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This research focuses on the sociocultural, structural, and identificatory integration of Japanese people as permanent residents of Dusseldorf, Germany. Dusseldorf has the largest community of Japanese in Germany and after London and Paris the third largest community of Japanese in Europe. Although the first contact between Germany and Japan was already established in the middle of the 19th century by Louis Kniffler, it took nearly hundred years until a significant Japanese immigration to Dusseldorf took place. Due to economic reasons Dusseldorf became Japan's economic center in Europe after the Second World War.

In migration sociology, the integration of migrants into a host society is explored to avoid societal collapse of the host. In recent decades, this type of research has become more relevant with the rise of globalism and recent human migrations. While there are many studies of Japanese integration and acculturation in North and South America, German studies have primarily focused on the business expatriate community. This group is often called "invisible migrants" (Glebe, 2004; Montag, 2001) since their role in the community is welcomed and often unquestioned. However, according to the current integration theory, it is necessary to focus on permanent residents. Expatriates or individuals, who are expected or are planning to return to their home country, are not that motivated to be an integral part of the host society. Therefore, this study's research will consider Japanese migrants of various kinds, who are willing to remain in Dusseldorf or at least in Germany:

- a. Expatriates, who have decided to remain.
- b. Japanese, with self-initiated emigration.
- c. Japanese, who have accompanied a spouse.
- d. Members of the Japanese ethnic community.

These focus groups will shed light on various aspects of the Japanese migrant experience in Germany and their integration to that culture. The following questions focus this research:

1. To what extent do the Japanese permanent residents integrate into German society and the Japanese community in Dusseldorf?
2. In case of socio-economic loss in Japanese expatriate, "invisible migrant," communities, does this change their status in German society and associated benefits? Do they consider this a disadvantage?
3. Why do Japanese emigrate to Germany? Why do they choose to stay?

This study will use a qualitative case study approach. The integration indicators, used in interviews, are based on current migration and integration research. In addition, language will be borrowed from existing German integration concepts. These questions will cover four dimensions of integration: social, structural, cultural, and identificatory integration. Social dimensions are concerned with socializing within and without of the ethnic community, as well as interethnic friendships and marriages. Structural will include examinations of use of existing systems such as labor, housing, education, and health care systems. Cultural will focus on language integration, convergence of values systems and religious affiliations. Finally, identificatory research will focus on ethnic identity and participation in the host culture.

By engaging these questions and research topics, this study will fill a gap in the literature about Japanese migrants, especially in Europe and Germany in particular. It will also enhance our understanding of “invisible migrants” and explore, for the first time, the Japanese permanent residents of Düsseldorf.

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