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**Historical Memories in Migrants' Narratives:
Japan's Modern History and the Fukushima Nuclear Disaster**

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Summary

This study focuses on biographical narratives of migrants who left Japan after the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster and examines how they have ascribed meanings to the disaster in their lives. The meltdown of nuclear reactors caused an environmental displacement in a large scale, and the number of Japanese nationals residing overseas has been dramatically increasing since 2011 (Oishi & Hamada 2019). Motives for migration are explained by several case studies on internal migrants from the contaminated areas, like avoidance of radiation exposure and precaution against health damage. Although these reasons are relevant to migrants overseas, there are still questions arising regarding their transboundary migration, because there are less contaminated areas within Japan. Rather, I assume that migrants by themselves could narrate their experiences of the disaster and provide more profound rationales for their migration, as Gaylene Becker argues that people make meanings of “disrupted lives” to maintain continuity (1997, p. 7). This process of making meaning is “an attempt to establish points of reference between body, self, and society” to adapt to disruption (Williams 1984, p. 177), and the migrants after the nuclear disaster also may have made similar efforts to recover from the disruptive effects. Therefore, this qualitative study uses migrants' narratives as a central data to understand the process of making meanings of the disaster in their lives.

The data was collected through snow-ball sampling and semi-structured interview with 39 migrants in Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Germany, and Indonesia in 2017. Drawing on methods by Riessman (2008), thematic narrative analysis was employed to understand their experiences and memories. One of the features of the migrants' narratives was recollection of the past including childhood memory and tragic Japan's modern history like atomic bombing and Minamata disease. Hence, there has been a broad range of meanings created after the disaster with both individual and collective memory of the past.

As this conference is held in Nagasaki, one of the atomic-bombed cities, I focus on atomic bombing and other cruel events in Japan's modern history and argue that such historical memories in the migrants' narratives represent fear about radiation and distrust of Japanese authorities. The nuclear

disaster recalled several migrants to their parents or grandparents' stories about atomic bombing, and the migrants realised the danger of radiation. Thus, historical memories gave a high reality of radiation risks, and it became a major determinant for migration. Some other migrants explained how Japanese authorities were not reliable at the disaster and justified their migration giving cases of untruth announcements of the Imperial General Headquarters (Daihon'ei) or neglected victims in Minamata disease cases. In these ways, migrants related their historical memories with the nuclear disaster and created meanings for migration.

Generally, migrants' narratives include various meanings which represent not only historical memories but also individual gender identity, sense of values, views of life, and hopes for future, and I emphasise here that analysis of these features helps deeper understanding of migrant individuals in micro-level. Such a microscopic analysis of migrants contributes to the discussion about alternative types of migration including lifestyle migration, which recently receives more attention in migration studies. As Nagatomo (2015) points out that "lifestyle factors" is getting more important in decision making process of migration, while traditional migration has been largely explained by economic or political factors. Benson argues that "different way of life" is influential on the decision to migrate (2010, p. 61). I do not conclude that the migrants from the nuclear disaster is lifestyle migrants, because there are urgent reasons to evacuate from radioactive contamination. However, this study reveals that historical memories and other meanings in individual's life are significant in migrants' explanations for migration.

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