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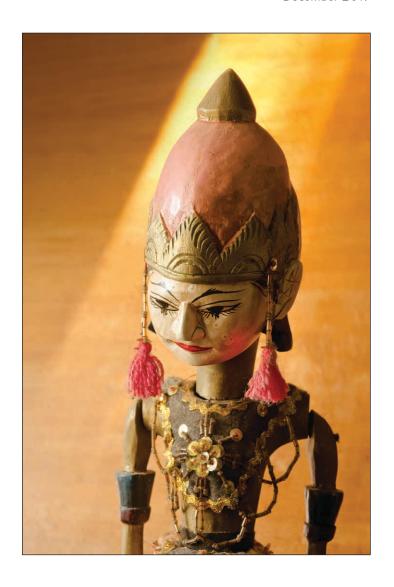
EMERGING GENERATION OF YOUTH WITH JAPANESE ETHNIC BACKGROUND IN AUCKLAND: THEIR BICULTURAL EXPERIENCES AND IDENTITY

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Abstract

Although the number of people who identify themselves as being 'Japanese' in the 2013 New Zealand census is still relatively small, the number of those who were born in New Zealand had increased by 7% from 2006. This suggests there is an emerging generation of ethnic cohorts, i.e., children of international marriages with a Japanese parent and children of Japanese migrants in New Zealand. However, there has been no study focusing on the life experiences of bicultural Japanese youth. Using interviews with 12 bicultural Japanese youths, both children of international marriages and those of Japanese migrants, this study will inquire into how they are constructing their ethnic and cultural identity and how they are developing their outlook in Auckland. The participants' experiences will be compared with those of their counterpart cohorts with Japanese heritage elsewhere: *hafu* 'children of international marriages in Japan', Amerasians and *kikokushijo* 'children of expatriates' as well as their contemporary East Asian adolescents' experiences in Auckland.

Key words: bicultural experiences, *hafu*, *kikokushijo*, 1.5 generation migrants, New Zealand/Japan

1. Introduction

New Zealand is becoming increasingly multiethnic. According to the 2013 census (Statistics New Zealand, 2013), among other major ethnic groups, Asian ethnic groups have increased by 33.0% nation-wide between 2006 and 2013. The Auckland region, particularly, is the most ethnically diverse region, with one in four people from an Asian ethnic background.

The number of people who identify themselves as being 'Japanese' in the 2013 census was 14,118, including temporary stayers.[1] Although the size of the ethnic Japanese population is small compared to other Asian ethnic groups, the number has increased by 40% compared to the figure in 2001. The 2013 census also revealed that,

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1   People who identified themselves as 'Japanese' was the 5th largest group among Asian ethnic groups according to the 2103 census. The numbers of the larger ethnic Asian cohorts are: Chinese (171,411), Indian (155,178), Pilipino (40,350) and Korean (30,171). Note that a person can state that they belong to more than one ethnic group.

nationally, among the people of a 'Japanese' background, the number of those who were born in New Zealand had grown to 3,930, an increase of 7% from 2006. The data further revealed that those born in New Zealand were less likely to speak Japanese (52.4%) compared to those born overseas (83.6%). These figures suggest that, although the population is still relatively small, there is an emerging generation of ethnic cohorts, i.e., children of international marriages with a Japanese parent and children of Japanese migrants in New Zealand.[2]

There has been much research on biracial and bicultural experiences pertaining to children of international marriages in Japan, often called *hafu* 'half'(Evanoff, 2010; Iwabuchi, 2014 Kamada, 2010, for example), *kikokushijo* 'children of expatriates' (Fry, 2007; Goodman 2012; Kanno 2000, 2008; Kano-Podolsky, 2004, 2008, for example) and Amerasians[3] (Murphy-Shigematsu, 2000, 2012; Root, 1996; Shin, 2010; Wallace, 2004, for example). For local relevance, studies have elucidated the experiences of 1.5 generation East Asian migrants in New Zealand, especially in Auckland, in light of transnationalism, returnees, racism, and different dimensions of in-betweenness (Bartley, 2010; Bartley & Spoonley, 2008; Butcher, 2004; Ho & Bedford, 2008; Ip, 2000, Lee; Friesen and Kearns, 2015; Wang and Collins, 2016, for example). However, studies that elucidate the experiences of Japanese ethnic groups in New Zealand are still limited (Boswell, 1995; Kominami, 2014; Kuragasaki-Laughton, 2007; Nakanishi, 2000; Tanaka, 1999, for example) and there has been no study so far that has inquired into life experiences focusing on bicultural Japanese youth.

Using interviews with 12 bicultural Japanese youths, both children of international marriages and those of Japanese migrants, between the ages of 19 and 32 at the time of the interviews, this study will inquire into what it is like to be living in Auckland in light of how they are constructing their ethnic and cultural identity and how that is influencing their outlook. The importance of listening to the narrative of individuals of a bicultural background has been advocated by researchers in the field (Kamada, 2010: 4; Iwabuchi, 2014: 243-284; Murphy-Shigematsu, 2012: 4; Wallace, 2004: 195). Murphy-Shigematsu (2000: 212) expects that bicultural experiences would be different when experienced in different parts of the world at different times in history: 'These pressures [to choose one's identity] vary by context – where we are positioned geographically, in what developmental stage of life, and in what historical moment'. Their narratives will be discussed in the context of bicultural experiences and identity issues reported in the literature on *hafu*, *kikokushijo*[4] and, to a certain degree, Amerasians. They will also be compared to those of contemporary 1.5 generation East Asian migrants in Auckland.

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2   According to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs' statistics of 2013, 5766 Japanese citizens were registered with the Consulate General of Japan in Auckland, excluding the long-term stayers and expatriates. Among these, Japanese females accounted for 3622 (63%), which may suggest cases of international marriages. This was also speculated in Boswell (1995: 112).

3   I use 'Amerasians' to refer to children of American and Asian parents who live in the United States.

4   There are some recent studies on Japanese abroad (Adachi, 2010; Goodman, 2003, for example). However, there are no studies that specifically look into the bicultural experiences and identity issues of Japanese migrants' children of recent years.

2. Cross-cultural experiences by young people

The experiences of children of international marriages and children of migrants are different and they are usually studied separately. However, in a generic sense of bicultural upbringing, they can be discussed under an overarching umbrella termed Cross-Cultural Kids (Cottrell, 2011). Cross Cultural Kids is an umbrella term to 'encompass the many and sometimes overlapping kinds of cross-cultural socialization' (Cottrell, 2011: 57) and it is defined as people who have 'lived in – or meaningfully interacted with – two or more cultural environments for a significant period of time during developmental years' (Van Reken and Bethel, 2006: 3, cited in Cottrell, 2007: 55). Such people include those who live between two cultures, such as children of international marriages, international adoptions, immigrants, refugees, and children of expatriates. Cottrell (2007: 55) states that while they share positive experiences such as an 'expanded world view' and 'adaptability', they go through difficulties such as often questioning 'who they are and where they 'fit in''.

In the context of this overarching bicultural upbringing experiences, I will first present bicultural experiences of *hafu* 'children of international marriages in Japan', Amerasians and *kikokushijo* 'children of expatriates'. This will give us some reference points specifically related to bicultural Japanese ethnicity. I will then introduce the experiences of 1.5 generation East Asian migrants in New Zealand discussed in recent studies. This will give us East Asian migrants children's bicultural experiences in a contemporary and local context. I will discuss issues pertinent to a specific cohort separately where appropriate.

2.1 Bicultural experiences of *hafu*, *kikokushijo* and **Amerasians**

The social constructs of *hafu* and *kikokushijo* in Japan have changed over the decades in Japan.[5] However, the overarching experiences discussed in the literature are similar both on the advantageous and challenging sides. Both aspects could also be experienced by Amerasians.

Racial discrimination, marginalization as well as lack of agency are experienced in all three cohorts. Kamada (2010: 6) states that ''othering' may serve to isolate and marginalize a certain group of mixed-ethnic minorities'. Evanoff (2010: 3) also discusses issues of 'racial and ethnic discrimination' and 'stereotyped experiences' for *hafu*. Murphy-Shigematsu (2012: 4) states that Amerasians are 'being othered, seen as

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5 For example, Iwabuchi (2014) presents how the social constructs of mixed race children have changed over the decades from the end of WWII to the present: from a shameful image of *konketsu-ji* (mostly referring to children of US soldiers after WWII), to objectified fashion models and TV talents, especially with a Caucasian parent. They have been referred to as *hafu* 'half' with a positive image for some decades. More recently, the composition of this *hafu* has changed dramatically due to increasing numbers of international brides (see also Burgess, 2010) and the experiences of children of foreign parents with diverse ethnic backgrounds can no longer be represented or understood under a single social construct (see also Evanoff, 2014: 147; Iwabuchi, 2014: 11-16). Referring to Sato (1997), Kano-Podolsky (2008) presents changes in the social construction of *kikokushijo* over the past few decades as well : from being labeled as 'education orphans' (1975-85), to 'symbols of Japanese internationalization' (85-90), and to 'trivialization' (90s) (See also Goodman, 2012).

different, marginalized, and isolated'. What's more, Amerasians in the United States not only feel a sense of marginality among mainstream White Americans but also within their own ethnic communities (Murphy-Shigematsu, 2000; Root, 1996; Shin, 2010; Wallace, 2004: 120). A sense of 'alienation' and 'rootlessness' is also felt by *kikokushijo* (Fry 2007: 136; Kanno, 2000b: 352). This sentiment comes from being othered and would also lead to a 'lack of identity' (Fry 2007: 136) even though they are ethnically fully Japanese. Goodman (2012: 30) mentions that *kikokushijo* were bullied and ostracized in the early days. Moreover, difficulties faced by *kikokushijo* on re-entry back into the Japanese school system have been discussed often (Kano-Podolsky, 2008: 56; Kanno, 2000b: 374). Returners with such experiences have been referred to as 'hidden migrants' in their own home country as they experience cultural shock (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001: 51-56).

Cottrell (2007: 55) argues that othering comes from how 'others see them differently than they see themselves'. In the case of children of mixed race, biracial physical appearances immediately set them apart from the main stream. Evanoff (2010: 157) states that 'differences in physical appearance can still marginalize *hafu* no matter how assimilated they are into Japanese culture'. Shin (2010:213) reports of a case where a Korean-American was 'often ridiculed for his Asian features' even in the present day American context. In the case of *kikokushijo*, othering comes between the mismatch of having a full-Japanese nationality and their 'foreigner-like' thinking and attitude from their overseas experiences (Kano-Podolsky, 2008: 57).

Evanoff (2010: 19) argues that 'the concept of *hafu* is not a private construct, but rather a social and a public one'. In spite of the small size of its population, *kikokushijo* also receive much public attention (Goodman, 2012; Kano-Podolsky, 2008: 57). Kano-Podolsky (2008: 56) conceives Japanese society as still being 'an ethnically and culturally homogenous nation for *kikokushijo*'.

In order to respond to social pressure, these groups of individuals are often forced to choose their identity and there is little agency in the choice. For example, Evanoff (2010: 158) talks about the social pressure for *hafu* to assimilate into the dominant society: 'Being monocultural and assimilating oneself to the dominant society should be more widely accepted as viable options for *hafu* in Japan'. Murphy-Shigematsu states: '[Amerasians] are commonly forced to choose, to come up with extreme solutions, either/or answers, and adopt a dichotomous vision of the world' (2012: 212). Kano-Podolsky (2008: 57) reports that *kikokushijo* had to resort to 'strategies of adaptation': they had to either ''scrape-off'' their overseas experiences to respond to Japanese social expectations, or 'graft' a layer of Japanese cultural patterns over those acquired while abroad'. Under such social pressure and restricted power of choice, they experience a dilemma of 'wanting to belong to' or 'freedom from' a community. (Evanoff: 19; Kanno, 2000:1). Evanoff sees multiculturalism as a way to overcome marginality of *hafu* (2010: 155) and acknowledges that such a social phenomenon is not relevant in an extensively multicultural city such as London (2010: 18).

Viewed from multicultural and interracial experiences, otherness gives them an advantage. Kamada (2010: 5) argues that there is a possibility of attaining heightened self-esteem among children of international marriage. Wallace (2004: 208) also

talks about 'privileges' and a 'celebratory' nature experienced among Amerasians. *Kikokushijo* were considered to be an international elite, especially when Japan was promoting internationalization from mid-1985 into 1990, which Goodman (1990: 5, cited in Kanno 2000b: 374) describes: '[*Kikokushijo*] are proclaiming their 'Otherness''. Kano-Podolsky (2008: 57) talks about *kikokushijo* being able to become 'the subject of envy and admiration for their life experience outside of Japan, especially their proficiency in foreign languages'.

In Japan both *hafu* and *kikokushijo* would enjoy a status advantage if they speak English, as English is a privileged language in the world (Hayden and Thompson, 1997). Kamada (2010: 262) notes how English could give *hafu* a prestige advantage: 'Even though many of the participants are not particularly proficient in English, they nevertheless position themselves as privileged in possessing the cultural and linguistic capital of English proficiency'. However, Evanoff (2010: 157) suggests that 'socioeconomic inequality' prevents some *hafu* from achieving bilingual ability as some families cannot send them to international schools. Bilingualism among *kikokushijo* was highly regarded in the trend of internationalisation in Japan. The Japanese government considered *kikokushijo* with English competence a 'valuable asset' (Ministry of Education, 1987: 155).

2.2 Experiences of 1.5 generation East Asian migrants in New Zealand

Experiences of current 1.5 generation East Asian migrants in New Zealand have often been discussed in light of its transnational nature (see, for example, Bartley, 2010; Bartley & Spoonley, 2008; Butcher, 2004; Ho & Bedford, 2008; Ip, 2000). For example, Bartley and Spoonley (2008) describe their transnational characteristics as 'the harbingers of a new transnationalism':

> In New Zealand, the 1.5 generation Asian migrant adolescents – financially well-resourced, motivated to pursue educational qualifications and high-skilled occupations, bilingual (at least), and with a degree of cultural flexibility and transnational experience – are not destined to settle in New Zealand. … They have options, and they can set into play a number of trajectories. (Bartley and Spoonley, 2008: 80)

Such bicultural experiences are not without challenges. The majority of subjects in recent studies have experienced racism and discrimination at school. For example, among the 1.5 generation Chinese migrants they studies, Wang and Collins (2016: 2787) report that 'experiences of racially infused bullying in childhood were mentioned by almost all interviewees' including 'being bullied, being called names, and having their English accent mocked'. Bartley and Spoonley (2008) also state that their subjects from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Korea felt that 'their non-white status produces social distance between themselves and the majority population in New Zealand' (68) and that they 'struggled with the need to make sense of their identity as migrants in New Zealand' (70). Lee, Friesen and Kearns (2015: 39) report that a large number of Korean New Zealanders experienced discrimination and alienation in their teenage years through to employment, which cause some of them to eventually return to Korea. Wang and Collins (2016) report that negative racial experiences 'influence the longer term

prospects for intercultural encounters in the host society' (2785). They also indicate concern that 'traumatic events in early life can have a fundamental impact on later life self-esteem and the ability to overcome difference' (2787).

Not only feeling othered by the dominant white society, Wang and Collins (2016: 2785) argue that migrants' children cannot participate actively as 'authentic kiwis' even if they desire to do so, because parents often impose cultural values and ideologies at home. Not only the home culture but sub-ethnic group formation at school such as Indian, Korean and white cliques seems to influence their socializing pattern 'through university and following graduation'(Wang and Collins, 2016: 2787).

Bartley and Spoonley (2008) and Bartley (2010) argue that the extent to which they experience racism around their Asianness influences their identity formation: 'Specifically, their experience of being racialised as Asian in New Zealand defined, to varying extents, the identity of every participants' (Bartley and Spoonley, 2008: 70). Bartley (2010: 386) argues that some embrace the identity of 'Asianness' while having been able to develop a sense of being a New Zealander though 'kiwi friendship' and 'citizenship', while others felt that 'being Asian meant confronting a boundary that has been created and maintained by others, which limited their identity as New Zealanders, and through which they will never completely be allowed to pass'. Thus, for 1.5 generation East Asian adolescents, not only marginalization by the majority, but also pressure from their own family as well as the sub-ethnic cliques seem to influence their identity formation.

Note that, in addition to the in-betweenness of the two cultures, Bartley and Spoonley (2008) and Bartley (2010) argue that the 1.5 generation experiences 'in-betweenness' of childhood and adulthood. Further, they also position Asian ethnic minorities as a 'visible minority' (Bartley: 387) in-between the Pakeha majority and Maori in the New Zealand context.

Despite such challenges, Wang and Collings (2016: 2783) argue that a sense of 'cosmopolitanism' can be developed in some 1.5 generation migrants through their 'agentive desire and will to utilize their intercultural competencies to build social relations and overcome distance that can be generated in intercultural encounters'. Referring to accounts of the first, second and 1.5 generation Chinese migrants in Australia, Liu (2015: 34) talks about the intercultural skillfulness they develop of negotiating 'through the bicultural environment to "fit in" to different context' without being disoriented.

3. Local context

Within the multicultural environment of Auckland, New Zealand, the image of Japan and Japanese people is in general favourable. For example, 'New Zealander's Perceptions of Asia and Asian Peoples 2015' reports that New Zealanders' feelings towards Asians cooled down in 2015 compared to 2014. However, their feelings towards Japanese were the warmest (Asia New Zealand Foundation, 2015: 21). In response to this finding, the president of the Japanese Society of Auckland was reported as saying 'Kiwis feel warmest towards Japanese people because few are property investors … Many New

Zealanders are also more aware of Japanese culture, whether it is through the *sushi* they eat or Japanese language that they learned at school' (Tan, March 23, 2016).

Indeed Japanese food culture represented by *sushi* permeates daily life in Auckland. Allen and Sakamoto (2011: 20) report on the hugely successful *sushi* industry by expatriate Korean retailers, stating that no fewer than 90 shops and restaurants sold *sushi* within the Auckland CBD: 'In Auckland's business precinct today, *sushi* is as readily available as sandwiches, 'filled rolls', meat pies, and chips, staple fare of the Kiwi office worker throughout the 1980s and 90s'.

The number of students engaged in foreign language learning in general declined in New Zealand in the last decade. However, Japanese is the most popular language studied at tertiary level. In the secondary sector it is currently the third most studied language, following French and the second placed Spanish by a small margin (Ministry of Education, 2016).

Japanese migrants to New Zealand in recent decades are life style migrants who came to New Zealand with a positive attitude to improve their life experiences (Johnson, 2009; Johnson and Kawai, 2011). Their forward-looking attitude would not only influence their children's life experiences in New Zealand but also New Zealanders' perception towards Japanese migrants themselves.

Japanese pop culture, such as music, *anime* and TV dramas, is much appreciated by the young generation in New Zealand. A recent study on the motivation of studying Japanese at university has found that 70% of the 367 respondents said 'interest in pop culture' was one of the reasons for taking up Japanese in the first place (Minagawa *et al.* 2016).

4. Participants and method

Participants were recruited through an advertisement in a Facebook page of a local Japanese cultural society, introducing myself as a Japanese mother who has brought up two children in a mixed marriage. Twelve participants, nine children of international marriages and three children of Japanese migrants, participated in the interviews. The children of international marriages were born between 1984 and 1997. Three were male and six female. Ethnicities/nationalities of the non-Japanese parents were: European New Zealander (3), Indian Malaysian (2), Chinese Malaysian (1), European Australian (2) and European British (1). Their schooling was mostly local, with some having been to international schools overseas. Their Japanese fluency ranged from 'being able to carry out day-to-day conversation' to being at the level of 'being able to use Japanese in a work-place environment'. The three participants of Japanese migrants were born in 1994 and 1995. Two of them were male. One was born and raised entirely in Auckland and the other two moved to Auckland at the age of two and four respectively. All of them went to local schools in Auckland. Two of them went to a Japanese supplementary school for a few years. Their Japanese is fluent: all of them are able to read newspapers and engage in conversation on complex topics.[6] All of the participants have native English proficiency.

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6   See Appendix 1 for the participants' background information.

One-to-one interview sessions were held during October 2014 and March 2016, each lasting between 30 and 90 minutes. The interviews were conducted using semi-structured questions, including:

- How do you identify yourself ethnically and culturally? Why?

- Is cultural identity what you choose or is it what others impose on you?

- Has your cultural identity changed over time? How and why?

- Was there a particular incident that triggered that change?

- Do you think what you think of your cultural identity will change in the future? Why?

Each session was recorded with participants' agreement (Reference no. 013522 granted by University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee) and recordings were transcribed by the current author into transcripts totaling 23,700 words.

5. What is it like to live in Auckland with Japanese ethnicity

When asked to describe their ethnic identity in a few words, several of the participants of international marriages felt that they are in-between the two without claiming either strongly; some simply declared they are 'New Zealander'; and one identified herself strongly as Japanese. For the three monoracial participants, while the sense of being of Japanese ethnicity occupies a positive place in their experiences, New Zealand perspectives and behaviours were also embraced.[7] (See Appendix 2 for a snapshot of their identity in a few words by all of the participants.) This is different from the bicultural experiences of *hafu* and *kikokushijo* which are shaped within the monoethnic society of Japan. In what follows I will discuss their voices around the issues of: their perception of Auckland being a multiethnic society; a sense of cultural privilege; a private construct of their identity; and their agency. I will also compare some aspects of their experiences to that of 1.5 generation East Asian migrants in Auckland.

Multiethnic Auckland

None of the participants experienced any racial bullying; nor have they felt any sense of marginalisation in their life in Auckland. They take it for granted that they are just like any other people around them and they seem to share a strong perception that this is because Auckland is a multiethnic city:

> New Zealand is really multicultural, I feel like I can fit in anywhere. … it's not a big deal to me. (*SH*, biracial)[8]

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7   When asked what Kiwiness is to the participants, their answers referred to values and behaviours, such as 'more outgoing', 'more friendly', 'outspoken', 'self-confidence', 'women being powerful', 'gender equality', 'liking outdoor activities and sports' and 'being laid back'. In contrast, Japanese characteristics were described as 'consideration for others', 'hierarchical', 'conforming', and 'being indirect'.

8   The participants' names are protected. Each participant is given random initials. I use 'biracial' to represent 'children of international marriages' and 'monoracial' to mean 'children of Japanese migrants'.)

> Nobody really cares what race I am because there is so many culturally diverse people here. (*MA*, biracial)

> I think in New Zealand, especially in Auckland, people accept anybody as a New Zealander' (*YA*, biracial)

Egalitarianism in New Zealand was also explicitly mentioned:

> New Zealand is kind of a cultural melting pot. …You are generally brought up with everybody on equal standing. (*PM*, biracial)

> Gender and equality are very important here. (*YA*, biracial)

Their perception of Auckland society is in tune with what Belich and Wevers (2008: 5) describe as the key characteristics of the New Zealand society: 'permeable' 'ethnically mixed' as well as 'egalitarian' and 'community participation'. My participants seem to feel that they live in a multiethnic city where diversity of physical appearance and different sets of values and behaviours are the norm and there does not seem to be a 'fitting in' issue with them. This is in contrast to the sentiment of marginality and the lack of sense of belonging reported by other Japanese bicultural cohorts in a country which is still portrayed as 'ethnically and culturally homogenous nation' (Kano-Podolsky, 2008: 56) and is far from an ideal multiethnic society to nurture *hafu* as a true multicultural individual (2010: 155). To my participants, Auckland seems to be providing a multiethnic environment for them. The fact that none of my participants experienced any racism during their formative years in Auckland contributed to how they feel about their Japanese ethnic identity. As noted earlier, Bartley and Spoonley (2008) state that the degree to which one experienced racism influenced their identity formation. The current participants were more on the side of the spectrum of the experiences of 1.5 generation East Asian migrants who were not exposed to much racism. However, this does not mean that otherness is irrelevant to their identity formation. One participant with Japanese parents described his ethnicity as a 'reference point' because of the very multi-ethnic environment of New Zealand, saying that 'especially in New Zealand where there's so many different cultures. … it's good to have at least a little bit of kind of 'I'm from this country'' (*RO*, monoethnic).

A sense of cultural privilege

Having Japanese ethnicity seems to give my participants more than an ethnic and cultural reference point but a certain privilege living in Auckland. Remember that Kamada (2010: 5) argues that it is possible for *hafu* to develop a sense of 'an identity of privilege and heightened self-esteem' in Japan which are associated with the European status and the English language. Proficiency in English also gives *kikokushijo* an edge. A sense of privilege is being felt by all of my participants, which comes, in our case, from having a Japanese heritage. Favourable images of Japan as a country, Japanese people as well as the popular Japanese language in New Zealand seem to be contributing to such an experience. *MA* (biracial) said that when she tells people of her Japanese lineage the reaction is 'Oh that's so cool!'. *JH* (biracial) says he even feels embarrassment because the reaction of people who find out that he is half-Japanese is almost that of excitement. *SH* (biracial) says that the rarity of Japanese in Auckland

compared to Chinese makes her 'special'. *RO* (monoracial) feels he is in a privileged position when he tells his friends that he has read *manga* and *anime* in the original language. *CE* (biracial) proudly spoke about her attraction to Japanese culture: 'I like to watch Japanese movies and TV shows, and I read Japanese books. I often pick Japanese movies on the plane. I've read some Murakami and I've read some Kazuo Ishiguro.' Internationally recognized modern Japanese culture is a source of pride with her. This is a different perception to that of 'being Asian is not cool' which is experienced at school (Wang and Collins, 2016: 2787).

Private construct of their identity

The concept of *hafu* in Japan is a social and public one. *Kikokushijo* has also been publically discoursed. Both of these bicultural cohorts stand out as special groups in the strongly monoethnic and monocultural society of Japan, where they are pressured to assimilate to the mainstream. Our participants, on the other hand, appear to construct their identity on a more private and personal level and are not bounded by socially formed constructs like their counterparts in Japan, nor experience pressure for assimilation. What is also absent in the stories of our biracial participants is that, unlike some cases of Amerasians discussed above, they do not feel marginalized by the local Japanese communities as a special ethnic cohort, either.

While the Chinese and Koreans migrants form 'visible' minorities between Pakeha and Maori, the Japanese ethnic population is small and less visible. This would allow them to be able to construct their identity more freely than some of their East Asian counterparts in New Zealand. We should note here that the Chinese ethnic group should not be considered as homogeneous in their patterns of assimilation into the host culture. Eyou, Adair and Dixon (2000: 541) report that ethnic Chinese from large ethnic groups such as Hong Kong, compared to Taiwan, China and Malaysia, 'may have less involvement with the mainstream society'.

Relating to the private construct of their identity, the local Japanese cohorts do not have to respond to social expectations of bilingual proficiency like their counterparts in Japan. Varied degrees of language proficiency in Japanese appear to be a personal matter to them. As noted earlier, statistics show that fewer children of Japanese ethnic background born in Auckland tend to speak Japanese. Japanese language proficiency did vary among the participants, especially among the biracial group. A slight sense of regret and inadequacy was expressed among those who do not have a competent level of proficiency. *MO* (biracial) felt that he feels 'lacking' because he cannot speak Japanese fluently. To my question of whether *CE* (biracial) felt inadequate because her Japanese is limited, her initial answer was 'sometimes'. However, she elaborated that not being fluent in Japanese does not matter because she lives in an English-speaking country. *MA* (biracial) responded that although she does not speak the language fluently, she embraces her biculturalness as she knows a lot about the Japanese culture. The motivation for becoming bilingual for our participants is not to gain a socially privileged position like *hafu* and *kikokushijo* in Japan, where to be able to speak English is a privilege. For our participants it is driven more for *personal* reasons, i.e., to be able to communicate with their Japanese grandparents, or even with their Japanese parents.

Absence of pressure at home

Unlike 1.5 generation East Asian adolescents, the three participants of the Japanese migrant's families did not feel pressure from their parents. For example, *TY* says that his parents did not force Japaneseness into his upbringing and welcomed him developing the culture of the country that they migrated to: 'They never imposed Japaneseness on me, more or less they sort of wanted me to be more New Zealand-like I guess because that's where you are. No point in Japanese in a non-Japanese society'. The parents' positive attitude towards their children to take on Kiwiness was also related by *RO*: 'I think they will be happy that… yes because that was the purpose and they can actually see that kind of worked. It's how they wanted to, so I think they'll be quite happy'.

Because of such support, they expressed that, while they retain their Japaneseness, they have developed and are embracing ways of thinking and behaviours of New Zealand culture:

> How I do things would be probably the New Zealand way rather than the Japanese way. I've come to accept that. (*TY,* monoracial)

> It's kind of mannerism and confidence, self-confidence as well. That kind of Kiwi feature. I think I have probably picked that up, growing up here. (*RO,* monoracial)

> Because I've been brought up here, my personality is really Kiwi or not really Japanese: more outgoing; more friendly. Also I say things directly, which is not very Japanese. [It's] Kiwi, New Zealand. (*HC,* monoracial)

Parents' migrating to New Zealand for lifestyle reasons is helping their children's assimilation into the local culture. Interestingly, all three participants with migrant parents had a more distinct New Zealand accent compared to some of the participants of the international marriages I interviewed.

Agency in choosing one's identity

Zaharna (1989: 508) argues there are always mirrors that serve to help develop people's identity of bicultural individuals in the process of a journey to the *self*. Kanno (2000b: 375) also argues that 'a person's identity is shaped and reshaped through interaction with others'. Bartley (2010: 386) quotes one of his subject's accounts that what others think of you shape how you feel whether you belong to society: 'To feel like you really belonged, I think the society, other people have to accept you, to make you feel like you really belonged'. Unlike their Japanese ethnic counterparts or local East Asian youth, our participants embrace agency in choosing their identity in their life in Auckland: 'I think It's something you can choose' (*SH,* biracial), 'I don't feel like I have to choose one over the other' (*YA,* biracial); 'Because I personally identify myself as Japanese, people around me also tend to identify me as Japanese as well' (*MK,* biracial); 'It is something I choose because I can choose to tell people I'm half-Japanese' (*MA,* biracial).

Mirrors, however, are held against them more distinctly when they are temporarily in Japan or interacting with Japanese people who were raised in Japan. However, even in such cases, their accounts suggest that it is simply the others, not them, who think 'they don't fit in'. Our participants feel they have learned to exercise agency in choosing who they are, as is evident in their words: 'So I am teaching myself to stop worrying about it' (*YA*, biracial); 'It's just that they don't understand it' (*LI*, biracial); 'That's their problem' (*TY*, monoracial). My participants' agency must be supported by the sense of security that they have a full membership within the primary society they live in, and they accept the fact that they are only 'outsiders' to the Japanese society, where they do not need to belong.

6. Journey to self

While they did not experience bullying at school or lost self-confidence in forming their identity, some of the participants revealed insights that came from their experiences of negotiating their bicultural identity through 'a journey into the self' (Alder, 1975: 22, cited in Fry 2007: 141). McKay & Wong (1996: 579) also talks about the multifaceted and dynamic nature of identity as being 'multiple, fluid and often contradictory'. In what follows, I will discuss some such experiences in depth.

Between the push and pull – mother's cultural values

Murphy-Shigematsu talks about how children of international marriages are being challenged constantly to find their place: 'the contexts that push and pull us towards a dichotomous either/or worldview and way of being are constantly in play' (2012: 213). The stories of my participants from the biracial families revealed that they indeed move between the two cultures within the biracial family environment. Two female participants talked about their mother's influence in their upbringing and how such in-betweenness allowed them to blend and shift their identities.

LI was born in Auckland to her Australian father and Japanese mother and she was educated at local schools. *LI* talks about being between two cultures:

> My mother … talks about her culture, like in her perspective of it, I wish I can understand, but there is also the European culture, so I feel like I'm pulling between the two.

LI also talks about how the cultural habit of being 'polite' from the Japanese side blended into her identity in the way she speaks in English. She says that English speakers would take that as a sign of her maturity.

YA migrated to New Zealand when she was two years old with a Japanese speaking European New Zealand father. She talks about consciously balancing the different sets of cultural values. She described how her mother brought Japanese cultural values into her upbringing:

> I only now have started realizing that I find my mother brought very Japanese values ['very considerate' and 'very hospitable'] with her and she tries to give those to me and any advice she gave me when I was a child was definitely Japanese values.

However, *YA* has realized that she does not have to act on these Japanese values all the time. She now feels that it depends on 'where you are in society' and spoke highly of the assertive and authoritative nature of New Zealand women. She is happy to have Japanese lineage but she is in a comfortable place to say that ethnicity is only part of you and 'it doesn't have to define all of you'. This illustrates YA's bicultural competencies to skillfully shift between identities so that she can "fit in" different social context' without disorientation.

'Expanded world view' and 'adaptability'

As noted earlier, Cottrell (2007: 55) talks about the 'expanded world view' and 'adaptability' among those how live between two cultures. Expanded perspective was indeed reported by some participants: 'You get different perspectives on the world' (*YA,* biracial); 'It's very convenient because being half gives you two different perspectives'; 'It's good because I gain perspective of three different cultures of New Zealand, Malaysian and Japanese' (*NS,* biracial). Bicultural upbringing has taught them that there is more than one perspective and prepared them to take on more different cultural perspectives. Some of them have learned other language(s) at university and have also been on exchange to study in countries where that language is spoken. *PM* (biracial) talks about the ease with which a biracial person can adopt another language with a different persona: 'Any kind of half person making a new persona to adapt is very easy'.

They even experience a special space, which is not dichotomous. Kamada (2010: 7) notes a place experienced by children of international marriages: '[*hafu*] inhabit a 'third-space' identity inclusive of – and yet separate from – either the first or second 'spaces' of their two ethnically diverse parents'.[9] Murphy-Shigematsu (2000: 159) also argues that Amerasians not only enjoy the duality of cultures but they could 'synthesize it in new forms of identity'. Such an experience was related eloquently by *PM* (biracial), who has experienced the most complex of life trajectories of the biracial participants interviewed. When asked about his ethnic identity, he gave two answers: 'Japanese-European', and 'what I would call *myself*'. This is the space that that does not belong to either:

> Being half excludes you from certain aspects of each culture but leaves you in a zone where you can kind of make your own rules. There's three different worlds here. There's a Japanese world, there's an English and there's just *yourself*.

This is a freeing notion and it takes one's identity to a space that would transcend the narrowly perceived biracial and bicultural dichotomy. This resonates with what Hayden and Wong (1997:355) describe as *international understanding* of 'tolerance, cultural awareness and understanding, broadening of perspectives and the losing of any sense of cultural superiority' and Wang and Collings's (2016) *cosmopolitan* outlook. There was indeed a sense of such an expanded identity among my participants. Some say that they are free from the notion of a dichotomous pull and are in a place where superficial labeling loses meaning. Global identities with expanded world view and adaptability is being born among them in Auckland:

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9   See 'third culture' in more details in Useem, Useem & Donoghue (1963).

I think that nationality can be very limiting. (*CE,* biracial)

Being multicultural allows you to see yourself as a global citizen and not attach yourself to any particular identity. (*SH*, biracial)

[A] lot of things that I feel benefit the new generation of like bicultural globalized children. I would say one of them is just openness where people believe in a quality. (*PM*, biracial)

[Bilingual/biculturalness] is definitely widening your perspective, understanding something that's novel to you. The world is only gonna get more global probably. So you might as well be part of that and use to your advantage. (*TY*, monoracial)

And I really would like to, in a way, educate people, and help them see from different points of view, in a more open-minded way. …I think the world also seems smaller or more connected… (*YA*, biracial)

Several of my participants expressed aspirations of seeking career opportunities in the rest of the world, not limited Japan. This is also in accord of the transnational nature of 1.5 generation East Asian migrants who cross national borders for job opportunities and life styles.

Fluidity of identity

There were accounts that support the view that identity is not a stative construct among my participants. They experienced this change through their formative years.

LI (biracial) was born in Auckland to a European Australian father and Japanese mother. She went to Japan during primary school for short periods of time. At that time she was not quite understand what was going on around her because she did not understand the language. So, after she worked hard to improve her Japanese she went back to Japan to study at a high school, feeling confident that she would be able to 'just fade into Japanese society' with her linguistic ability. To her it was a 'revenge' round to show them that she was one of them. However, although she felt that she was successfully interacting with everyone physically, on a mental level she realized that the fact that she likes to say her own opinion did not work in Japanese society where conformity is strictly observed. She hadn't understood the New Zealand cultural side within herself before she was mirrored in Japan. So she has come to terms with the idea that linguistic fluency does not necessarily guarantee her full place in Japanese society if she carries and embraces her New Zealand cultural characteristics within her. She also felt that she was 'excluded' in Japan because of her Caucasian looks on her most recent trip to Japan.

PM (biracial), who is a competent bilingual, says he has constantly been in a state of flux: 'A personality, especially of someone who's a very multifaceted linguistic personality, … is always in flux, where they have to kind of adapt'. He recounts his experience in England, where he felt orientalism was still quite strong. There he needed to downplay his Japanese side so that he would not be thought of as 'that half-*Japanese* kid' rather than 'that half-*English* kid'. He called it a 'multi-personal defense system' to avoid suspicion that he was not an outsider. This reminds us of the 'adaptation

strategies' of *kikokushijo* discussed earlier. *PM* explained that in his case his multi-faceted personality was operating to the point where 'people were kind of confused as to who they were talking to'. Although *PM* says it is a good thing to be dynamic, he has now found a community of Japanese friends and feels very comfortable for his Japanese side to flourish. This supports his agenda to return to Japan to work using his bicultural and bilingual ability to his advantage.

Of the three full-Japanese participants, *TY* has gone through the most challenging experiences in discovering his identity in Auckland. It was during the interview that for the first time he realized that his identity had changed a lot:

> I think, having gone through the whole talk now I realize how much I've actually changed. I didn't think I changed that much but I really did, sort of switched and turned like change gears so much throughout my life.

TY reflects upon how he felt while very young. He strongly wanted to identify himself with Japanese. He told everyone that he was born in Japan, although he was actually born in Auckland. *TY* says: 'I wanted to be more Japanese than I actually was … I have probably dabbed and downplayed [the New Zealand side] a bit earlier in my life'. However, though interactions with Japanese people during his university years he was challenged to face his New Zealand side. By talking to young Japanese people, *TY* came to realize 'how different [he] thinks from them and how different [his] morals or thoughts are from them' and even felt 'Ah sxxt, I'm not Japanese at all!'. Further, in the process of needing to push his New Zealand side more to be understood by Japanese people, he had to allow the New Zealand side to be expressed fully. He has now accepted and claims his New Zealand side proudly and has integrated his dual identity.

These accounts suggest that my participants seem to be travelling between the cultures through focusing and defocusing the two sides of their bicultural identities.

7. Conclusion

In this study we examined the experiences of the children of international marriages with a Japanese parent and those of Japanese migrants under the overarching category of those who underwent a bicultural upbringing. We examined their voices with particular comparison with experiences of their Japanese ethnic counterparts as well as of those of the 1.5 generation East Asian in New Zealand.

As Murphy-Shigematsu anticipated, my participants' bicultural experiences in this part of the world at this point in history were indeed different from what has been discoursed in the literature on their Japanese ethnic cohorts. The Japanese monoracial participants' experiences were not only different from those of *kikokushijo* but also from those of 1.5 generation East Asian youth in some aspects.

Although my participants experienced otherness to different degrees, they categorically reported that they did not experienced any racial bullying nor felt marginalisation in day-to-day life in Auckland. Their experiences could be similar to some of the 1.5 generation East Asian adolescents who had not experienced much racism. Unlike *hafu* and *kikokushijo*, whose biculturalness forms a special social

construct in a monoethnic society where they are forced to assimilate, my participants seem to be able to exercise agency in developing their bicultural identity in a more private and individual way, supported by what they perceive as an egalitarian and multiethnic community. Instead of racial prejudice, both of the cohorts appear to be enjoying having Japanese cultural privilege. Some of the biracial participants are not highly bilingual. However, their bilingual ability is of a personal choice and matter to them. In comparison to the other 1.5 generation East Asian migrants, the monoracial participants did not feel pressure from parents or cliques that could have prevented them from assimilating the host culture.

Some stories revealed deep bicultural journeys to the *self*. This often occurred more distinctively when they faced Japanese who were brought up in Japan and when they were in Japan. These stories tell of the dichotomous push and pull between the two cultures they live in, their skills to negotiate the in-betweeness by forging a blended and shifted self, finding a space where they can transcend cultural duality into a more accepting and expanding cosmopolitan identity. Their intercultural competency and their outlook as a global citizen do share the transnational nature of 1.5 generation East Asian migrants described as 'the harbingers of a new transnationalism' (Bartley and Spoonley, 2008: 80).

It is hoped that the voices of the participants of this study can be shared by the parents of younger generation of Japanese lineage and the younger generation themselves, who will continue to constitute an emerging part of the New Zealand ethnic landscape, so that there will be a better understanding of what it is like to grow up as part of an emerging generation of children that have Japanese lineage in Auckland. Of course, continued dialogue with more bicultural Japanese youth will be necessary to deepen our understanding of this new generation. However, this study is the first step to document the direct voices of some of the bicultural Japanese youth in Auckland who have gone through their journey so far to arrive where they are today.

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Appendix 1. Background information of the participants

Biracial participants

Name	Year born	Born in	Gender	Ethnicity of the non-Japanese parent	Lived in	Schooling	Japanese language proficiency
YA	1990	Japan	f	European-NZer	Moved to AKL when 2 yrs old	Local schools	fluent
MA	1996	AKL	f	European-NZer	AKL	Local schools	daily conversation
JH	1996	Japan	m	European-NZer	Japan, China, AKL	Local school in AKL, Int'l school in China	daily conversation
MK	1996	AKL	f	Indian-Malaysian	AKL	Local schools	fluent
SH	1995	AKL	f	Indian-Malaysian	AKL	Local schools	daily conversation
MO	1996	AKL	m	Chinese-Malaysian	Europe, China, AKL	Int'l school in China. Local school in AKL	daily conversation
LI	1996	AKL	f	European-Australian	AKL	Local schools	fluent
CE	1984	Aust	f	European-Australian	Aust, Japan, AKL	Local schools in Aust and AKL, Int'l school in Japan	easy daily conversation
PM	1997	Japan	m	European-British	Japan, England, AKL	Int'l school in Japan, local schools in England and AKL	fluent

Appendix 1. Background information of the participants – *continued*

Monoracial participants

Name	Year born	Born in	Gender	Lived in	Schooling	Japanese language proficiency
TY	1994	AKL	m	Auckland	Local schools	fluent
RO	1995	Japan	m	Moved to Auckland when 4 yrs old	Local schools	fluent
CH	1994	Japan	f	Moved to Auckland when 9 yrs old	Local schools	fluent

Appendix 2

'My ethnic identity' in a few words:

[*YA, biracial*]	I feel comfortable with my ethnicity and I don't feel like I have to choose one over the other.
[*MA, biracial*]	It's only me as a New Zealander pretty much.
[*JH, biracial*]	Yeah I don't feel I'm connected to one, I feel mixed.
[*MK, biracial*]	I like to identify myself more with Japanese now especially because I am quite fluent in speaking.
[*SH, biracial*]	I see myself as a New Zealander. I think it is something you can choose.
[*MO, biracial*]	I've never felt like I'm any.
[*LI, biracial*]	I don't think I categorize myself in being a New Zealander or Japanese. I'm just nothing. …I will probably be a subcategory of Japanese or something.
[*CE, biracial*]	I don't know. None of them. I guess New Zealand since I live here now and have lived here the longest. … I think that nationality can be very limiting.
[*PM, biracial*]	European-Japanese. If I was to give you an abstract answer I would give you what I would call myself.
[*TY, monoracial*]	Ethnically I'm a proud Japanese, but I guess inside 'Am I truly Japanese?' Probably not. And at the same time I'm happy, I'm a proud New Zealander in that sense as well.
[*RO, monoracial*]	I don't really identify strongly with either. Especially now… I kind of feel more Japanese than Kiwi. And I think … I think 'pride in it' is a bit too much but it's kind of something that makes me who I am.
[CH, *monoracial*]	I'm really proud to be Japanese and my passport is Japanese and I do everything to be Japanese. Because I've been brought up here, my personality is really Kiwi or not really Japanese.

Acknowledgements

Biographical note

Harumi Minagawa is a Senior Lecturer in Japanese in the School of Cultures, Languages and Linguistics at University of Auckland. Her research interests centre around the meaning of grammar and Japanese L2 pedagogy. A series of current projects inquire into how subjective construal is reflected in various types of narratives in Japanese. Through research in the field of Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language, she has been advocating an intellectual approach to language teaching and learning as a way to empower learners at the tertiary level.