative methodology acknowledges that translation is rendered through the assistance of individuals and their various backgrounds and subjectivities, unlike the positivist approach that accepts the researcher as a neutral contributor. The analysis of meaning, within the language used, is important; however it is the ideas and concepts within them that bring forth the thoughts and opinions within the text (Popper, 1992).

Autobiography whether comprehensive, topical or edited, is another purposeful approach for understanding the participant’s underlying thought process. However, I did not choose this particular method, as I did not need a comprehensive detail of the JETs’ life. Nor, did I need to juxtapose different lives in a series of stories. Edited autobiography is similar to life history. The slight difference being that the life history approach can be used to zoom into a certain time period for the sake of clarity, whereas edited autobiography is concerned with cutting down on the length and repetition of the data (Berg, 1989: 99-202).

Through the interview process, instead of using life history, I could have used ethnography. This paper was going to use ethnography as a methodology for observing the participants in their adopted cultural setting. Another emerging ethnography called mult-sited ethnography could have been used. It is an updated tool for doing ethnography from in a globalising world, where local perspectives must mobile and less attached to a specific locality (Kjeldgaard *et al.*, 2006:521). Yet, because I have had to acknowledge my involvement in the programme, it would be difficult to say that I can view the participants from an outsider’s perspective. Ethnography is the reflection of the outsider looking in and thus, observes the participant or participants in their social and cultural environment (Goulding, 2004). I could not be completely removed to an outsider’s perspective in the case of this research. With ethnography, like many qualitative methods, there could be issues with time constraint as it may take time to develop a relationship with the participant (Bell, 2010). The methods used to collect the data should be discussed.

## Methods for conducting research

If my research is to understand the process and transformation of the individual from a personal perspective, interviews are an important step for acquiring this knowledge (Boyatzis, 1998: 12-32; Titon, 1980). The application of open-ended interviewing would be preferable, as it would give the participant freedom to reminisce and awaken dormant areas of their memory. Narratives were gathered through interviews from JET alumni and key officers at CLAIR. The location of my interviews will be carried in the UK and Japan.

I obtained recordings of the participants’ time on the JET programme and the struggles they encountered living in their host communities. Data was taken from a CLAIR official to understand the goals and future of the JET Programme and participants continuing relationship to Japan..

In addition to interviews, I will take information from online resources such as academic literature, Japanese newspapers, CLAIR magazines and other Japan related media. To find additional information on the JET Programme I will look at JET related literature from AJET and CLAIR and those who have published books of their time on the programme. The evidence presented in chapters 6 to 8, which discusses the results of the research, have varying lengths. Life history is about giving voice to the varying opinions and fluctuations of time and past and memory that may exist. Therefore, because this research is about understanding how memory and nostalgia work to create a connection to place, these subtleties and opinions, no matter the length of expression, shall be inserted. It is important to address what materials will be needed to obtain the data.

To gather the data I used a voice recorder through a recording application on an iPad. If I could not get an interview in person or over Skype, I sent out a questionnaire to elicit responses, and obtain dialogue through email or Facebook. Notes were taken on paper while doing the interviews and reflections and used an online application called Gingko. The transcripts were then organised by decades and for researching evidence, using Nvivo. Like all research methods, life history also has imperfections.

The disadvantage of narrative life history is that the story depends on the relationship developed with the interviewee. There are numerous methods for obtaining data that could have been selected.

Other approaches, which could have been used in this research, are data collection through surveys, statistical analysis and, participant observation. It is significant to address what other methods could have been important for the material.

Some other methods for collecting empirical data are through are participant-observation, group interviews, and case studies. The research could have been done with a questionnaire, however this analysis is introspective in nature and therefore the approaches I have explained above appropriately fit the research design. Designing a questionnaire with closed questions would give less ample feedback; open-ended questions may take time, and possibly limiting for the time frame of a Ph.D. Another approach, which could have been taken, would be a case study analysis; nevertheless the focus of the research is not about comparing different policies. If this analysis was comparing the JET Programme with another related programme than it would have been ideal. However, this is not the case of this research. Research on JET has taken a narrative analysis method.

Within the analysis of the JET Programme, narrative analysis has been done through the literature of *Getting Both Feet Wet* (Chandler, D., Kootnikoff, 1999), and McConnell's (2000) *Importing Diversity: Inside Japan’s JET Programme*. In Chandler and Kootnikoff's work it compiled narratives taken from JET participants and Japanese Teachers of English to get both sides of the culture clash. The subjectivity of the narrations remained in the hands of the storyteller. It was up to the participants to demonstrate their own story interpreted through their own window. McConnell's book was explanatory of his own observation and with observing the behaviour of the JET participants and the reactions of the Japanese staff working alongside. The observations taken were from participant-observation and through interviews from an anthropological lens. Although these methods are fitting for qualitative data gathering, the phenomena observed for this research is individualistic and thus needed the method to match the subjective and intersubjective methodologies.

## Addressing ethical issues

There are a few ethical issues that this research may raise. Firstly, the anonymity of the participants needs protection. Secondly, using my own voice a valuable resource without resorting to a one-sided dialogue should be addressed. Thirdly, carefully choosing what knowledge is valuable to the contribution of the research.

The protection of the participant's identity is important as regards, upholding the ethics of social sciences and to the academic institution. Weber (1949) was concerned with the ambiguity of the researcher's 'value judgments' versus concrete facts (XI-XIV). To make this paper empirically substantial, so as to avoid becoming trapped in a one sided argument, there are certain measures this research will take. While I will primarily be using personal narratives stemming from the participants/alumni and myself, to balance this subjectivity, I have consulted external sources from academic journals, newspaper articles and JET related literature. To make sure that the information collected is balanced and a valuable part of the argument, I will be interviewing participants both in Japan and outside. It is worth exploring the JETs who decided to stay in Japan and how they contribute to the programme and the Japanese ministries’ soft power. I will also take interviews from different decades of the programme so as to get a linear progression of the different individual thought processes that were taking place in different times and places.

## Conclusion

To fully appreciate and understand the soft power process, it is important to consider methodologies that require ontological knowledge at the personal level. How attraction is influenced by our everyday life is usually described in theoretical abstractions. However abstract these theories may seem, they are still necessary to acknowledge and grapple with. Within the individual, through memory and the everyday, there is a triadic struggle between attraction, repulsion and integration. These themes: alienation and reconciliation, rhythms and patterns, orientalism visible within our lives and the present uncertainties that arise from this tension and pressure within us and within societies, demonstrate this contention. The processes that bring about this struggle are often regarded as inconsequential, but through this friction, change happens and the reflection of identity creates knowledge. Power can be found within this struggle, as we try to find solace in identity to form a collective consciousness that bonds us through our experiences. This knowledge that is created through reflection, and the desire to link with others through our histories, creates social and cultural capital or soft power.

This study clarifies how the expansive process of cultural attraction can be pinpointed at the micro level through established academic methodologies of life history and autoethnography. Soft power may be a political and international relations idea but the concept of attraction involves receivers, which are composed of individuals. Understanding time and place, individual motives and characteristics involve an in depth inquiry into the backgrounds of the participants. While the methodologies used in this research bind the theoretical to the conceptual framework, I have acknowledged that other methods could have been taken. I do not believe that this was the only structure to approach the argument. However, for this study it involved the engagement of the researcher's experience and those others with shared experiences of the programme.

The next chapter will discuss how memory and nostalgia are important within the mind of the individual level. The processes of the mind should be explored and how this is contributes to the development of soft power.

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# Chapter 4

# The mind and the movement of soft power through memory and nostalgia

## Introduction

Memory is what we reflect on when we experience nostalgia. In this chapter I will explain the malleability that manifests from a biological level to our identities on a discernable level. Hood (loc. 58: 2012) explains,

For the briefest of moments, we are not sure where we are and then suddenly “I,” the one that is aware, awakens. We gather our thought so that “I” who is conscious becomes the “me”- the person with a past. The memories of the previous day return. The plans for the immediate future reformulate.

When we are absorbing new phenomena, our memory is being overloaded with the development of new experiences that lead to self reflection (Fernyhough, 2013; Hammond, 2013) Thus, new and exciting situations have an influential impact on our mind when it comes to identity. We may not be fully aware of this process, however it is beneficial to understand its ramifications (Hood, 2012). Botton (2004: 22) reminds us that we forget how much time we consume thinking about the future instead of being in the present. Our mind dwells on being anywhere but here and now. He further elucidates that ‘there is purity both in the remembered and in the anticipated visions of a place: in each instance it is the place itself that is allowed to stand out (Botton, 2004: 22).’ When we embark on a new experience we are discovering memory which as Nora proposes,

…remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. (Nora, 1989: 8).

Nora declares this statement, but then contradicts this reasoning by implying that, ‘memory is absolute, while history can only conceive the relative (Nora, 1989: 9).’ What he is suggesting is that the social collective manipulates history, whereas memory is concrete and can be relied upon more than history itself. In fact, history and memory are equally blameworthy for their changeability and egocentricity. Due to advances in medical research, what has been discovered is memory’s susceptibility. Memory is not reliable and is certainly not archived in an orderly pattern. In fact memory retention is fluid and inconstant, something that needs to be recognised when it comes to our own narratives. Experience gathered over time is thought to result in personal growth and learning (Boyd *et al*, 1983)*.* The consideration given is that the experience garnered will nourish our future self, perhaps even make us wiser. Empirical, or observed experience, is a source of knowledge that is accessed by replaying past events which contribute to our future decision making, thus adding to the interpretations of our evolving, present selves. By committing to the JET Programme, participants look forward to the unfamiliar encounters and the challenges they present. The immense occurrences that unfold beyond one's parochial confinements provoke and awaken faculties of the mind that may have been left dormant otherwise. I will explore how these events shape one's future ambitions and become a resource for the present through the recollection of memories. JETs’ remembrances of their time in Japan are imbued with nostalgia and used to facilitate with future decision-making.

According to Boym (2001) the definition of nostalgia comes from ‘*nostros* ---return home, and *algia* --- longing (xiii). She continues to describe nostalgia as something that can only exist from a distance, separated by space and time. It is about yearning for a home that is no more, or even an imagined one that only exists in the mind. It is about the feeling of displacement and mourning a place that is no longer in the present. Nostalgia can take hold of a collective memory and transport the dissatisfied present into a gleaming artifice of a past. Komporaly (2014) speaks of this when he dissects the novel ‘*I’m a Communist Biddy!’* and the Romanian film based on the book in 2013. He surmises that we look to our past when the present is dissatisfying. The main character of both the media and novel is based in the 1990s where an old couple continues to live as if they were still in the time of communist Romania. The reason for this, according to Komporaly, is because they do not know how to fit it into the reality of the present. Perhaps, because many of us are finding ourselves in in such a fast paced society, we are constantly feeling the urge to find grounding in our past. It could be the case that JETs look to their past to find some sense of how to forge their realities in a world full of instability. The reason for entering the programme to begin with, is most likely due to future exploration and to find the next step that will lead us to better options. In *I’m a Communist Biddy*, a movie discussed by Komparly (2014), it was a time of relative stability in Romania, where employment and a regular salary, were dependable, although this was in the face of tyranny and at the expense of others’ misfortune. For the present of many in the industrialised nations, this stability is less established. To plan for what is to come, we look into the future through the memories that have already been laid down. For JETs, they first imagined their impending journey to Japan, and then reflect back on this time to define their present and future after the programme. When we are young and have the freedom to explore the world, this has a great impact on the development of the mind and future thinking (Arnett, 2000a, 2005). The link between young adulthood and memory is further explained in the chapter. Yearning for the past and future is instrumental to soft power. Nostalgia is found both in memories in the past and dreams of the future.For this research, nostalgia is the key concept that promotes the image of Japan abroad. Indeed, nostalgia is soft power’s vehicle.

This chapter will explore specific themes within memory and nostalgia, concerned with how memory impacts the personal narrative leading to soft power. The individual is important to this study as the aim of the research is to understand the individual process of nostalgic attachment and how this involves the byproduct of soft power from the grass roots level. The creation of memories is further solidified when one is removed from the experience. This is the time when the reflection on the past brings forward the nostalgic attachments buried in one's past. Hence, the chapter will be divided into sections that will explain the optimism bias and nostalgia, nostalgia memory and everyday life, emerging adulthood and the conclusion.

We use memories to define us, no matter the experience; it is used and remade as something positive in the present. For JETs, even with the impact of negative experiences, they become part of the learning process of the individual. They become a window for understanding and contributing to our inner strengths. The concept of the ‘optimism bias’ becomes important for understanding the reasons we have a tendency to have a positive outlook of our experiences. This is then projected to our future prospects.

## Optimism bias and nostalgia

Nostalgia connects our aspirations to our present. Vess *et al* (2012) wanted to investigate how nostalgia becomes a positive resource of the self, a process that shields our identities from the present worries, while boosting our self-esteem. Through a method of ‘event reflection’, in this study the participants were either given a nostalgic event reflection or future positive event reflection assignment, the latter being the control group. These groups were asked to think about a time in their past that brought about the nostalgic feeling. Afterwards they were told to write four words that related to their reflection. The next experiment was related to self-concept accessibility. The participants were presented with personality characteristics and asked to categorise them as either ‘me’ or ‘not me’. These characteristics were selected from a self-esteem test, interspersed with neutral characteristics taken from the same resource. To manipulate the feedback another test was given to the participants and they were told that it accurately predicts professional and academic success. The task was to link a fourth word to a set of three. The test was either difficult, in order for a result in negative feedback, or easy for positive feedback. Following this test, the participants were then asked to do another event reflection but with a different topic from the first. The final assignment was to answer a question related to the previous test about professional and academic success. Participants were asked to rate to what extent their performance related to their capability. What the researchers found was that there was a positive correlation between nostalgic reflection and positive self-identity. In fact, negative events were imagined to be distant from the present self and positive events to be recent phenomena (Vess et at, 2012). The researchers stated, ‘There was a pronounced difference in performance attributions among success and failure participants who reflected on an ordinary past event. (Vess et al, 280).’ The conclusion of the experiment found that external threats to the self are buffered by nostalgic reflection by retaining a value of self during negative happenings.

We have the tendency to overestimate the potentiality of positive events, compared to the estimation of negative ones. The ‘optimism bias’, which has been documented within psychology and economics, is ‘the difference between a person’s expectation and the outcome that follows (Sharot, 2014: R941)’. Primarily, Sharot gathers that the bias is optimistic if one’s future predictions are better than the present, and negative if the real world is better than one predicted. To empirically measure this, an individual’s expectations are documented before the future event occurs and then measured again after it. The findings suggest that although people are aware of the hardships that exist in life, there is still the expectancy that the future will be better.

She does not specifically quote nostalgia in the process of the ‘optimism bias’*,* yet there is a connection. Nostalgia is not limited to the remembrances of the past, but of the future that is yet to come. Hammond (2013) suggests that this forward thinking is done to soften the negativity in our lives. It is a way for preparing for what may be ahead. Therefore, it seems as if we take negative events from the past to propel us forward for our own survival. It also seems that emotion is present when we conjure up the past, but becomes positive when we look forward. This could be because we do not need to protect ourselves from what has already transpired (Hammond, 2013: 232). We only have the future that awaits us and thus, we glance in the rear view mirror to imagine a better tomorrow. Nostalgia is felt in the present but taken from our past and projected beyond our today.

## Memory, nostalgia and everyday Life

Although the theory of Everyday Life has been explained in chapter 3, it is essential to understand the connection of memory to the theory. As demonstrated earlier, everyday life is about realisation and a release from the common misconceptions we find ourselves engaging in on a quotidian basis. It is about being able to analyse the patterns whether social, economic, and cultural by seeing the familiar in our routines by being estranged from them we can see the rhythms and patterns (Lefebvre, 1991, 2002, 2004). As social beings, it is not enough to live from day to day, we need meaning and to look beyond the confines of our present state. Sacks states, ‘We need to transcend, transport, escape: we need meaning, understanding, and explanation; we need to see overall patterns in our lives (Sacks, 2013: 88).’ Memory is an area where this unfamiliar context can emerge. Solnit (2005, Fernyhough 2013:29) describes the delight in encountering the unfamiliar. She states, 'lost' has two different meanings. 'Losing things...is about the familiar falling away, getting lost is about the unfamiliar appearing.' Fernyhough (2013:23-8) describes the unfolding of the unfamiliarity within the search of familiarity while tracing his steps around his former college at Cambridge. He finds himself lost in a place that was once so familiar, where many events transpired as a young adult; falling in love, learning, transitioning from youth to adulthood. Yet, the context has changed, and while random memories are triggered, the past is not parallel with the present. It is here where Fernyhough sees the concreteness of his memory failing. The past memories are being reconfigured with the new, and familiarity can be a response to something that had been processed minutes ago. Draaisma (2013:xiii) argues that this alteration occurs not because of memory’s unreliability but from perceiving the event from another angle. Perhaps, our experience or emotion since that memory was established can shift the perspective, permanently changing the memory each time we conjure it to our consciousness. Nostalgia is also about the element of imagination and the spaces these occupy within reality and personal experience.

## Conception of space and time in the everyday

Tuan (2001) proposes, ‘Place is security, space is freedom: we are attached to one and long for the other (71).’ And we tend to take these places in our life for granted until we are far from their comforts. Within place and space, Tuan argues that culture warps these areas of everyday life. He further explains that space and place are unified when we start to become acquainted with a certain space. Space turns into a place, where the former is abstract and the latter, through time, is assigned significance. Tuan states that place is the hiatus point and that the continued cessations we have in this space, the closer it brings us to the familiarity of it as an attached place (Tuan, 2001: 117, 120-1). When it comes to time, Iyer (2000) finds that in this age our ‘circadian rhythms’ become disturbed and that the research community has not documented the extent this accelerated life has affected us. ‘Humanity today is facing all kinds of sudden jerks it’s never known before, and many of us embrace this phenomenon—the definition of possibility—without knowing what the consequences will be (60).’ He then continues to add, ‘The average person today sees as many images in a day as a Victorian might have in a lifetime; but compounding, and confusing, this are the shifts in place and mind we experience that Sigmund Freud and Oscar Wilde could not have imagined (60).’ Moving from unfamiliarity to familiarity is part of creating long-term nostalgic development.

Due to the forces of globalisation, people feel obliged to define themselves within the world’s narrative. Today, individuals feel pressed to determine their identities (Robertson, 2000: 27). If we look at the influence of spaces, it has been thought that there are plural areas within everyday life that have an impact on our outlook. Quinton (1997: 209) has stated, there are two areas of time and space, which are physical and experiential, ‘the physical is vast and systematic, the experiential is small and fragmentary; where the physical is public, the experiential is private.’ What this also means is that the imaginations that exist in our lives must also occupy space within our realities. Imagining the unfamiliar places we have yet to experience is a part of memory and nostalgia. We draw on our imaginations through what we have remembered. Another influence that affects our personal experience with space and time is the ‘holiday paradox.’ This is the phenomenon where we are so occupied with absorbing new and unfamiliar happenings that time seems to pass quickly (Hammond, 2013: 6-7). We seem to need this in our lives where we need to feel the intensity of the present and appreciate how our senses respond to the environment around us (Sacks, 2012: 88).

Japan can indulge the imagination of a utopian landscape that does not reside in our own backyard. It is about finding value in a foreign destination whose culture and society seem more ideal than our own. Our happiness has contentment when we only see it as being temporary or, a place where we cannot truly become part of its society (Botton: 2002: 21). Botton interprets Flaubert’s love of Egypt, spurred on by a distaste for his own country of France where he quoted France as being a, ‘...country where one sees the sun in the sky about as often as a diamond in a pig’s arse (Botton, 2002:96).’ Flaubert had a strong longing for the culture, landscape and people of the Middle East. His yearnings were based on stereotypical fantasies of an exotic continent he had never been to. Yet, one of his letters to his mother revealed that his nostalgia for Egypt was deepened. It was not worsened by the reality of true life in a country he had only before imagined (Botton, 2004:95). Therefore, imagination in this instance can be described as an escape into another culture, but in Flaubert’s case the reality of encountering the true representation of the other only deepened his respect of that culture. Of course there may have been disappointments through this development of understanding but Flaubert’s rejection of his own country pushed him to see his adopted society as something familiar. It seems as if understanding difference challenged his notion of self and in the process he was able to widen it. In fact, Flaubert insisted on producing a new way of acquiring nationality. Instead of acquiring nationality by one’s birthplace or by one’s ancestral heritage, one should be able to choose the country by which culture and society attracts them (Botton, 2004:96). While his ideal may be extreme, it demonstrates how understanding another society and culture can be a positive endeavour. Individuals reflect on their imaginations of the foreign culture they encounter, which can be both attractive and simultaneously opposing. There is always a process of understanding and rejection when confronting difference, which makes an impact on the individual. This impact is then reflected upon through memory where the individual uses it to define their present self. To make this reflection clearer I will explain how this process relates to the individual using the JET participant as an illustration. Of course, imagination and introspection is hard when we are in survival mode and going through hardships that make the present all the more real (Harber *et al*, 2003: 263). Lehrer (2007: 78) believes Bergson’s (1911, 2005) opinion is that this imagination and inner reflection is merely ‘bourgeois meditation’. It is also for the young who are freer from the constraints of much responsibility. Eventually this novelty dissipates and the unfamiliar becomes routine and commonplace. It is only when one is no longer present in time and place that this nostalgia and imagination is once again revived. How does this process relate to the JET participants and alumni?

## Emerging adulthood

For JETs their time in Japan is an influential period in their early adulthood lives. There have been many studies done to demonstrate how early teen and adulthood has a huge impact on our identity later in life. It is the time where we are trying to mould and forge the kind of person we want to be in this overwhelming world we find ourselves in. Matanle (2006) did a study between British and Japanese university students, a time period within emerging adulthood. He reveals the differences between how they approach life time employment, and was most significant was that contact with others through different experiences is important for future development. Thus, for young JETs, the time they spend in Japan will be some of the most impactful and memorable times of their lives. They challenged themselves by living in a totally different society, most likely both culturally and demographically as many of them are placed in villages and towns. They will have forged friendships with other JETs and locals who they may have not found comfort in, perhaps in another context. Many of them will learn about themselves in ways they would not have been able to reflect upon otherwise. As they leave the programme they may long for the aspects of their life they never thought they would have missed. Indeed, memory is a malleable process and nostalgia will begin to set in. The longing for the past and certain aspects of their life in Japan will run its course.

The JET Programme has frequently been emphasised as a youth exchange programme, and it is this point that is of great importance. Officially, the programme does not have a specific age limit, however they emphasise on their website that they would like to remind the applicants that JET is primarily a youth exchange. JET participants are usually recruited for application after finishing a bachelor’s degree, since it is the minimum qualification (CLAIRb, 2010). This would mean the common age range would be from the early to late 20s. Admittedly, there are those that fall below or above the age range for various circumstances. One consideration could be due to the re-applicants who were once on the programme and were allowed to reapply after three years passed from the time they left the programme (Aspiring JETs, 2010). Nonetheless, since the programme is a youth exchange, those classified as ‘young adults’ are prominently engaged. The programme rarely hires those over 40 years of age (JIC/JET/jetfaq., 2014). Within the academic literature Arnett (2000a, 2005) has given a concise justification for this time period known as ‘young adulthood’, although according to him this has been mislabeled and should be designated as ‘emerging adulthood’.

A new field is emerging within psychology called ‘emerging adulthood’. Arnett (2000a, 2005; Syed *et al,* 2013) is one of the academics at the forefront of this developmental theory. He defines the time period between the late teens to twenties as an age of personal exploration and metamorphosis. Levinson (1978) has detailed the ages of 17 to 33 as a time of insecurity and impermanence. During this stage, named the ‘novice stage’, Levinson believes that in this period we are searching for stability by exploring various options. During this stage we are experiencing uncertainty, which influences key areas of our lives, including love, work, and how we fit into our social surroundings and internalise the wider world (Levinson, 1978; Arnett, 2000a: 470). Luyckx, *et al* (2011) found that although emerging adulthood is a period of uncertainty, they are a time for creating opportunities that lead to future prospects. Thus, investing in one’s future by trying to figure out one’s identity, leads to better prospects and character stability. The breadth of literature on identity has been on how early adolescence affects identit*y* (Hall, 2000: xix). However, less importance has been given to how emerging adulthood has a large impact on our development. This stage in life has been significant for illustrating the JETs time on the programme.

## Conclusion

To conclude the arguments made above, it is through the nostalgic reflection of memory that an image of Japan is dispersed abroad through individuals. Nostalgia can be brought on by the imaginations of the future and the past, which creates the feeling of personal attachment associated to a particular time and place. The reasoning being that one is not present or living in the presence of that particular space, past or future. JETs reminisce over a particular period of their life in Japan that happened in an influential period of their life known as ‘emerging adulthood.’ The instability and freedom to push the boundaries, to experience the unfamiliar has an impact on their life after leaving JET. Through autobiographical memory we can understand how memory can be easily manipulated, and can change over time. Additionally, we are in the habit of putting ourselves as the main character in our past reflections, emphasising the narrative in our favour. This usually leads to a positive reflection concerning nostalgia, where we tend to use it as a buffer from future uncertainty and deficiency. The development of the ‘optimism bias’ demonstrates how we tend to overestimate the positive results of future happenings, which for nostalgia reflects a positive reflection in the present. When we reflect on the past we tend to overestimate the positive reflections of the past that define us in the present. These reflections help us to estimate the outcome of our future in a favourable light. For memory and soft power, this positive reflection on the past and present is part of the creation process of identity. Living and engaging with host communities in Japan is part of this reflection that is carried with us through our movement forward, to the future. It is these intimate reflections that have an impact on the developing identity of the person and to others we meet

Nye (1990) declared that soft power works best when there are similarities between societies, but differences can also be appealing, especially when there is discontent in one’s present. Discontent perhaps, pushes people to escape their present situation to find something different. Nye is obviously stating the political influence of the collective social concerning soft power. However, regarding JETs, they may find themselves fragmented, even with similar experiences that bind them together. Nevertheless, the accumulation of these participants’ engagements with others have a hefty impact on the direction of soft power for the Japanese ministries, especially when their shared experience creates a lasting and continuous relationship with Japan. Empirical data will be presented in the next chapters to integrate the theoretical framework and concepts to the experiences of JETs along with my own. Thus, in chapters 6 through to 9, I have used the concepts presented in this chapter and the theoretical framework discussed in chapter 2, to interpret and analyse the interviews.

For the next chapter ‘Background to the JET Programme’, I will discuss the history and organisation of the programme.

# Chapter 5

# Background to the JET Programme

## Introduction

This chapter will give a thorough background of the programme, beginning with the historical account of why and how the programme began. The next section will describe the structure and goals of the programme, followed by the contemporary issues facing the programme today, followed by an explanation about the relationship of JET to soft power and ending with the concluding summation of the chapter. There are four main ministries in support of the programme that together share their expertise for an end purpose that is both similar and contrastive. The programme itself was formed at a time when there were outside pressures and preconceptions about the society and nation of Japan. Exploration of these issues will continue in the chapter. The JET Programme participants will at times through the chapter be referred to as JETs for simplicity.

Focus on JET tends to be about the receptivity of English in the classroom and as a tool for the promotion of international diplomacy. My research will concentrate on a sociological approach to understanding how JET participants promote Japan. Therefore, this study will take a sociological perspective of how JET participants promote Japan abroad through Nye's concept of soft power (Nye, 2004; Watanabe and McConnell, 2008) via memory and nostalgia. For the participants, these programmes were secure choices for exploring an overseas experience. They received a decent income and Japan was a safe place to earn money while adventuring to a foreign destination. At the same time, they had the time to contemplate their future, under the official auspices of being on a government led exchange scheme. Therefore, how the programme has had an effect on the foreign language training in the classroom is not the aim of this research. Instead, I will demonstrate that by understanding the roots and motivations of the programme, there can be a clearer indication of how everyday experiences contribute to the engenderment of soft power. To interpret precisely how the JET Programme utilises soft power for the Japanese government, the historical developments of the programme need to be recounted.

## History of the JET Programme

In the 1980s Japan was a time of high economic growth without the need to deal with military negotiations. The Western economies were looking to Japan to understand its ‘unique’ economic growth (Hay *et al*, 2000; McGray, 2002). Internationalisation became a key objective in higher education and pressure from the outside world, namely the US, wanted access to the Japanese domestic market. Opportunities were attracting students from abroad (Jain, 2005: 64-5). The former Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (MESC), now MEXT, had an objective to increase the number of foreign students by 100,000 by 2000. *Monbushō* scholarships would be given to 10,000 of these students to help them study in Japan (Umakoshi, 1997: 260). The JET Programme was also established in this decade. It was a time for expanding *kokusai kōryū* (Jain, 2005: 63) or internationalisation as a response to outside growing pressures. Perhaps the JET Programme was used to lessen the risk of a predominantly unsavoury image flourishing about the country on an economic and diplomatic basis. Doko Toshio, the former president of Keidanren (formerly, the Japan Federation of Economic Organisations), now known as Nippon Keidanren (Yoshimatsu, 2005: 259), through key individuals of the British Council and consulate, began talks in the 1980s of creating a programme to assist with mutual understanding. Junichiro Koizumi who at the time was working in the Japanese British Parliamentary Group assisted this endeavour (cited in Chandler *et al*, 1999 pp. xiii-xvii). The first participants in the programme were the cream of the crop and were hired based on their ability to be independent, self-sufficient and versatile. Essentially, these individuals were to be the neoteric cultural ambassadors chosen to break the barriers between Japan and the so-called 'West'. Eventually in 1987 the BET Programme was expanded to become the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme. JET was first proposed through the Home Affairs official, Nose Kuniyuki (McConnell, 2000: 34). It began in May of 1987 and by 1997-1999 it was recognised as one of the world’s most successful government international exchange initiatives (McConnell, 2000: 3). Prime Minister Nakasone gave JET to President Reagan as a token to demonstrate their willingness to open up to the West and cultivate a cosmopolitan, international outlook. JET was created at a time when Japan was being criticised by the rest of the world, especially the US for its strict trade barriers. It was also seen as an unwelcoming place for foreigners and expats. In the same year it extended participation to countries such as the UK, New Zealand and Australia, and added Canada in 1988. Maclean had an idealistic ambition for developing the programme, however his reasons have not remedied the common occurrences regarding cultural miscommunications. These discrepancies and misunderstandings have been documented by McConnell (2000) who followed the programme for a number of years through observation of both the participants and the Japanese staff in charge of JETs. Kutnikoff and Chandler's (1999) work also substantiate the cultural difficulties between JETs and their Japanese counterparts through stories coming from both cultures. While Maclean's goal for BET was to solve miscommunication between British English teachers and their Japanese counterparts, the reason for JET was to pacify the growing economic tensions between the US and Japan (McConnell, 1996). McConnell (2000) found through his observations that participants in Japan have committed a number of faux pas. Thus, instead of closing the divide between the rest of the world and Japan regarding cultural understanding, McConnell seems to conclude that it has maintained it.

In the 1990s we again see a pattern where age, non-committal attitudes, background in teaching and having lived in Japan are influencing factors. Challenging one’s self by going abroad to learn something new is also evident. Although this time period was a time of economic hardship, the ministries managed to hire JETs. The senior managing director of CLAIR in the winter of 1992 was Mr. Maekawa. In the 1992 JET Journal he wrote of the need for JET in a time of growing prosperity. Although he does not speak of the troubled economic decline, he goes on to explain that the world’s priority is now peace building. He brought up issues such as the dissolvent of the USSR’s Communist Party, the integration of the European states and a Cambodian peace treaty (CLAIRa, 1992:6-7). He proposes that JET is one of these areas of peace building. This shows evidence of the Japanese government’s objective to display and maintain their nation as one of peace. This is a prime example of soft power for promoting the image of Japan and putting that responsibility on young JETs. Their role is key to the development of Japan’s peaceful image and for the ministries; less emphasis on the economic decline. It was beneficial for maintaining economic relations, to promote Japan as a strong peace-building nation, and perhaps to draw eyes away from their current financial situation.

In the 2000s, Japan had briefly recovered from recession from 2000-2001 (Economy, 2010; Masters, 2008, National Institute for Japanese Studies). It was also the decade when JETs were allowed to extend for an additional two years if their contracting organisation approved and were considered of ‘exceptionally high standard’ (Embassy of Japan in NZ, 2012). At this time Mcgray (2002) wrote that despite Japan’s dampened economic and military might, they have restructured their power concerning ‘gross national cool’. Japan has been seen as a trendsetter for fashion, through its animation and art and this is a non-traditional way for asserting, power or soft power.

In 2010, JET had to revamp its English education at the elementary school level as part of the ‘Execution Plan for the Reform of English Education in Response to Globalization’ (Kodera *et al*., 2013). Education minister Shimomura stated that more ALTs should be placed in elementary schools (Ogawa, 2011). JET was being scrutinised in 2010 as CLAIR was up for review during the *jigyō shiwake.* When the Democratic Party of Japan temporarily took control, the need to axe governmental over budget spending became a focal point (Gannon). However when the LDP returned under Abe, he declared that an increase in the number of JETs would me made (Mie, 2013b). JET would have an important role in assisting with the efforts of the 2020 Olympics (Jetwit, 2013).

For the Japanese government, ‘Western’ nations that were economically and culturally appropriate for exchange can be recognised by the countries that were chosen as the original participating nations (The US, New Zealand, The UK and Australia). Australia and New Zealand were advantageous because of their strategic location as being the closest Western neighbouring countries. Additionally, both these countries already had a well-established Japanese language education. Thus, these countries were already conducive for the supporting Japanese internationalisation. The US and the UK have had a long history of knowledge and technical exchange with Japan since post-war time (McConnell, 200: 50-1). This was evident during the Iwakura Mission in 1871 to 1873, where Japanese government officials went abroad to learn about ‘Western’ societies’ social structure, patterns of industrialisation and education. Japan wanted to catch up with the ‘West’ and become an equal and respected modern nation (Nish, 1998). For the JET Programme, in the beginning they looked predominantly to hiring white Ivy League graduate. These individuals may end up in high positions in their home countries and likely remain conducive to Japan (McConnell, 2000: 55). These individuals in accumulation would perhaps help Japan with its overseas economic prospects and cultural and diplomatic relationships from a grassroots, business and governmental level in the long-term. Through the preceding BET and MEF Programmes the relationship with the US and the UK have continued, and eventually Japan would introduce other nations such as Canada and Ireland, along with France and Germany in the following years through Prime Minister Takeshita (Montgomery *et al*., 1995: 82). Those newly minted graduates who had chosen to participate on the programme may have felt some ease when choosing to leave on the programme. Could coming from a ‘Western’ perceived nation to a newly developing one, embolden these participants? That is, to the point that risk may have been lessened because of socioeconomic perceived standing of their home countries? Most of the participants I have interviewed were through snowballing, attending academic events and from posting on the JETAA forums. Coincidentally, all the participants I have come across came from ‘Western’ designated nations. This is not surprising since they make up the majority, with those from non-Western nations having just one or two participants. In reality, many participants today are from various areas of the world, not just from Western perceived nations, such as: Mongolia, Latvia, Egypt and Uzbekistan, just to name a few (CLAIR, 2015i). All the participants interviewed came from the original participating nations mentioned above.

### Cliché Japan, JET and nostalgia: the transition of image in the West

This section will present the historical occurrences that influence Japanese depictions abroad evident in chapter 7. Many of the participants encounter Japan related activities, things and people in their childhoods. In fact, it had been stated that because of this early introduction to Japan, Japan felt familiar, perhaps tangible, although the individual had never been to the country. Perhaps, this is due to the influence of Japanese articles, sports, shows, or meeting Japanese people. These are some of the early introductions the participants had to Japanese culture. How exactly can one feel nostalgia and attachment to a place one has never been? Boym (2001) explains that this sentiment can be felt for a certain place although one has not even experienced being there or even set foot on its soil. Perhaps, a place is related to our background, but that is not always the case. Perhaps it these places were influential growing up though images projected in our lifetime through media or hobbies and have become part of our identity. Ideas of another place, its culture and images may be interpreted as part of the self (Matthews, 2000). This identification of identity to a certain place will perhaps be stronger and solidified if someone has an understanding of that place, such as living their long term. However, today with the circumstance of social media, television, radio and circulating publication of books, it is easy to find the world beyond our boundaries. Nostalgic attachments for another place can exist without having been there, or from having become part of that place through living and engagement. Imaginations and stereotypical ideas of an exotic place passed through individual stories or through mass media can leave one wanting. How this exists needs to be further elaborated through the discussing the interview results. In this chapter is an exploration of the images and circumstances of Japan and the outside world from the 1980s forward, followed by the responses of the participants and discussion. Before we discuss the responses and images floating around from the 1980s and beyond, we need look back to 1950s Japan. This is done to understand why Japan found it important to engage with the rest of the world economically and diplomatically and to understand how JET became an important part of this engagement.

Before the 1980s in Post war Japan, a high level of savings was encouraged throughout the 1950s to the 70s. Frugality was promoted through banking, with the government promoting savings at the local and national level. Eventually, as the men were able to find stable and secure careers, woman had the option to become housewives. It was at this grass roots level, housewives were socially pressured through mass media and organisations such as the *shufuren* or Housewives Association to save their husband’s salary. Thus, the many women who decided to manage the family’s finances at home essentially assisted in the recovery of Japan’s economic condition. Throughout Japan’s history, its government has desired recognition as a modern, international nation, equal to the US and Europe. It was in 1959, Japan finally entered another cycle of mass consumerism. Japan’s thriving post-war economy was taking notice abroad, as their growth of accumulated wealth was widespread and began to partake in a capitalistic sense of consumerism. Extending to the 1980s, Japanese were procuring properties abroad and became well known for their abundant yen surplus. (Dunn, 1969: 146-47; Francks, 2009:4-5; Garon, 2006, 2011). Japan’s economy exceeded or matched those of the Western world (Columbo, 2012). Internationalisation, known as *kokusaika* was a growing strategy that the Japanese ministries began to implement, especially with the US International trade and investment were becoming a priority. (Wesley-Smith et al., 2010: 80-1) At this time, Japan also put in an agenda to increase the number of foreign students. The former Ministry of Education, Science and culture (MESC), now known as MEXT planned to have 100,000 exchange students by the year 2000 (Umakoshi, 1997). The Japanese economy was growing exponentially and admired throughout the world for its innovative technology transfer from the West and their improvement upon it. Indeed, this was spurred on by the foreign direct investment from abroad that began in the early 1900s, such as with Tokyo Electric through General Electric and Goto Fundo, invested through Siemens. Engineers also traveled abroad to the UK, US and Germany to acquire knowledge on new technologies. Through reverse engineering, they were able to produce the many products that became the rage in the 1980s. Perhaps, it was the past investments that had finally taken form in the late 80s and beyond (Amsden, 2001; Nicholas, 2011). Participants in the 1980s were in a unique position as they were the first to leave for Japan and saw the transformation of BET and MEF to become the JET Programme. Now we are in the 1980s where MEF and BET merged into JET in 1987. There were only a few participants, (848) from the US, the UK and New Zealand and then the following year, the addition of Canada (CLAIR, 1996: 180).

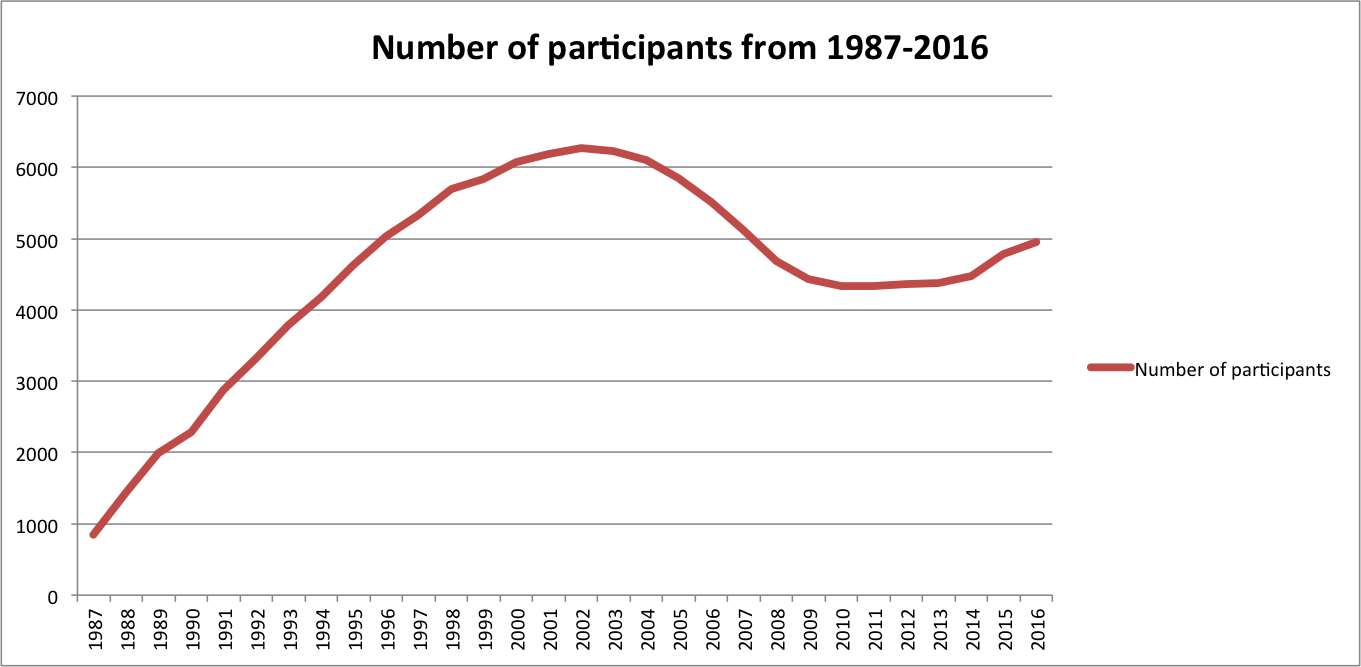
For those in the 1990s, JET was still a fairly new initiative. Yet, its reputation was growing as a successful programme. Unfortunately, the Japanese economy was on the decline at this time (Rosenbluth, 2010). It was at the start of the 1990s where Japan started to enter ‘The Lost Decade.” It was a time when the highs of Japanese economic growth started to deteriorate and consumer consumption began to stagnate (Kanaya *et al*, 2000; Lee *et al*, 2011; Tabuchi, 2014). Temporary and part-time workers became a normal part of the labour force along with the disappearance of skill based improvement programmes. The stiffening of corporate style management and lack of skill-based employment had become the norm (Devine, 2013). It was at this time that mainstream literature started to emerge on the experiences of JETs. McConnell (2000) wrote his book *Importing Diversity* and Feiler (2004) wrote *Learning to Bow*, both influential literatures on the programme. On the British side, Mclean claimed to be the mastermind behind the initial programme, both in the Japan Times and in the book (Brown, 2002), *Getting both Feet Wet: Experiences Inside the JET Programme* (2002) wrote about the many cultural misunderstandings that existed between participants and the local staff. In the ten-year anniversary edition of Wings of JET (CLAIR, 1996), they explained the progress made in the last ten years of the programme. *Wings of JET* is a governmental ministry/JET based literature that promoted stories of JETs and incepts into the programme. Although Japan was going through economic turmoil, it seemed JET was doing well. It went from 848 participants in 1987 to 3000 in 1992, and even adding another 2000 in 1996, equalling to 5000 after ten years. Minami Yoshimi was the Senior Managing Director of CLAIR in 1996, and expressed the participation of eighteen nations at that time. Non-English speaking countries were added in 1989, which included Germany and France, and extended to the Asian neighbours of China and Korea. At this time, assistant language teachers were known as AETs or Assistant English Teachers (CLAIR, 1992b: 6). The Sports Exchange Advisor (SEA) role was added in 1994 to assist in the coaching of swimming, basketball and football (CLAIR, 1996: 215).

Japan’s image was firmly that of subway commuting salary men and their professional housewives or *sengyou shufu* (Schoppa, 2008: xi)*.* Popular Japanese dramas and anime exported overseas portrayed this stereotype. Studio Ghibli and the director Hayao Miyazaki became famous overseas, especially in 2003 when it won best Oscar for best-animated feature (Fox, 2016). Nevertheless, the dichotomy of a modern, techno savvy and hard working disciplined Japan remained alongside the stereotypes of *karate,* temples and traditional arts. What may have shifted was the eccentric Japan, which came across on mass media through shows such as Takeshi’s Castleand Iron Chef (Keshi Heads, 2004; Lukacs, 2010). Japan became fashionably trendy as Gwen Stefani released a song called ‘Harajuku Girls’ on her 2004 album Love. Angel. Music. Baby. (Feeney, 2014). By 2000, sushi had become a well-established global gastronomy, being popularised in the US during the 1970s as a cosmopolitan fare. Japanese popular culture from films, music, to food became global commodities (Bestor, 2009). This was also the decade when JETs were allowed to extend for an additional two years if their contracting organisation approved and were considered of ‘exceptionally high standard’ (Embassy of Japan in NZ, 2012). By 2007, for the JET’s 20th anniversary, the prime minister Taro Aso declared that there were over 46,000 participants from 54 different countries that have been on the programme (CLAIR, 2007a: 2; CLAIR, 2007b: 48). He spoke pleasingly of the alumni associations and proclaimed that ‘the biggest organisation of Japanophiles in the US is surely the association of former JETs (CLAIR, 2007a: 49).’ Naruhito, the Crown Prince of Japan, stated in 2006 how programmes such as JET were also reciprocally beneficial for the Japanese leaders of the future (CLAIR 2007a: 42). What the 2000 JETs depicted of Japan in an age of overflowing globalisation will further discussed in chapter 9. The structure and goals of the programme need to be introduced.

## Structure and goals of the programme

JET was established in 1987 with the objectives to improve foreign language skills in the educational system, and to foster international understanding within the Japanese communities. It is an official government agenda that has expanded from originally taking applicants from just four countries, to 65 as of 2015 (CLAIR, 2015a). Its origins began after the Japan and American trade war, where the JET Programme was presented as a token of appreciation to American representatives during the reign of President Reagan and Prime Minister Nakasone. This announcement took place at the summit of 1986 and was positively regarded as 'the greatest initiative undertaken since World War II related to the field of human and cultural relations'. (Watanabe and McConnell, 2008:19) During the 1980s Japan felt the need to demonstrate to the world that it was cosmopolitan. Thus the need for ‘internationalisation’ took form. Japan realised that it was getting stigmatised abroad for its stringent trade operations, and for its lack of acceptance of foreigners and abundance of diversity. Government officials knew that this was a looming problem, so they decided to take fresh graduates from English speaking countries and place them throughout Japan. It has been emphasised to be a top-down approach to international diversity (McConnell, 2000). The programme however, applies a face-to-face or ‘grass-roots’ approach to its international relations agenda. This strategy is a bottom up approach; an effective procedure for positive change within the programme and for the transmissibility of conveying Japan abroad, yet is not emphasied within research. Just by living and interacting in their community they are supposed to spread internationalisation. JET is an expanded version of the former BET Programme, or the British English Teaching Programme that included 22 participants and the American Monbusho English Fellows Programme (Now known as *monbukagakushō*) (MEXT, 1994; MOFA, n.d.). There are currently 65 participating nations and more than 62,000 participants worldwide (CLAIR (2015a). Fresh graduates from mostly Western English speaking nations interested in the programme go through a long waiting process. Eventually, if they succeed they are invited to work in the boards of education, primary and/or secondary schools throughout the communities of Japan. There are three job roles on JET. About 90% of the positions on JET are for the ALT role (*gaikokugo shidō joshu*) (CLAIRd; CLAIRg). They assist Japanese Teachers of English (JTE) in the classroom with English in the classroom and after school activities. The Coordinator of International Relations (CIR) must have a proficient command of Japanese and only 10% of JETs are hired for this position. CIRs work for boards of education and government prefectural offices for translation and interpretation, and educational purposes, sometimes even having the same role as an ALT. The uncommon role is that of the Sports Education Advisor (SEA). They must be hired through an Olympic Committee or similar organisation to teach their sport to the youth of Japan (CLAIRg, 2010). Originally, JETs were hired on a one-year contract and had the ability to renew twice which meant a total of three years. However, after 2006 JETs had the possibility to renew 4 times, leading up to a total of 5 years (jet-programme.com, 2012). The ease of re-contracting is different depending on the placement of the JET participant*.* The regulations for re-contraction are not uniform throughout the public school system. Some JETs after the third year are hired for responsible roles such as the prefectural advisor role (CLAIRb. 2010e) or to teach at Elementary Schools. For the rest of the chapter when there is a reference to JETs, or generally referred to as the participants, representing the ALT majority. The SEA role is almost unheard and will not be emphasised in the research.

The graph below shows the number of participants from 1987 forward to 2016. However, the numbers are not fresh participants coming each year, but a considerable proportion must be re-contracting JETs. The total numbers of 62,000 participants from 1987-2016 have to consider those that have re-contracted for 2, 3, and 4 and 5 years, meaning the actual number must be considerably lower than



Graph showing number of JETs from 1987-2015. (Data taken from CLAIR, 2015g)

claimed.

In the graph above, in 2002 there was an increase in the number of JETs, most likely due to the 2002 FIFA World Cup; the first time two nations jointly held the event outside of North and South America and Europe (Korea.net, 2017). From 2013 forward the number of JETs are on the increase, most likely in preparation of 2019 Rugby World Cup, the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Para Olympics (Kyodo, 2016).

The goals of JET have not been clearly defined, as each ministry seems to have their own motive for the programme. Metzgar (2012), McConnell (2000) and Chandler and Kootnikoff (1999) have also concluded this in their research of the programme. From the onset of the programme there has been competition between the ministries about the fundamental aims of the programme regarding promoting education, or concentrating on governmental policies to further sympathy abroad (Metzgar, 2012: 10, McConnell, 2000: 30-31). There has been a change to CLAIR's explanation of the programme's goals and functions of the three ministries, in which the operation of JET with each ministry is clearly explained in English. Regarding the goals of the programme, it stated in 2010,

The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme aims to promote grassroots internationalisation at the local level by inviting young overseas graduates to assist in international exchange and foreign language education in local governments, boards of education and elementary, junior and senior high schools throughout Japan. It seeks to foster ties between Japanese citizens (mainly youth) and JET participants at the person-to-person level

(CLAIR. 2010i).

While earlier in the year, the three main goals were stated clearly to be:

1. Create mutual understanding between Japan and the rest of the world. 2. Promote internationalisation within local communities by enhancing the foreign language curriculum, and 3. Develop an international exchange within the local communities (CLAIR. 2010i).

Both statements of JET's goals have come from the same website. There is still an emphasis on the person-to-person approach of internationalisation tied to JET. This has always been the objective of the programme but has become less pronounced in recent times. While it may be implied that the programme as an international exchange, is to create mutual understanding between Japan and the world, the revised goal seems to emphasise foreign language training and exchange through the public school system and government. The communities, which the participant engages with informally and naturally outside of the local government and public school system, are overlooked.

Grassroots internationalisation is an important process. Participants engage with the local community through cultural events and through the hobbies. It is through these engagements that internationalisation at the community level is important, as the JET must always remember that their job does not stop at the schoolgrounds, but continues as they go about their daily lives in Japan. In fact, the shape of the JET participants’ opinion of Japanese society is also influenced by the close connections of the Japanese friends they make outside the government office and school, where they can find it easier to talk frankly about their experience while living in Japan. There seems to be a micro level approach to JET in the latter statement, which portrays the international scale of JET clearly.

## Administering ministries and connected organisations

There are four ministries that are responsible for the operations of the programme. The Ministry of Home Affairs merged into the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), controls the budget and implementation of programme through an administrative agency, the Ministry of Education, Sports, Science and Culture (MEXT) provides guidance for English in the classroom, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) hire JET participants through consulates overseas.

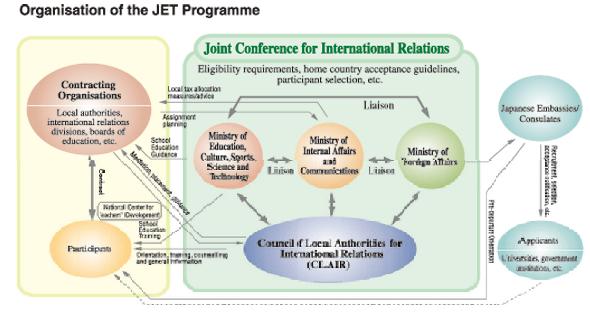
These entities are governmental organisations except for CLAIR, which is considered a quasi or semi-governmental. They are set up as having a commissioner, and commission relationship, resulting in a multi-level organisation that is set up to maintain decentralisation. The reason for this is to maintain political impartiality, to acquire a neutral expert base and to assure there is a horizontal spread of leadership. According to a CLAIR official, he explained that there should be less emphasis on these organisations as semi-governmental (Oshugi, 2009).

I think in the past we have used semi-government quite a lot and recently we’re not using it quite as much, we are trying to focus more on the strengths or the main part of the JET Programme being the sponsoring local governments organizations more so then focusing on CLAIR.

(Semi-governmental organisation) an organization or body, which is related to the government. CLAIR works through, with the money, which is provided, at the local governments in Japan, and also our staff is made up of those staff from those governments that have been sent temporarily to the headquarters of CLAIR in Tokyo (CLAIR Official, 2014).

The reason for this question was to clarify the pseudo governmental role that CLAIR holds. It seems that they are working for the local authorities and thus, assigned a semi-governmental label as they are funded through the local governments and execute decisions for them as well.

The CLAIR (2010i) assists in the management of JET with the three ministries (McConnell, 2000). The graph below demonstrates the responsibilities of each ministry.



Note: Organisational layout of ministerial support for the JET Programme. (CLAIR, 2010f)

### *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

MOFA is the agency that goes through the hiring process for JET participants and recruits them through their consulates and embassies abroad. The agency is responsible for providing information to newly recruited JETs about their impending life in Japan through pre-departure briefings. They also support with the transition for life after JET by holding 'welcome back' functions in the participant's home country. MOFA also supports the Japan Exchange and Teaching Alumni Association (JETAA), which will be explained in detail later in the chapter (CLAIRe, 2010).

### *Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications*

The Ministry of Internal affairs and Communications is responsible for directing the finance arrangements for the programme as well as establishing the acceptance criteria required for each participating nation. After MIC consultation, MOFA, MEXT and CLAIR generate acceptance specifications to decide the number of participants granted entry for each country. At the local level they contact the boards of education, organisations and schools to create educational projects intended for new participants. It is through the MIC that local taxes are allocated for JETs' travel and wages (CLAIR, 2010f). MIC was originally the Ministry of Home Affairs (*Jichisho*). It was predominantly responsible for everyday local government control and not known for being concerned with international dealings. Home affairs have strong ties with the local communities, as its clientele are the local governments. Thus, they are tied to the local, but are retained as one of Japan’s most powerful organisations. It held a key role when it came to managing the affairs of the regional and the local, especially compared to the other ministries. Home Affairs was also concerned with preventing all of the country’s resources from going straight to Tokyo and therefore supported the *ikkyoku shuchou*, a movement against the monopoly of resources to Tokyo. Beginning in the 1970s and 80s local governments began initiating sister-city relationships abroad that forced the Home Affairs office to deal with issues they were not familiar with. As a result in 1985, Home Affairs decided to open an advisory board (*kokusai iinkai*) to explore the internationalisation process for the local governments. Through the process of internationalisation the home ministry soon realised the importance English comprehension (McConnell, 2000: 30-36).

### *Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology*

MEXT is in charge of all the educational aspects of the programme. They institute seminars, workshops, orientations, and advice for all topics related to teaching. They are responsible for setting the standards for the English curriculum in the classroom. Every year they hold an ALT opinion exchange to open dialogue with ALTs (CLAIR. 2010d). MEXT has always been concerned with the forward progression of communicative English in the classroom. In the beginning of the programme in 1990, Japanese teachers of English had very low confidence in their listening and speaking skills. Many of them never had the chance to engage with native English speakers. MEXT saw the incorporation of JETs in the public school system as a tool to improve the skills of the Japanese English teaching staff. After prolonged engagement and teamwork with JETs, MEXT felt that this would inspire an innovative teaching in line with the goals of the ministry (Cominos, 1991). In a 1990 keynote speech, Kageura stated that culture and language must be acquired together to properly learn the language. He continued to mention that teachers and students should allow themselves to respect, open up and adapt to the ways of the outside world, beyond Japan's borders (1990 Kageura cited in Cominos, 1991: 117). In the 2005 JALT keynote speech, Kageura is still reverberating the same concerns of the need for creativity in the classroom and the acceptance of the outside world through the JET by making them an integral part of the school (JALT, 2006: 39).

### *The Council of Local Authorities for International Relations*

CLAIR was created July 1988 and its mission is to support internationalisation through Japan's local communities. The local authorities are the contracting organisations that recruit the JET participants to work in the local boards of education, public schools and government offices throughout the prefectures. The organisation advises the host prefectures, organisations, appointed municipalities and the participants about the programme (CLAIR, 2010j). They also provide conferences for the programme and publish material for distribution for the participants. CLAIR also hires former JET participants for advisory roles as Programme Coordinators. They are contact references for participants who have concerns or issues while on the programme. On their website they state that their main goals include: supervising the other ministries with the recruitment and appointing of new JETs, and placing the recruited JETs with contracting organisatons after being notified by MOFA (CLAIR, 2010a). CLAIR also provides assistance for those in need of counseling and in 2015; an online mental health support was made available, along with mental health subsidies. Additionally, AJET’s support network and volunteer service provided counseling and are separate from any formal ties to CLAIR (2015f).

According to a CLAIR official, there is emphasis on local administrations, however the national authorities maintain control.

…it’s not a programme for a particular local government, it doesn't mean that everything will go in the way that that local government wanted at all times, so if that particular local government wants a JET to arrive in Fall instead of summer, then it’s not exactly going to work in that way because its not, it has to work, it’s a programme which is working for all of the local governments, so as one big system also, it can’t just work however they want it to work...so there is some kind of national control there as well (CLAIR Official, 2014).

CLAIR is acts as an intermediary between the local authorities and the ministries. It is relevant to illustrate the function of the local authorities.

### *Local authorities and contracting organisations*

As to how the local authorities operate, a CLAIR official explained the importance of the JET Programme,

The local authorities greatly benefit from the programme. In fact, the JET Programme was set up to assist with the development of sister city relations at the local level. To an extent they are able to control the characteristics of JET candidates they want to receive. For example, if there is a candidate from a sister city they want to join their locality, they then tell CLAIR to find a candidate from that area. CLAIR then contacts MOFA to interview candidates through the embassy in that country…So the JET Programme originally started as a programme for local governments and today also it exists to and CLAIR as well being involved in the programme, exists to make this programme for local governments … And also the local authority does give a certain amount of money to CLAIR for sort of administrative, the things which CLAIR does, like organizing orientation, things like that…(CLAIR Official, 2014).

To further clarify the process of the JET participant selection, CLAIR contacts MOFA (MOFA) who has selected the participants overseas. From this group, they then pair them to the local ministries. If a local authority asks for a JET from a specific country, this country then becomes a participating nation. Basically, CLAIR does not execute a plan until they hear the requests from the local authorities.

So the JET Programme started because it’s difficult for each those local communities, or local governments to have, or find those non Japanese young people themselves and have them come to Japan, so the JET Programme is a way for that to occur in one kind of centralized way. If there is a request from the local government in Japan, for a participant of a certain country, as a general rule that country will become a participating country…So there is a system but it’s quite complicated… whereby there is some kind of subsidy of money to that local government for having a JET participant. (ibid).

The local authorities have a centralised role and unique advantage when it comes to CLAIR and the JET Programme. Therefore, there is a benefit for the local authorities to engage with CLAIR on the JET Programme through subsidisation. The ministries play a major role in the strategy of the JET Programme, however there are other JET related organisations that play their role in supporting the JET Programme.

### *The Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching*

The Association for the Japan Exchange and Teaching Association (AJET) is a volunteer based JET associated organisation, founded in 1988, that collaborates with all four ministries (CLAIR, MOFA, MIC, MEXT) tied to the JET Programme. They are a national body made up of a council of 20 elected JETs who manage and maintain the networks between the local branches. JET participants must aid and support the future development of the programme by giving back to the local community, generate support for JET participants through events, create educational and professional resources, and communicate any concerns raised by the participants to the ministries (ajet.net, 2012). According to research done by McConnell (2000) the transition of AJET as a representative entity was no easy task. AJET was initially formed to protect JET participants’ interests as a pseudo union of the programme. This formation, which was brought up in the 1987 Tokyo Orientation, came as a surprise to the Japanese officials. Almost 80% of former Monbusho English Fellowships and British English Teachers from the past BET Programme were invited to support and pay 100 US dollars in joining fees to AJET. In return, AJET promised to pressure the supporting ministries into resolving JET related issues or concerns. Hence, AJET was an independent, self-funded organisation that is run by a body of representatives from the prefectural, national and regional level. Today, AJET is no longer invited to participate in the Tokyo Orientation. There have been issues with the funding of AJET and liability issues since they are not considered an official organisation within the JET Programme. (AJET; Interview in Osaka, 2014).

In recent times, AJET has been struggling to define itself as an official part of the JET organisation. It has been formally announced that AJET will no longer be allowed to be a part of the JET Orientation that takes place annually every summer in Tokyo to welcome the new participants. This breaking news was not clarified until recently as many JETs on the JET forum were questioning the disappearance of AJET. Finally, an official confirmation had been put out by CLAIR with AJET following up with a transcript of the debate (JETAANY.org. 2014; Law, 2014). CLAIR does state that they are content with AJET continuing its support of the JET community as usual (Law, 2014).

### *The Japan and Teaching Alumni Association*

JETAA was created in 1989 by Charlie brown and Luch Van de Brule (CLAIR, 2010c) and is a support group that JETs can join upon their conclusion of JET. The aim of the association is to further and promote the relationships among JETs and for Japan. According to the JETAA website, there are currently 53 localised chapters around the world, in 16 countries with 26,000 participants (CLAIR, 2015e).

A development for a JETAA International chapter (JETAA-I) began in 1995 and was established in 2000. Their objective was to be a mediating authority between the different chapters worldwide. In 1998, CLAIR supported the activities of the chapter to maintain and promote links for alumni. In 1999, MOFA also began to support the programme. There have been a number of events where representatives are sent to represent their local chapter. At the 2000 conference executive officers were chosen. The committee and organization has admitted that they are no longer able to maintain the funding and support they initially received in earlier years. Smaller meetings have taken place in Toronto (2007), Paris (2008), Kingston (2009) and Edinburgh (2010). JETAAI believes its most important contribution was bringing significance to JETAA (Jetalumni.org., 2013; JETAA-I, 2016).

JETAA gives the participants the opportunity to reminisce and relive their past lives in Japan, perhaps participating in Japan related activities and events locally with the Japanese community, thus making the past easily accessible in the present. JETAA is an important ingredient to the soft power process where soft power spreads through associating with JETAA by keeping ties with Japan through networking and participating in its events.

In recent developments circa 2014, a CLAIR official reported that Tokyo has taken in about 100 JET participants. These particular recruits are able to do a homestay at the beginning of their time on the programme (ithinkimlost, 2014).

Tokyo metropolis has only had 5 JET participants and then this year in one big intake Tokyo metropolis has taken in 100 JET Participants, for them it's a new experience of training the JET participants and they are doing a special homestay programme it seems but that is something that is unique to the Tokyo metropolis. Tokyo metropolis is just like one local government if you will, like any local government, it operates as such, so they have their own training which they conduct, so as a local government, they are the contracting partner of the JET participants just like the other local governments are. (CLAIR Official, 2014).

The intake of these JETs may be part of the ministries’ plans to increase English and international competence for the upcoming Olympics, Para Olympics and Rugby Cup. This was mentioned above in ‘Structures and goals of the programme’.

Social and cultural capital can be exported through nostalgia. Mourning of an existence of a former self and life creates this feeling of nostalgia. When the JET participant leaves Japan they will most likely talk about their experiences abroad to other people, which creates an image of Japan. They will even possibly go into Japan related careers because of their experience on the programme, further facilitated by JETAA organisations. There have been future developments for JETs, however JET has had its criticisms.

## Problems facing JET

The initiation of JET was not without flaws. It drew a much criticism from the participants who vented to the media (Japan Times, Mainichi, Daily Yomiuri (McConnell, 2000: 74) about the handling of inequalities of gender and race by CLAIR and the Ministry of Education. Many of the earlier JETs who were unfamiliar with the Japanese language and culture had many complaints about the programme’s assertive opinions, which caused cultural misunderstandings within the programme. Most of these criticisms were sent to the managing department with most of the roles occupied by former MEF and BET participants. CLAIR only had a small department whose employees comprised around 20 individuals who did not work as a cohesive administration. The officials appointed to CLAIR from the Home Affairs Ministry were not used to handling problems related to internationalisation. The problem with CLAIR in its early stages was that it was unmethodical and weak, probably due to a lack of knowledge and experience. This made it hard to designate a clear aim for the programme. Many officials did not want to join CLAIR, as it represented a step down, instead of a step ahead on the career path (McConnell, 2000: 65). Mr. John Campbell stated that the organisations running the JET programme are akin to, ‘” pseudo-uchi” --agencies that cross-ministerial jurisdictions to deal with recurring or permanent problems (McConnell, 2000: 66). ' The programme's trajectory became less bleak. Cominos (1991, 1992) reported that it took five years for the programme to take off. Officials within the ministry were occupied in the earlier stages for the schools to adopt JETs into their curriculum. Another issue arises May of 2010.

Under the ruling of the DPJ, JET was discussed in the *Jigyō shiwake* or budget revision. JET was criticised for its failure to improve English in the classroom, thus perceived as an unneeded expense to the government (Anon, Backing group B). AJET published a report looking at the barriers of ALTs’ as sole educators, demonstrating the emphasis of English education (AJETNationalCouncil, 2013). Although many JETs were aware of their role on JET, the DPJ’s shortsightedness failed to acknowledge the participants’ contribution to internationalisation and as a tool for improving the image of Japan abroad (Gannon, 2010; JETProgramme, 2010). Before this ruling, local authorities have contemplated the expenses of hosting an ALT and the quality of the JET’s teaching skills. (Asahi, 2006) The focus on English is only one area where JET is worthwhile. In 2012 when the government was handed back to the LDP they stated to the media that they wanted to increase the number of participants by 10,000 in the next three years (Mie, 2013b). The programme’s relevance in cultural diplomacy has remained valuable.

## Conclusion

The JET Programme's path is crisscrossed by the aims of the ministries, expectations of the JET participants and alumni and burdened by the prevailing opinions of the present. The programme itself has not made any drastic changes over time. It seems that the existing problems of the early 1990s are still present; however it may not be in the interest of the ministries to change the operation of the programme. Instead, it seems that the competing interests for the programme seem to create a type of check and balance, with the local authorities being responsible for making the important decisions; facilitated by CLAIR. Although implemented through the ministries, JET has a bottom-up approach at the national level. Since the local authorities are the agencies with the asking power, CLAIR, must do its best to fulfill the objectives of these local administrations. Thus, demonstrating that the local areas of government is given weight in the decision making process.

As a means of soft power, the programme itself seems to create sympathisers and through their connections becomes a strategy for internationalisation. The image of Japan is broadcast abroad through the JETs memories and longings for their time in Japan, however it seems to fail as a means of home internationalisation. The future of JET had looked discouraging in the last few years; still it has managed to move into the future under the LDP.

The next chapter, which forms the second section of thesis, leads into the discussion of the results from the interviews. Chapter 6 will discuss the reasons JETs have decided to go abroad, choose the JET Programme, or former schemes, and the risks that looms in the background in their decision making. The chapter discusses the start of the journey and forms the basis of early memories contemplating about the programme and going abroad.

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# Chapter 6

# Seeking opportunity and response to uncertainties

## Introduction

The responses demonstrating the participants’ reasons for joining the teaching programme will be discussed in this chapter. It will lead with discussions titled: Uncertainty and exploring the future, An economic safety net, Opportunity to expand skill set, Means of escape, A return to Japan and Invested interest in Japan.

These participants will have varying reasons for choosing JET. Their responses were divided into the sections mentioned above. Uncertainty about the future may be taken as a consequence. Decisions taken are steps toward drawing the blueprints for the future. The JET Programme is a youth exchange programme, where this stage in life is considerably influential, and the starting point for forming nostalgic impressions. Influences that led these participants to apply for the programme had to do with age during emerging adulthood (For these participants between the age of 22 to 26). This was discussed in detail in chapter 2, which is a window to explore one’s identity and future tied to less responsibility.

Moving abroad satisfies both an adventure for encountering the unknown and a chance to find opportunity. Yet, in ‘Western’ categorised societies taking risk is part of the development for success. Most of the participants, including myself, predominantly come from Western English speaking nations (as evident in chart presented in chapter 5). How we confront decisions about our future from this standpoint is an important consideration. The evidence demonstrated through participant interviews will vary. Their description may be brief or long, to voice the varying experiences of those on the programmes. These particular narratives will begin a discussion into how these individuals look at JET as an opportunity for navigating one’s future, perhaps lessening risk through risk taking by moving abroad.

Some reasons were to explore their futures through going on the programme, a safe way to go abroad while earning, a few motives were to develop their careers or to expand their already established interests and some as an opportunity to escape their localities and lack of opportunities. Risk does not seem to be an anxious reaction when these individuals contemplate going to Japan or when indecisive about the formation of their future. In fact, they seem to welcome the unknown possibilities and challenges.

Risk is not something that is always harmful. Some approach risk for the sake of opportunity, I will explain through the JETs responses, how modern ‘Western,’ society, uses the notion of freedom to grant the individual rights to create and explore identity. Nevertheless, this assumption of freedom exists with risk and uncertainty about one’s future. We choose certain paths with a certain amount of risk, which was not always the case in human society (discussed in chapter 2). People have to be ready to adapt to change and to leave our localities for the means of opportunity. How opportunity is addressed for each participant, should demonstrate the trend of reflexivity and the positive attitude towards risk.

## [Uncertainty and exploring the future](#Aneconomicsafetynet)

Marty (1980) …when I graduated I wasn’t exactly sure what direction I wanted to go in career wise so this also gave me an opportunity to consider my options.

Cora (1980) I think, also after I graduated, if it hadn’t been Japan it could’ve been another country. I did really want to go abroad. I don’t know where it would’ve been. Probably France, or something like that.

The responses indicate how some of the participants used JET as a way to expand their opportunities and possibilities. JET has been used as a way to figure out the next move in their future, (literature already explored in chapter 2). Here the responses showed how JET was used as a platform for discovering future opportunities.

Marty was not sure what direction he wanted to follow and used JET as a way to figure out his future. Cora was not swayed by any particular decision to go to Japan. Thus, during her time after university and having no real responsibilities, going abroad was an appealing choice. JET has also been a safe financial choice for going abroad.

## An economic safety net

Shannon (1980) Japan also seemed a bit cushier, and easier. And the pay was appealing for me, right out of college.

Elaina (1990) It (JET) had a reputation for being a “good” program and well organized. At the same time, I had an opportunity through a friend to move to China and teach English in Shanghai, but I opted for JET principally because it was much more structured and there was a support network, as opposed to just relying on my friend to make sure everything worked out okay.

Jackson (1990) It seemed like a very good chance to do the whole New Zealand overseas experience. And actually do it in a way that’s not expensive.

Maurice (2000) The JET programme was the most lucrative way to move to Japan and you have everything taken care of for you, they set you up with an apartments or insurance, you know the whole 9 yards, everything.

Laura (2010) I had always wanted to go to Japan, but could never aﬀord it.

JET has also been economically viable for many wanting to figure out their future after graduation, providing an economic safety net. The programme had a positive reputation for its organised support network. The participants spanning all the decades have mentioned that the salary was an incentive for considering and applying for the programme.

The participants above all found JET to be a comfortable choice for going abroad. It was also appealing as it was a safe choice as a recent graduate and an economically safe way to explore their futures. Elaina mentions the support network that was important in making her choice. For Jackson, it was a safe choice for doing the New Zealand overseas experience while earning. Maurice said one of the major reasons for choosing JET was also because of the inclusive insurance and housing. . Thus, the programme’s generous salary and supportive network is a major reason for applying for JET. For the participants it felt like a more organised, viable and safe choice. Having an efficient set up and a support network was also mentioned. The next section will describe how the programme was used to develop one’s skill set

## Opportunity to expand skill set

Bart (1980) MEF seemed perfect to me. I would gain even more teaching experience AND live in another country.

Alfie (1980) For two semesters I spent two semesters at Sophia University in Tokyo. During that period, I visited a senior high school nearby my apartment on several occasions and realized that spending (more) time in the Japanese education system was key to gaining a deep/ﬁrm understanding of the nation, its people, and its culture.

Abigail (1990) I did my degree, my dual honours in Japanese and business at Shefﬁeld and really if you’re going to be able to speak Japanese properly you have to go out and live out there.

Maurice (2000) In America I was running my own martial arts dojo, and the more I studied and researched about what we were studying, the more interested I was, and writing a book, being able to explain to my students the details and the history of what it was they were studying. So I got in my head that I needed to go to Japan and study there and learn as much as I can first hand.

Simon (2010) Back in 2006 when I graduated from college, my mother just saw an ad in the newspaper about hiring for JET and I was looking for something else and she just said, “Oh this is a really good opportunity for you, in your expertise area.”

Other reasons for applying for JET extend to advancing one’s skill set. The participants above had a background in Japan through education, teaching or through extracurricular activities. Many of the participants wanted to expand their existing skills to do with Japanese and knowledge on Japan’s culture and society and this was evident in each decade. JET was seen as an advantageous for acquiring experience in Japan.

Bart wanted to experience another country and MEF was a safety net that gave him another opportunity for enhancing his teaching expertise, while lessening the risk of going into something quite different. For Alfie, he had already studied Japanese and wanted to acquire knowledge of the culture and society. JET gave him the opportunity to gain insight into the Japanese educational system. Abigail thought it would help with building her existing education. She felt that going out to Japan was an asset for developing her language skills. Maurice was running a martial arts dojo and found JET to be the perfect opportunity for going to Japan. He felt that first hand knowledge of Japan was needed for his book and martial arts interests. Simon has learned Japanese from his childhood and at university and felt that this was a perfect opportunity for his background. Simon had extensive knowledge on Japan through education and as an exchange student. JET was an opportunity to use those skills.

Therefore, for the participants already influenced by Japanese culture the programme was an opportunity to go to the country to obtain first hand experience. Other reasons for applying have to do with escaping one’s circumstances.

## Means of escape

Natalie (1980) Well, the job market for liberal arts graduates in the U.S. was not so great in the early 1980s. Back then there were only 75 MEFs throughout the nation so it was considered quite an honor to be selected.

Patrick (1990) Better than working in a bank and putting a suit on and commuting to work in London every day. That was what I really didn’t want to do, to put on a suit and commute in the rush hour in London everyday. I just thought that would just be wasting my life.

Laura’s (2010) I joined JET because I had been out of uni for a few months and was sick of getting rejection after rejection. I just wanted to get out/away/somewhere else.

The participants have also looked at JET as a way to escape the lack of opportunity in their home countries. JET seemed to be a viable solution to get away from these issues. A lack of opportunity prompted many of the participants above to consider a change of scenery and to apply for JET. Thus, it was a way to escape those limitations and explore new one’s abroad.

Natalie thought it would be good for her future and away to escape lack of opportunity in the U.S. She joined MEF to find opportunity abroad to escape the situation back home, but she also found that it was a golden opportunity because of MEFs reputation. Equally, Laura’s main reason for applying for JET was for the opportunity to escape after getting job rejections in her home country. Patrick felt that JET was an opportunity to escape the banking world and to broaden his career options away from London’s banking scene.

Thus, from these examples we can see that JET was a valued choice for the lack of opportunities in some of the participants’ home countries. Others saw JET as a way to fulfil their interests in the culture for those already familiarised with the culture.

## Invested interest in Japan

Jacob’s (2000) I fell into sort of the pop culture track, the people who really like anime and video games from Japan, and it seems kind of superficial. The pop culture was sort of the big key thing. And of course just the interest in the language.

Jill (2000) My university had Japanese students there as part of a sister university, so our university a Japanese course. I just kind of became a bit obsessed about getting on the JET Programme and learning all I could about Japanese culture and language.

Elle’s (2010) I was very interested in Japanese culture and so was my friend who was really interested in Japanese culture, she introduced me to things Japanese geisha stuff. At ﬁrst I was mildly interested but then when I read that blog I knew it was something I had to do. There is a moment in your life you know there is something you have to do and that was it for me. So from the age of 13 until the age of 21, I aimed to do it.

Laura (2010) As I had always had an interest, having studied Japanese ﬁlms and literature at uni, it helped my application.

Other reasons for joining had to do with the opportunity to be in Japan because of interest in the culture. A few of the participants were enthusiastic about Japanese pop culture, history, language and video games, already possessing an existing attraction to Japan before applying for JET. These prompted them to apply for the programme.

Jacob’s interests in Japanese pop-culture and the language were significant reasons for why he looked to JET as an opportunity to go to Japan. Similarly, Laura’s reasons were related to an interest in Japanese literature and media. Jill became interested in Japan when she had the opportunity to take courses at university and made it her goal to go to Japan. Elle’s reasons were because of an early interest in Japanese *geisha* and a blog written by a JET participant Thus, those who had already developed an interest in Japanese society and culture found JET to be an ideal opportunity to be in the country they encountered through their interests. The next section considers a return to Japan after having lived there before.

## A return to Japan

Reina (1990, 2000)

The JET Programme revised its rules and allowed alumni to reapply. I found that life in Japan better suited my personality and I really missed my colleagues, friends, and former students in Shimane, so I requested to be placed there again.

Mark (2000) I left the place (university) having made Japanese friends as well. I was kind of like, well I like the people I know, I like the place, if I’m going to move anywhere that might be a cool place to live. In terms of living, I love Vietnam and I love Malaysia, but in terms of living, Japan was more attractive than those places.

Thomas (2000) I had a year left, it was my junior year when I did study abroad (in Japan). And I went back and I enrolled into a Japanese language course and started applying for JET. I’ll give it as shot, why not, I’ve already been to Japan once.

Lorna’s (2000; 2010)

I just had been missing Japan, and I was planning to get married to my then ﬁance, and he was saying that he never had the chance to live abroad, because he’d never gotten it…and we ended up talking about that, well I’ve always wanted to go back to Japan, how would you feel about that? And we decided basically to get married, before and we had a house or anything set up, we had like big thing tying us down, to go.

Some of the motivations the participants had were for the opportunity to return to Japan. A couple of the participants had previously been on the programme. Others had travelled there before and found it an appealing place.

Reina felt that she belonged in Japan and decided to reapply for JET so she could return. It gave her an opportunity to explore life back in the country and to get back in touch with her former host community. Similarly, Lorna began to miss Japan, and felt that returning to the country as a JET was a dependable option. She wanted to return to Japan with her husband before life became too burdensome. Mark knew that he wanted to live abroad. He had travelled around East and Southeast Asia but felt attracted a to the prospects of living in Japan. He had travelled to Japan before, and because of the impression it made along with Japanese friends made at university, he felt it was the best opportunity for him. Thomas had already been to Japan and because of that experience decided to study Japanese.

Some wanted to return because they felt it was the right place to be, having already experienced living in Japan, as a tourist, or because of connections made through Japanese friends back in their home country.

## Conclusion

To conclude this section, individuals have had their own intimate reasons for seeking opportunity abroad. For some, JET was a golden opportunity for expanding advancement in teaching, learning the Japanese language and culture and for exploration of the self. It was also seen as a time for expansion to immerse oneself in another culture and society while trying to figure out one’s future. Other participants wanted to expand their knowledge on Japan. For a few, the JET Programme was a means to escape a life that provided little opportunity or appeal for their future, while being able to live abroad. These reasons were often compounded and not limited to one motivation. After these participants found that they were accepted onto the programme, it is important to understand how they formed their understanding of the country.

The allurement of Japan as an exotic and unfamiliar setting is another consideration. The phenomenon of nostalgia also extends to this exotic attraction as a vehicle for soft power. To consider this idea, the next chapter will explain the attraction of the unfamiliar. This unfamiliar represented by Japan and its various contexts, whether social, historical, or cultural. Hence, a form of ‘othering’, represented by the imaginations of what Japan is thought to be, before immersion.

By presenting these answers I will establish how nostalgia is a powerful stimulus for soft power through JETs personal accounts.

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# Chapter 7

# Imagining Japan and evoking nostalgia

## Introduction

This section is about understanding the stereotypical assumptions that were floating around. These assumptions are important for soft power regarding nostalgia from a distance. This is where nostalgia is reflection of an unfamiliar other, in this case Japan (Boym, 2001). The sections presented here are: Japanese products and pop culture, Friendship, Apprehension and wonderment and Modern and traditional impressions. There is significance in encountering different peoples, societies and circumstances. Perhaps, these encounters found in foreign destinations give meaning to one’s life. Approaching an unfamiliar place is arguably an adventure into the unknown and a chance to figure out where one’s future may lead. Encountering this unknown may lead to the creation of lifelong attachments to a specific place and time and solidified through further long-term engagement.

Challenging and discovering the unfamiliar is a way of overcoming weakness and wielding power. In an unknown place we realise our shortcomings. If we can overcome them, conceivably we can control and adapt ourselves resulting in the feeling of empowerment. JETs who have stayed for years in communities all over Japan have learned to adapt to their new environment leading to the burgeoning feeling of home. The stereotypical overblown caricatures imagined of a certain place and its people can often be an initial attraction. It is necessary to unravel the image Japan emits beyond borders throughout its history and their involvement with what they perceived as modern. Certainly, it will clarify the stereotypes that are diffused abroad, which the participants have received throughout the decades of Japan’s evolving economy, society and state. Perhaps, these over exaggerations are complementary to the image Japan wants to project abroad to attract the modern world but keep it at a distance.

As time goes on, the participant becomes deeply rooted in the rhythms of their adopted place. They essentially for a time, become part of the scenery and learn to adapt to the rhythms of these places. Indeed, there are themes of othering*,* whereby stereotypes have been generated through *nihonjnron* assumptions, or Japanese uniqueness (othering was introduced in chapter 2). Horne (1998: 38) expresses two contradictory views that have been broadcast abroad about Japan:

Orientalist-Japan as an unchanging, traditional, conformist, group oriented, Asian country, portrayed through images such as the saumurai, geisha, and Mount Fuji; Modernist (or post-/hyper-modernist)-Japan as a modernized, (post-) industrial, westernized and Americanized society, recognized through developments such as the ‘Walkman’, virtual reality leisure centres, and theme parks. (Horne, 1998: 38).

It is necessary to be aware that the participants will have been heavily influenced by these stereotypes. There will be a further discussion on this topic in chapter 8. This is done to recognise the oversimplified images disseminated overseas. Thus, this section will explore the imaginations and images that the participants had of Japan before leaving on JET. I will insert specific comments made by the JET participant that portray the movement of nostalgia. By presenting these answers I hope to establish how nostalgia for Japan impacts the individual as part of the soft power process before JET (discussed in detail in chapter 2). The early images the participants remember of Japan will be divided into categories of: Japanese products and pop-culture, Friendship, Apprehension and wonderment, Modern and traditional. Throughout the decades presented, there are comparatively similar ideas of what Japan embodied as a place and society. Some of the quotes may be longer than others depending on amount of evidence given. To understand the transmission of Japanese culture abroad, a discussion and presentation of the responses by participants will reveal their impressions of the country. First will be the early influences of Japanese pop-culture circulating in the early lives of the participants.

## Japanese products and pop-culture

Cora (1980) I’ve always kind of had an interest in Japan because my mother collected Japanese antiques. Like vases, or bowls and things like that. So, ever since I was a child, it was familiar to have these kind Japanesee things around me. I’d be washing the ornaments, and I’d ask her about the women who’d be painted on the vases, “What’s that they’re wearing? Oh kimono, and can I get a kimono?” “No not really. No.” “Can I go to Japan?” It was something that made Japan kind of not so foreign to me, actually. I did pick up Japanese novels that had been translated into English.

Alfie (1980) My paternal grandparents’ house had a collection of Asian antiques/artefacts. Also, quite coincidentally, the man from whom my parents bought our house were close friends with Edward Sylvester Morse, the archaeologist who taught natural history at Tokyo Imperial University during the Meiji Restoration. There were many artefacts that Morse left behind. As a very young boy I attended a private art school run by an elderly woman half a mile up the street from my house. The woman’s name was Matsubara and each year she sent a Christmas card, which was, a woodblock print and her paintings (too) carried a vermillion, carved ‘seal’ (*inkan*) in the lower corner.

Terrance (1980) He sent me the books like, ‘No Longer Human’, by Dazai Osamu and ‘House of the Sleeping Beauties’ by Kawabata Yasunari, Inter Ice Age 5 by Abe Kobo and so on… When I had a moment I would give it a read, and I had that same kind of feeling when I was working on a Kibbutz with Kazu, this way of thinking, this way of writing is a little bit different from anything I’ve met before, and you know so I would like to know more.

Shannon (1980) (Japan seemed to be) a cross between “Blade Runner” and Disneyland. I’d seen some movies, especially *Ran* by Akira Kurosawa and *O-soshiki* and *Tampopo*.

Elaina (1990) I guess as a child my brother and sister and I used to watch some of those dreadful action shows that were dubbed into English from Japanese, things like Ultraman and Spectraman, and Godzilla, so I had those sort of skewed images of what metro Japan looked like.

Jackson (1990) There’s a mini series when I was young on TV called Shogun and again it was told from the Western point of view of a guy that comes to Japan. He was almost killed, he was a complete outsider but he makes himself familiar with Japanese culture and becomes very senior in the hierarchy, but that led onto an idea of one of the strong values he was trying to defend, which was going to a non-English speaking country. I didn’t realise at that point, that in Japan, they studied English. So I really thought it would actually be more challenging than it was… the idea of coming to a new culture and having to completely adapt to that culture as a minority, was really appealing.

Jacob (2000) It was called *Famitsu*, it’s like a Japanese video game magazine. Which is still in publication today, it’s basically like the publication…*Famicom* version or something. And I was like, “What is this?”… oh this was Japanese video games. And I was just like, “This is a huge magazine for video games!” You know, and I, I took that stuff seriously. And then he’s like, “I’m gonna lend you this video anime.” It was Dragon Ball Z, and I’d never seen it, mind you my exposure to anime before that was like nothing I’ve ever seen. So I was like, “Yasufumi what’s going on? People are flying and they’re throwing each other into mountains.” But it was just interesting for me to see the stuff that was really cool and interesting, and as a kid it was like getting new toys, you know? Umm, and I just remember that was sort of my first interest, because I played video games and I thought this is cool, and at the time Japan was number one in developing and creating really good games.

Simon (2010) I remember in high school they would show us Miyazaki Studio Ghibli movies. So we watched Totoro like a bunch of times. I remember my teacher really liking this movie, something like *kojifunjyatta*. It was about a university sumo club, and the sumo just like trying to keep the sumo club alive, and they also had like a girl, a bigger Japanese girl that was really into sumo, but because she was a woman she couldn’t play.

Lorna (2000 and 2010)

…video games and manga and stuff, I suddenly was one of those; Japan is the greatest place on earth, oh my God! A kind of nerd.’

Many of the participants had early life influences related to Japanese pop-culture and literature. How these were introduced into their lives varies, but were nonetheless impactful.

Cora’s early impressions of Japan came from her mother’s Japanese collectibles. She came to the conclusion that because of these Japanese things were in her childhood, Japan itself did not seem so alien. This may have played a role in her interest in the country. Likewise, Alfie’s early impressions were formed through his family history and in his childhood. For Terrance, a Japanese friend sent him books that peaked his interest in the culture. Shannon, Elaina, Jackson, Simon initial impressions of Japan came from pop-culture, including movies and other mass media. She was also influenced by movies exported abroad that gave her the impression that Japan was this alien destination removed from reality, like a kind of Disneyworld. The images that were around during Elaina’s time gave her an impression that Japan was made up of megacities. Jackson felt the appeal of being an outsider to a new culture and trying to immerse oneself and adapt was appealing from the shows he watched growing up. Jacob mentioned he was introduced to Japanese video games and magazine and Dragon Ball Z through a friend. Jacob ‘s time on JET along with this early influence impacted his career choice in the gaming industry. Likewise, Lorna, like Jacob was influenced by video games along with pop-culture. It was something she found appealing growing up and gave her a connection to Japan.

Many first encounters with Japanese culture had to do with the exportation of pop culture abroad. These had to do with video games, manga, movies, products such as pottery and books. You can see that the influences are different from the 1980s to the present, where literature and Japanese pottery were influential in the 1980s and developed into media and movies later. This topic was further discussed in chapter 2. Other encounters that tend to be influential are friendships developed with Japanese.

## Friendship

Terrance (1980) On the Kibbutz I met lots and lots of people, just one of them was Japanese, he was a young guy called Kazuo Hashi and everyone called him Kazoo... he was my fruit picking partner he used to pick fruits mostly peaches on this Israeli fruit farm and we used to do that like 6 hours everyday. There wasn’t a lot to do other than picking the fruits, so we used to talk about stuff and the way he talked about life and I can’t even remember what we were talking about, but what I can remember is that he made a big impact on me. You know I thought this guy thinks a little bit differently from how I think. I’ve never heard someone with exactly that kind of point of view and so that was where I got my ﬁrst interest in going to Japan and then he’d already graduated from university. He had done religious studies at Doshisha University in Kyoto and that’s why he was on the Kibbutz, he was interested in Judaism, and so after we left the Kibbutz I went back to England I went back to university and he got a job with the Japanese bookshop Kinokuniya, a big Japanese bookshop.

Bart (1980) I lived with a Japanese guy at university, and I was impressed with how polite, considerate, and amiable his Japanese visitors were. I became fascinated with Japan.

Reina (1990 and 2000)

I had Japanese friends in L.A. and met some Japanese people when I was a junior tennis player. They always seemed nice.

Jacob (2000) I met this guy, his name was Yasufumi Michibara...I was in a city where there was a lot of Japanese… I remember befriending him and you could tell he was from Japan**.**

Making friends with Japanese was a crucial part of developing an invested interest in Japan. These friendships also contribute to the nostalgia attributed to their reflections of the country.

Terrance remembers a friendship he developed abroad where he met a young Japanese man on a Kibbutz in Israel. Meeting him piqued his interest in Japan. Bart had a Japanese flatmate that sparked his interest in the country. When he had Japanese guests’ over, their politeness made an impression. Reina was touched by how nice Japanese tennis players were when she was a junior tennis player. She grew up in Los Angeles, California where she had Japanese friends growing up. Jacob made a Japanese friend in junior high school and he introduced him to Japanese video games. The friendship that Jacob made had a lasting affect on his memory and developed interest in Japan.

Developing friendships and even having brief interactions with those from Japan have made an impact. It furthered the participants’ curiosity and interests in their early lives. Some of impressions also lead to curiosity, fear and fascination. The next section will demonstrate the unease felt by Japan’s progress that existed simultaneously with feelings of amazement.

## Apprehension and wonderment

Cora (1980) You know the famous ones. Mishima’s*Confessions of a Mask*and stuff like that**.** So I thought right, they’re all a tad suicidal**.**

Bart (1980) In the media, Japan was portrayed in the 1980s as a juggernaut on the verge of ruling the world. I visited in 1983, and of course, this fascination only deepened. I was totally duped by that initial impression: On the veneer, totally Western… but like most, I ignored what lay beneath the surface, which is steadfastly Eastern. Now, I would say that this is one of the things that I like most about Japan: It looks Western on the surface, but it is scarcely Western beneath the surface.

Shannon (1980) I’d read some novels in translation by writers such as Fumiko Enchi, Junichiro Tanizaki, Yasunari Kawabata and Yukio Mishima. I’d heard that high school kids committedsuicide because of exam scores.

Patrick (1990) It was either legacies of the war, at the Thai Burma railroad and this, the *Bridge of the River Kwai*, that ﬁlm with Alec Guinness was hugely popular and it sort of made, Japan**.** A lot of people had this idea that Japanese people who were innately cruel in some way…. Then there was also the expansion of Japanese economy, and Japanese manufacturing and this sudden realisation which attracted me to Japan tremendously, was the idea that they could build cars and ships and stuff better than we could, and that was really something that became very obvious in the 1980’s, and was quite a big shock to the British psyche. But it also beneﬁted Britain because of all the factories they built here. What really kind got me interested in Japan before going out there was Nissan and all these companies, and Sony that built all these factories in Britain. I was just thinking what’s this all about? … it just didn’t conform to the worldview I had been given that Britain was great and that we were the world’s best and brightest, that was the impression I was given. While we were being surpassed by an Asian country and it didn’t chime with, the rhetoric of British culture I was being given, that Britain was the best and brightest of everything.

A few of the interviews indicated unease with Japan’s warmongering past. At the same time, the world was in admiration for how they grew economically through their technological innovation (these topics were discussed in chapter 2). Those in the 1980s and 90s seem to carry these impressions.

Cora and Shannon reflected on Japanese literature because her first impressions were found within these texts, which gave her a macabre impression of Japanese society. Bart and Patrick both explain a circulating fear growing up in the 80s that Japan may take over the world. Likewise, Patrick felt that the rhetoric the UK was spouting did not fall in line with the progress happening in Japan in the 80s and early 90s

This anxiety of Japan’s economic development was present in the 1980s and early 1990s. It challenged some of the assumptions of those from the ‘Western’ world (US and UK). Some of these images included stereotypical impressions of a society prone to suicide that came from Japanese translated literature. There are also modern and traditional impressions of Japan that have contributed to stereotypes.

## Modern and traditional impressions

Natalie’s (1980) I grew up in California there were some small inﬂuences from the Japanese American community there. I imagined things to be a bit more primitive than they actually were. I knew that 75% of Japan's land mass is uninhabitable, so I imagined things to be very crowded.

Shannon (1980) (Japan is) Sort of a cross between “Blade Runner” and Disneyland. I’d taken a class in Asian history, so I was enthralled Heian Era court poetry.

Patrick (1990) Then there was other stuff, which was the cute, charming woman in their kimono and I don’t think anyone in Britain at that time really thought the Japanese people were particularly polite or kind, apart from Japanese woman in kimono.

Jackson (1990) I actually did karate when I was 8 years old. Both of my parents were very interested in Zen philosophy, Buddhism and you know from a Western perspective of course, we were practitioners as such. And I remember at one point my father like giving me a talk about things in discipline, and discipline in life, so it was very different because we had a very free upbringing and like my parents were hippies. The idea of self-discipline is quite an interesting concept. And the whole side of karate and that whole strictness.

Jill (2000) I thought it would be very modern, lots of robotic kind of inventions, and but then very beautiful with, you know the traditional arts, and well everyone knows about geisha, Kyoto, so I thought Kyoto would be very traditional, and then Tokyo would be very high tech.

Eunice (2000) Maybe more high tech and futuristic. Technology and stuff.

Mark (2000)Karate and super cool technology, temples, probably manga…yeah *Karate Kid* and technology and temples probably were my image.

There is a contrast between modern and traditional images documented by the participants. The responses below demonstrate some of the images received by the participants that were used to make sense of Japan.

Natalie’s image of the nation was coloured with Californian Japanese culture and certain facts she picked up through university courses, which led her to feel Japan was somewhat antiquated. Natalie’s image of Japan was of a traditional society and culture that lived the same as they did in the past. Shannon, Eunice and Mark exhibit a stereotypical image of modern Japan, for Mark this was juxtaposed with traditional themes of karate and temples Their imagery of Japan reflects the high tech clichés circulating during her time. Patrick recalls the stereotype of delicate, cute woman donning kimonos and the contrasted to Japanese men who were somehow innately cruel people. The mention of these traditional adornments demonstrates the exoticness tied to Japanese women. Jackson recalls how he was introduced to Japan in his youth, a time when his parents raised him in the Buddhist religion. His thoughts of Japan came from Zen philosophy and the disciplinary practice within the religion. Jill remarked on the contrast between Japan’s modern technology and traditional culture.

As expected, participants will have had their own ideas of what Japan represents through images of its modern and traditional culture transmitted abroad. These conceptions generate a nostalgic inclination for a society and culture they have yet to experience. It is that inexperience itself that can be desirous and one of the reasons many of the participants have maintained their connection to Japan.

Conclusion

We can see the nostalgic imagination for Japan through stories told by people, imagined through objects, books and what is and was depicted over mass media. Nostalgia can be present before having a deep understanding of a certain people, place or society. This can be a major influence by means of soft power. Just as these participants were given certain images from their environment, whether through objects, cultural or social ideas, they will then be vessels retelling their experiences of having lived intimately in the country. These stereotypes create a positive image for Japan that become intimate yearnings and nostalgic depictions for others to possess. These images have changed over the years, where we see a change from ideas of economic superiority, to influences from movies and animation, to fashion, music and manga (this is discussed in detail in chapter 2 *in Discussion of Japan reflected from a distance: The role of soft power and the nostalgic unfamiliar*). They are representations that Japan invites to charm the outside world, and at the same time, to remind us that they are different to anywhere else, even if this is not altogether the case (Clammer, 2001).

In the next chapter the experience of living in Japan will be discussed from the JETs’ point of view. In this chapter nostalgia for the unknown and a future unknown was described. However, these stereotypes are challenged as these individuals grapple with the reality of their new life and home. It will entail the negative experiences encountered when living in a foreign place. Facing adversity is part of the process of acculturation that eventually leads to nostalgic attachment: the vehicle for the movement of soft power.

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# Chapter 8

# Adversity and acculturation

## Introduction

In this chapter, I will address the idea of acculturation, or adapting to another culture other than one’s own (Bacallao and Smokowski, 2011). Living abroad is challenging and often life changing. It facilitates opposition to our preconceived notions of culture, values and our overall worldviews. By engaging with the unfamiliar, in this case, host communities throughout Japan, there is a process of rejection and integration of our own assumptions with those of the adopted place. This chapter will look at two different layers: the experience of adversity and how the participants were able to move past these differences. The first discussion will document the types of adverse situations told by the participants in the sections: Ostracism, Harassment, Cultural misunderstandings and Othering. The second layer will look at how participants began to accept these differences. The results will be introduced as: Immersion, Acculturation and contentment as an outsider and Appreciation.

The process of acculturation is an important part of the participant’s experience. Before adaptation and an appreciation for the ‘other’ can materialise, adversity to our own assumptions and with our host cultures must be addressed.

There are patterns that emerge as one first confronts and then begins to adapt to a new way of life. The nostalgic attachment to these memories and the places where they were created becomes part of the personal narrative. In the last chapter we discussed how nostalgia is framed before the experience. These stem from images and stories received growing up in our own societies. Preceding that chapter was a discussion on Japan as, a representation of nostalgia before embarking on the journey with further literature discussed in chapter 2. After the novelty fades and routines begin to form they become part of the everyday leading to adaptation. How deeply each participant acculturates to Japan differs for each person. What is evident is that, through living among its citizens a deeper understanding of Japan will develop. How profound and how impactful the experience was, is different for each individual. Coming to terms with this non-acceptance is part of the progression on route to familiarity and understanding.

Negative experiences and memories are not displaced, they provide the many strokes and colour to each individual’s portrait. It must be emphasised that they do not define the whole experience, but lead to appreciation and empathy for their host localities. As discussed in the chapter on memory, we use these impactful experiences as a source of understanding that defines us in the present and as a means for survival. It is important to highlight how challenges and adversity can manifest into an appreciation for the experience. I have asked the question, ‘What are some of your troubling experiences?’ to prompt memories of earlier times adapting to Japan. How the journey towards biculturalism can be a positive attribute for expanding one’s horizons and adaptability. Regarding soft power, it ties the experience to identity and contributes to nostalgic attachment, in this case to Japan and each person’s host locality.

Acculturation is a vital part of the experience for the participants. Biculturalism has been evident through adaptability and contentment of where one fits in the Japanese context. Some of the participants living in Japan feel a prolongation of youth and contentment as an outsider. Thus, even if that source of identity lies at the crossroads of being accepted as something foreign, although they have acculturated Japanese ways of being.

Biculturalism is both a state of being and a process. Part of acculturating is coming across stressful circumstances (Kim, 2005). ‘Acculturative stress can include confusion, anxiety, depression, feelings of marginality and alienation, and identity confusion (ibid, 2005: 268).’

These participant groupings are not expected to assimilate to the Japanese way of life and therefore levels of familism (feelings related to family: network, support, trust and dependability, etc.) are not an expected outcome (Smokowski and Bacallao, 2011:50), although, some of these signs of familiarity may be experienced through the JET/BET/MEF social network. According to Schwartz *et al* (2010: 27),

Our view holds that a truly bicultural person would intermix their heritage and receiving cultural streams with regard to cultural practices, values, and identifications. This means that biculturalism implies not just behaving in ways consistent with the two cultural contexts, but also holding values from one’s heritage and receiving cultural streams, as well as identifying with both cultures (e.g., as a Chinese American rather than just ‘Chinese’ or just ‘American,’ although either identification may be most salient in specific situations).

They also argue that to a greater extent, this is possible when a person is living within a community. This is impactful for the individual when living and embedded in a close-knit environment. These circumstances give allowance for the materialisation of biculturalism (ibid: 27-28).

Many of those who continue to live in Japan have expressed their improvement in their quality of life. All participants have demonstrated psychological adjustment to their surroundings, even those who have left Japan. Cognitive flexibility, social interest and self-esteem have been demonstrated through their contemplation on living and experiencing life in Japan. It has resulted in some type of impact on their character or ways of thinking. Participants have experienced some of the negative affects, although these effects vary. However, even with the negative encounters, these individuals have perceived something meaningful and productive from the experience.

Juxtaposing the negative and positive recollections will demonstrate the rhythms that lead to adaptation and powerful sentimentality for a time passed. It is necessary to present the participants responses regarding their memory and reflection of adversity experienced on the programme. The values that we hold will be challenged when living in a socially and culturally different place.

Some of the responses below demonstrate how differences in what are appropriate behaviours became challenging.

## Ostracism

Alfie (1980) I learned that the building had been having regular gatherings, using the money collected each month, but I had been intentionally excluded. This was a major turning point for me in the sense that the ‘normal’ and ‘friendly’ relationship with my overnight became one of distrust and anger. Ultimately, the head of the building’s resident association came to apologize to me. Of course the damage was done and thereafter I never really felt comfortable interacting with the other residents. This experience taught me the word *mura-hachibu,* which means village exile.

Thomas (2000) I’ll be flat out honest; if I didn’t make friends in the community during my 2nd year I would’ve bounced. Because when you stay for 5 years you’re the old *ojisan* and then someone, some stupid person at Tokyo orientation came up with the idea of unicorns. Someone said it and they were like, “Oh you’re a unicorn”, the fabled mystical beast that everyone says exists but you hardly ever see. Cause you’re so rare and in the 5th year. This was at the beginning of the 5th year cycle. I really hated that term but that’s what happened at Tokyo orientation. Oh, yeah, it was hard on me, mainly. There were a lot of things that were getting me down and you know what, they will always grade me.

Taylor (2010) I had some problems with culture shock and I wasn’t so happy with the way my base school were treating me so in the end and looking back I guess I got pretty stressed out and I wasn’t happy. I was happy with everything else in my life apart from one school. I had a base school and a visit school and the base school was the problem. I just felt they didn’t really support me in things and didn’t help me out. They didn’t help me grow as a person or acknowledge that I could change and become better at Japanese and understand the culture better.

There are incidents that the participants experienced that demonstrate ‘othering’, in regards to what scholars have pointed as *tatemae/honne* and *uchi/soto*, discussed in chapter 2 under *nostalgic imaginations and orientalism*.

Alfie brought up ‘othering’ in the sense of feeling ostracised. He felt that the apartment residents in his complex were leaving him out of certain committee duties because he was a foreigner, despite the fact that he was also paying into the monthly collection. Thomas mentioned that if he did not make friends in the Japanese community he would have left, also reflecting on the fact that friends come and go. He found it hard being a five-year JET, as newer participants stereotyped him for being a longer-term JET and a fifth year appears to be a rarity at his time. For Taylor’s case, he felt that his Japanese counterparts did not acknowledge his understanding of the language and capacity to solve everyday issues. Taylor’s incident could be taken as a form of ostracism as he felt underappreciated and unaccepted at the workplace because they did not seem to invest any interest on his progress living in their community.

These events emerged in their everyday life and at the workplace. Not feeling included as a resident living abroad can be an unpleasant experience. Harassment was another emerging theme through the participants’ recollections.

## Harassment

Terrance (1980) I mostly was enjoying it and you know I, things had gone a bit wrong in Kofu. There was a very strange guy I got to know who thought, possibly wanted to kill me. I won’t tell you the full-length story, this particular reason why I was feeling uncomfortable in Kofu, but you know apart from this problem I basically did enjoy living in Japan.

Nina (1980) When it came time for question and answer from the students, one girl raised her hand and asked, ‘Are you a virgin?’ I was totally taken aback and can’t remember what answer I gave her. Later, the teacher asked if it would be OK to invite students to talk to me one-on-one, and that same student stopped by. Her question this time was, “Have you ever used thinner?” In those days, the rough kids would sniff paint thinner to get high. It was the first and last time for me to visit that junior high school!

Natalie (1980) I did have a stalker follow me around in the second year - not life-threatening or anything, but probably a bit mental, and he somehow learned my phone number and would call in the middle of the night and say nothing. Those were the days when you could not unplug your phone from the wall socket so I ended up wrapping a towel around the receiver and sticking it in a drawer. Changing one's phone number back in those days was extremely expensive (something like 50,000 - 60,000 yen) so I endured that until my successor took over and the board of education took responsibility for changing the number.

Reina (1990 and 2000)

**…**being sexually harassed by one of my JTEs, and passive aggressive behavior by other JTEs who did not like the fact that ALTs received such a high salary for being inexperienced and having no teaching license (compared to new Japanese teachers).

Simon (2010) One day I asked for a password reset, from the computer technology department in city hall.They gave me a new password and I think that put me on their radar becausethey remoted into the computer or something. The computer system was really old. It looked like Windows 2000, something I used like 10 years before I think the biggest thing was I was using Google Chrome as my browser, not like Internet Explorer. So one day, they might have seen it when my computer opened up, the icon.They call in and they’re like tell Scott to not use Gmail, like ever on the computer. You have to use the cumbersome and very annoying Microsoft, Outlook email, that’s on the system, so I had to say I don’t have city email, like can you make me one? And it took them days to make me an email, “Tell Scott not to use Chrome or Firefox, he has to use Internet Explorer.” And so I had to delete Chrome and they said, “Oh, he’s got different software so we’re going to have to format his whole computer.” And my boss was like, “That’s weird.” And so from that point my boss was like can you give us an information technology handbook, some kind of set of guidelines so that we know. Then the information technology department is like, “We don’t have one of those.” So my boss is like, “Can you please write one because we’re like ﬂying blind here? We complied with them but I didn’t know what I was doing wrong, and my boss was like, “You’re feeling bad about this and it’s not really your fault.” I had news sites up and I was looking at news articles**.** It was semi work related because I do the adult’s English class and I want interesting content to teach in English and news sites usually have like videos and stuff so I was watching a video on the news, andthe phones had been ringing off the hook for the 3 days, and my boss is like, “Scott what are you doing?” And I was like, “I have this video.” and he was like, “Oh they said you’re not allowed to watch videos.” I was like, “What? What? Really?” So then my boss hangs up. He’s like, “I think they’re watching your computer.”

Incidents of harassment happened outside and within the workplace. There were difficult situations that some of the participants had to confront. The responses discussed those experiences.

Terrance’s experience was life threatening, however he did not go into detail. Even after that experience, he still found reason for staying and making a home in Japan. For Nina, the inappropriate questions asked by students came from curiosity. Nina seemed to find the incident amusing and did not take the comments personally. Natalie had an issue with a stalker on her time on the programme and put up with the issue until her successor took over. Reina was sexually harassed by an English teacher at her own school.She also experienced hidden aggression from colleagues that were jealous of the amount of pay she received without requiring a teaching license. ALTs do not need a teaching license for team-teaching in Japan. Simon had some issues with the IT department at his board of education. The harassment he experienced happened in the workplace, where the IT department monitored his computer activity by telling him to stop what he was doing even though it was work related.

These experiences of harassment varied, with some cases being more serious than others. How each participant processed and interpreted the event was evident from the responses presented. Other troubling events come with navigating a new culture and social environment.

## Cultural misunderstandings

Cora (1980) There was, a kind of cultural difference at one point, it was like sometimes all the teachers in my grade we would go out for dinner and have an *enkai*. I kind of felt a little bit guilty, not that they were trying to make me feel guilty, but my work was just Monday till Friday, but I think the Japanese teachers had to work on a Saturday morning and I felt really guilty about that. Once when we were out having a meal I got talking to some young teachers about that and I said, “Okay, I’ll just come in on Saturday, cause like I’m not doing anything on Saturday morning anyway, I’ll just come in on Saturday mornings and it will make me feel better. I did come in the next Saturday and they were all really surprised**,** and I think the teacher who was in charge of me, he said, **“**Things we say when we’re drunk, or like you said, you would come in on a Saturday, and the other teacher said okay come in on Saturday, when they say that, when we’re drinking, it’s not reality.”’So then, quite a lot of what is said in that drinking environment it’s just there, and then it’s just forgotten and things go back to normal.

Shannon (1980) I was invited to go to a hostess bar with my principal and one of his friends. A young female Japanese teacher was invited along as well. Although I didn’t understand what I was getting myself into, and I thought, “this is Japan,” in retrospect, it was inappropriate for my boss to take me to a hostess bar. Nothing happened; I was just an accessory, but still.

Marty (1980) I had difﬁculty explaining the meaning of ‘holiday’. It certainly does not equate to *yasumi*. There were times when I wanted to travel and visit other countries or even other parts of Japan but the Japanese had difﬁculty understanding this concept. On one occasion I had to pretend I was doing a project on Buddhist temples to allow me to go to the Japanese Alps to ski. During my ﬁrst year I wanted to visit relatives in California for Christmas but I was forbidden from leaving the country. I sometimes had the feeling that my life wasn’t totally my own and that the Japanese felt they ‘owned’ me and wanted to show me off! It was also a bit tiring at times to be asked after two years in the country whether I could use chopsticks and knew any words in Japanese.

Jackson (1990) There was probably the one thing, which I could’ve handled better. There was an event where I was recording for an English hearing test and it’s bad enough for the students because I’ve got a Kiwi accent, *i* and *e* are actually the wrong way around, when you think in Japanese. Like the number 10, sounds like ‘tin’. And like the metal tin sounds like ‘ten’ in English, I mean in Kiwi dictation. And we were doing bingo games where it was like, tell the difference between ‘ten’ and ‘tin’and, of course, I was setting them up to fail…. I was so stressed from the whole thing. I was upset that it was my fault that the students did really badly on the test. So I actually wrote a formal thing on the web processor to my supervisor saying I recommend that you cancel the results of the test or do another one and give the students the beneﬁt of getting the best result out of the two things. I thought it was necessary to make a formal letter to my supervisor because it was my fault. But I think, looking back at it now, it was actually,the wrong way to handle it. If I wanted to get the result I wanted, I shouldn’t have immediately gone to making a formal submission in writing to him.I probably should’ve taken the time to associate with him more on an individual level and just explain thoroughly why I found it to be a problem. At the time, I was a lot younger so it was also that hierarchy thing of not trying to make a personal connection with him.

Maurice (2000) I found myself with probably the worst case-scenario for a JET Programme participant, so we’re talking about kids beating up teachers, chairs thrown out windows during class, bikes in the hallways, lots of instances of *ijime*, lots of instances of teachers hitting kids, you know for discipline purpose, it was really, really bad…I guess during my second year I just completely had it, I stopped going to classes, just refusing to participate in anything that was going on in school unless the teacher addressed certain, specific issues, I was writing letters to CLAIR, writing letters to the principals, vice-principals, documenting things, talking to the Board of Education, and it just was completely ignored. And it was just horrible worst-case situation. I called in prefectural representatives into our city, which I didn’t know was a faux pas at that time, but the people in my city were really unhappy that I brought in prefectural representatives and cast a light on some of the problems that were happening there. I finally told the supervisors in Daito city, you can either move me back to America or move me to another school but I’m not staying in this school any longer.

Cultural misunderstandings are difficult to prevent and are natural when living in a different culture. The replies above discuss the difficulties the participants had living abroad.

Cora and Shannon both mention misunderstandings following an *enkai.* She felt guilty not coming into work on the weekend and brought it up at an *enkai* or work party. She learned about the unsaid rules governing work parties in Japan: what happens there is not always taken seriously. Shannon’s experience was related to Japanese unspoken rules and the blurred lines of professionalism that can be dropped during these social gatherings. Marty Jackson and Maurice had some difficulties communicating with their host institutions. Marty had a hard time explaining the meaning of taking a holiday. He had been living in Japan for two years, at yet even after learning some of the social rules and etiquette he felt let down when they still asked him if he knew the language and could use chopsticks. Jackson reveals mishaps in the workplace. His New Zealand accent confused the students on some tasks and particularly on a test, which was also distorted because of another incident. This incident taught him an important lesson about hierarchy in the Japanese workplace. Maurice had a hard time in his school placement because of the kids’ unruly behaviour and tried to take care of the situation himself by going appealing to the prefectural level. He later realised that it was not the correct approach in Japan.

Some of the participants had a hard time dealing with the transition from informal to formal settings, such as with work parties and at the workplace. Others had to do with how to approach colleagues about issues and not understanding the formalities involved. Learning the rules of social etiquette when entering new culture will be a learning experience. The responses detailed how some of these participants remembered the cultural faux pas they unintentionally made. The next section details how the participants perhaps reflected negatively on their encounters with Japanese.

## Othering

Bart (1980) I suppose there were some (troubling experiences), but most of them would be rooted in my own ethnocentrism or lack of understanding, lack of empathy, so let’s let them go. If I had a troubling experience, in other words, I was most likely largely to blame for it occurring. I never ride in taxis any longer because for years, they pulled alongside me, saw my foreign face, and then took off. As a matter of principle, I refuse to patronize them, even today. Unimportant stuff like this, not worth commenting on, really.

Mark (2000) I nearly had two ﬁghts because I don't take kindly to racism, at all. Even back in England I’m the same where if I see something I don’t like I struggle not to say something about it. Whether it’s race… racism or whatever, so it was twice in a bar…I don’t know, just the low level everyday racism was incredibly draining, like the kind you won’t understand because you're not Japanese and…like, “Ooh, do foreigners use chopsticks as well? Do foreigners eat rice, oh my god!” The chopsticks one is more forgivable particularly in Fukui because it is genuinely innocent, they don’t know. I mean when I’ve told them I’ve lived in Japan for 4 years and then they’re still saying, “Oh my god you can use chopsticks.” *Nihonjinjyanai dakara wakaranaikamou.* Like it’s just infuriating and that’s the sense of Japanese uniqueness*, nihonjinron* people believe that… it can be very frustrating. I mean most of them don’t.

Elle (2010) I had a teacher who I did not get along with at all and he was an English teacher. I had just been to Taiwan, and I came back to show the kids pictures. I was telling him about how Taiwan was originally named *Ila Formosa*, which is a Portuguese name, because the Portuguese were the ﬁrst to colonise it besides the indigenous people who are living there, and the teacher said, “Oh no” from the back of the room and he never says anything during class mind you. And then from the back of the room he suddenly goes, “That’s not true.” And I said, “Oh I just read it was true, then why do you say that?” He said, “No other country has occupied Taiwan except Japan.” And I said, “Well that’s just not true.”…and then I told him that I was half. I’m half French and I don’t wholly identify with my French or my American side I sound more American for sure, but I spent too much time in France to not feel French also in my identity. And so when he asked me what I am, and kept asking what I am, I told him I was French/American, Franco/American, half French, half American. I explained...and he would say in front of the class, “No I’m not.” He would say, “No you’re not, you’re American”, or “No you’re not, you’re just French.” Of course you can’t tell someone what they are. I could go over there and claim to be Japanese, and he would have no right to tell me I’m not. You are whatever you feel you are. And then the last one was the one time he told me America has no traditional culture. And I was in the middle of teaching too, in front of the students and he wrote… “It must be hard for Americans since you have no culture basically.” And I was just like, “I’m doing my job here, dude. You know, you guys brought me in from America to teach the school about my culture, let me do my fucking job.”’

Simon (2010) Just because you’re gay. You were already like kind of separate anyways so that’s okay. It makes it kind of like okay. But for an actual Japanese person there’s this mentality of the *nihonjinron*. This is how Japanese people are, we’re all this one group of homogenous and we all think the same and stuff. So if you have any kind of perceived outsideness, you can be pushed aside really quickly. That’s just my experience of Japanese people coming out.

Taylor (2010) When I first came back from Japan I didn’t want anything to do with it so I just didn’t talk about it and think about it all. Or study any Japanese because I became conversational in Japanese so I’ve done things like my own *shaken* so I’ve been to the place where it’s done in the prefecture. I went through the process and did that. I went to the City Hall and ask for the certificate of your seal (*hanko[[4]](#footnote-4)*). When your *shaken* runs out you need to drive your car to the garage to get things fixed and then take it to get *shaken* done. So I arranged for one of those myself, I explained what I needed and how long I needed it for, things like that so I can do everyday life things. I didn’t study and I didn’t think about it for a long time, about 2 years actually. It’s only been about a year since I started to do more Japan stuff**.** One thing that kept it up was that somebody from Japan came to Birmingham to study a TEFL and CELTA to study some education related things. Because they were on JET and I kind of knew them from JET things we hung out together sometimes and talked about Japan. But to other people and my family. I didn’t talk about it.

Laura (2010) I think the only thing I find troubling is the attitude to women and the, “It can’t be helped” thing, which drives me insane. The lack of autonomy, which obviously we are taught is vital from when we can walk, is basically non-existent here. I thought that *janken* being the decider of literally everything was a time-saver but I realised it’s because no one can make a decision. I find it frustrating that at such a young age they are already stuck in the whole, ‘the nail that sticks up will be hammered down’ thing. I suppose it’s worse because I’m in a more rural area, so there are no other foreigners or outside influences.

While there were varying experiences of misadventure and misunderstandings, adversity does not necessarily result in contempt for the culture or experience. It is a necessary step in the direction of understanding and acculturating to one’s foreign environment.

Bart found it unpleasant when taxi drivers would not stop for him when seeing his foreign face. However, he refused to look at this issue with contempt. Mark’s experience was perceived as racism on an everyday level. He was frustrated by the common assumptions made towards him on a daily basis and attributed this to the propensities described to *nihonjinron.* Elle experienced discrimination as an American white female and for claiming to have two national identities: American and French. She was frustrated when remembering an obstinate teacher who told her it was impossible for her to have two nationalities. She was there to demonstrate internationalisation, and she felt that he was not allowing her to do her job. Simon had challenging experiences when it came to navigating the dating world as a gay man in Japan. He assigned the term *nihonjinron* to express his feelings about the homogeneity in Japanese society. He feels that if you do anything outside the norm you will not be accepted within the culture and society. Taylor did not initially appreciate his time in Japan because of how he felt while living in his host community. This could have been because of implications of cultural misunderstandings. He was not sentimental for Japan after he left. In fact, he did not want to speak about his experiences upon his return to the UK. Laura is starting to find certain situations displeasing. Laura is on her first year on the programme and is starting to become bothered by some of the differences between her and her host culture. She mentions the treatment of women and homogeneity as areas where she is finding dissatisfaction.

A few have used the term *nihonjinron* to describe the homogenous nature of Japanese society. This concept was addressed in chapter 2 in Reflections on Japanese uniqueness. This section addresses how participants express discriminatory feelings because of what they have experienced in their communities. In the next section, how the participants familiarise themselves to their new environment and interpret their experiences will be introduced. These areas will be discussed in: Immersion, Content as an outsider, Acculturation, and Appreciation. The next sections will look at the positive impact of being on the JET Programme and how after experiencing adversity it can lead to adaptation and tolerance for the host culture and society**.**

## Immersion

Cora (1980) I never really felt there was that much difference between Japanese and me, I mean apart from the look, I never really thought there was much difference, there’s no reason to go out of your way to go out and look for foreigners who are few and far between when you’ve got all these Japanese people around ya…I think I’m probably half Japanese or more… don’t be deceived by the Scottish accent. Yeah I really do, I’ve been completely brainwashed…speaking in English, recently I’m getting better at it but, even then, I ﬁnd myself thinking in Japanese ﬁrst, and then kind of translating it into English. But when I ﬁrst came back, I really had to concentrate on just keep speaking only English all the time…. Human beings are so complex; it would probably take more than one culture to express oneself adequately, and the more the better. Most of us make do with one or two cultures and we try to express ourselves with using that…

Jackson (1990) I feel like in Japan, I personally in my situation, I have anincredible amount of freedom, because I sometimes think, I see English and Japanese with language and culture, as being like the ocean… above air and below water, and so in either environment you’re 100% immersed in that environment but you switch between them. That’s the way I see it. And I’m kind of lucky in the fact that I can put my head above and below water, as much as I like, so I’m in that position where, you’re not stuck swimming below the surface, you have the same restrictions, so it’s like you can really enjoy a lot of aspects about Japanese culture and society without committing too it…

Simon (2010) Well for me it was the shift in language difficulty, I found having lived here it was a lot easier to learn content and just have a sense of a Japanese frame of mind I guess. Living here you build a more Japanese brain I guess you could say... It was just oh, I’m very comfortable in Japan, because of all my previous experience with Japan, I feel, oh this is easy. When I was depressed I was talking to a counsellor, a gay counsellor actually too. And I always said I ﬁt in better in Japan, and I think, his saying to me was, “Maybe it’s not that you ﬁt in more in Japan, it’s just your personality type integrates better in Japan. So I guess I’ve always been more reserved and I take a step back and view things. I’m quieter in conversation, I’m better in one to one conversations than in things like group presentations whereas in Australia the mentality can be quite boisterous and like, “Look at me look at me.” So I mean I had that trouble in college too, of not being outgoing enough and that even affected my job opportunities too in Australia. So I don’t think I necessarily integrated any more Japanese things into myself, except that I already kind of ﬁt in with a few cultural norms.

Some of the participants ended up living in Japan past the JET experience. They have adapted to Japanese culture and society, some becoming fluent in Japanese language and culture.

Cora did not feel segregated from her Japanese counterparts and to an extent identifies as Japanese. She said that only on the exterior she is Scottish and feels that humans are complex and that it may take more than one culture to fully express sentiments. Jackson is fluent in Japanese and can easily switch between his own culture and Japan’s. Being able to understand his background as well as his adopted one is a great advantage. Another benefit is the amount of freedom allowed to him because he is not accepted as Japanese. Because he views himself as fluent between both cultures, he is regarded as being completely immersed in Japan. Simon had lived in Japan previously and studied the language for a long period of time. He feels he can now understand other subtleties in the language and that his personality fits into the Japanese context, as he feels unencumbered by living in his locality compared to his own society.

The responses above demonstrate an ease of functioning in Japan and understanding where one fits within its social and cultural context. Cora and Jackson feel they are able to switch between two identities. Simon feels freer to express himself in Japan than his own country. The next section discusses how the participants feel satisfied as an outsider in Japan.

## Acculturation and contentment as an outsider

Terrance (1980) If you wanted to ask me, have I changed, am I still the same? I’d say, I’m still the same. When I sit there in the professor’s meeting in the faculty meeting, which often lasts 4 or 5 hours, and it’s quite hard to bear. You know? I’m still sitting there, I’m still basically an English teenager thinking, ‘Why, oh why, do these old men go on and on so much?’ Although some might say, I’m actually an old man myself. But I still feel like a newcomer or youngster and I’m still observing from the outside, although I’ve been a member of the faculty of this university for over a decade now…No one’s going to think I’m just a regular Japanese bloke and for some reason I seem to get a buzz out of that. I like being an outsider and I kind of like to sort of, go a bit deeper than most people do into Japanese society. A lot of my friends, who studied Japan in various ways, do their ﬁeldwork then go back to England, or wherever their home country is, and then after that they make visits to Japan and I just think, you can get in deeper if you’re there all the time. So my present job lets me do that.

Bart (1980) I always say thatJapan is the best country in the world to live in. Consideration *(omoiyari*) would be my primary reason for saying this. It is the little things in Japan thatmake living here great. Someone once said that you won’t be accepted in Japan unless you conform completely. Otherwise, you will be ostracised, outcast. What I have noticed is that you can live here with enormous anonymity as long as you respect others and show consideration. I would say that much Japanese respect or like me because I have changed so little. I do not consider myself very American, but I would never say that I have “gone Japanese.” To use a “I drifted down the *ukiyo*.” I suppose I changed in some ways, but never in a way to get accepted by anyone. A MEF wrote a song years ago called **Invisible**. The song was about a foreigner being stared at constantly, but nobody really wanted to “see” him. … I think the lyrics went like this: “I’m invisible, no one’s looking at me. I’m invisible, everyone’s looking at me.” They are interesting to me because they harken back to that notion that a person wants to be recognised, wants to be special. I am content being such a regular nobody, I get on just fine here.

Patrick (1990) I’ve always felt a bit out of place where I’ve been. So for me, feeling out of place is a natural state of being…It’s just I’m compelled to feel that way, because I was born in Kenya and spent much of my childhood in Africa as I told you, and of course I felt out of place there because it was a rather colonial existence, and then coming back to the UK, or not coming back, but actually coming to the UK for the ﬁrst time, I wasn’t a returnee migrant, I was a ﬁrst time migrant to the UK, even though my nationality is British. So I felt quite out of place in Britain too. I always felt this way. So feeling out of place in Japan was naturally a place of being for me…when I think of Japan, there are some similarities, the way I like to think about it is actually… we’re human beings and we mostly have the same wants, desires, pleasures and anxieties; the differences are tiny and very few, compared to all of the similarities that we have. We might express it all differently and so I think that’s the point of culture …we all eat, but what do you eat? How do you prepare it? How do you eat it? That’s where culture comes in. But actually we all eat everyday, and that’s the similarity, that all humans, pretty much all humans, eat food. And we’re all similar; we’re all the same in that respect. So it doesn’t matter whether you’re British or Japanese, we all eat. We all breath air, we all sleep in the evenings or prefer to sleep at night. There’s actually not that much difference between us, the only differences are really cosmetic and really small differences like whether we use metal or wooden implements, whether it’s chopsticks or knife and fork, whether it’s a big plate, with everything on one plate, or a series of little plates with things divided onto little plates, whether it’s sitting on the ﬂoor cross legged, or sitting on a chair, or all of these sorts of things. For some people they’re really important issues, but for me they're interesting, but they’re not really important big issues. That’s what culture is, all the stuff that’s in between us, different but the same.

Jackson (1990) After traveling it gave me the impression that there are so many possibilities out there, and so many patterns of behaviours and ways of interacting, and so many different types of people you can meet and that I kind of felt like it should give you an example, it should give you the advantage of being able to communicate well and associate with anybody that you meet. And what surprised me when I went back to NZ was that, some parts are still quite cliquey because when you get people that’ve never lived in their hometown, or maybe they’ve travelled or whatever, basically they’ve spent their whole life in one community, even though it’s a city, like Wellington, it seems quite important to have gone to the same high school or something, and that kind of thing really surprised me.

Jill (2000) When I was in Japan, I could kid myself that I was Japanese. But if I saw another Caucasian in the city that I didn’t know, I’d think, what are they doing in my city? Who are they? I’d be very intrigued as to who they were or what they were doing there. As probably the same way the Japanese residents did. When they saw a [*gaikokujin*]外国 人 I suppose. And I did spend far too much time with Japanese people I suppose. My Japanese level has never been as high as a native speaker, but I remember just feeling like that’s where I belonged, but that’s purely down to the people in my city, just make me feel so special and so welcome. When I came back to the UK, I remember feeling quite shocked in a way; the people didn’t look after their city and didn’t look after other people’s belongings. I went to a car boot sale with my dad and I had a set of 6 mugs, and I put them down on the blanket behind the car and somebody picked them up and had a look at them, and then threw them back down on the blanket. They didn’t break, but I just thought, you don’t throw… wait that’s, what are you doing? I just got back from Japan and I was really angry. I said to my father, I can’t believe they treated someone else’s property like that. What’s going on? He said, you’re in the UK Jill, you’re not in Japan anymore, this is how people treat other people’s things, and I found that really hard.

Thomas (2000) Someone once told me this, and I thought that was interesting when it comes to how culture blending happens. They said, basically imagine everyone in Japan wearing yellow sunglasses. Everyone in the States wears blue sunglasses. By living here for a while your sunglasses are going to turn green, they’re never going to go full-blown yellow, and you’re never going to be able to go back to blue. And you know yellow and blue makes green, right? So like, I’m not Japanese, I’m never gonna 100% become Japanese mannerisms, or Japanese everything, but I definitely lost some of my American isms and put in some Japanese isms…I’m from the South, and people… I notice it, I do it, and it confuses you, it’s small talk. So when I went back everyone was like small talking me up. I was just like oh! *Natsukashii,* oh it’s been, oh so long. Like everyone’s so friendly, then I was like wait a minute, no it’s *tatemae*, everyone’s just doing small talk.

The responses demonstrate that feeling like an outsider within another society and culture can be fulfilling. They also demonstrate how they feel they acquired a quasi-Japanese identity through themes of acculturation and biculturalism (discussed in chapter 2). These responses reflect the opinions of some of the participants that ended living in Japan after JET.

For Terrance and Bart, acculturation involved accepting the fact that they would never be seen as Japanese. He fully acknowledges the advantages of living in his adopted country and admits to feeling the same way he felt when he first arrived to Japan and takes pleasure in that. Bart enjoys living a life in anonymity where he feels he has changed living in Japan but does not feel the need to exhibit these changes. According to Patrick, acculturating to Japan was facilitated by his experience living abroad in Kenya at a young age. He explains that he never truly felt like he belonged in the UK, causing him to always feel like an outsider, or feel universality with others. He declares that humans are all alike and that how we eat, sleep, etc., are the only insignificant differences. Jackson feels that living in Japan and traveling has made him open as a person and able to relate to other people. He now feels that he can appreciate being an outsider even in his home country. Jill reflects on how she adapted to living in Japan and even uses the Japanese word for foreigner, *gaikokujin* to explain her feelings when seeing a rare Caucasian foreigner in her host community. She started to see significant cultural differences between Japan and her home country, such as the streets being less clean and how people took care of other’s things; evidence of a level of acculturation. Thomas retains his American identity, nonetheless, admits he has blended Japan into his identity. To describe this blending he retells a cogent story about Japanese wearing yellow glasses and Americans wearing blue ones. He uses Japanese words to describe his feelings about nostalgia as *natsukashii* and comparing Japan and his home culture through the cultural concept of *tatemae*, explained in chapter 2 in nostalgic imaginations and orientalism.

Many of the responses indicate contentment as a foreigner in Japan. They understand that they will never be accepted as Japanese and yet they are satisfied with that categorisation. They have come to terms with it. The next section demonstrates the appreciation the participants feel about living in Japan and for the experience.

## Appreciation

Terrance (1980) When I arrived in Japan it was the bubble era, economic bubble and Japan was notorious as being the most expensive place in the world to live, and that isn’t the case anymore. Japan has had almost no inﬂation for about 20 years now and housing prices have come right down. My house is a pretty nice house, but I deﬁnitely couldn't afford to buy a house like that in England at the moment, even if I was earning the same amount of money. So there are lots of practical advantages to living in Japan at the moment and I'm a permanent resident now, so much less hassle with the immigration. And my wife is employed full time as well and I think it would be quite difﬁcult for her to get a job outside of Japan because her English is only so-so. But also my job, my life's work is, is about Japan, and if you're studying Japan there’s no better place to be but Japan. And so I think I'm a lifer!

Natalie (1980) I think my expectations about what is considered the norm here, in terms of professionalism and service, are too high for my home country. I also realized when we returned to the US that my vocabulary was preserved from the 1980s and had not picked up new trendy terms. Also the medical system here is socialised and so much more reasonable than in my home country.

Eunice (2000) I feel protective over some foreigners. I almost have an innate sympathy for someone who can’t understand, like I met a Chinese man on my ward a few weeks ago, and I just felt, I don’t think he felt a connection with me but I almost felt ….not simply for him but because you don’t understand anything and I know how that feels. And I was thinking, what if that was me? Thank god I never ended up in a hospital in Japan, you must be terriﬁed. It’s not a terrifying experience if you speak English and you understand, I felt this connection with his wife because although her English was better I thought it’s all alien to you because you don’t understand everything.

Elle (2010) I would say it changed the way I think, which of course does change a bit about how I act. Having lived in a foreign country like Japan where it’s such a different culture from your own, even though I travelled before Japan to places where I didn’t speak the same language, it’s almost like the fear will still be slightly there, “Oh what if I’m stuck at the train station and nobody speaks my language?” and now having experienced what that’s like, it’s gone. That fear is gone; I know that there is a way around it. It’s more with the culture now. It’s taken away a bit of my fear of language barriers and how it changed my everyday life.

Lorna (2000 and 2010)

One thing I have to say is everybody is so rude (in the US). Especially, when I got to the airport, I had to ﬂy into Detroit. I was just like, “These airport people are horrible!” Oh my god so embarrassed to be American. Like there are certain things like, when you go to a restaurant here (in Japan), when you’re ready most of the time you ring the little bell…they go ahead and once they bring you your food, then they bring you your bill. Like you don’t have to wait again. When I went back to the US that annoyed the crap outta me. There’s such a simpler way if you only knew. No tipping and that was for anything, like for taxis for the bar, eating out…I don’t like bothering other people. Or when others do, l don’t like if people’s music is too loud, I don't want other people to really hear me listening to music or my TV…I am super thankful for social feeding and … like the things I would normally take for granted in the US I’m actually thankful for them now. It doesn’t seem like a big deal but it actually makes life better. Okay I’ve been, in the horrible heat and humidity without air conditioning and survived, and I actually appreciate how wonderful the US is.

Thomas (2000) I love living here now and there are still days that I go into work and I hate everyone here, I hate everything, like we all do sometimes, I still have my days. But I did learn a valuable lesson and it was that my life isn’t as bad as I thought it was.

Taylor (2010) Then when I got a job I didn’t talk about it there, but also I know that people don’t want to hear you banging on about Japan all the time. If it came up in the conversation then I would mention it and I would share a story or an anecdote or something like that. But then it became a joke in the office that Taylor is always talking about Japan so it became a running joke. I had always something good to say about it, like a funny story or this is what I did and we had fun…I might be applying for a job in Japan. So, basically, the way I look at it is… I spent a year and a half feeling sorry for myself for a bit, thinking Japan’s rubbish but then, before I came back to England I changed my opinion. At one point I said I hated Japan. I said it to one of my good friends, a Japanese guy, he’s a really nice guy, helps me out a lot. But before I was leaving I said to him, “I’m really sorry I don’t mean I hate Japan. I just hate some stuff about it that was going on”, then when I came back I didn’t speak about it, I didn’t want to hear about it but then I was always thinking about what happened and thinking what could have happened here and what I could have done better. I then resolved to think that it was certain people and the way that they had treated me. That is the reason I had the bad experience. If I had known things, as I had mentioned before, I could’ve dealt with them more easily and I could’ve handled it. Then I started to do stuff with people who were interested in Japan and teaching them things, teaching them Japanese as well, just telling them about my experiences in Japan. Never anything negative though, I only tell them about positive things, or I don’t mention it. Only with my friends who knew me there, because obviously they understand how I was feeling at the time. Usually I don’t mention anything negative only some good stuff.

Laura (2010) My community is pretty chilled, mostly families and old people walking their dogs. I have been approached by a few people who want to practice English, but otherwise not much. I have been to my teacher’s parent’s house, which was brilliant, her whole family was there and it was great to see a family home (that’s also one of my top memories actually. I drank whiskey with her dad, her 5-year-old niece taught me origami and her friends were shrine builders). I haven’t really joined any clubs, I’m always working late, but want to try and join the calligraphy club. (Tried to join archery but they said not until April). I go to cooking classes at school, which is brilliant, we make traditional Japanese food, last time we made *osechi* and tomorrow is cake (not so traditional, but still).

The participants that have stayed in Japan after JET have expressed what they have learned to appreciate by living in Japan, or returning to the country.

Terrance and Natalie lived in Japan after their time on JET. Terrance found Japan’s ease of life appealing, along with the economic gains in his career for himself and his family. Natalie reflects on what she appreciates about living in Japan in terms of customer service, the medical system and how she herself has changed. Eunice did not specifically feel Japan had any long-term influence on her, however she feels sympathy for foreigners who cannot speak or understand English in her country. She feels that she has become more adventurous, such as trying different foods and exploring other cultures. Elle also does not feel that she has permanently adopted Japanese habits or traits. She feels that living in Japan has given her an appreciation for living in a place where she did not initially know the language. For Lorna, there were things that started to bother her about American culture, such as the degree of customer service compared to Japan. Furthermore, because social media keeps her tied to news back in the US she does not feel disconnected by living abroad. Lorna has learned to appreciate aspects of her home country by living in Japan’s countryside. Thomas had returned to Japan after JET to teach English again. He started to see the positive aspects of living in the country, which is a change for how he felt during his time on JET. Taylor’s aversion to his experience in Japan shifted into nostalgia for his host community and developed interests while there. In the future he hopes to return to Japan for employment. Laura was on her first year of the programme at the time of consultation. She started to become comfortable with her community and has started to participate in different activities.

All these examples demonstrate that there is an ability to appreciate another place that has a different history, set of values and norms, even after having adverse experiences. It is this appreciation and the action of reflecting on the past that contributes to an attachment to place, in this case, for Japan and the host communities. These impressions of adversity do not negate the positive impressions that can be made by living abroad.

## Conclusion

Negative experiences and situations will have a profound impact on the individual. Learning to navigate a new environment and culture will naturally lead to disagreements and misunderstandings parallel to ‘othering’. Historical postures that hyperbolised stereotypical representations of the designated West and East have impacted both cultures. During the Meiji era, images and stories of Europe and the US were used as a political strategy to unshackle the power relations away from the controlling elite, as well as to create a unique Japanese polar identity. Indeed, this identity has remained throughout the centuries and is perceived by these participants as they try to find where they fit in Japan. Comparably, the participants find themselves referring to ideas related to *nihonjinron* to explain the behaviour of their Japanese counterparts. These situations are opportunities for learning. For many, the outcome of these struggles contributes to nostalgic recollections of a distinctive time during young adulthood that later contributes to soft power. Indeed, they lead to an awareness of our own shortcomings and perhaps a chance for appreciation for our own individuality and for our host community.

Biculturalism and acculturation is an important consideration when living in a different culture and society for a number of years. It is a unique understanding of being able to comprehend one’s own culture as well as the host country. Clearly, biculturalism as an indicative outcome of acculturation is ideal. However, even modest levels of acculturation are significant for open-mindedness and flexibility in character. These factors are beneficial for the affects of nostalgia and attachment to place and memory, especially for those that have left Japan. The rhythms that begin with opportunity, attraction through the ‘othering’ of exaggerated images, to factors related to ‘othering’ and orientalism and the ensuing misunderstandings can metamorphose into contentment and appreciation. Indeed, these shifting thoughts and realisations are important to soft power. The next chapter will substantiate how the participants are attached to their experiences through nostalgia and thus, soft power.

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# Chapter 9

# The commodification of experience through nostalgia

## Introduction

For this chapter, I will discuss how nostalgia is manifested through the participants’ intimate involvement living and working in Japan. In this chapter, I will discuss the cultivation of nostalgia from memories experienced in Japan. This extends to the idea of a second home mentality that is also applied to the attachment of JETs to their host communities (previously discussed in the literature in chapter 2). This is further discussed in this section. Some of these longings are subtle and pervasive. For every decade**,** this remains true. Whether they happen to be in Japan or abroad, they reflect on positive feelings about their experience on the programme.

The nostalgic impressions from the participants will be introduced, leading into analyses of the evidence for each decade. How the individual is impacted by their experience needs to be discussed. Thus, a more thorough breakdown of how these discussions are important to the research are presented under the headings: Nostalgia and positive reflection, Rediscovering nostalgia, Interpreters for Japan, A second home mentality, and Capitalising on the JET experience**.** To better understand this process, an introduction into Japan’s approach to internationalisation is requisite. In these sections, I will remind the reader of the individuals’ contribution to soft power and further discussing how individuals have kept Japan in their lives in the section ‘Internationalisation: linking Japan to the present’, followed by the summary. The next section will discuss how outside influences, such as the tourism industry may be a significant inducer for selling the nostalgic Japanese countryside. JETs are influenced by these advertisements and stories and in turn become influencers of this image because of their intimate connections with their host localities; often realising the impact of living in Japan onto their identity after the experience. These experiences become an essential part of the participants’ experience as they reflect on their host communities. If we are to understand how JETs view their time in Japan we need to look at their responses.

## Nostalgia and positive reflection

Marty (1980) This was without doubt the happiest period in my life – full of adventure and excitement and I feel very nostalgic looking back and am as keen to speak about my experiences in Japan now as I was 30 years ago. I really missed Japan when I came back to the UK and took a good 2 years to readjust. I have kept in touch with a number of Japanese and have met them and given them hospitality when they have visited the UK.

Nina (1980) There are too many memorable experiences to write about, but I did make some very good friends with whom I still keep in touch. I also met my husband while on the program, so all in all, it was a very good year.

Shannon (1980) It was a heady, exciting time for me, as a young woman in my early twenties. We got to stay at nice hotels during the conventions. I was chosen to represent my country in a tree-planting ceremony, which the Emperor and Empress attended when the *Shokujusai* was held in Tokushima. I especially enjoyed visiting junior high schools in small villages, such as the one in the mountains in *Kamiyama* and a fishing village near *Naruto* (where I fished with the kids during a school event). These schools had an intimate environment and the students were especially well behaved.

Elaina (1990) I have fond memories of Japan and I think the fondest grow stronger the more removed I am. I was shocked when I was reading the announcements of the latest crew of JETs arriving in Tokyo last month and I did the math and realized it had been twenty years since I left Japan. I cannot believe it's been that long… But I do still have fond memories of my time there, of the friends I made, and of the… just of the experiences I had, both with the culture and my own personal growth, the kind of growth that you do when you're living abroad and just kind of exploring.

Taylor (2010) I miss the freedom. Every day is new adventure. I can be free and every day is something new. It’s exciting. I miss that. I miss going to some mountains and go for a drive in the mountains. In 2.5 hours I can be in Sendai and in same kind of time I can be in Niigata and enjoy a city with my friends, or a club or something, or see something nice. So I miss that kind of thing. So yes am in a city now but it’s not the same thing. The countryside as well it’s not the same thing. When my friend lived in Oguni that was kind of my favourite place in Japan. I always used to go there and feel relaxed when things were getting to me. So I miss that. I also miss my football team. I didn’t get to see them as often as I would have liked to have. Saw them a couple of times at their home ground and I went to see them as much as I could when they were in Yamagata. I miss doing that. I can’t do that here.

Elle(2010) There were certain things that people kind of attach to Japanese culture, for example saying [*itadakimasu*」 before eating, certain things that they say, or the 2 hands up, put your ﬁngers up when they take a picture, that I was never attached to before, or while living there. I would do the *itadakimasu* in front of my teachers, but it never really felt authentic. Like I’ll never do it alone, you know what I mean? It wasn’t something I was raised doing…I would say it changed the way I think, which of course does change a bit about how I act. Having lived in a foreign country like Japan where it’s such a different culture from your own, even though I travelled before Japan to places where I didn’t speak the same language, it’s almost like the fear will still be slightly there, “Oh what if I’m stuck at the train station and nobody speaks my language?” and now having experienced what that’s like, it’s gone. It’s taken away a bit of my fear of language barriers.

Laura (2010) I think going to the festival in Osaka (*Kishiwada Danjiri Matsuri*) was one of the best ones. The men riding carts was great and the atmosphere was so much fun. I climbed Mount Fuji in August and it was horrific, I don’t know why I ever thought it would be a good idea. Standing at the top, unable to see a bloody thing at sunrise, desperately clutching a hot chocolate is definitely a string memory though! Going to Seki, an old crossing town and being invited into a local family’s house just at random was amazing, they showed us the intricate wood work and panelling, gave us tea and sweets and showed us wooden toys the father had made, that was a great memory. The *bunkasai*s were also brilliant, at both schools. My best memory is sitting in the planetarium, which my technical high school students made. They are considered non-academic, and take that to mean stupid, but what they do is incredible, they have built an electric sports car and the planetarium was amazing it’s been put on display at the city hall now. I suppose, to finish, my favourite parts have been tutoring the third year girls for their exams, and then when they come to tell me they passed. They are so happy and it’s really lovely.

The participants have favourable memories of their time in Japan. Many have found that it made a major impact on their futures. The responses demonstrate their feelings towards Japan and the JET experience.

Marty is nostalgic for certain things he ascribes to Japan. He found it to be the happiest period of his life and misses what he describe as Japan’s non-confrontational culture. When he hears Japanese, he divulges that he feels compelled to approach these individuals. He continues learning Japanese after the programme. Nina met her husband in Japan and still resides there. She reflects on the friends she made and meeting her husband while on the programme. Shannon recalls meeting the emperor and empress at a tree planting ceremony. Like, Marty’s response, she recalls JET as an exciting time to be a woman in her early twenties traveling and living in the countryside. Elaina finds that being absent from Japan has made that longing prominent. She looks back fondly on her time on JET and the personal growth she was able to experience. Taylor misses the freedom and adventure that he felt at that stage in his life. There were a few things that Taylor misses about his life in Japan, such as going into the mountains and watching his favourite football team. These were all very positive experiences that tie him to his host community. Elleyearns for the time when she was on the programme. Every year would be different as her peers would leave the programme and new people would take their place. Thus, she was aware that going back to that particular place would not be a true representation of her experiences. Elle compares her time in Japan to now living abroad in Scotland, and feels that living in the Japanese countryside was more of an adventure. Laura had just started the programme; she considers her early experiences and the enjoyment of exploring a new culture. She finds appreciation in her students at a technical high school, feeling accomplished when they did well on their exams.

What the participants’ value from their experience varies. Some found their partners, some remember feelings tied to youth and the freedom living in another culture, others are nostalgic for a life once lived in Japan, different to their own. For some of the participants who had a previous interest in Japanese culture, they rediscover and continue their interests of the country.

## Rediscovering nostalgia

Patrick (1990) My ofﬁce has a few pictures on the wall of Japan because they reﬂect my experiences more than pottery and that sort of thing. Because this is a department of East Asian Studies… I’m in it all the time. And so I’ve got all this stuff around in my ofﬁce. I don’t think of it as a sort of a shrine…Do I feel nostalgic? Yeah to some extent, I feel nostalgic for the experiences that I had in Japan, they were great experiences and they are great experiences. I was in Japan only a week ago having great experiences. Yeah a bit of freedom from the humdrum. Yeah I’m nostalgic for Japan when I’m in the UK.

Jacob (2000) There’s the nostalgia, because of the accessibility I can discover new stuff every single time…I’m trying to remember…so it was sort of the Spring break, it was March. It was cold but I remember taking all my *nenkyu*, it was the first time I was gonna visit Tokyo for a long time. Like when we first arrived on JET, we went to the Keio Plaza, but then we got to explore for a day if we wanted to get away from the, meetings and stuff. I really didn’t spend a lot of time out. But when I got to Tokyo, I had a plan. I had my Lonely Planet guide. I had highlighted this huge guide and everything and I just I was excited to see the Japan I dreamed of seeing when I was a junior high school kid. I get to *Akihabara*, which is like the geek mecca, and I get there and I remember it was like one night out and it was after I explored that night. I knew I was going to come back the next day, like, it’s one district but I was going to explore the shit out of it. You know, this is, this is what I really love. And I remember there was one night I was walking back and I look back at Akihabara and I knew then there was a very good reason why I wanted to come to Japan. I made it. It’s kinda dramatic but if I got hit by a train or something tomorrow, that’s cool. I made it! That’s because that was a milestone I wanted to do when I was a kid. I want to go to Japan one day. And then I’ve been in Japan, and when I got to Tokyo and got to that specific place that I read about and day dreamed about, and this is a confirmation that I had succeeded…and it took a long time but I made it! It was a latent thing; it wasn’t like I’m finally going to do it. It was like, there’s a reason why I wanted to see this place, to be in this place. And I was super happy about that. And that was when it was July after 7 or 8 months. It took so long for me to realize I’ve achieved a dream of mine.

Taylor (2010) I miss going to Shibuya. Shibuya is my favourite place I guess. I always go across the crossing if I go to Tokyo for something and stay there for a day. It’s kind of weird behaviour, but I like going there. It’s one of the reasons I went to Japan. Because I was interested in Japanese rap music, and the one thing that was always mentioned in that music was Shibuya… Shibuya became something interesting to me, so I guess that was my fantasy about Japan because Shibuya became like a cult thing. It’s the crossing, it’s in the Fast and the Furious. So the one thing I thought I’d get to do was drift my car around Shibuya crossing, but that would probably get me arrested, but it became something of a fantasy to me imagining what Shibuya was like. And then when I went to Shibuya it continued the cult status because there are some nice clubs there, and we went to the club with my friends and we tried to talk to some girls. And then for some reason, even though the club is noisy, my Japanese just becomes really good. I don’t know why, when I’m talking to girls or I do something with my car, then my Japanese suddenly becomes really good.

A few of the participants below already had Japan related interests. JET gave them the opportunity to explore these interests further, solidifying the attraction.

Patrick longed for the experience he had in Japan, not necessarily Japan itself. Since he works in a Japan related field, he is able to maintain contact with the society and culture. He longs for freedom from the everyday that is ever present in his life in the UK and Japan frees him from that banality. Jacob’s nostalgia takes him back to a specific moment when he arrived in Akihabara. He had always dreamed of arriving at this specific location, which he defines as a ‘Geek mecca’. He also mentions that he stumbles upon nostalgia everywhere. This most likely refers to his continued visits to Japan, where creating new memories are triggers for nostalgic reflections. Taylor possesses a strong interest in Japanese rap music. The music he’s interested in is particularly popular in Shibuya and contributes to his nostalgia for the country. Thus, he his rediscovering nostalgia for Japan when he listens to rap music that links him to his experience and previous interests that drew him to Shibuya.

These responses show how the participants who already had an invested interest in Japan were able to further establish and explore those interests. The next discussion will look at how the participants interpret Japan for others after the experience.

## Interpreters for Japan

Cora (1980) I don’t feel nostalgic because, I haven’t lost anything, culture and language it’s all…It’s all portable. Just like when I went to Japan all those years ago. I kind of took Scotland to Japan and it was very light and portable, and now I’m bringing Japan here and it’s the same. So I don’t feel so lonely really because I’ve got it inside me, so I’m okay.

Abigail (1990) I suppose I sometimes feel…. a bit, I feel sometimes feel I gotta admit that I know Japan in a very different way then, what the main marketing messages are, so I mean, I like it, I like eating sushi, and I go and have it, but it doesn’t necessarily mean Japan to me, I mean obviously we all know Wasabi isn’t really Japanese, I don’t really mind in a way, I think good for them for leveraging it all, it’s just a commercial thing.

Jackson (1990) I ﬁnd in most cases, the strongest friendships I’ve made have been when I started something new and when there are other people that have also started something new. So everyone’s open, and we’ve all got a common experience. Just like when making friends back in high school or university and especially JET, and *mombushō[[5]](#footnote-5):* we’re all in this whole new experience together and we’re more free to make many other connections. Even though you might all come from diﬀerent cultural backgrounds, there’s a common experience through JET or at the university that you can always draw on.

Eunice (2000) I miss the food, I miss the excitement of going to all the different festivals, that kind of thing, but I think that’s because it felt more like a holiday when you’re there experiencing stuff like that. You do everything you can because you’re only there for a short while. I even think about doings things in this country and think I’d like to go and do that, but I don’t. However, I think if I was in Japan, I deﬁnitely would’ve gone. But because you’re here, and I’m here forever, you don’t bother. An example of that would be the... something that is going on in London at the moment at Hampton court. I wouldn’t really make the effort to go there, but if I was in Japan I would probably make the effort to go. I’m proud of what I’ve done, because without sounding big headed, I think the experience is a massive thing and I think you forget that. Even now, when things happen, when I see Japanese things, I’m like, “That’s not Japanese. That’s not how it is.” Because I went to a Japanese restaurant a few weeks ago with two of my friends, and the chef was cooking the food, but I’m thinking, yeah this is really cool and this really fun but I was thinking if we were in Japan, we’d be doing the cooking, and it’s hard to explain to people, that in Japan we sit around the table with the big hot plate in the middle and you cook the food yourself.

For many who have been on the programme, regardless if they stayed in Japan after JET, have felt the need to explain Japan and their experience to others. This demonstrates attachment to this period in their lives and to Japan. It is also an expression of how they identify with Japan. The responses have given evidence of how the participants’ become interpreters for Japanese society and culture.

Cora remained in Japan for 30 years until she recently returned to Scotland. She did appear to miss Japan and conveyed the transportability of culture and language. Therefore, she feels that Japan will always be with her as part of her identity. For Abigail, she admits that she does not miss Japan, as it is overwhelmingly part of her life. When reflecting about aspects of Japan in her daily routine, she is aware that chains such as Wasabi are not authentic representations of Japan. Indeed, she concludes that she has an intimate understanding of the place, becoming an interpreter for Japan. Jackson came to the revelation that people are receptive to forming new friendships when they are embarking on something new for the first time. He compares the JET Programme to first starting university. Using JET as a way to capitalise on developed networks is another positive attribute of the programme. Eunice contemplates over the fact that she may have been forthcoming about trying new things since she was aware that her stay was temporary. Additionally, she admits to being very proud of the experience and finds herself pointing out authentic Japan to others who may not be familiar with the culture.

This section demonstrated how the participants feel compelled to interpret Japan to those they meet, even unintentionally. Some of them feel that Japan is part of their identity, becoming natural interpreters to those around them. The next section discusses how the participants remain attached to Japan.

## A second home mentality

Marty (1980) I miss the feeling of kindness, lack of conﬂict, harmony, the respect the Japanese have for one another. It was also a very exciting time – my life was full of amazing experiences. I have a very soft spot for all things Japanese and will always approach people when I hear them speaking Japanese. Since January 2014 I have been attending Japanese lessons at university once a week to refresh my linguistic knowledge. I have only ever bought Japanese made cars. I received so much hospitality and kindness that I would like to pay this back – not only to Japanese but also to others around me. My wife and I often invite foreign students or people who would otherwise be on their own to our house on Christmas Day as well as at other times.

Elaina (1990) … I've never really been pining for Japan, although, when I participate in this exchange, I'll be at Waseda starting next month and when I was choosing the time to go, I chose mid-­September to mid-October because that was always my favorite time of year in Japan. You know, as fall settles in, it's just a beautiful time to be there. Looking forward to exploring, maybe going to some places I've been before and some new places I've always wanted to go – in addition to doing my work, obviously that's the priority…

Perhaps for some JETs, they wish to relive the experience or return to a place that was once home, or *furusato* (as explored in chapter 2), even if it is just to visit or remain connected to Japan in some form. The responses below demonstrate how some of these participants have kept Japan in their lives and used their experience to open up future opportunities.

Marty misses many aspects of Japanese culture and tries to keep up with the language. Marty has tried to keep Japan related people, culture and language in his life after his experience on the programme. Elaina has a job that allows her to be connected to Japan. While she states that she does not miss Japan, she does look forward to old places she has been and exploring new ones. Being connected to Japan means she does not miss it, but by her statement there is a familiarity and second home mentality present. They demonstrate wanting to remain connected to Japan in some form because of their experience on the programme. The next discussion leads into how the participants have used JET for their futures.

## Capitalising on the JET experience

Natalie (1980) I went back to the USA to earn an international M.B.A. and came back as a marketing manager in Tokyo. From that point onward I was in Japan for the next 22 years consecutively, then we moved to Oregon for 2.5 years, but with the poor economy we returned to Japan as we found ourselves more marketable here…. After graduating with an MBA I landed a job as a marketing manager in the wines and spirits industry in Tokyo, followed by consulting for an Australian company representing their interest in Japan, then cosmetics in P.R. in Tokyo, and now I am a relocations consultant for global companies sending their expats in and out of Japan.

Abigail (1990) I don’t miss it because I still speak Japanese here a lot, and I use Japanese all the time, I do quite a lot of work with the Japanese embassy here. And I run all these things, I’ve probably got a bit too much Japan in my life. I’m actually working with Korean companies too now.

Elaina (1990) I have found ways to incorporate it, really. I've never seriously considered completely moving back. I've gone back several times; I've taken students from Indiana University. I'm taking, in the spring, an award winning journalism student on a tour of Japan. I've remained connected to Japan in the ways that I can. I've had a Japanese tutor here on and oﬀ over the six or seven years I've lived here in Indiana, so I've tried.

Maurice (2000) Plus what I’m doing now, wherever the roads lead**.** Anything I’ve learned from my experiences here, is that you never know where one thing is going to lead to another, I never in a million years would think that I would be working here, or to have been AJET Chair, or to have been doing all the teaching related specialty, events, and seminars. One thing leads to another that’s where you’re at. So can I say will it have fulfilled my goals, I don’t know?

Jacob (2000) Yeah I remember when I started there (Konami) I had Japanese staff there, they had executive producers from Japan, one of them only spoke Japanese. And I remember being interviewed by a Japanese/American woman and she worked there, she was a video game producer, which was really cool…I think that helped me get in, even though my Japanese wasn’t really very good. Even though I had stayed in Japan…

The responses above demonstrate how the participants used JET to establish their future careers. Having had the opportunity to live and work in Japan gave them the inspiration and an advantage in their career goals.

Natalie, Elaina, Abigail and Jacob found ways to stay connected to Japan throughout their careers, thus using their experience on the programme as a gateway to their future. Natalie went back to the U.S. after JET to return to higher education. She found that it was advantageous for acquiring a position in Japan. Her experience on JET and continued involvement in Japan has led to a productive future related to expertise on Japan. Likewise, Abigail works in a Japan-related field in the UK. She was able to use her experience in Japan for her career and has expanded her skill set to work with Korean companies. Abigail looks back fondly on her time on JET and the personal growth she was able to experience. Jacob was able to use his experience on JET to help him get a job at Konami. Maurice was living in Japan at the time of interview and had not left for any length of time. He considers the opportunities that JET has given him and where it may lead in the future. Perhaps his reflection is not nostalgic, as he is presently going through the experience. However, he is still in the process of forming these impressions that will have an impact later in his life.

These individuals are instances of how JETs have become attached to Japan because of their experience on the programme. Nostalgic reflections have been influential for soft power. They easily digest Japan related images because of their intimate experience in the society and culture. What this has resulted in is entering Japan related careers, consuming Japan related products and geniality to Japanese people. Indeed, it has also been advantageous to enter a profession one has familiarity and knowledge within.

## Conclusion

The JET Programme and former schemes are influential when it comes to promoting long-term attachment to place. Many of them view Japan as their second home. The Japanese government and tourism agencies have been quite familiar with using nostalgia as a grass roots agenda to reinforce identity (discussed in chapter 2). The JET, MEF and BET participants are part of this narrative, promoting Japan internally within their communities and internationally through nostalgic reflections. Clearly, this is relatable to the concept of soft power, where a level of attraction is present for these participants. Often, these reflections emerge after the experience has ended, when the impact onto one’s identity can be discerned. The experience ties them to these local places and at the same time their acknowledgements and nostalgic reflections of their time in Japan are reinforcing for Japanese. Even if it was for a short time, they became part of the scenery and had access to the intimate and personal areas of the Japanese life and rhythms. Japan and what it represents to these individuals will always be an important highlight in their lives that will forever connect them to the country. This has been evident through their consumption of Japan related goods, return for travel and entering Japan related careers. Many reflect on their experience as an important highlight in their life that has had a lasting influence on their future and persona. The next chapter is the concluding chapter that will re-examine the research by reconsidering its contribution, originality and findings.

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# Chapter 10

# The conclusion: lessons drawn from the impact of experience

## Summary

The aim of the study was to understand how time on the JET programme became an influential component to the lives of the participants and how it contributed to soft power at the individuallevel*.* For this chapter I will summarise the findings, discuss the importance of this research, consider whom this research impacts, its contribution and limitations, and finally future research.

Experiences and remembered events are powerful catalysts for soft power. This revelation is usually taken for granted in our mundane routines. Everyday life theory gives a clear advantage to understanding the narrative material for ‘othering’, imagining, alienation and to an extent re-integration (for acquiring cultural appreciation and heuristic learning). Experiences, which change the patterns of thinking and require a major shift in routine, such as that of an overseas long-term experience, are impactful. Bonnett comments, ‘When the world has been fully codified and collated, when ambivalence and ambiguities have been so sponged away that we know exactly and where everything is and what it is called, a sense of loss arises (2015: 4)’. There is an erosion of mystery where in our hyper-connected world every parcel of reality appears exposed with nothing left to discover. People, such as JET participants seeking an experience abroad, are perhaps trying to find another reality. That reality may be a representation of the unknown driven by nostalgia.

This research took life history interviews from 24 individuals on the JET programme and preceding initiatives. Everyday life theory and social phenomenology were implemented to codify and decipher their experiences. To organise the material I divided the interviews by decade from the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s and 2010s. After transcribing all the interviews and coding them through NVivo, I found parallels, which were discussed from chapters 6 to chapter 9. These themes followed the common trajectory that unfolded during the interviews along with my own experience. These themes comprise:

* Seeking opportunity and responses to uncertainties
* Imagining Japan and evoking nostalgia
* Adversity and acculturation
* The commodification of experience through nostalgia

These chapter titles represent the common features that occur through the timeline of experience.

The investigation found that that the participants were uncertain about their future and wanted to explore other paths. JET was economically viable solution for exploring another culture while being paid well. Many found it a safe choice and a way to escape the lack of employment or choices in their home countries. Some used the programme to enhance their Japanese language skills or knowledge of Japan, while others wanted return to the country after having been there.

The interviewees all had a degree of knowledge about Japan. These areas included Japanese pop-culture and products, friendships developed with Japanese, a sense of admiration mixed with uneasiness about the country, and stereotypical modern and traditional designations. These labels could be stereotypical and are the source of knowledge that the participants bring with them to Japan.

The next stage of the experience involves experience with adversity and then adaptation. I found that the participants dealt with ostracism, harassment, cultural faux pas and othering. However, the participants equally became immersed in the culture and found they adapted and found contentment with their label as outsiders. An appreciation for the experience was a common outcome.

The participants find that they have positive recollections of their time on the programme, even when encountering adversity. A few feel the need to rediscover their past by returning to Japan, they feel the need to translate to others their experience living in the country and some feel like Japan is a familiar second home. The participants have used JET to further their future, a few going into Japan related careers.

These experiences are different for each individual. However, there is a common thread of wanting to experience difference, not being familiar with the culture and the misunderstandings that arise. This results in the JETs, starting to understand and adapt to living abroad in Japan.

## Outcomes and implications

There are a number of conclusions that have been drawn from the research:

1. Long-term interest in Japan due to acculturation.

2. Empathy and flexibility in character.

3. Influence of JETs as interpreters of Japan conveyed abroad.

4. Nostalgia is an effective approach to soft power**.**

A significant finding was that many individuals have kept a degree of Japan in their lives. I found that the participants to conscious or unconscious degree adapted and acculturated to their host communities. It has been impactful for their futures through career choices, deciding to stay long-term Japan, consuming Japan related products, through social media, keeping the connection with friends made on JET and with Japanese friends and returning to visit.

The participants have demonstrated empathy towards foreigners in their own societies. A level of flexibility by being able to see the positive in situations after experiencing hardship is also noted. For all decades, there has been a demonstration of kindness and a desire to assist during encounters with Japanese. Another interesting finding was that through keeping Japan in their lives, they also became interpreters for others who have not been to the country.

However these individuals interpreted their time on the programme; it is valuable to understand how these reflections play a part in the movement of soft power. This progression is crucial to appreciate how an image of Japan is portrayed through individuals. These participants are vessels carrying knowledge about Japanese society and culture. Since they have been intimately entwined and supported living and working in localities around Japan, they have developed knowledge of the culture and society that they can convey to others. This research emphasises the by-product of nostalgia that connects these individuals to the country after the experience. This has resulted in a tendency to keep Japan in one’s life, perhaps an extension of the experience.

Nostalgia was discovered to be an important component for the diffusion of soft power. Everyday life theory was an important lens for reflecting on the data. There were common threads of events that led to the attachment of individuals to their experience on JET. This experience is then further ascribed to the place in which these events took place, Japan and the host communities. The themes in the discussion chapters of ‘seeking opportunity and response to uncertainties’, Imagining and evoking nostalgia’, ‘adversity and acculturation and ‘the commodification of experience through nostalgia’ demonstrated this movement towards acculturation that leads to nostalgic underpinnings.

## Contribution

For this study, the research contributes to literature on soft power and research on the JET Programme through expanding knowledge on the following aspects:

1. Expanding the concept of soft power to nostalgia through sociological investigations at the individual level through the JET Programme.
2. Concentration on ALTs and AETs and not on roles of CIRs and SEAs.
3. Concentration on the JET Programme and links to previous schemes of American MEF and British BET.

4. Understanding how JETs become informal goodwill ambassadors for the Japanese government at the individual level.

Firstly, while much research has investigated a top-down approach to soft power (Nye, 2004, 2008, 2011; Lam, 2007; McConnell, 2008; Watanabe *et al*, 2008), this research emphasises the importance of a bottom-up movement through individuals specifically on the JET Programme. The importance of international programmes to reinforce an image of a favourable social and cultural climate has been discussed within literature on soft power (Nye, 2004: 109). Indeed, the minute details of how individuals emotionally process and assist in this image creation have been lacking. How acculturation is part of the attachment process that engages with identity and past reflection is important to address. Therefore, this study links the propensity of nostalgia as an important dimension to the soft power process.

Secondly, I decided only to interview those in the role of ALTs or AETs. The reason for this being that the majority of JETs and BETs were placed in this role within the public school system to teach English. In fact, 90% of the participants are in the ALT role (Consulate General of Japan in New York, 2016). Thus, I felt that the experience and reflection of ALTs and AETs were the most advantageous perspective to gain an overall understanding of the programme.

Thirdly, this study explored the participants of the JET Programme and previous schemes, detailing the background and experiences of the participants. This study’s distinctiveness and originality stems from the analysis of JET/MEF and BETs’ backgrounds and their responses divided into decades from the 1980s to 2010. Additionally, limited literature delves into the informal experiences and influences of JET participants and its contribution to soft power.

Fourthly, The objective for the programme continues to be about the creation of goodwill ambassadors for Japan or *shinnichika* wo *sodateru* (*Keizai Doyukai,* 2014; Ranade, 2014). Even for the supporting organisations composed of MOFA, MEXT, MIC and through the mediation of CLAIR, understanding the intimate details of how JETs convey their experience can be insightful. While the ministries cannot control individual experiences, they can find value in the nostalgic attachments that JETs have been granted living in their localities. Indeed, how these participants keep Japan in their lives, even when confronted with adversity, is a significant phenomenon. By understanding JETs prolonged relationship to their host communities, more can be done with maintaining diplomatic ties at the grass roots level. Time on JET is an incipient diplomatic engagement that the ministries can utilise in the long-term. Nostalgia can play a role in activating alumni to keep Japan in their present lives.

## Suggestions for future studies

Concerning future studies, this study contributes to the informal influence of soft power. Memory and nostalgia are powerful catalysts to the promulgation of informal diplomacy. In this case, the emphasis is on the image projection and attachment of the alumni to Japan.

Another expansion to this study could be the addition of the less common roles of CIR and SEA. To have a detailed understanding of the programme, these roles need to be investigated. Additionally, the rare roles of those teaching other languages, such as German, French and Korean, etc. could be another study (Jain, 2005: 83).

Additionally, research could be done on how the JET Programme has been an influential factor for those alumni entering academia. Living in Japan may have instigated willingness to further study Japan, perhaps go into other areas of higher education. I have been organising a JET alumni academic special interest group with the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme Alumni Association in the UK and Dr Matanle at the School of East Asian Studies. From this event, interviews could be taken to obtain data to find if JET influenced their career choices.

Expanding the concept of soft power through nostalgia can be applied to other similar exchange programmes. For example, the American Peace Corps. and the European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students known as ERASMUS (Erasmusprogramme.com, 2010), could demonstrate the benefits of cultural exchange programmes within societies.

## Conclusion

The aim of this research is to expand the concept of soft power through the extension of nostalgia. Although other theoretical and methodological approaches were possible, I found life history and auto-ethnography the most suitable approach for understanding soft power at the individual level. The intimate details of the experience could only be conveyed through life history and auto-ethnographic analysis. The JET Programme is a prime example of how a long-term exchange embeds the participant into the community, is given a certain privileged status and comfortable economic compensation to mainly fresh graduates. Thus, these points contribute to the nostalgic underpinnings to an experience that unfolded at a particular period of one’s life. Through seeking opportunity in globalising world, imagining Japan, going through adversity and then becoming familiar with the culture and society, individuals have a capacity to become attached to the country. These rhythms and patterns are conducive to the dispersion of an image of Japan abroad by these individuals becoming carriers of that knowledge of its society and culture. The JET Programme is an ideal example of how experience living abroad can contribute to soft power development at the individual level. This study will contribute to future knowledge in the sociological field of soft power and nostalgia for the JET Programme. As Schumacher (1993: 64-65) has expressed,

The way in which we experience and interpret the world obviously depends very much indeed on the kind of ideas that fill our minds…. When people ask for education they normally mean something more than mere training, something more than mere knowledge of facts, and something more than mere diversion. Maybe they cannot themselves formulate precisely what they are looking for; but I think what they are really looking for is ideas that would make the world, and their own lives intelligible to them.

Going abroad is a form of education that challenges our values and our mind-sets. JETs are seeking to understand another place, society and culture, where at the end of the experience, become part of their identity. This process is instrumental to the foundation and production of nostalgia.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Further details of the participants

### 1980s

**Marty** was a former BET participant from 1981-1983. Marty was 23 years old and was placed in Osaka. Marty eventually returned to the UK where he went into teaching back in the UK.

**Cora** is another early BET participant from Scotland and on the programme from 1984 to 1985. She was 22 when she began the programme. Here she reflects on her reasons for going to Japan. Cora just moved to Edinburgh, Scotland after living in Japan for 30 years. She feels uncertain about staying in the UK on a permanent basis, and may return to Japan where she has permanent residency.

**Natalie**, an American from Northern California was on the early MEF Programme. She was there from 1982 to 1984 and was 22 years old when she began. She currently lives in Japan.

**Shannon** is an American from South Carolina, but grew up in Michigan. She is currently living in Japan and was on the JET Programme a year after its inauguration in 1987. Shannon was 22 years old, soon turned 23 when she left to live in Tokushima Prefecture.

**Bart** started the MEF Programme in 1986 and stayed for one year. He was 26 years old when he began living in Chiba Prefecture. In fact, 1986 was the last year of MEF and gave Bart the opportunity to become one of the first ALTs on the JET Programme, He ended up staying for an additional three years. This was a rare opportunity and a pivotal time period for the programme. Thus, he was able to see the transitional phase from MEF/BET to JET.

**Alfie** left from Boston, Massachusetts in 1984 at the age of 22 to participate on MEF from 1984 to March of 1987. The reason for leaving early was to accept a position in CLAIR. Alfie’s experience was also at a significant period in the early days of JETs formation. He was able to understand the process as a participant, and as a part of the top down approach through CLAIR. Alfie has made his living in Japan

**Terrance** left on the BET Programme in 1983, and stayed for about one year and half. He currently resides in Japan as a professor teaching in Yokohama and was 22 years old when started BET.

**Nina** was on the first year of the JET Programme in 1987 at the Hiroshima Board of Education where she was a ‘one shot’ AET (Assistant English Teacher). She is from Los Angeles and is of Japanese decent. Nina started the programme at the age of 29. She continues to live in Japan where she teaches at a national university in Japan.

### 1990s

**Patrick** was on JET from 1989-91 at the age of 26 and worked for CLAIR soon after as a programme coordinator from 1991-93. Initially, he worked in Tokushima Prefecture that is located in Shikoku. I have put him in the 1990s decade as he started quite late in the decade into the 1990s. He is currently working in the UK as a senior lecturer related to Japan.

**Elaina** is from Michigan and was on the programme from 1993-95. She left for Japan at 23 and was placed in Shimane prefecture. She resides in the US and works as a professor with an emphasis on East Asia.

**Abigail** is from the UK and participated on JET from 1996-1997 in Kagoshima. She was 22 years old when she left. She presently lives in London. Abigail has been able to intertwine Japan related work into her life. She currently puts on networking events in London to introduce British to potential business clients in Japan

**Jackson** was on JET from 1994 -1996 and originally from New Zealand. He was 25 years old at the time and was placed in Nagano-ken. Jackson currently lives in Japan and has permanent residency. He was an early *Monbushō* scholarship recipient studying for a master’s degree in architecture at the University of Tokyo. He used to work for a Japanese 3D graphics company and currently works for an international finance firm.

**Reina** had been a JET in the early 1990’s and in 2003. For this section, the reasons for her initial involvement on JET will be expressed. Her participation in 2003 will be interpreted in the 2000 decade of this chapter. In 1990, she went to Japan at the age of 22 for three years

### 2000s

**Mark** was on the programme from 2006-2011 when he was 24 years old and was placed in Fukui prefecture. He grew up in the south of England in the UK.

**Jill** was on the programme from 2000 to 2003 and was placed in Oita Prefecture. She is originally from East Anglia, UK but now resides in Edinburgh. Jill was 22 years old when she left for JET. Jill has had experience as a professional Taiko performer and works as a cultural representative of Japan to the UK.

**Jacob** is from California, USA and was on JET for one year from 2002 to 2003 in Kita-Kyushu. He was 23 years old when he left for Japan. Jacob’s career at the time was in video editing. He is now working for Nintendo in the US

**Eunice** left for JET when she was 20 and was placed in Ishikawa prefecture. She stayed from 2007 to 2010. Eunice is studying to become a nurse in the UK, which is where is from.

**Thomas** was on JET for the full 5 years from 2006 to 2011. He is originally from Kentucky, USA and was 22 years old when he started JET. At the time of interview he was working for a company similar to JET.

**Maurice** was another 5 year JET but continued to work for the Osaka board of education. He was placed in Osaka prefecture and was there from 2007- 2012. He was a much older JET, at the age of 28. Back home in Southwest Virginia. Maurice ran a karate dojo that obviously influenced his reasons for going on JET.

**Reina** had already been on the programme in the 1990’s but decided to return in 2003 (Refer to 1990’s JETs).

### 2010s

**Taylor** is from the UK and participated from 2008-2012 in Yamagata Prefecture. He was 23 years old when he began. I have put him into the 2010 decade, as he started later in 2008 and continued till 2012.

**Elle** was on the programme from 2012-2014. She turned 22 when she arrived in Oita prefecture. At the time of interview she was studying for a Masters in Psychology at the University of Edinburgh shortly after leaving JET. She is originally from Miami, Florida in the US

**Simon** is from a small town in Australia where he grew up learning Japanese and continued to do so in university. He had experience living in Japan as a high school exchange student in the past. Simon then went onto JET in 2012 at the age of 23 and was placed in the Kanagawa prefecture. Unlike other JETs, his position was advertised through the local government of his town. Since his town has a sister city relationship with a town in Kanagawa prefecture, they wanted to hire someone specifically from his area. If he were not able to become an ALT through the JET programme he would have been hired privately through the local government in Kanagawa.

**Lorna** is unique in her experience on the programme. She was a participant from 2006-2007 in Gifu prefecture and again in 2013 in Awaji where she was still a JET at the time of interview. After her stint on JET in 2007, she worked for another company in Nagoya for about one year. Eventually, she returned back to Kentucky, USA where she read a master in East Asian studies focused on Japan. She returned in 2013 along with her husband who had never been to Japan.

**Laura** was a JET on her first year in 2013 in Mie prefecture. She was 23 years old when she went onto the programme and is from the UK.

## Appendix B: Interview with CLAIR Official and Ranade, former PA to CLAIR

**Interview on the Relationship of JET and CLAIR**

**25 August 2014**

**Responses**

So the JET Programme started because it’s difficult for each those local communities, or local governments to umm have or find those non Japanese young people themselves and have them come to Japan, so its…the JET Programme is a way for that to, for that to occur in one kind of centralized way.

The local governments are all together supporting this Programme, the JET Programme, and they are all supporting it by… advising it I guess, and then at the national level or in cooperation, enabling that programme to exist, there is the, CLAIR the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations, and sort of the three Japanese government ministries, the ministry of internal affairs and communication, and the ministry of foreign affairs, and the ministry of education, science and technology.

So what CLAIR does, the first thing, is ministry of foreign affairs selects JET people to become JET programme participants and CLAIR receives requests from local governments in Japan saying, we want this kind of person and CLAIR matches the people that the ministry of foreign affairs selects, and requests, and then umm makes that I Guess makes that pairing.

So, recently umm, I think in the past we have used semi-government quite a lot and recently we’re not using it quite as much, we are trying to focus more on the umm, the strengths or the main part of the JET Programme being the sponsoring local governments organizations more so then focusing on CLAIR.

So…maybe one way of thinking about it is umm like an organization or body, which is related to the government. Umm also CLAIR works through, with the money, which is provided, at the local governments in Japan, and also our staff is made up of, from those staff from those governments that have been sent temporarily to the headquarters of CLAIR in Tokyo.

If there is a request from the local government in Japan, for a participant of a certain country as a general rule that country will become a participating country… it’s not as like CLAIR or the national government is saying let’s have this participating countries, the request comes to CLAIR from the local gov. for a participant of a certain country. For example if someone said from the local government says we want one participant from Vietnam, then CLAIR will receive that request and speak with the ministry of foreign affairs, which will then find a participant from Vietnam.

So the JET Programme originally started as a programme for local governments and today also it exists to and CLAIR as well being involved in the programme exists to make this programme for local governments. CLAIR doesn’t move until we get a request from, the local authorities, so the local authorities, I guess makes that decision for a JET participant) and so, the local authority is the body which pays the wages for that person who comes to them.

And also the local authority does give a certain amount of money to CLAIR for sort of administrative, the things which CLAIR does, like organizing orientation, things like that…

So there is a system but it’s quite complicated… whereby umm there is some kind of subsidy of money to that local government for having a JET participant...just following on what I said earlier, it’s not, even though it’s a programme which is for local governments but it’s not a programme for a particular local government, so it doesn't mean that everything will go in the way that that local government wanted at all times, so if that particular local government wants a JET to arrive in Fall instead of umm summer, then it’s not exactly going to work in that way because its not, it has to work, it’s a programme which is working for all of the local governments, so as one big system also, it can’t just work however they want it to work...so there is some kind of national umm control there as well.

**Ranade, former PA to CLAIR Interview *Interview about JET and CLAIR***

**17 July 2014**

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication, has the primary jurisdiction over the JET Programme, or CLAIR, since CLAIR is the organisation that runs the JET Programme, while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry for Education, Culture and Sports, support JET Programme, in terms of the ALT selection criteria or the policies connected with team teaching, or ALT matter but The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is more relevant to the CIRs, yeah CIR stuff. And the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications used to be じちしょう (自治省)\*1 the Ministry of Local Governments. JET programme is basically supported by the local governments.

The relationship between the central government and local governments have changed over the years, it’s becoming more decentralised at least for the purpose of appearances, well it might be there, but might be like that in reality as well but what they’re trying to say is that, “Okay we don’t rule over the local governments, but we only support them.”

The funding actually comes from the local governments to the ministry of internal affairs. *shomushō,* The Ministry of Internal Affairs, does fund most of the money but at the local governments

The central internationalisation of *chiho,* of the local governments? Or I’d say the non-urban areas, so JET Programme was intended to promote internationalisation at the grass-roots level, and that’s why the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which was in charge of, is in charge of local governments comes in the picture.

…the JET Programme has been around for more than 2 decades now and there must be a very definite policy behind that programme, and the words like soft power, they’re not usually used in the context of JET, not by the authorities, like CLAIR, not so much. But it definitely is, a type of soft power or kind of diplomacy, so a better way to put it is like *shinnichika*,wo *sodateru* which means to develop resources, like human resources to understand Japan or who have a positive image of Japan who will be like, goodwill ambassadors of Japan after the JET Programme*.*

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1. AJET is a support network constituted of elected JETs for the purpose of guidance and counseling and for presenting pressing matters to CLAIR (AJET, 2016). JETAA’s goal is to maintain links between alumni and the JET community, and promote cultural knowledge of Japan to participating nations and communities abroad (CLAIR, 2015b). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. An initiative that invites foreign exchange students in Japan to participate in homestays in Ishikawa prefecture. The aim is for cultural exchange and for students to experience Japanese culture, society and life (Japan Tent). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. European Commission [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Japanese name seal (Kameda, 2014: 105). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Today, referred to as *monbukagakushō* under MEXT. In 1983, MESC (now MEXT) gave *Mombushō* scholarships to overseas students to increase internationalisation (Mönch, *et al.*, 1990: 264; Umakoshi, 1997: 260-1). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)