

*Reimagining selves, liminal tourism spaces as sites for
lifestyle migration. An exploration of the reflexive
narratives of tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan*

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Certificate of Authorship

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Name Kim Nelson

Date 30/8/19

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Abstract

Tourism spaces are social constructs, and due to their liminal qualities are places in which individuals have enhanced psycho-social space to explore new ways of living and working. One such space is Niseko, a small agricultural community in northern Japan that has, since the early 2000s, transformed into a ski destination through the development of international tourism. Many Australians have settled in the Niseko area and established tourism-based businesses and holiday homes, transforming local streetscapes. Despite evident socio-economic and environmental change, Niseko has received little academic attention, particularly in regard to advancing understanding of how Niseko is functioning both as a tourism destination and as a unique social and cultural space in Japan. This research aimed to explore the experiences of tourism business owners to offer insight into how Niseko as a social space may be influencing the lifestyles and identities of tourism business owners who live in Niseko, Japan.

This research is framed by a social constructivist perspective and takes an interpretive approach which valorises subjective and contextual research participant perspectives. The research was premised by the idea of stories being windows to understanding subjective human experience, and Giddens' (1991) conceptualisation of self as a self-constructed narrative. Accordingly, the research design drew upon a narrative method of inquiry, specifically designed to illuminate the voices of participants to enhance understanding of experiences of living in a tourism space. Responding to the recognised scarcity of emotionally reflexive tourism research, two creative strategies were employed which resulted in the composition of seventeen micro-stories and seventeen interpretive poems, in response to the participant narratives. The creative interpretations of the data sought to unpack and illuminate the key experiences of the participants and thus served the dual purpose of illustrative data and a method of analysis. In addition to the creative strategies as forms of analysis, a thematic narrative analysis of the narrative and creative data was also undertaken.

The research findings revealed Niseko, Japan as functioning as a liminal tourism space which was being shaped by cosmopolitan tourism business owners who relocate there to pursue their 'second life' after experiences of living abroad. Five key conclusions were drawn from the findings of this research. These included (1), experiences of living abroad changes both the people and the places they inhabit, (2), liminal tourism spaces are locations in which

individuals may explore different ways of living and working, (3), lifestyle choices can be understood as part of the narrative of self, (4), narrative methodological approaches have the capacity to generate new connections and knowledge, and, (5) creative research strategies can create, interpret and communicate research data in innovative ways which offer insight into the subjective and multilayered experiences of individuals who construct and shape their lives in tourism spaces.

This thesis builds on the emerging research area which explores the link between tourism and lifestyle migration and offers new insight into how participation in tourism businesses can facilitate lifestyle migration. It reveals how experiences of living overseas can influence individuals to establish alternative lifestyles in tourism spaces, underpinned by the desire to live in a way that is more congruent with their sense of self. This research contributes to understanding how highly mobile, cosmopolitan individuals in tourism spaces relate to place and are influenced by it.

There are so many foreigners now,
Most days I don't even need to speak Japanese.

But bloody hell,
That missile warning in my phone?

Yukiko swiftly translated for me

Get down to your bunker

That we prepared earlier?

Prologue

Sōkō (Frost falls)

The march towards winter is gathering speed. It is only thirteen degrees today in Hirafu, and in this, the second week in November, the *yukimushi* have begun to appear. These tiny insects have a life span of only a couple of days and their brief appearance forewarns that the first snow is only a few days away. The passing of time is marked by the changing of the seasons here. The traditional Japanese calendar identifies not four but seventy-two *ko*. Periods of around five days which are named to describe the subtle changes in the natural environment which occur throughout the year in Japan. Sylvie silently calls them,

East wind melts the ice

wild geese fly north

peonies bloom

plums turn yellow

evening cicadas sing

rainbows hide

ice thickens on streams

She cannot recall them all, yet she is comforted by the idea of such intimate orientation with this place.

Sylvie is in an empty park on the outskirts of the village of Hirafu and swings back and forth as the evening settles. Briefcase and laptop temporarily abandoned on the bench nearby. It is quiet here and she is not fearful of theft, it takes a little getting used to though, she still holds her phone and keys close by as she walks to her car at night. However, little by little it is softening, the sense of being constantly vigilant. It is an unexpected liberty. A deep exhalation. So much of her energy was expended on carrying something she did not even want to hold.

The swing creaks softly, belying its age. The new housing development seems to have sprung up around the park, the architecture a fusion of Japanese and Western alpine sensibilities. The houses are each framed by manicured gardens and are lavish with high-end finishes and attached garages, everything a foreign-second homeowner could want. Each house has a

custom mailbox which is a miniature version of the house. Sylvie wonders if these houses ever even receive mail?

They will be coming soon, the winter people. The second-home owners, the snowgans with their oversized duffle bags and not-quite-warm-enough jackets. They will immediately recognise Sylvie as from home, see her name badge and ask her for directions, for recommendations of where to drink and if there are shops that sell thermal underwear. When they come, her language changes, her accent broadens and her Japanese is reserved for her boss and the officials at the government office where she renews her Alien Registration card. Sometimes Sylvie wishes they would make more of an effort to learn a few words, but here it is *too* easy just to get along in English, for a few weeks or a whole season. Even her boss advertises for English language skills over Japanese language ability when he is looking for new workers.

Sylvie wonders what the people who live here feel about all the changes to their corner of Hokkaido? Although the bears still hibernate and the salmon still gather to swim upstream each December, the faces that witness these changes are now more diverse. It not only looks different to other parts of Japan, it feels different too. Is it a space which allows room for dissimilar things to co-exist? Sylvie wonders. Like the *yukimushi*, however, the thought is fleeting. Natsu-san, the jeans and apron clad office manager of the development, arrives and asks if Sylvie is lost, hoping to (politely) move her along. Sylvie comments on Natsu-san's strong Australian accent and is surprised to learn that she has never left Japan and has learned her English from working all day every day with Aussies in various jobs around the Niseko area. Sylvie's park loitering is instantly forgotten and the two women chat easily in a mix of Japanese and English about how much the Niseko area has changed. They exchange business cards and promise to keep in touch and meet for coffee sometime in the village. "I would love to hear more of your story next time", Sylvie says as they part ways. "Feel that?" Natsu-san grins broadly, her hands drawn magnetically to the sky. "The first snow. Better hold off on that catch up until the swallows return and things around here have calmed down again".

Sylvie's hair is damp from the snow as she walks through the dark to her car. Her phone and keys forgotten in her bag. Her arms stretched wide to catch both the snow and the pieces of a new idea which she will chase in the spring.

We have left behind the daily *chikatetsu* crush
To join the Birkenstock-clad Aussies
for
soy-almond lattes and gluten free toast.
Messy hair and loose time,
In Niseko-*cho*
The *sakura* fall in new formations
Reorientated by
A foreign breeze

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Opportunity of Elsewhere. Unpacking Host Experiences of Living in Tourism Spaces.

“Where you are is who you are. The further inside you the place moves, the more your identity is intertwined with it. Never casual, the choice of place is the choice of something you crave.”

(Mayes, 1997, p. 96)

1.1 Introduction

Central to understanding place, is understanding the people who live there. This thesis seeks to unpack the experiences of people who live in a place which has been transformed by international tourism and to understand the intersection of place and self in tourism contexts. From the processes of globalisation has emerged a re-conceptualisation of ‘place’ which conceives it to be not just a physical location or source of identity, but a space which is constructed from the intricate and dynamic interplay of people and their environment (Massey, 1994). Tourism spaces are created not only by the development of infrastructure to facilitate tourists but also by the people that inhabit them. Thus, this thesis foregrounds the individuals whose lives and livelihoods are intertwined with a tourism space.

Perceptions of tourism spaces are often shaped by the stories shared by tourists about their experiences (Edelheim, 2015). Laing and Frost (2017, p. 110) find, “travel narratives can shape tourist imaginings about places, and are a useful tool for understanding tourist experience”. The idyllic beach in Fiji, the hedonistic cruise, the brush with danger on safari, these conceptualisations of tourism destinations may emerge from the accounts shared by friends and family, and likewise from the stories we tell about our own travel. It is through the act of telling stories to others that we make meaning from our experiences. In alignment with the premise that storytelling offers a window to understanding experience, this thesis draws on the power of stories to extract understanding of the experiences of tourism business owners in a small pocket of Japan which has experienced intense change since its origins as an agricultural

community. Niseko, the focus of this research, has transformed into an international ski resort, with its development strongly fuelled by Australian tourists, and tourism businesses and holiday homes owned by Australian expatriates. Despite evident socio-economic and environmental change, Niseko has received scant academic attention. Highlighting the paucity of research into the cultural anomaly of Niseko, Takeda (2017, p.53) calls for urgency in further research to, “investigate this unique social space”. Thus, in response, this research seeks to advance knowledge about the social space of Niseko, Japan and how it is experienced by tourism business owners who live and work there.

This opening chapter provides an introduction to the research and outlines the background of the project to provide context for the forthcoming chapters. Responding to the gaps in knowledge highlighted in this chapter, the research aim, objectives, and research questions will be presented to provide focus and direction to the research. Additionally, this chapter provides definitions of the common terms and Japanese terms which appear throughout the thesis and includes an account of how the thesis is structured and a synopsis of each chapter. As this research aims to understand experiences of a tourism space, the chapter will begin by reflecting on how experiences of travel are augmented by the unique qualities of tourism destinations and how these experiences can provide room for the possibility for individual reflection and change.

Travel is anchored in transitions, moving from what is known into spaces or experiences that are unknown. The first encounter with a tourism destination can be an assault on the senses, and sensitivity to what is new and what is distinct about the space is enhanced (Foster & McCabe, 2015). Perhaps encountering the sound of an unfamiliar language or the sensation of a yet to be identified foodstuff on the tongue. As these new spaces are traversed, adjustments must be made, some subtle, others significant. Travel requires a willingness to be flexible and perhaps requires looking through a different lens, to assist in the navigation of new experiences and new spaces. Experiences of tourism, then, are embodied and have long been associated with the idea of, “getting away from it all” (MacCannell, 1976, p. 13). Individuals are drawn by the opportunity to escape from the mundane aspects and routines of their everyday lives and enter a space in which they feel they have an abundance of freedom and choice (Graburn, 1983). In the act of separation there is a sense of agency. An opportunity to explore and perhaps recreate aspects of self, away from the usual home and cultural environment (Harrison, 2003). This chance to experiment with new ways of being and interacting with new environments and

cultures is recognised as an important source of subjective wellbeing (Sirgy & Cornell, 2001). Thus, tourism is often about the chance for individuals to experience a sense of renewal, pursue feelings of happiness, in an attempt to increase life satisfaction, a potential means of awakening and enriching personal wellbeing (Kim, Lee, Juyeon, & Kyungmo, 2015). While these conceptualisations of tourism are, like much of the literature, based on the perspectives and experiences of the tourist (Rasmi, Ng, Lee, & Soutar, 2014; Reisinger, 2013; VanWinkle & Lagay, 2012; Xiang, 2013), the present research offers a counterpoint and considers how tourism spaces are experienced by individuals who live and work in them. In particular, one of the key foci of this research is concerned with understanding the subjective experiences of tourism businesses owners in Niseko, Japan and unpacking the underpinning motivations around why they moved there. Thus, this research invokes inquiry into the connection between place and agency. It will seek to understand what it means to have moved to a place as a reflexive choice, and in turn consider how the selection of location may be connected with choices, about how to live and who to be (Hoey, 2005). It is research which explores how these choices of location and lifestyle may influence and be influenced by the context of living in a tourism space, with its distinct qualities and diverse stimuli.

The specific context for this research is the tourism destination of Niseko, Japan. A tourism destination is defined as a physical location which offers tourism products, services and attractions to tourists (UNWTO, 2002), it is, however, like any place at its foundation, a social construct. It is through this lens of understanding tourism spaces as social constructs that Niseko, Japan will be examined in this thesis. Accordingly, this research will take an interpretive approach in its design and will demonstrate the capacity of creative research strategies to complement narrative methodologies to valorise individual experiences of tourism spaces. Thus, this research draws on the capacity of stories in their unfolding to bring understanding to a complex and unique social space in far northern Japan. Each story presented in this research is framed by detailed description of its layers of context, individual, local, and global. Consideration is given to the temporal and historical contexts of the research, and each story is sifted through a systematic method of analysis. The outcome of this process is, as classically described by Geertz (1973, p. 21), “rich, thick description”. This richness brings clarity to the specific experience of local tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan and more broadly contributes to understanding how experiences of living in tourism spaces may influence the lives and lifestyles of those who choose to live in them. This research demonstrates that it is those stories which stay with us, which can shape ourselves, our lives,

and our view of the world. The stories that are presented in this research are anchored in lived experiences and real contexts. Each individual story is at the same time part of many larger stories, and by allowing space and consideration of both in this research, a fuller exploration of the experience of living in the tourism space of Niseko, Japan is facilitated.

A key aspect of understanding what is happening in tourism destinations is the distillation of the distinct qualities of these spaces, which sheds light on how they may affect those who choose to live and work in them. Tourism spaces are recognised as the contexts within which tourism is simultaneously created and transpires, and as such are social spaces which are both dynamic and complex (Pritchard & Morgan, 2006a). Tourism spaces are often described as, “beyond normal social and cultural constraints” (Preston-White, 2004, p. 240), thus making them unique social spaces for both tourists and the hosts that reside in them. Responding to the paucity of inquiry into how tourism destinations are experienced as social spaces by tourism hosts (Deery, Lee, & Fredline, 2012; Sharpley, 2014), this research will explore the liminal qualities of tourism spaces and consider how tourism spaces both form and are formed by the individuals who reside in them.

Our subjective experiences of the world are contextualised by the spaces we inhabit and are coloured by our perceptions of them, thus understanding the relationship between place and people is central to this research. As articulated by Lew (2003, p. 121), “we shape places to reflect our identities, just as much as places influence our opportunities and well-being”. This research seeks to unpack this idea in Niseko, Japan. This research will illuminate how the liminal qualities of Niseko, Japan are experienced by both the Japanese and non-Japanese tourism business owners who live there and in turn how the unique qualities of these tourism hosts have influenced its development into a distinct socio-cultural space within Japan.

1.2 Origins of the Current Research

The genesis of this research began when I was living in Japan in 2007 and 2008 while my husband completed a post-doctoral fellowship at Hokkaido University in Sapporo. Having travelled to Japan on two prior occasions and feeling a deep sense of resonance with both the environment and culture, the decision to move there was not difficult. We left life in a coastal town in south-eastern Australia for the sub-Arctic climate of far northern Japan. In relocating

we entered our own liminal space and felt the fullness of the opportunity we found ourselves in. The freedom from our prior lifestyle and abundance of new experiences on offer was an intoxicating combination. One aspect was the chance to travel to other parts of Japan, and we felt a particular draw to rural Japan. On one such weekend adventure, and prompted by several friends who had visited Niseko, we made the two-hour car drive from Sapporo and entered a space unlike any other we had been to in Japan. Physically, the presence of tourism in Niseko had indeed manifested significant changes to the built environment, multi-storey five-star resorts at every turn, prominent English signage and for the first time for us outside the one foreign food store in the large city of Sapporo where we lived, offerings of Australian foodstuffs such as Vegemite, Tim Tams and meat pies. More striking than the physical impacts of tourism, however, was the unusual socio-cultural environment of Niseko. The presence of Australian expatriates and prominence of their businesses in the area suggested tourism may be having an impact beyond the incoming waves of transitory snow-seeking Australian tourists each winter. Perhaps the socio-cultural environment of Niseko was changing? Niseko certainly stood out as an anomaly in a country with only 1.76 per cent of the population not born in Japan (Immigration Bureau of Japan, 2016).

At this point no academic research had considered the impact of international tourism on the socio-cultural landscape of Japan, which led to me developing an exploratory Honours project focusing on Australian tourism in the area that revealed some of the social and cultural impacts on business owners and residents in Niseko, Japan (Nelson, 2014; Nelson & Matthews, 2018). At the conclusion of that project, it was clear there was scope for future, more in-depth research into the unique cultural space of Niseko. As a tourism space, it was an exemplar of economic prosperity in a broader context of decline amongst rural communities in Japan. As a culturally dynamic social space, it invited further exploration to unpack how it was experienced, not just as a tourism destination but as a place to live and work. As the opening point in this Chapter illuminated, we know much about how tourists experience and may be affected by tourism spaces, and much less about how the people who live there may shape or be shaped by the unique qualities of tourism spaces. Thus, Niseko, Japan provides an ideal context in which to engage in research which will contribute to enhancing our understanding in this field of tourism studies, and simultaneously generates much needed knowledge about Niseko as a tourism space and as a social construct.

The research is framed by a social constructivist perspective, which has shaped its methodological design. The social constructivist paradigm fits the focus of this research concerned with understanding individual experiences of living in a tourism space. Aligned with this approach, this research illustrates the value of research which requires, “a relationship with respondents in which they can cast their stories in their terms. It means listening to their stories with openness to feelings and experience” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 525). The research is underpinned by the assumption that ‘story’ is a key way that humans both understand and explain their experiences (Clandinin, 2007). Accordingly, it draws upon the methodological approach of narrative inquiry to illuminate the voices of tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan to unpack experiences of living in a tourism space. In alignment with this approach, narrative interviewing is utilised as the research instrument as it allows participants the space to be reflective and to construct their own meanings. To augment the thematic analysis of the narrative data, this research also employs two creative strategies, interpretive poetry and micro-stories, which both illuminate and unpack the key experiences of participants, as well as placing the participant voices at the foreground of the research.

1.3 Research Aim and Key Research Questions

Based on the lack of academic investigation into the unique social space of Niseko, Japan and challenging the common focus of tourism research to steer research toward understanding the experiences of tourists in tourism spaces, this research seeks to illuminate the experiences of tourism hosts. Specifically, the aim of this research is to explore the experiences of tourism business owners to offer insight into how Niseko as a social space may be influencing the lifestyles and identities of tourism business owners. This broad aim will be achieved through the following objectives:

1. To use personal narratives as instruments to understand how tourism spaces may influence the lifestyles and self-identities of tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan.
2. To analyse the narratives of tourism business owners to understand how self-identities and lifestyles are negotiated in spaces transformed by tourism.
3. To draw upon a social constructivist perspective embodied in a qualitative methodology to contribute to the recognised lack of subjective conceptually driven research on tourism hosts.

Accordingly, the research questions that this research will respond to are:

1. What are tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan's experience of living in a tourism space?
2. How do tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan perceive their lifestyles have been shaped by their experiences of travel and tourism?
3. What experiences influence self-identity construction in the reflexive narratives of tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan?

The research aim, objectives, and key research questions will be drawn upon to inform the areas of the literature reviewed, research design, data collection processes, and subsequent analysis. These underpinning research questions driving the research will be revisited in Chapter Four (methods) as well as in the final chapters of the thesis as reflections are made as to how the findings produced by the research contribute to providing new knowledge towards resolving these key gaps in knowledge.

1.4 Definition of Common Terms

Throughout this thesis a number of common terms will be utilised which relate to key themes, contexts, actors, and processes which are central to the focus of this thesis. To facilitate the understanding of the central terminology and concepts used, and to provide clarification of the interpretation of those employed in this thesis, these common terms are conceptually and operationally provided below.

Liminality A sense of being physically, socially, and ideologically in a space that is outside of a person's usual environment and social boundaries (Freidus & Romero-Daza, 2009) and considered to be betwixt-and-between the normal, day-to-day cultural and social states and processes" (Turner, 1979, p. 465).

Cosmopolitan Derived from ancient Greek word *kosmopolites*, meaning 'citizen of the world' (Delanty, 2006). The ability to know and utilise a vast cultural knowledge (Kendall, Skibis, & Woodward,

2009) and openness to cultures that sit outside their local or national environment (Schueth & O'Loughlin, 2008).

Lifestyle migration	The phenomenon of people moving as a lifestyle choice to pursue a better quality of life (Cohen, Duncan, & Thulemark, 2015).
Narrative	A short or extended story about a significant experience or a life story (Chase, 2005).
<i>Ikigai</i>	Japanese concept of, “that which most makes one’s life seem worth living” (Mathews, 1996, p. 51).
Tourism space	Contexts of relations between people, aspects, things, and places consolidated by the phenomenon of tourism (Cipolletti, 2014, p. 92).
Host Community	People who live in the vicinity of a tourism destination and are either directly or indirectly involved with, and/or affected by tourism (Smith, 2001).
Globalisation	The intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice-versa (Giddens, 1990, p. 64).
Tourism destination	A physical location comprised of tourism products, services, and attractions (WTO, 2002).
Liquidity	The fluid nature of contemporary cultures, societies, and identities, comprised of the key elements of movement, increased speed, the need for constant adaptability and transformation, the recognition of space being more important than time, the temporary nature of social patterns, and the ability

of individuals to actively shape their own lives compared with previous times (Bauman, 2007).

Mobility	Physical bodily travel, imagined travel (through the media), and virtual travel through communications technology (Szerszynski & Urry, 2006).
Agency	The way individuals are able to monitor their own thoughts and activities as well as their physical and social contexts (Ritzer, 2007, p. 523).
Reflexivity	The internal conversation with self that individuals conduct and through which they construct their priorities and commitments (Archer, 2003).
Reflexive project of self	The capacity to give a coherent account of one's activities and the reasons for them (Giddens, 1984, p. 45).
Self-identity	The self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of his or her own biography (Giddens, 1991, p. 53).
Psychological Space	The experience of spaciousness in the inner psychological landscape of a person (White & White, 2004).
Lifestyle	A more or less integrated set of practices which an individual embraces, not only because they give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity (Giddens, 1991, p. 81).
Lifestyle Entrepreneurs	Individuals focused on constructing a way of making a living orientated towards creating a particular lifestyle which is crafted to balance economic, family, social or leisure needs (Bredvold & Skalen, 2016; Jaafar, Abdul-Aziz, Maideen, & Mohd, 2011).

Psycho-social Space An enhanced sense of psychological freedom relating to the social environment of an individual (Stenning, 2018).

1.5 Translation of Japanese Terms

Given the context of the research is a village in Japan, a number of Japanese words are used throughout this thesis. The English translations are provided below.

<i>Chan</i>	A Japanese honorific or suffix added to the end of a name
<i>Chigau</i>	To differ
<i>Chikatetsu</i>	Subway
<i>Cho</i>	Town
<i>Densha</i>	Train
<i>Furusato</i>	Hometown
<i>Gaijin</i>	Foreigner
<i>Guchagucha</i>	Cluttered
<i>Genkan</i>	Entranceway
<i>Hiseiki kyo</i>	Company worker
<i>Ikigai</i>	Something one lives for
<i>Kaki</i>	Persimmon
<i>Kihin-kai</i>	Welcome society
<i>Minshuku</i>	Japanese style bed and breakfast
<i>Muraokoshi</i>	Awakening the village
<i>O'cha</i>	Tea
<i>O-taku</i>	Wife
<i>Omoshiroi</i>	Interesting
<i>Omotenashi</i>	Whole-hearted hospitality
<i>Ramen</i>	Quick cooking noodles
<i>Sakura</i>	Cherry blossom
<i>San</i>	Mr or Mrs
<i>Sencha</i>	Green tea
<i>Wakarimasu</i>	Understand
<i>Yukimushi</i>	Snow bugs

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is presented in seven chapters, which offer a detailed and reflexive account of the context, process, findings and implications of this research. A point of difference in the thesis structure is the positioning of a reflective poem in between each chapter and the next. Each poem was created in response to the narrative data generated by this research. The process and theory supporting the inclusion of reflective poetry in the research design will be presented in detail in Chapter Four. The intention of the placement of the poems is to provide reflective space between the chapters, as well as opportunity to offer moments of connection and insight into the unique experiences of tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan.

Following this opening chapter, Chapter Two will expand the focus of the thesis beyond Japan and will consider the broader literature relevant to the research aim of exploring the experiences of tourism business owners, in order to offer insight into how Niseko as a social space may be influencing the lifestyles and identities of tourism business owners. Chapter Two will reflect on the wider global environment within which Niseko interconnects. It will then consider some of the key features of tourism concepts such as mobility, cosmopolitanism and liminality, both to further unpack the context of the tourism business owners who are the focus of this research and to reflect on how residing in tourism spaces may influence the lives of tourism business owners. Chapter Two will then focus on exploring how the transformation of broader social conditions may influence individuals in tourism contexts. By extension it will consider the way individuals perceive and construct their own sense of self and their lifestyles, through discussion of key areas of the literature concerned with reflexive agency, self-identity, lifestyle as an expression of self, and lifestyle entrepreneurship. Chapter Two will draw focus to the requirement for research concerned with understanding what is occurring in tourism spaces, to begin from a position of viewing tourism spaces as primarily social spaces, and as grounds which may enable individuals to explore, negotiate, and construct new lives and lifestyles.

Chapter Three will introduce the research site of Niseko, Japan. It will focus on building clarity of the context of this research by exploring Japan and, in particular, Niseko as tourism spaces. Additionally, the chapter will provide a detailed account of the geographic, demographic, built, and economic environment of Niseko to create understanding of the various settings which frame this research.

Drawing on the conclusions from the review of the literature in Chapter Two and the introduction to the research site in Chapter Three, Chapter Four will offer a detailed account of the methods utilised in this research and the underpinning assumptions which steered the research design. The chapter will introduce the narrative approach of the research and the social constructivist theoretical framework which informed the methodological design. Aligning with interpretivist methodologies, this chapter will provide space to discuss the role of researcher reflexivity and positionality. Chapter Four will revisit the research questions and provide an account of how the research was executed including details of the sampling framework, recruitment, research instrument of narrative interviewing, and data collection. Additionally, Chapter Four will reflect on the ethical considerations and the temporal context of the research, introduce the creative strategies of poetry and micro-stories and explore how creative strategies may be utilised as both data and analysis. Chapter Four will conclude with an in-depth discussion of narrative analysis and demonstrate how it was employed alongside creative strategies to reveal key themes, insights, and trends from the data.

Chapter Five comprises the first of two chapters discussing the findings of this research. Drawing on the narrative data collected during the narrative interviewing component of the study and researcher field notes, Chapter Five presents seventeen micro-stories, and nine of the seventeen interpretive poems composed during the analysis phase of the research. The nine poems included in Chapter Five were identified as particularly connecting with and/or illuminating one or more of the four primary themes that were identified from the data. The creative interpretations of the data sought to unpack and illuminate the key experiences of the participants and are utilised as both data and a method of analysis in this research.

Chapter Six introduces and describes the four key themes that were identified from the participants' narratives and creative interpretations of the data through the process of narrative analysis. The key themes discussed in Chapter Six include cosmopolitanism, liminality in tourism spaces, lifestyle migration, and *Ikigai*. Additionally, Chapter Six will introduce a common narrative thread of the research which emerged during the analysis of the research data. Finally, this chapter draws on the narrative interview data to demonstrate how these key themes manifested and were determined during the analysis phase of the research.

The final chapter of this thesis, Chapter Seven, will critically examine and discuss the findings presented in Chapters Five and Six and reflect on how the findings generated by this research

respond to the overarching research aim and the key research questions it has sought to answer. Chapter Seven will highlight the unique qualities of the findings of this research and elucidate how they are meaningful in the context of the broader literature. Specifically, Chapter Seven discusses how this research brings focus to the capacity for narrative methodological approaches to generate new connections and knowledge. Further, it reflects on how the creative strategies employed in the research design demonstrate how approaches such as poetry and micro-stories can be utilised in qualitative studies to create, interpret and communicate research data in innovative ways. Chapter Seven critically interprets the key themes which emerged from the data and outlines four key conclusions drawn from the findings. These include (1), experiences of living abroad changes both the people and the places they inhabit, (2), liminal tourism spaces are locations in which individuals may explore different ways of living and working, (3), lifestyle choices can be understood as part of the narrative of self, and (4), the capacity of liminal tourism spaces to provide opportunities for individuals to pursue their *Ikigai*. The implications of these outcomes are examined in Chapter Seven to determine the contributions they make to understanding what is happening in the socio-cultural space of Niseko, Japan, as well as more broadly how tourism spaces are experienced and understood. In alignment with the interpretive approach of the research, Chapter Seven will reflect on the design of the research and make recommendations for future research in this area.

The thesis concludes by revisiting the common narrative thread which emerged from this research. This common narrative thread is presented as a creative interpretation, to draw focus on the strength and congruence of such mediums in qualitative research and to highlight their ability to offer a more nuanced view into the complex experiences of individuals who construct and shape their lives in tourism spaces.

1.7 Conclusion

In summary, this thesis argues that tourism spaces are social constructs, and due to their liminal qualities are grounds in which residents, and in particular tourism business owners, have enhanced psycho-social space to explore new ways of living and working. Premised by the idea of narratives being windows of understanding subjective human experience, and Giddens' (1991) conceptualisation of self as a self-constructed narrative, this research illuminates how Niseko, Japan can be understood as a liminal tourism space which is being shaped by the

cosmopolitan individuals who relocate there to pursue their ‘second life’ after experiences of living abroad. This research builds on the emerging research area which explores the link between tourism and lifestyle migration and offers new insight into how tourism businesses can facilitate lifestyle migration. It demonstrates how lifestyle migration manifests as a reflexive lifestyle choice and contributes to understanding how highly mobile, cosmopolitan individuals in tourism spaces relate to place and are affected by it. This research suggests lifestyle migration, as is evidenced in this research in Niseko, Japan, and more broadly in other tourism contexts, can be understood through the lens proposed by Giddens (1991), that lifestyle choice is motivated by the desire for narrative congruency in the reflexive project of self.

The following chapter will consider how the transformation of broader social conditions may influence individuals in tourism contexts. The chapter will critically examine the literature relevant to the overarching aim of this research, to explore and understand the experiences of tourism business owners in order to offer insight into how Niseko as a social space may be influencing the lifestyles and identities of tourism business owners. In doing so, the proceeding chapter will establish how the distinct qualities of tourism spaces such as mobility, cosmopolitanism, and liminality are currently understood in the academic landscape and will illuminate areas that, to date, have been poorly understood or absent from the academic gaze to guide the direction of the current research. The chapter will present a comprehensive review of the literature and will advocate for research concerned with understanding what is occurring in tourism spaces, to begin from a position of viewing tourism spaces first and foremost as social spaces which have the potential to shape the lives and experiences of those who inhabit them.

Deep winter *onsen*,
Snow in my hair.
Exquisite equilibrium
As I am *delicately* poached.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

More than just a place to play.

Exploring the liminal qualities of tourism contexts as social spaces.

2.1 Introduction

Niseko, in Japan, is an example of a place transformed by tourism, and in particular international tourism, as many Australians have settled in the Niseko area and established tourism-based businesses and holiday homes, transforming local streetscapes since the early 2000s (Committee for Publishing a History of Ski Resort Development at Hirafu, 2011; Kureha, 2008). Despite evident changes to the built and social environments in Niseko since the development of international tourism, little consideration has been given to how Niseko as a tourism space is being experienced by individuals who work and live there.

The UNWTO (2002) describes a tourism destination as a physical location comprised of tourism products, services, and attractions. Such a simplistic definition, however, neglects the complex social spaces that exist in these environments. More accurately, tourism spaces can be described as, “contexts of relations between people, aspects, things, and places consolidated by the phenomenon of tourism” (Cipolletti, 2014, p. 92). Tourism is recognised as, “the largest ever peaceful movement of people across borders” (Sheller & Urry, 2004, p. 3), thus, as accurately observed by Johnson (2014), tourism is indeed situated right at the front line of cultural exchange.

Tourism, then, is a key way humans interact with each other and the tourism spaces that develop are recognised conceptually as social constructs (Williams, 2002). As a social phenomenon tourism is, “socially and culturally produced and generated” (Wang, 2000, p. 43). On this premise, this literature review focuses on understanding how tourism contexts operate as social spaces which are recognised as embedded in broader global and social contexts. By extension, the review will consider how such spaces may be experienced by individuals who work and reside in tourism destinations, in order to fully establish the context of the present research.

Section 2 of the review will initially focus on exploring the wider global environment within which Niseko interconnects and will then consider some of the key features of tourism contexts such as mobility (section 3), cosmopolitanism (section 4) and liminality (section 5) to better illuminate both the context of this research, and explore the ways that tourism spaces may influence the lives of tourism business owners. In section 6, the review will consider how postmodern conditions are shaping the way tourism is both developed and experienced. The review will then reflect on how the transformation of broader social conditions may influence individuals in tourism contexts, and by extension, the way individuals perceive and construct their own sense of self and their lifestyles in sections 7 and 8 respectively. This review will explore the idea that research seeking to understand what is occurring in tourism spaces must view these spaces not just as locations to inhabit, but as rich social spaces within which individuals may negotiate and construct their lives and lifestyles.

2.2 Tourism Global Context

Tourism, as a social phenomenon, has a long and complex history and since the mid-twentieth century has developed into a major global industry (Backer & King, 2017; Pearce, Flep, & Ross, 2010; Zhou, Chan, & Song, 2017). Tourism facilitates the global movement of over 880 million people annually and contributes billions of dollars in export earnings (Beedle, Kline, Cardenas, Byrd, & Schneider, 2013). On this basis, the economic potential of tourism is increasingly recognised as a catalyst for regional development (Henderson, 2017; Timothy, 2001). Many regional communities embrace tourism as a way of creating livelihoods to replace declining industries, such as agriculture and manufacturing (Andereck & Vogt, 2000). Tourism is an industry reflecting substantial changes over the past two decades including trends stimulated by Generation Y (Benckendorff, Moscardo, & Pendergast, 2010), rapid technological developments (Xiang, Magnini, & Fesenmaie, 2015), shifts in tourist motivations (Zotic, Alexandru, & Dezsi, 2014) and an increased focus on ethical and sustainable travel (Penz, Hoffman, & Hartl, 2017). Framed by the increasing fluidity of contemporary society (Bauman, 2000), contemporary tourism reflects social, cultural, economic, and technological developments (Cohen & Cohen, 2012), as will be explored in greater depth later in this chapter. Flows of tourism are recognised as having the potential to shape and transform host societies (Sheller & Urry, 2004) and as such tourism plays an important role in contemporary society and is inextricably bound up with the processes of globalisation (MacLeod, 2004; Mowforth,

2007; Picard, 2011; Sacareau, 2018; Wang, 2000). Thus, understanding the global context within which tourism operates is essential for understanding the nature of contemporary tourism and its influences in tourism spaces.

Globalisation is used to describe the varied economic, social, political and socio-cultural changes that have shaped the contemporary world (Stegar, 2017). Globalisation and associated time-space compression have contributed to the increasing sense that all places are becoming more accessible to citizens of the world (Torkington, 2012), as economic, political, and cultural barriers are reduced (Cohen, 2012). The interrelated influential forces underpinning globalisation are recognised to include technological, economic, political, and cultural aspects (Dwyer, 2015). The growth of global tourism is recognised as an expression of globalisation (Song, Gang, & Cao, 2018). For example, tourism has often been the driving force behind the development of systems and infrastructure such as rail networks, highways and airports which have greatly improved accessibility and interconnectedness between people and places around the globe (Cohen, 2012). Illustrating this point, Prince (2017) finds that as rural places become spaces for tourism entrepreneurship their communities become entangled with global economic and cultural processes which deeply penetrate and may challenge social structures, lifestyles and identities in complex ways. Therefore, when reflecting on the rural tourism space of Niseko, Japan it is necessary to establish the broader global research environment in which it is embedded. Thus, this review will explore the intersection of tourism and globalisation to uncover how broader global influences may shape contemporary tourism receiving communities.

Globalisation is recognised as a key concept in the social sciences (Hall, 2005), and describes the growing interconnectedness of the world, echoed in increased flows of technology, information, products, resources, and people (Dwyer, 2015). Definitions of globalisation are contested due the broad spectrum of ideas underpinning the concept (Mak, Lumbers, & Eves, 2012). This research employs Giddens' (1990, p. 64) definition, stating globalisation is, "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice-versa". Globalisation and associated technological innovations, such as the internet, create more complex and interconnected patterns of social lives, communications, and employment (Hannam & Diekmann, 2010). Globalisation also broadens the range of social experiences in

daily life (Giddens, 1991), exerting influence on individuals, including those in tourism receiving communities (Sharpley, 1999).

Globalisation is argued as being as old as humanity itself (Friedman, 1999; McGibbon, 2000; Urry, 2007). What is new in contemporary times, however, is the increased pace of change, degree of intensification of global interconnectedness (Cooper & Wahab, 2001; George, Mair, & Reid, 2009; Hall & Tucker, 2004; Salazar, 2005), and number of countries and people participating in the globalised world (Friedman, 1999). International tourism, assisted by reduced air travel costs, technological advances, and increasingly globalised media, is recognised as a result of increased globalisation since the 1970s (Cohen, 2012; Wang, 2000). Globalisation and international tourism are intrinsically linked (Edwards & Usher, 2000; Giddens, 1990), “both have to do with the movement of people, the movement of ideas and the movement of capital across borderlines” (Reiser, 2003, p. 310), and both are transformed by technology.

Globalisation and tourism are recognised as having potentially transformative influences on individuals, including manifesting changes to lifestyles, mobilities, spaces, and identities (Berry, 2008; Featherstone, 1990; Freidus & Romero-Daza, 2009; Kendall et al., 2009; MacLeod, 2004; Sanchez, 2010) and are recognised as simultaneously influencing each other (Mak et al., 2012). The processes of tourism and globalisation can be understood from economic and social perspectives (Hall & Tucker, 2004), prompting considerable debate with regard to their nature, reach, and implications (Edwards & Usher, 2000). In terms of broader impacts to society and by extension to societies in tourism receiving communities, globalisation de-stabilises cultural and social rules and creates lifestyles requiring people to have increased flexibility (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001) and changed conceptions of self (Torkington, 2012). According to sociological research, the impact of globalisation through tourism is an important and emergent transformative social flow changing conditions in host communities (Urry, 1994). Tourism, with its mobile nature, affects the global environment and is predicted to continue to do so as developing countries gain greater access to enabling technologies (Hannam, Butler, & Paris, 2014).

Despite the clear nexus between tourism and globalisation, existing research largely fails to acknowledge broader global contexts when researching experiences of tourism in host communities (Abrahams, 2015; Canavan, 2016; Kim, Usal, & Sirgy, 2013; Meethan, 2003;

Palmer, Koeing-Lewis, & Medi Jones, 2013; Tangit, Khairuman, & Adanan, 2014; Taylor, 2014; Wang & Chen, 2015). Acknowledging globalisation's long recognised influence in tourism research (Hall, 2004), Meehan (2003, p. 23) describes, "a manifestation of social, economic and cultural phenomena [that are] are now being played out on the global stage in complex forms of interaction, within which tourism is one element among others". By researching how tourism operates within a globalised world influencing individuals working and living in tourism spaces, this current research contributes to both globalisation and tourism literature.

2.3 Tourism Mobilities

A central feature of global tourism contexts is the highly mobile nature of individuals, objects, ideas, and the use of technologies within them (Hannam et al., 2014). Thus, interwoven with tourism is the idea of mobility and movement between places (O'Regan, 2010). Bauman (2000), explaining the mobilities concept, perceives the modern world as existing in a 'liquid', rather than solid state, in recognition of the fluid nature of contemporary cultures, societies, and identities. This fluidity is comprised of the key elements of movement, increased speed, the need for constant adaptability and transformation, the recognition of space being more important than time, the temporary nature of social patterns, and the ability of individuals to actively shape their own lives compared with previous times (Bauman, 2007). Liquidity is a useful concept for understanding the broader context within which individuals in tourism spaces operate, and how the fluid nature of the modern world may be influencing and shaping the way people in tourism receiving communities experience living in a space transformed by tourism.

The concept of liquid modernity was furthered by Urry (2007, p. 33) who described it as a 'mobilities paradigm' and argued its relevance as a lens in sociological tourism research on the basis that by reflecting upon what is mobile in opposition to what is static in academic research, it is possible to gain deeper insight into social phenomena. Due to these characteristics, therefore, the concept of 'mobilities' can provide a useful way to understand the flows of tourism in the contemporary world. To be specific, from a mobilities perspective, it is essential to approach the study of social environments with the recognition of the varied and numerous

global connections and technologies that are interwoven into people's lives, a perspective relevant to the current research.

In tourism contexts, mobilities are recognised as being increasingly global in nature (Sheller & Urry, 2004). These include physical bodily travel, imagined travel (through the media), and virtual travel through communications technology (Szerszynski & Urry, 2006). Increased mobilities are also recognised as manifesting a sense of affiliation with multiple places and identities (Hall, 2005). These flows of information, ideas, products, people, and images have resulted in the intensification of the reduction of spatial distance in the world (Featherstone, 1995). Through increased mobility individuals can simultaneously be connected to multiple places, and in tourism contexts this is expressed in a compression of time and space: not only those emerging from technologies but also from the increased speed and numbers of international travellers (Sheller & Urry, 2004). Therefore, from a mobilities perspective, an individual is recognised as having to adapt in response to the constantly evolving mobility systems (such as transport, the internet) that are part of the liquid modern world. These complex mobility systems which are organised around the circulation of people, objects, and information at various speeds command the recognition of the broader context of fluidity for research in tourism contexts. It has been posited that viewing tourism in terms of mobility places it at the heart of social and cultural life, rather than on the borders of people's daily lives (Hannam et al., 2014). However, it could be argued that mobility, whether physical or virtual, would still not be accessible to much of the developing world. An example illustrating this perspective is Staiff and Bushell's exploration of the intersection of tourism, heritage and community in Laos. In this work they employ a mobilities lens and find, "wealthy countries offer a greater range of mobility than poorer countries" (2013, p. 107). Mobility then, much like tourism, is possible principally through economic capacity (Bauman, 1998; Cohen & Cohen, 2012) and thus mobility becomes a marker of status and a key component of the social capital of the global elite (Cohen & Gossling, 2015).

Increased mobility in contemporary society means increased choice about spatial location. As an outcome of this change, people have altered the way they form attachments to places and individuals may be, "wedded to several places at once" (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. 25). It is recognised that the assumption that individuals will live their entire lives embedded in a single location and monocultural environment is unlikely to be the experience of individuals living in the late modern world (Krivokapic-Skoko, Reid, & Collins, 2018). Thus, increasingly people are becoming less bound to their place of birth and are rather choosing

places which they feel are more congruent with their chosen lifestyle and life-story narrative (Savage, Bagnall, & Longhurst, 2005). One expression of this is the phenomenon of 'transnational lifestyles', which are facilitated by international mobility and multiple home ownership and are evidence of lifestyles which are underpinned by mobility and demonstrate multiple attachments to place (Montezuma & McGarrigle, 2018). Therefore, as highlighted by Elliot and Urry (2010, p. 3), in the highly mobile globalised world, questions of identity have become, "fundamentally recast in terms of capacities for movement" as, "the globalisation of mobility extends to the core of self". The ability to choose their spatial location for mobile individuals in the late modern world then, is increasingly a choice, "bound up with the reflexive project of self" (Giddens, 1991, p. 147) and reflects a search for meaning and an opportunity to renegotiate and reconstruct one's identity in a new location (Durr, 2012).

The mobilities paradigm, therefore, sees tourism as part of a complex set of global mobilities (Cohen & Cohen, 2012) and recognises the destabilisation of societies (Hannam et al., 2014). Thus, tourism spaces and the people that inhabit them are not fixed and unchanging (Sheller & Urry, 2004). In turn, this perspective challenges many of the basic assumptions upon which previous sociological tourism research was based. For example, it has challenged distinctions between concepts such as home and away (Paris, 2012), 'hosts' and 'guests' (Smith, 1989) and the boundary between what is 'local' and what is 'international' (Germann Molz, 2006). The flow-on effects of increased mobility are evident in tourism spaces as they emerge as diverse and transnational socio-cultural spaces (vanNoorloos, 2013). Highlighting this point, Takeda (2017) identified that in the tourism space of Niseko the mobility that is occurring is more complex than transnational mobility between Japan and Australia, but rather is embedded in broader international and domestic flows. Despite the clear nexus of mobility and tourism (Sheller & Urry, 2004), there is a recognised lack of theoretical integration in the academic literature of the concepts of tourism and mobility (Coles, Duval, & Hall, 2004), which the present research addresses.

The role of the mobilities paradigm in blurring previously established definitions in sociological research has thus altered how tourism contexts and experiences of tourism are understood by sociologists. Thus, it is from this perspective of recognising the fluid and mobile nature of contemporary society and in turn tourism contexts, that this current research is situated. In the context of the present research, this approach will inform the way participants are recognised to be entwined in a mobilities system which views them not as immobile hosts

in a static environment, but rather, acknowledges the dynamic and interconnected nature of their experiences of tourism. By extension, this research will utilise the mobilities perspective to attempt to understand how tourism business owners experience the tourism space of Niseko, Japan. In turn, this will contribute to illuminating the potential of tourism to influence both physical and social boundaries for individuals living in these spaces and will also help establish a broader understanding of how tourism spaces as part of the mobilities paradigm are, “fluid, relational and unstable” (Sheller & Urry, 2004, p. 21). A central part of this fluidity in tourism spaces is associated with socio-cultural conditions which may be sensitive and receptive to a diversity of cultural influences. Thus, as an outcome of increased mobilities, tourism spaces become locations where there are opportunities for intercultural exchange (Lorant & Csaba, 2004) which may lead to the emergence of cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism is a socially, culturally and geographically situated concept which is embodied by tourists, tourism workers and tourism researchers (Johnson, 2014) and will be the focus of the next section.

2.4 Cosmopolitanism

As highlighted thus far, tourism is an outcome of the socio-cultural and geographical conditions shaped by globalisation in the contemporary world. Cosmopolitanism is similarly identified as emerging as a result of the, “socio-cultural conditions of globalisation” (Johnson, 2014, p. 257; Hannerz, 1996) and is a concept that has substantial ramifications for the way people perceive each other, the world around them and their own self-identity (Warf, 2012) and as such cosmopolitanism is applicable to the focus of this research. The term originates from the ancient Greek word *kosmopolites*, meaning, ‘citizen of the world’ and it is suggested, much like mobility, that it is underpinned by discourses of consumption (Butcher & Smith, 2010). Cosmopolitanism was traditionally exclusively attributed to the global elite, for example in the context of Niseko, Takeda (2017) notes that Australian tourists are Anglo-Saxon, native English speakers from a first world country and fit typical perceptions of cosmopolitans.

The term cosmopolitanism can be used to describe both the qualities of people and of places (Lawhon & Chion, 2012). Papastergiadis (2011) proposes that cosmopolitanism may emerge in spaces where there is a ‘void’ in situations where traditional ways are less useful and where, through creative processes and cultural interaction, there is cultural transformation. The key features of cosmopolitanism in tourism contexts are recognised to include cultural exchange

facilitated by mobility, openness to other cultures, international travel and a perception of being globally connected (Hannerz, 1990; Urry, 1995; Vertovic & Cohen, 2002). Cosmopolitan spaces are created by cosmopolitan individuals, both those who are mobile and those without global mobility. For example, in a study examining the tourism destination of Cusco, Peru, Lawhon and Chion's (2012, p. 541) local participants described feeling as if, "we do not live in Cusco anymore, we are citizens of the world as an outcome of living in a tourism space". Thus, cosmopolitan spaces may be created and recreated by both local and international influences and the interplay between them (Clifford, 2003).

Tourism spaces are thus recognised as environments which are well suited to research concerned with understanding cosmopolitanism and how it is embodied and performed (Johnson, 2014). In the context of tourism, cosmopolitanism can be viewed as a progressive humanistic ideal of a global sense of belonging (Kendall et al., 2009) that has the capacity to foster tolerance, respect and a celebration of cultural differences (Salazar, 2010). Cosmopolitanism can, therefore, have positive effects in practice. Beck and Snaider (2006, p. 7) propose, "it is only when cosmopolitan ways of thinking and perceiving become incorporated into peoples' identities, rituals and dispositions that the former can become an effective force in the world". Illustrating this point, Baptisma (2017) finds cosmopolitanism to have a moral element which in tourism spaces are discernible in the sensitive engagement of tourists with locals in the tourism space of Canhane in Mozambique. Baptisma (2017, p. 178) reports, "this village became a field of simultaneity between socio-economic contrasts and global responsibility. There, tourists can fortify their moral selves by personally engaging in helping the deprived and different local residents as part of a more general process of serving the universal community; a quest which emanates from a sentiment of global belonging". Thus, tourism spaces may become spaces of possibility.

In sociology, cosmopolitanism has been used to understand social transformation by recognising new or emerging social realities (Delanty, 2006); an approach relevant to the present research that views tourism spaces as social constructs. Johnson (2014, p. 256), defines cosmopolitanism as, "an embodiment of one's identity: a composition of literacies including background (ethnic, national, cultural) and accumulated cultural capital through experience (travel, kindred/ethnic ties, and historical ties) that can explain processes of knowledge transfer and provide insight into cultural positioning (and cultural distance)", which reflects the position of this thesis. Thus, cosmopolitanism is not just about international mobility, but rather is an

embodiment of Baptisma's (2017) sensitive engagement with culturally different people and places.

It is argued that cosmopolitan individuals make a conscious attempt to become familiar with other cultures that sit outside their local or national environment (Schueth & O'Loughlin, 2008) and are empathetic towards cultural differences (Skrbis, Kendall, & Woodward, 2004). A cosmopolitan disposition is characterised by qualities such as, "openness to cultural differences, semiotic proficiency in reading other cultures, lack of geographic rootedness, and tastes or attitudes that reflect globalised consumption patterns" (Crossley, 2017, p. 153). Cosmopolitanism for the individual can be understood as a form of cultural capital which is accumulated through knowledge of and experience of the world (Fullagar, 2002). Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst (2005, p. 191) in their research based in Manchester, UK identified cosmopolitanism in some of their sample, being expressed as, "an ability to look at their lives, thoughts and values from a perspective that did not take English referents as the implicit frame of judgement, but which was able to place them in some kind of a broader global comparative frame". The ability to know and utilise a vast cultural knowledge (Kendall et al., 2009), or 'cultural literacy' as proposed by Johnson (2014), demonstrates how cosmopolitan individuals effectively navigate cultural interactions, and how cosmopolitanism can be viewed as a form of cultural capital which influences how places, spaces, and the people in them are interpreted and understood. Cultural literacy is a key concept when exploring cosmopolitanism as it highlights the point that cosmopolitan capital can be accumulated regardless of mobility (Johnson, 2014). This is a key shift in understanding expressions of cosmopolitanism as it means that less mobile tourism business owners may also embody cosmopolitanism, of relevance to the present research. Thus, individuals who embody a cosmopolitan perspective are not necessarily those who are hyper-mobile or from a particular background, but rather, cosmopolitanism is inherently about agency, and the ability and freedom to move comfortably and navigate different cultures (Clifford, 1998). Thus, unlike earlier conceptualisations of cosmopolitanism in tourism research which suggested cosmopolitanism develops in individuals as an outcome of international travel, for example Bruner (1991, p. 246) argues that it is travel which broadens the viewpoint of an individual and, "leads to a cosmopolitan perspective"; cosmopolitanism is now recognised to be applicable to multiple contexts by multiple kinds of people (Krivokapic-Skoko et al., 2018). In this way, cosmopolitanism may develop in people's everyday lives as they are increasingly intertwined with broader global processes (Beck, 2002). Illustrating this point in the case of tourism contexts, Takeda (2017, p.

54) asserts, “people are not necessarily equipped with the corporeal mobility in order to be cosmopolitan. Through interaction with foreigners and living in a multi-cultural environment, people gain cultural capital which will contribute to their quality of being cosmopolitan”.

It has been identified that there is a clear lack of knowledge and understanding regarding the intersection of tourism and cosmopolitanism (Byrne Swain, 2009). In particular, tourism academics such as Takeda (2017) and Germann Molz (2006) articulate there is a need for research into cosmopolitanism to draw its focus away from tourists and towards host communities. Illustrating this point, Schiller, Tsyplyma and Gruner-Domic (2011, p. 404), state, “until recently the cosmopolitan literature failed to address the everyday activities of people who do not belong to the ranks of elite cultural travellers”. Few studies have considered this angle of cosmopolitanism, however notable examples include research from sociologists such as Nowika (2009), Werbner (1989), and Notar (2008) indicating that cosmopolitanism can exist in individuals from ordinary working-class contexts who are not globally mobile, but as an outcome of their involvement in tourism. More recently Takeda (2017) suggests that in tourism contexts, host residents may be transformed and become cosmopolitan through their encounters with and adaptations to international tourists, of relevance to the present research. Cosmopolitanism, then, describes a, “way of being in the world, a way of constructing identity for ones-self that is different from, and arguably opposed to, the idea of belonging to or devotion to or immersion in a particular culture” (Walden, 2000, p. 1). Therefore, cosmopolitanism has the potential to transform a person’s self-identity by creating fluidity in the relationship between the self and the other, and by extension may lead to broader transformations in communities and cultures (Spisak, 2009). The next section of this review will build on this quality of tourism spaces as rich grounds and social space for individuals to develop their sense of self and negotiate and construct reflexive lifestyles.

2.5 Liminal Tourism Spaces

Having explored the influence of global forces, increasing mobilities and emergent cosmopolitanism in tourism contexts, this section will examine the liminal quality of tourism spaces, in order to better understand both the context of the participants in this research and to explore the ways in which residing in liminal tourism spaces may influence the lives of residents in tourism receiving communities.

'Space' is a complex and multi-faceted concept (Wang, 2000), most commonly understood as a geographical feature (Kowalczyk, 2014). Historically, in the social sciences 'space' is habitually used in its more traditional form to describe a spatial location for people's social interactions (Cipolletti, 2014; Werlen, 1993). However, 'space' encompasses more than just the physical; it can also provide room to contain social meanings and interactions (Wang, 2000). Tourism spaces, therefore, can be viewed as extending from actual geographic spaces into conceptual or mental spaces and are recognised as subjectively perceived by those experiencing them (Kowalczyk, 2014). In particular, tourism spaces are characterised as dynamic (Sharpley, 2014; Wearing & Wearing, 2001), as creating social flows, and as fertile grounds for socio-cultural change (Sheller & Urry, 2004). Takeda (2017) suggests tourism spaces should be understood as being fluid social spaces and are also widely acknowledged as locations in which opportunities for negotiations between people, of relationships, and of identities may take place (Amoamo, 2011). They may also be grounds for new forms of social life to emerge (Hannam et al., 2014), thus demonstrating the capacity of tourism spaces to influence people in a range of ways. As offered by Fullagar (2002, p. 54), "travel is a liminal space inhabited by *multiple* desires that can produce different ways of knowing self and other". Therefore, understanding tourism spaces is essential when exploring the influence of tourism on both tourists and tourism receiving communities (Hall, 2008).

Liminality is a key characteristic of tourism spaces and describes a sense of being physically, socially, and ideologically in a space that is outside of a person's usual environment and social boundaries (Freidus & Romero-Daza, 2009). It has been described as, "a limbo-like space" (Preston-White, 2004, p.350) which is "betwixt and between" traditional social structures (Turner, 1979, p. 465). The term liminality is derived from, "the Latin word 'limen' for boundary or threshold" (Jaimangal-Jones, Pritchard, & Morgan, 2010, p. 263). In tourism spaces, liminality explains the way in which individuals perceive their environment and social roles in a different way than they commonly do in their home contexts (Freidus & Romero-Daza, 2009; Salenniemi, 2003). Thomassen (2012, p. 21) describes liminal spaces as, "the places we go to in search of a break from the normal". Illuminating the liminal quality of travel and tourism spaces, Myers' (2010) exploration of lesbian backpacker travel experiences in New Zealand reported that travellers experienced a sense of freedom from heteronormative social constraints and space to explore their own identities. Myers (2010, p. 131) reflects, "the lesbian women interviewed expressed their journeys and experiences as escapes relative to the societal

expectations and perceptions in their home environments. They wanted to escape from the roles they played at home and to have the freedom from socially expected behaviours to examine their own social and sexual identities”.

The removal of daily routines and structures in tourism spaces extends beyond a physical change in location, enabling the liminal tourism space to provide individuals with the psychological space to explore and reflect upon their perceptions and behaviours (Nash, 1996). Thus, a key element of liminal spaces is the potential they offer as spaces for transformation (Andrews, 2012). White and White (2004, p.216), describe this as, “a space in which to search for a revitalized sense of self”. The concept of liminality relates to the early sociological tourism research by Cohen and Taylor (1976) highlighting the link between tourism experiences and the search for personal meaning. Thus, the liminal quality of tourism spaces is of relevance to the present research as it explores the influence of experiences of tourism on the self-identity of tourism business owners who reside in tourism destinations which provide rich grounds for personal and social reflection and negotiation.

Recent liminality research recognises such spaces create opportunity for renegotiating identities and cultural norms (Daskalaki, Butler, & Petrovic, 2016; Zhang & Honggang, 2019). Huang, Xiao and Wang (2018, p. 3) describe such spaces as creating, “a sense of freedom. Liminal personae can temporarily break free from social norms and disregard social hierarchy. They have the liberty to mix with different people and exist without structure”. Similarly, in the context of tourism spaces, liminal qualities are recognised as expanding social spaces and creating room for individuals to, “construct his/her own hybridisation” (Wearing & Wearing, 2001, p. 157). It is possible, then, that for tourism business owners, the continual exposure to, and interactions with, international tourists who have different cultural and social contexts, may also create psychological liminality for host reflection, behaviour and lifestyle changes, and identity renegotiation. Thus, given this research aims to understand experiences of living in a space transformed by tourism, tourism business owners are an appropriate choice as research participants for this research.

As people invest personal meaning in tourism spaces, they become locations not just to inhabit, but within which people negotiate and construct their own sense of self and their social relationships (Pritchard & Morgan, 2006b). This notion of tourism spaces being dynamic locations for personal change is broadly reflected in tourism research aiming to understand

relationships among tourism, space, and social structures and the interplay between tourism experiences and identity (Aitchison, Macleod, & Shaw, 2000; Crouch, 1999). This is an area of developing knowledge to which the present research makes an important contribution. The fluidity created in these liminal tourism spaces is framed by the broader societal conditions of postmodernity, thus understanding how postmodernity coalesces with tourism is perceived and experienced is the focus of the next section.

2.6 Postmodern Tourism

As established in this review, the broader conditions within which tourism operates have been transformed by globalisation and associated changes such as increased mobilities in the postmodern world (Zotic et al., 2014). Postmodernism is said to require of individuals, “an adjustment to new conditions involving changes in all fields, ultimately triggering changes in the vision of current civilisation, [the] individual’s mentality, perception and behaviour” (Zotic et al., 2014, p. 79). Thus, the way in which people live and perceive themselves and the world around them has transformed. Tourism is recognised as a lens through which increased insight into subjective individual experiences and how they connect with wider social processes may be generated (Mica & Oakes, 2014) As this research is concerned with understanding the experiences of tourism business owners living in a tourism space, unpacking the qualities and characteristics of tourism and tourism experiences in the postmodern world sheds light on the contexts of the participants in this research.

Tourism is recognised as historically having moved through five distinct stages of development including (Zotic et al., 2014):

1. Up to 100 BC prehistoric times
2. 100BC–476 AD early tourism
3. 476 AD–1789 AD pseudo-tourism
4. 1789–1994 AD golden tourism
5. 1994–2030 AD postmodern tourism.

One of the key changes in recent history prompted by the emergence of a globally connected socio-economy has been the shift away from mass tourism towards more niche individualised tourism (Zotic et al., 2014). This change has been reflected in tourism studies with a recognised

move away from the early theories of ‘modern tourism’ in the early 1970s and the emergence of more contemporary conceptualisations of ‘post-modern tourism’ tourism (Uriely, 1997) which has produced a range of new conceptual and theoretical approaches which are recognised as having, “enriched tourism studies significantly” (Mica & Oakes, 2014, p. 294).

Changing patterns of migration and work are identified as the key factors stimulating the transformation of tourism in postmodern times (Zotic et al., 2014). Postmodern tourism is characterised by a wide variety of branded products and tourism-related products which are designed to attract particular personalities and to resonate with individual symbolic meanings (Yuksel, Sirakaya-Turk, & Preciado, 2013). Reflecting the increasing individualisation of postmodern tourism, postmodern tourists can be identified as distinctive in the way they engage with tourism, which is driven by their personal preferences (Eugenio-Martina & Campos-Soria, 2014). Travel experiences for the postmodern tourist are said to be primarily motivated by notions of identity, authenticity, and uniqueness of place (Zotic et al., 2014). That is, the postmodern tourist is seeking a unique, resonant experience that is coherent with his/her sense of self. The postmodern turn has similarly affected the orientation of tourism research, with tourism being increasingly drawn into, “ongoing debates in social theory concerning such diverse topics as post-colonialism, mobility, culture, well-being, and care” (Mica & Oakes, 2014, p. 299).

It is posited that a defining characteristic of postmodern tourism is that it has changed from being primarily an economic activity into something more akin to a social and leisure lifestyle (Zotic et al., 2014). Looking forward, this integration between leisure and lifestyle is predicted to intensify as, “tourism, is seen less as a departure from normal routines and more as a means by which older boundaries between work and leisure have become permeable” (Savage et al., 2005, p. 188). It is proposed that in the future the consumption of tourism may increasingly become integrated as part of an individual’s day-to-day lifestyle (Cohen, 2012; Zotic et al., 2014). Tourism, then, may be experienced in a different manner to the way it has generally been consumed as a separate activity, often perceived as an escape from everyday life (Edensor, 2001). This point is salient when considering the tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan who are the focus of this research, as they concurrently blend tourism and work in their day-to-day lives in their tourism entrepreneurship enterprises. This evolution of tourism being increasingly curated to cater to the individual with his/her own unique needs and desires for particular experiences or indeed even the aim to integrate tourism into a lifestyle, is

underpinned by the ability of the individual to influence and transform the conditions of his/her own life, which will be the focus of the following section.

2.7 Agency, Reflexive Lifestyles, and Giddens' 'Project of Self'

In the late 20th century social transformations affected the way people live and this has had flow-on effects on their lifestyles and conceptualisations of self (Giddens, 1991; Torkington, 2012). For example, social differentiation now correlates less with fixed social hierarchies and more with individual experience, thus, people are increasingly likely to experience less constraint from traditional social structures throughout their lives (Beck, 1992). Increasingly the responsibility has fallen to the individual to make decisions about how to construct their own lives (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) and this increased agency of the individual to shape their life through their own activities and decisions has transformed social conditions in contemporary life (Giddens, 1984).

2.7.1 Reflexive Agency

Agency describes the way in which individuals are able to monitor, "their own thoughts and activities as well as their physical and social contexts" (Ritzer, 2007, p. 523). This acknowledgement of individual agency signals a distancing from the positivistic sociological tradition in favour of a more subjectivist and interpretivist approach (vanRooyen, 2013). Human agency is a concept central to much contemporary social theory (Loyal, 2001) and is particularly relevant to consider when exploring ideas of individual identity. By definition, agency describes the things that individuals are actually doing (actions) or their ability to do things (Giddens, 1984, p. 9), "agency refers not to the intentions people have in doing things but to their capability of doing these things in the first place". Thus, agency denotes power and choice, and this power, according to Giddens (1984), has the capacity to bring about transformation. In tourism contexts, it is recognised that for tourism business owners a sense of agency over their lives is a key motivating factor (Bredvold & Skalen, 2016) so they have greater control over the circumstances of their lives (Wolf, 1999). Thus, when considering the context of the present research the concept of agency as outlined in Giddens (1984), the invitation arises to consider how tourism business owners' sense of agency influences how they

act and how they view themselves in the context of the narratives they construct about their lives and their experiences of living in tourism contexts.

The concept of agency is recognised as a useful source of inspiration for research focused on understanding a social constructionist view of self, “characterised by interpretation, variability, relativity, flux and difference” (Crossley, 2000b, p, 529). The capability of individuals to be reflexive is a central feature of human agency and is recognised as contributing to understanding human experiences and the way the social intersects with the individual actor (Parker, 1991). Illustrating this point, Giddens (1984, p. 3) argues, “to be human is to be a purposive agent, who has both reasons for his or her activities and is able, if asked, to elaborate discursively upon those reasons”. Building on the idea of agency, Giddens (1984) suggests that social situations are characterised by the reflexivity of individuals which forms a key part of agency, and this provides individuals with the capability over the course of their lives to reflect on the nature of the social context within which they live and how it may have influenced them. The concept of reflexivity can be defined as the internal conversation with self that individuals conduct and through which they construct their priorities and commitments (Archer, 2003). Further developing the idea of reflexivity, Farrugia and Woodman (2015, p. 628) describe it as, “aimed at describing the means by which, through engaging in the world, purposive and agentic subjectivities with meaningful inner lives are constructed”. Reflexivity, therefore, is central to the concept of agency as it reveals the potential of each individual to craft their own knowledge and in turn the way they experience social interactions, endowing each actor with the capacity they have to control their circumstances and life (vanRooyen, 2013). This idea of the individual’s ability to construct knowledge and perceive experiences is central to this research that explores the influence of living in a space transformed by international tourism on tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan.

In research focused on understanding individual experiences in tourism contexts, the approach advocated by Giddens (1984) of exploring the discursive reflection of individuals is well represented (see for example; Beaven, 2007; Fullagar, 2002; Hellum, 2008 ; McGibbon, 2006; Meehan, Anderson, & Miles, 2006; Nelson, 2015; Noy, 2004). A reflexive project of self is the knowledge that is produced by the individual and is described by Giddens (1984, p. 45) as the capacity to, “give a coherent account of one’s activities and the reasons for them”. Therefore, discursive knowledge is the way that individuals perceive the circumstances of their lives and is the window to understanding their self-identity. This aligns closely with Carr’s (1986)

argument that human experience is most accurately portrayed through personal narratives, also describing the discursive knowledge of individual actors. In research focused specifically on understanding self-identity, examples such as Hughes (2012) and Pritchard and Morgan (2006b) also demonstrate the suitability of the application of analysing personal accounts to understand concepts of self and self-identity construction. Therefore, in the present research seeking to understand experiences of living in a space transformed by international tourism, the discursive knowledge of tourism business owners will be captured and analysed with consideration given to the broader social context framing each individual.

2.7.2 The reflexive project of self

Tourism spaces often provide opportunities for interactions with others from different cultural backgrounds, which can affect tourists to the extent of prompting them to renegotiate their own identity (Wearing & Neil, 2000). As the present research aims to explore the experience of tourism business owners living in an environment transformed by tourism, it is likewise concerned with understanding how the transformation of social conditions can influence individuals in these contexts, and by extension the ways in which individuals perceive and construct their own sense of self.

It is acknowledged that globalisation and the social and technological transformations manifesting from it are playing a crucial part in the renegotiation of identities in the late modern world, and as such have changed the ways through which people create and recreate their own ideas of self. In the context of this fluid globalised world, individuals are recognised to be attached more loosely to conventional boundaries of place, cultures, and fixed identities (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Giddens, 1991). In tourism contexts in particular, it is widely acknowledged that globalisation and associated mobilities in liminal tourism spaces can manifest fluidity in social flows, conditions and structures (Amoamo, 2011; Sheller & Urry, 2004; Weber, 1949). As an outcome of these changing conditions, there is a recognised shift from the perception of identity as something that is *given*, to the idea that identity is something that is *made*. Therefore, in contrast to conceptualisations of identity as passive or determined solely by external forces, the postmodern individual is recognised as being consciously involved in the construction of their own self-identity. Thus in post modernity, individuals are recognised as being in a state of perpetual evolution (Gillis, 1996). In this context, as articulated

by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002, p. 5), “The human being becomes a choice among possibilities”.

Reflecting on sociological understandings of self in the postmodern era, Wearing and Wearing (2001, p. 144) offer that there is a move towards, “a fragmented, decentred notion” of self that is self-constructed. This the conceptualisation of ‘self’ which recognises the agency of individuals creates space for sociological tourism research to explore in greater depth the complexity of tourism experience than would be possible in research framed by more generalised reference groups. Therefore, sociological explorations of individual experience in tourism contexts offer the opportunity for insight into the construction of self through tourism experience, while acknowledging the relational complexity of the individual with his/her social environment.

Such a conceptualisation of self, which is constructed rather than derived from fixed social positions, is offered by Giddens (1991). Giddens (1991) states, “self-identity is not found in behaviour” (1991, p. 54) and defines it as, “not a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits possessed by the individual. It is the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of his or her own biography” (1991, p. 53). Giddens proposes that in late modernity individuals must construct their own identities through the reflexive project of self (Giddens, 1991). This, ‘reflexive project of the self’ (Giddens, 1991) specifically involves individuals in reflexively providing an account of and reasoning behind their own actions. As such, this kind of narrative identity, “is created by the stories people tell about themselves to define who they are” (Bredvold & Skalen, 2016, p. 98). Thus, as highlighted by Giddens (1991), the construction and maintenance of a story about ourselves is the means through which individuals create meaning and coherence throughout their lives.

In tourism contexts in particular, applications of Giddens’ concept of self-identity are used in sociological research to understand the influence of tourism, experiences of tourism and patterns of tourism consumption, and are recognised as useful both as a conceptual approach and as a research strategy. This approach of understanding identity as a self-constructed narrative aligns with a narrative turn in the social sciences which has created innovative ways to explore a variety of phenomena, including identity (Czarniawska, 2004). Examples of the application of Giddens’ concept of self-identity in sociological tourism research include Noy

(2004), Hyde and Olsen (2011), Glover (2003) and Elstrud (2001), demonstrating the ways in which narratives can be used to draw insight into the influence of tourism experiences on self-identity. Importantly, these applications use Giddens' theory of self-identity to understand how tourism may influence self-identity construction in relation only to tourists' experiences and neglect to consider experiences of tourism business owners, demonstrating a gap in the tourism literature. This gap is framed by a wider scarcity in tourism studies of research that has considered identity construction amongst tourism business owners (Bredvold & Skalen, 2016).

2.7.3 Lifestyles as an Expression of Self

As this review has highlighted, Giddens (1991) proposes that in late modernity individuals must construct their own identities through the reflexive project of self (Giddens, 1991). Thus, as traditional social roles and structures are less salient in people's lives and consequently are less influential in terms of individuals' identities, for some, lifestyle choice has become pivotal in the construction of self-identity (Giddens, 1991). The link between identity and lifestyle was first offered by Alder (1929) who saw 'lifestyle' as an expression of a person's basic character. Giddens (1991) theorises that in modern social life, the concept of 'lifestyle' is increasingly central and is framed by the effects of globalisation, which has placed individuals in a position whereby they are more than ever before in situations where they must negotiate and navigate a broader variety of lifestyle options.

Lifestyle is defined by Giddens (1991, p. 81) as, "a more or less integrated set of practices which an individual embraces, not only because they give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity" but also as suggested by Torkington (2012, p. 74), lifestyle may be interpreted as a, "template for the narrative of self". Thus, lifestyle is about choice (Veal, 1993), and the choice of lifestyle is a reflexive statement about who an individual is or aspires to be. The concept of lifestyle in the contemporary world is therefore a central part of this project of self. As pointed out by Cohen (2010), Giddens' idea of lifestyle is focused on the idea that lifestyle can be a way that individuals create a coherent sense of self. Thus, narratives about lifestyle migration are also narratives of self. Lifestyle decisions, then, may contribute to the construction of a coherent narrative of self (Hoey, 1995; Torkington, 2012), which is recognised as an increasing trend, particularly in Western contexts (Veal, 1993).

Giddens (1991) suggested the less traditional the context of the individual, the more likely that lifestyle concerns will relate to the construction of self-identity. Lifestyle, then, is about the kind of choices a person makes about how (and perhaps where) they live their lives (Giddens, 1991); such choices, therefore, are underpinned by the degree of freedom or agency an individual has (Veal, 1993). This point is considered particularly salient in contemporary Western culture, where, “there is hardly a desire more widespread in the West today than to, ‘lead a life of your own’ ” (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. 22). Travelling or relocating to pursue a particular lifestyle is a way that individuals may create spaces in which they can, “seek coherence in order to try and make sense of their lives” (Cohen, 2010, p. 83). Those who move to pursue a particular lifestyle are searching, then, for a place which is cohesive with their personal narrative. Hoey (2005, p. 593) describes such individuals as being, “on a kind of personal quest, lifestyle migrants seek places of refuge that they can call home and that they believe will resonate with idealized visions of self”. Therefore, for lifestyle migrants, spatial orientation can be understood as an expression of identity.

Relocation may be used as a strategy to create a new lifestyle, one which reduces conflict between personal values such as family commitments and the need for work to fulfil material demands. Thus, “the act of relocation becomes an attempt to reconcile obligations and expectations between material and moral domains” (Hoey, 2005, p. 588). Hoey (2005, p. 595) coins the term, “the opportunity of elsewhere” to describe the idea that people may choose to reconstruct themselves through the pursuit of a new lifestyle in a different location. In this way a change of geographic place can provide momentum for the individual to reconstruct a lifestyle which more closely reflects their values and psycho-social space to explore and realise what Russell-Hochschild (1997) terms, ‘the potential self’.

As established in this review, tourism spaces are situated within a broader context of increased global mobility, and thus have become progressively more accessible which has in turn influenced people’s lifestyles (Lorant & Csaba, 2004). Transnational lifestyles such as second homes abroad mark a shift away from traditional norms around belonging and highlight the link between tourism and lifestyle (Montezuma & McGarrigle, 2018). In tourism contexts, tourism business owners are often interested in combining a lifestyle with a livelihood in order to enjoy things like outdoor activities (Hoey, 2005; Prince, 2017). Illustrating this point in his

seminal work, *The Tourist*, MacCannell (1999) suggests that as a term lifestyle should be conceptualised as a combination of both work and leisure.

In contemporary society individuals are encouraged to be reflective and have an understanding of themselves and who they are and this is often expressed through their leisure activities (Guerrier & Adib, 2003). This perspective is of interest to consider in tourism contexts. Intrinsically, conceptions of tourism and work appear strikingly opposed, but are in fact tightly interwoven (Guerrier & Adib, 2003). This is evident from leisure theory, which demonstrates how people need to ‘work’ at leisure (Laurier, 1999), and in the way that work studies illustrate how people are able to weave experiences of leisure into their work time (DuGuy, 1996). As such, this creates an interesting dichotomy in tourism contexts when considering the experiences of tourism business owners who are working in an environment constructed around leisure experiences. Bauman (2000) offers an interesting perspective on the relationship between work and leisure, positing that perceptions of work have become reinterpreted as potentially another type of leisure, and in this way work has become part of the coherent identity individuals construct across both the working and non-working parts of their lives. This blending of the spheres of work and leisure to enable individual identity construction does not reflect early sociological research in the area of work. For example, in the middle of the last century a number of studies exploring the intersection of work and identity across a range of social classes found that people did not deeply associate their identities with their work (Dubin, 1956; Goldthorpe, 1968; Mills, 1951), but rather work was perceived as a necessary sacrifice of time in order to build the kind of life they wanted outside of it. In this context, work is viewed as a source of extrinsic reward where it provides income, status and power, as opposed to intrinsic rewards such as identity creation. The next section will explore how tourism business owners navigate work and leisure through lifestyle entrepreneurship.

2.7.4 Lifestyle Entrepreneurs

As this review has established, tourism contexts are social constructs and spaces in which individuals may create businesses as a way of harmonising their livelihoods with their leisure activities and other responsibilities such as family commitments. Such entrepreneurs are described in tourism scholarship as, ‘lifestyle entrepreneurs’ (Bredvold & Skalen, 2016; Thomas, Shaw, & Page, 2011; William & Shaw, 2004). Lifestyle entrepreneurs can be defined

as those who are focused on constructing a way of making a living which is less concerned with creating profit and more orientated towards creating a particular lifestyle which is crafted to balance economic, family, social or leisure needs (Bredvold & Skalen, 2016; Jaafar et al., 2011). Lifestyle entrepreneurs are more common in rural areas (Carson, Carson, & Eimermann, 2018), and their goals are often underpinned by the motivation of living in a particular location to pursue a more natural lifestyle (Bredvold & Skalen, 2016). For tourism entrepreneurs, social and cultural values can be more important than an economic motivation (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000). The measure of success for lifestyle entrepreneurs in tourism spaces is often measured not by economic outcomes, but rather, “in terms of a continuing ability to perpetuate their chosen lifestyle” (Dewhurst & Horobin, 1998, p. 30).

Despite the clear nexus between these spheres in contemporary society, research exploring the links between tourism, lifestyle and relocation is scarce (Montezuma & McGarrigle, 2018). In particular, there is a recognised need in tourism research to better understand the experiences of lifestyle entrepreneurs (Thomas et al., 2011). The challenge for scholars, as outlined by Veal (1993, p. 243), “is to understand how lifestyles are formed and sustained on the individual level”. Prince (2017) suggests a qualitative approach focused on unpacking individual experience is the most appropriate research strategy to understand the phenomenon of tourism entrepreneurship in rural tourism spaces, of particular relevance to the context of Niseko, Japan which is the focus of this research. Similarly, Bredvold and Skalen (2016) in their research exploring lifestyle entrepreneurship in Norway endorse a qualitative approach and demonstrate the value of ‘life stories’ as a methodology which is able to illuminate individual experiences of owning a tourism business. Hoey (2005) shares this perspective, suggesting that a narrative approach is the most suitable methodology to unpack experiences of lifestyle migration, as it provides an embedded context.

2.8 Conclusion

This review has sought to understand how tourism spaces operate as social spaces and acknowledges such spaces as being deeply embedded in broader global and social contexts. These broader contexts were found to be characterised by increased interconnection and mobility, and tourism spaces emerged from the literature as places which reflected the fluidity of contemporary society as well as social, cultural, economic, and technological developments.

On this basis, this review has highlighted the need for tourism research to examine individuals in host communities in the context of the globalised world within which they exist (Bauman, 2007; MacLeod, 2004; Yamashita, 2003) and further that such research should consider how broader global contexts may be influencing what is occurring in tourism spaces.

Further reflecting on the influence of globalisation, this review revealed the way globalisation and its associated processes have engendered the destabilisation of cultural and social rules, which has had the outcome of creating lifestyles which require individuals to navigate increasingly flexible conditions. One aspect of this change in social and cultural conditions highlighted by this review of the literature was in terms of mobility and the way it has expanded the choice for many regarding spatial location, which in turn has loosened attachments to place. The review identified a recognised lack of theoretical integration in the academic literature of the concepts of tourism and mobility; thus this review finds there is a need for research which attempts to unpack the connection between place and self.

Cosmopolitanism was highlighted by this review as a key outcome of the socio-cultural conditions of globalisation which frame the context of this research and one which has the potential to influence the way people perceive each other, their communities and lifestyles, and their own self-identity. Examination of the literature to understand how cosmopolitanism has been examined in tourism contexts revealed a strong orientation towards research focused on cosmopolitanism as embodied by tourists who fit into traditional conceptualisations of cosmopolitanism as being associated with the highly mobile global elite. While more broadly the review acknowledged a lack of knowledge about the intersection of tourism and cosmopolitanism, it in particular highlighted the need for research which explores how cosmopolitanism may be experienced and expressed by less mobile individuals who, through their everyday interactions in tourism contexts, may develop cosmopolitan qualities, thus pointing to the potential for residents of tourism spaces to be transformed through their experience of living in a tourism space.

Building further on understanding the qualities of tourism destinations as social spaces, this review found tourism spaces to be endowed with liminal qualities, in that they are experienced as spaces which are both physically and socially removed from usual social and cultural boundaries. Understanding liminality and how it manifests in tourism spaces was found to enrich understanding of how such locations are experienced both by those who pass through

and those that reside in them. Despite this potential for tourism research which encompasses a liminal lens to contribute to understanding what is happening in tourism spaces, this review of the literature revealed a discernible lack of knowledge about the intersection of tourism and cosmopolitanism. Current scholarship into tourism and liminality undertaken in this review revealed liminal tourism spaces to be dynamic and fluid social spaces which, due to these qualities, are locations in which there is psycho-social space for individuals to explore and navigate personal change. Thus, the review found liminal tourism spaces to be ideal contexts for research which seeks to understand the connections between tourism, space, and social structures, as well as having salience for studies concerned with unpacking the relationship between tourism experience and identity.

Recognising the quality of liminal tourism spaces as creating room for negotiating and constructing identity, this review considered a vital part of being able to fully understand the influence of living in a social environment transformed by tourism on individuals in a host community is to understand the effects on the self-identity and lifestyles of the people who live there. The review demonstrated how self-identities are fundamentally unfixed and subjective, and these qualities necessitate the approach of examining lived experiences through individual narratives in order to best unpack their complexities and understand the influence of living in transformed tourism spaces on the lifestyles and identities.

Drawing on the conceptualisation of lifestyle as an expression of the self as offered by sociologist Anthony Giddens (1991) and with consideration to the emerging area of literature exploring the interplay between work, tourism, lifestyle, and migration, this review has revealed there is space for research which can provide insight into the experiences of tourism business owners who are working in an environment constructed around leisure experiences and in particular has found a gap in tourism research which contributes to understanding the experience of lifestyle entrepreneurs in tourism spaces.

This review has demonstrated the need for research which explores how tourism spaces can both shape and be shaped by the people who live in them (Torkington, 2012) and acknowledges the need for a research design which creates space to encompass the reflexivity of research participants, recognised by this review as necessary in research which attempts to understand human experience. In particular, this review of the literature has highlighted the opportunity for research to shift its focus onto tourism hosts and their individual experiences. The review

has demonstrated the need for tourism research to develop innovative methodologies which are able, “to address the complexities of an increasingly cosmopolitized world” (Johnson, 2014, p. 255) in order to understand how self-identities and lifestyles are negotiated in spaces transformed by tourism.

Research examining the experiences of tourism business owners offers the potential for substantial conceptual and methodological contributions to broaden explorations of the construction of self-identity and lifestyles in tourism spaces. This examination of the literature has revealed a limitation in understanding around the intersection of tourism, lifestyle, and self-identity, a gap that this study seeks to innovatively address through the application of a qualitative narrative approach.

Foster and McCabe (2015, p. 47) aptly identify that, “physical settings, spatial characteristics and geographical features of place are essential elements in understanding the important links between tourist experience, sense of place and identity”. This thesis argues for the inclusion of tourism hosts as part of this linkage. On this basis, the proceeding chapter will provide orientation to the research site of Niseko, Japan, the local context of this research, and its development as a tourism space.

I can't reach her with my questions
Because
She is hidden.
O-taku, wife.
O-taku, the woman at the rear of the house.
Her experience is buried so deep under
her husband's story
She doesn't even know that it is there.
Unexpectedly,
Our 'I's are of vastly different size, shape, and culture.
I can understand and yet I *cannot* understand.
The view from her *o-taku* lens.

Chapter 3: Research Site

Introducing the Research Site: Niseko, Japan.

3.1 Introducing the Research Site

It is recognised that the influence of tourism on destination communities is shaped by the specific conditions under which tourism hosts and tourists interact (Tosun, 2002). The present research is focused on exploring the experiences of tourism business owners living in Niseko, Japan, thus it is essential to provide a detailed account of the research site of Niseko, Japan and its broader contexts, which is the primary purpose of this chapter. This chapter will outline the distinctive environment of Japan and, in particular, Niseko as tourism spaces. Additionally, the chapter will introduce the geographic, demographic, built, and economic environment of Niseko, in order to build greater clarity of the immediate context of this research.

3.2 Tourism in Japan – *Yokoso*

Forming a chain of four main islands, Japan occupies an area of 377,915 km², is predominately mountainous and spans a range of climates from sub-Arctic in the north to tropical in the south (Henderson, 2017). It has transformed from a largely rural society into a modern country since the late 19th century (Funck & Cooper, 2013). As a tourist destination Japan is recognised as offering a diverse range of attractions such as shrines, temples, natural landscapes, festivals, theme parks and hot springs (JNTO, 2016). In Japan, tourism has become a major tertiary industry and is recognised as a key way to energise the country's economy (Teikoku-Shoin, 2010).

Japan has a long history of domestic tourism (Kajiwara, 1997; Nelson & Graburn, 1997), originating with peaceful religious pilgrimages in the 1700s (Moon, 1997). Once isolated from the rest of the world, it was forcibly opened to foreign trade in 1859 and thus was thrust into engagement with other nations (Henderson, 2017) and even then only a very small number of foreign traders were able to enter Japan, via Nagasaki (March, 2007). The abolition of the need for passports for domestic travellers only occurred in 1871 with the commencement of the

Meiji era¹ (March, 2007), illustrating the level of restriction encountered by early domestic tourists in Japan. By the mid-nineteenth century both rail and air networks were well established in Japan and short breaks to hot springs were a popular form of domestic tourism (March, 2007), however, the majority of domestic tourism was confined to job hunting in cities, and journeys back to hometowns for festivals (Graburn, 1983). Historically, domestic tourism in Japan has been restricted by the long work hours required in Japanese companies, as well as the high care demands placed on women in Japanese society; although the Japanese government is now beginning to introduce policies to address these issues it continues to limit domestic tourism growth (Funck & Cooper, 2013). The economic boom period which began in the 1950s expanded the ability of ordinary Japanese to travel for pleasure and by the 1970s the majority of Japanese tourism was still domestic and in group form, reflective of Japanese society in general (Graburn, 1983). Graburn (1983, p. 60) describes Japanese domestic tourism at this time as taking “place within an accepted, approved and known cultural structure”.

International tourism is therefore a relatively new industry in Japan (Kajiwara, 1997; Zhang, 2014). The concept of attracting inbound tourists to Japan first emerged in the early 1890s and in 1893 the *Kihin-Kai* (Welcome Society) was formed to encourage foreign travel in Japan. The Board of Tourist Industry was established in 1930 (Kato & Horita, 2018) and by 1936 spending by inbound tourists represented Japan’s fourth largest source of foreign exchange revenue (Leheny, 2003), however, this ceased in the early 1940s with Japan’s involvement in World War Two. Inbound tourism in Japan only recommenced when officially promoted by the Japanese government in 1968 in conjunction with the hosting of the Olympic Games in Tokyo, and tourism became recognised as a key part of Japan’s post-war economic recovery (Kato & Horita, 2018). While Japan’s inbound visitor numbers have consistently followed a growth trend since 1950 (Larke, Kilgour, & John, 2016), Japanese inbound tourism is an industry that, according to some authors at least, presently remains relatively underdeveloped (Arlt, 2006). For example, Funck and Cooper (2013, p. 160) note, “in contrast to the rapid development of outbound tourism since the 1980s, inbound tourism has played a minor role in the development of tourism in Japan”.

¹ The Meiji era describes the period of Japanese history from 1868 to 1920 when Japan transitioned from an isolated feudal society into a more Westernised form resulting in the restructuring of social, economic and military life (Friedman, 2016).

While international tourism is still an emerging industry in Japan, the Japanese government appears committed to encouraging its growth (Kato & Horita, 2018). Reflecting on the current state of tourism in Japan, Larke, Kilgour and John (2016, p. 658) report, “Japan is experiencing a significant growth in inbound tourist numbers, with this expected to continue”. Tourism has been welcomed in Japan as a means of stimulating economic growth and was a key element in the 2013 Japanese Revitalisation Strategy (Henderson, 2017). Zhang (2014) reports that the Japanese government has implemented numerous programs to stimulate tourism and the success of these is reflected in the international visitor statistics, with numbers growing from 5.2 million in 2003 to over 10 million and accounting for approximately 6 per cent of Japanese GDP in 2013 (DLITT, 2015). This growth is significant as it occurred despite the global economic recession in 2008, the swine flu epidemic in 2009 and the earthquake and nuclear crisis in 2011 (Larke et al., 2016). Inbound tourism numbers exceeded eight million in 2012, ranking Japan as the 22nd most popular destination worldwide in 2014 (The Japan Times, 2015). In terms of economic contribution, the World Economic Forum (2015) reports that tourism contributed 2.4 per cent of Japan’s GDP in 2014 and 7.5 per cent when indirect effects are also counted. These numbers are anticipated to grow in the lead up to Japan hosting the 2020 Olympic Games, with the Japanese government targeting 30 million inbound tourists (Henderson, 2017).

Exemplifying its commitment to tourism, this quote from a Japanese government report encapsulates the government’s enthusiasm for tourism development in Japan, stating, “tourism provides us with opportunities to look at our land, our history, our culture and our way of life from new perspectives and to build a nation that is truly rich and filled with creative energy” (Keidanren, 2000, p. 2). Hokkaido, the prefecture within which Niseko is located, is a good example of a region reflecting the Japanese government’s push to increase inbound tourists (Bureau of Tourism, 2015). In 2017 Hokkaido welcomed 56.1 million tourists and of these 2.8 million were international tourists, with twenty-four percent of these arrivals sourced from China (AsiaGamingBrief, 2018). Due to increases in international air routes into Hokkaido and the creation of the new Shinkansen train link, tourist numbers continue to increase and in 2016 Hokkaido recorded the second highest number of guest nights out of all prefectures in Japan (Japan Tourism Agency, 2017).

Therefore, given the relatively recent development of international tourism to Japan (Zhang, 2014), and that the Japanese Government’s International Tourism Strategy (Bureau of Tourism,

2015) is focused on tourism as a tool for the economic recovery of Japan (Tahara-Stubbs, 2015), it seems that research into understanding the influence of tourism in Japan is timely. Rural areas, such as the Niseko area of Hokkaido, in particular, are being targeted as regions rich in opportunity to stimulate inbound tourism growth. Kato and Horita (2018) highlight a key trend in future Japanese tourism research will be centred around the utilisation of tourism as a means of development for rural areas, demonstrating the salience of research concerned with understanding regional tourism spaces such as Niseko, Japan.

Despite the Japanese government's enthusiasm for the economic potential of tourism, there are still recognised barriers to future tourism development. An example of a barrier being experienced by tourists recently highlighted by the Japan Times (2016) is the increasing issue of tattooed foreign tourists being denied access to Japanese hot springs on the basis that tattooing is still perceived by Japanese as indicative of association with organised crime (Murai, 2016). Yamada (2009, p. 319) reports, "it is evident that negative views of tattoos remain strong. The sign 'no tattooed people allowed' is overtly displayed in public places such as saunas and pools even though tattooing is not illegal". Increasing friction over this issue has led the Japan Tourist Agency to encourage hot spring operators to be more flexible as international visitor numbers continue to increase (Murai, 2016). More broadly in Japan there is a, "well documented tendency to exclude *gaijin* (foreigners) from full participation in society" (Cooper, Jankowska, & Eades, 2007, p. 71). This is evidenced in signage excluding foreigners from entering certain facilities (Henderson, 2017) such as hot springs and hotels (Befu, 2006), from accessing services such as real estate (Morita, 2015) and the requirement for all foreigners living in Japan to carry what is known as an 'alien registration card' at all times (Funck & Cooper, 2013). By extension, in terms of attitudes towards tourists, Uzama (2009) finds there are fears that illegal immigrants will pose as tourists to gain entry to the country and concern about how to communicate with foreigners, demonstrating the ambiguous feeling that may exist toward tourists who are simultaneously generating both financial opportunities and apprehension for Japanese people. Funck and Cooper (2013, p. 161) report, "in a questionnaire conducted by the [Japanese] government in 2003, 32.4 per cent of respondents voted against an increase in the number of foreign tourists, mainly due to a fear of increasing crime". When considering the largely homogenous composition of the Japanese population however (98.5 per cent are ethnic Japanese) and the language barriers that exist for the vast majority of non-Japanese (Henderson, 2017), it is understandable that it may take time to lessen concerns about incoming foreigners. The 2020 Olympic Games has been identified

as an opportunity for Japan to develop a more tourist friendly environment (APEC, 2014), and recent government measures such as relaxing the visa requirements for Chinese passport holders in 2010 (Henderson, 2017) are evidence of moves toward making Japan more accessible to international tourists. Academic research into tourism in Japan has largely focused on tourist motivations and the behaviour of outbound Japanese tourists and there has been little consideration given regarding the social impacts of international tourism in Japan (Funck & Cooper, 2013). In particular, Henderson (2017) identifies the need for greater understanding of Japanese resident attitudes towards incoming tourists in order to support the continued development of Japan as an international tourism destination.

3.3 Rural Tourism in Japan

Rural tourism refers to tourism in non-urban settings (Beeton, 2006). Rural tourism spaces are recognised as experiencing more acute influences from tourism development than their urban counterparts (Dickman, 1989) and are generally characterised by highly homogenous populations and small family-run enterprises (Beeton, 2006), many of which experience issues attracting staff due to their rural locations (Funck & Cooper, 2013). This section of the chapter will reflect upon the nature of rural tourism in Japan of relevance to the present research, as Niseko is situated in a rural context. In comparison with urban areas throughout Japan, rural communities have experienced economic decline due to a continuing trend of urbanisation and governmental industrialisation policies since the 1960s (Fujita & Tabuchi, 1997; Schneider & Silverman, 2010). For example, many villages advertise low or no cost abandoned houses as an incentive for young urbanites to relocate to rural areas to combat the dual pressures of depopulation and ageing (Funck & Cooper, 2013). The influence of globalisation and deregulation since the 1980s has further increased this trend towards urbanisation (Shikida, Yoda, Kino, & Morishige, 2010). This inclination towards urbanisation is reflected more broadly in Japanese sociology with the focus in sociological research shifting from rural to urban studies in line with broader societal urbanisation (Ayukawa, 2000).

Agricultural activity in Japan is declining and in turn this has affected population levels in rural locations, which as an outcome has threatened the survival of many regional communities (Chen, Zhenmian, Nisikawa, & Nakamura, 2018). Funck and Cooper (2013, p. 119) predict a, “Darwinian struggle for survival as the population outside major cities across the country

diminishes in line with the predicted decline for the Japanese population overall”. The governmental support for rural tourism in Japan is particularly motivated by the prospect of development through the process of *muraokoshi* (awakening the village), underpinned by the decline of these communities (Hashimoto & Telfar, 2010). The sustainable aspect of this kind of development is not motivated by aspirations to preserve the natural environment, but rather with community involvement as a way of overcoming depopulation (Arlt, 2006) and creating jobs through tourism (Funck & Cooper, 2013). For example, Dusinberre’s (2012) exploration of the port town of Kaminoseki finds that depopulation of rural areas has prompted local governments to take action to revitalise their local economies. Many of those who have relocated to rural spaces have been identified to be counter-cultural types (Klien, 2016) with, “an in interest in the arts, rebuilding traditional industries and culture through tourism” (Funck & Cooper, 2013, p. 121). This utilisation of tourism as a method of rural revitalisation is also reflected in the case of Japanese ski tourism; for example when Japan experienced a ski boom from the 1960s to the 1980s, guesthouses were built in rural areas to provide hospitality for domestic urban skiers and to revitalise rural communities (Patchell, 2014). This connection between tourism and rural contexts is evident in the ‘*furusato*’ (hometown) movement (Clammer, 1997; Funck & Cooper, 2013) which became an integral part of Japanese tourism marketing through the Discover Japan campaign (Creighton, 1997), linking ideas of returning ‘home’ with a connection to a more authentic rural Japan. By extension the campaign suggested the notion that Japanese identity could be accessed through travel to rural locations (Middeleer, 2016). Dusinberre (2012, p.117), reflecting on the Discover Japan campaign, notes that through the, “process of guided tourism, the tourist would not only experience Japanese distinctiveness, they would also realise Japanese identity within themselves”. Asuka village, in the Nara prefecture of Japan, is an example of a town which developed a successful tourism industry underpinned by the concept of nostalgia in the 1970s and 1980s (Funck & Cooper, 2013).

One of the governmental responses to increased urbanisation (Knight, 1996) in the late 1970s was to promote domestic tourism as a means of tackling the issue of declining rural populations in Japan (Clammer, 1997). As Funck (1999, p. 366) notes, “attracting people as well as creating jobs in non-agricultural sectors was ... vital for the economic sustainability for rural areas” and tourism was one means by which this could be achieved. Central to this push for domestic tourism was the *Isson Ippin* (one product, one village) movement (Kajiwara, 1997; Moon, 1989). Emerging in the 1970s, *Isson Ippin* was a regional development program which

associated villages with the production of a particular tourism product and then branded it as a tourist attraction (Knight, 1994). This strategy was central in helping to revitalise declining rural communities (Moon, 1989). The *Isson Ippin* movement spread quickly throughout rural communities in Japan and continues to prove a successful strategy in Japanese regional tourism, particularly in regard to food tourism (Hashimoto & Telfar, 2019). Despite the significance of domestic tourism to economic, and in some cases socio-cultural revitalisation in Japan, rural villages were heavily impacted by the Japanese economic downturn of the 1990s (Funck, 1999) and the development of ski tourism in some rural areas was one strategy of village revitalisation utilised to reinvigorate declining regional communities. On this basis, the next section of this chapter will explore ski tourism in Japan.

3.4 Ski Tourism in Japan

Skiing was introduced to Japan by the Austrian Theodor von Lerch in 1911 in Takada, Niigata and since that time it has proved popular throughout the country, especially from the 1960s onwards (Kureha, 2008). Rapid growth in ski resort development occurred in the 1980s during an economic ‘bubble’ in Japan (Funck, 1999; Kureha, 2008). Moon’s (1997) study provides an early look at the impacts of ski tourism in rural Japan and finds that ski tourism has, “not only boosted the local economy, but revitalised local society and culture”. While the domestic ski tourism industry in Japan was especially strong during the 1990s (with numbers peaking at 18 million visitors in 1993), it is argued that changing snow quality (Fukushima, Kureha, Ozaki, Fujimori, & Harasawa, 2002) and an ageing residential population (Kureha, 2002) contributed to a marked decline in the domestic ski tourism industry. A key influence was the collapse of the Japanese economy in the 1990s, which led to domestic ski tourism declining from 17 percent in 1993 to 12.7 percent of the population participating in skiing in 1997 (Funck, 1999). Subsequently, capital began to be withdrawn from the ski industry and there were numerous resort closures (Funck & Cooper, 2013; Kureha, 2014).

In recent times, Japanese skiers have continued to dominate the Japanese ski market, however, recent research identifies a trend of increasing numbers of foreign skiers, especially from Australia and South Korea, since the mid-2000s (Funck & Cooper, 2013; Kureha, 2008). International ski tourists have become an increasingly important market segment, with the tourism industry targeting foreign skiers and snowboarders, and Australian and New Zealand

arrivals in particular being credited with a degree of recovery in the Japanese ski tourism industry (Vanat, 2014). Originally popular with a mostly domestic ski tourism market, it has only been since the early 2000s (Segon, Booth, & Elizabeth, 2015) that Niseko and other resorts in Hokkaido have attracted inbound tourists in large numbers (Hirota, 2015). The influx of snow-seeking Australians to Niseko was quickly followed by the arrival of Australian investment companies, which led to the development of apartment complexes and travel agencies positioned to serve the new foreign tourists (Funck & Cooper, 2013).

3.5 Niseko: Geographic, Demographic, Built and Economic Environment

Niseko is located on the northernmost tip of the Japanese archipelago on the island of Hokkaido. The island is mountainous, and spans 1,283 km². Hokkaido is the largest region in Japan, and the most sparsely populated (Teikoku-Shoin, 2010). The area is known for its natural beauty, and a strong farming industry comprised of numerous small villages, many specialising in a particular type of field produce or dairy product (Staples, 2011; Teikoku-Shoin, 2010). The climate in Hokkaido is typified by long winters and short summers (Japan External Trade Organisation, 2006). Hokkaido has a strong nature-based tourism industry, considered to be an important component of the national economy (Ide, 2012; Teikoku-Shoin, 2010).

Niseko is located 93 km west, or approximately 100 km from the prefectural capital, Sapporo (population of 1.87 million), see Figure 1. The population of Niseko is 4,958, and the population density is 25 persons per square kilometre (Niseko Town Council, 2018). Niseko is known for its cool climate, low humidity and abundant snowfall (Japan External Trade Organisation, 2006). The new Chitose Airport in Sapporo is the international entry point and handles 123 domestic flights per day from eighteen destinations outside of Hokkaido. Additionally, the airport welcomes direct services to/from Seoul, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Shenyang, Taipei, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk (Russia) and Guam (Japan External Trade Organisation, 2006).



Figure 1. Geographical location of Niseko in Japan

Originally a small agricultural community farming potatoes, the chance introduction of skiing by an Austrian Lieutenant in 1912, a year after its initial introduction in central Japan, changed the course of the future of the Niseko area. By 1961 the first ski lifts had opened, marking the beginning of the transformation of the area into a ski destination (Committee for Publishing a History of Ski Resort Development at Hirafu, 2011). Underpinned by the success of the 1972 Sapporo Winter Olympic Games, in the 1980s there was a rapid expansion of ski lifts, ski lodges and hotels in the Niseko area (Committee for Publishing a History of Ski Resort

Development at Hirafu, 2011). During this period of expansion many Japanese migrated to the Niseko area from cities in other parts of Japan to pursue a more natural lifestyle (Kureha, 2014). The area has gained distinction as a world class ski resort due to the consistent falls of high-quality powder snow (Staples, 2011). While Niseko town itself is a small administrative hub, what has become known as the ‘Niseko area’ encompasses ski fields located in the surrounding areas of Kutchan town, Grand Hirafu, Hirafu Onsen, and Annupuri (Staples, 2011). See Figure 2.

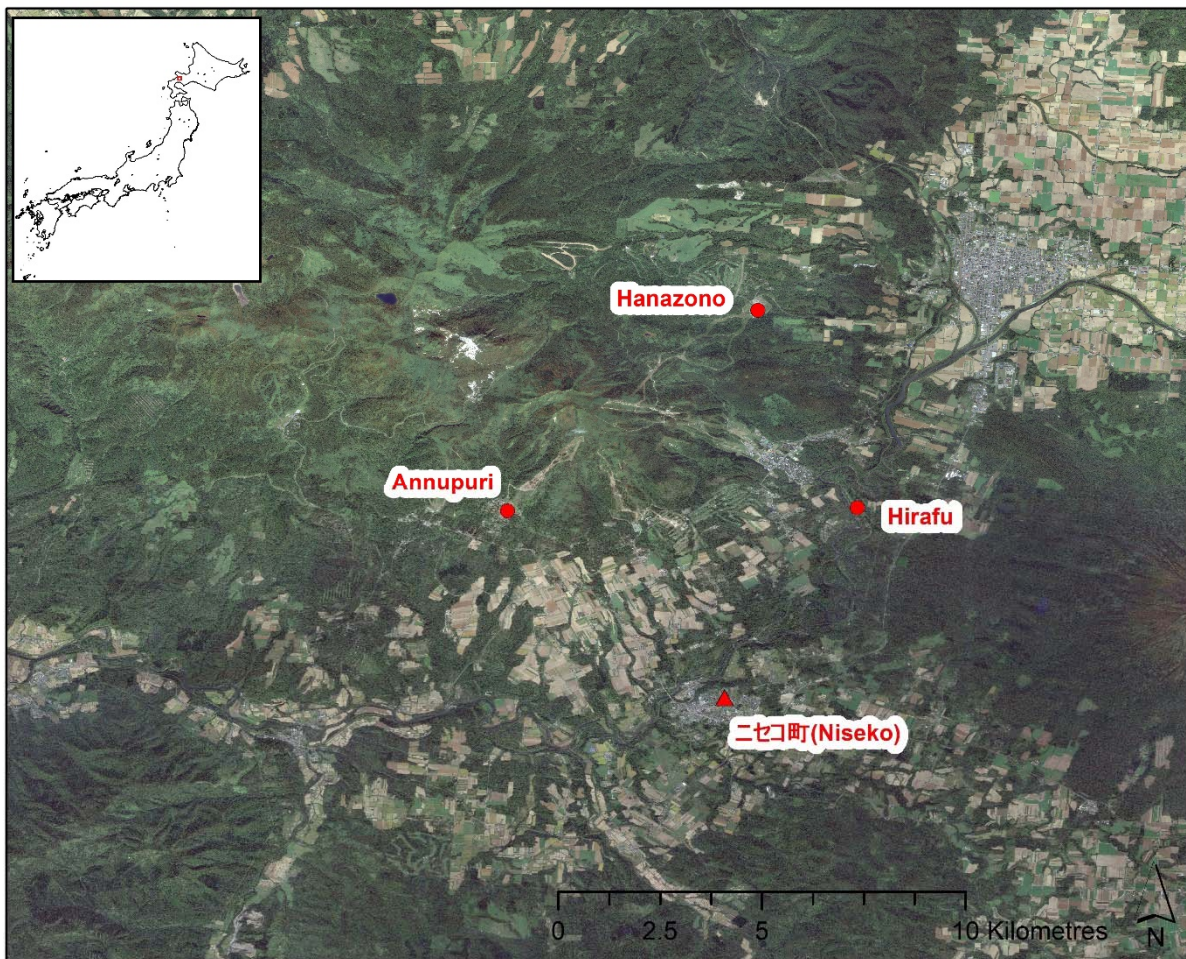


Figure 2. Villages within the Niseko ski area

There are about 250 accommodation facilities in the Niseko area, the majority of which are located near the ski slopes. This number includes five large hotels (100 rooms +), an increasing number of new self-contained apartment complexes targeted at foreign tourists, and a number of smaller bed and breakfast and pension facilities. There are approximately 170 restaurants in

the Niseko area, however, in the peak winter season, it is recognised that more dining options are needed to accommodate the influx of tourists (Japan External Trade Organisation, 2006). The style of accommodation developments in the Niseko area is reflective of the Australian trend of taking longer holidays than Japanese tourists (Hirafu, 2011). Australian-style apartment blocks which are four to six storeys high dominate the ski field base and do not conform to the existing style of Japanese ski resort developments (Kureha, 2014). See Figure 3. Branches of Australian real estate offices such as LJ Hooker, and Australian banks also reflect the influence of international tourism on the built environment of the area (Nelson & Matthews, 2018). An international school was opened in Niseko in 2012 to accommodate the children of the growing expatriate population (Takeda, 2017).



Figure 3. Hirafu streetscape. Image author's own.

At present, Niseko is recognised as an economically successful tourist 'hot spot' in Hokkaido, and Japan more broadly (Ide, 2012). The majority of inbound tourists are foreign ski and snowboard enthusiasts, attracted by Niseko's ranking as one of Japan's top ski resorts. Niseko is recognised as being transformed from a rural to a cosmopolitan environment by foreign investment in recent years, manifesting what has been termed the 'Niseko boom' (Staples, 2011). The local economy has been revived by foreign investment and has been highlighted by the Japanese government as an example of how foreign investment can revitalise rural

economies. However, the long-term feasibility of continued development in the area has been questioned due to the rapid inflation of land prices (Staples, 2011).

3.6 Tourism in Niseko

Peak tourism season in Niseko is winter (December to April), and during this time there is an influx of ski and snowboard tourists to the area (Staples, 2011). The Niseko area attracts both domestic and inbound visitors across its seven ski slopes each winter (Japan External Trade Organisation, 2006). During the summer period (July-August) the Niseko area is promoted as a 'green' destination, encouraging tourists to enjoy the natural scenery, hot springs and more recently, adventure tourism such as white-water rafting (Staples, 2011). In addition to the local government which works to promote tourism, there are tourism associations for each town as well as a joint council, the 'Niseko Mountains Tourist Association Council'. In response to the growth in the number of Australian tourists, the Kutchan Town's Council for Tourism Promotion was established to improve services and infrastructure for foreign tourists (Japan External Trade Organisation, 2006).

In 2016 Niseko welcomed 1,693,000 foreign tourists and of these, the top three source countries for inbound tourists included China with 39,902, Hong Kong with 33,616, Taiwan with 29,024 and Australia with 24,856 (NisekoGovernmentOffice, 2017). The fourth largest market share of foreign tourists in Niseko is Australian (NisekoGovernmentOffice, 2017). The Australian tourist boom occurred in response to Australian skiers and snowboarders seeking an alternative ski destination after the September 2011 attacks in the United States of America (Kureha, 2014). Many Australians are settling in the Niseko area, developing tourism-based businesses and establishing holiday homes, transforming local streetscapes (Committee for Publishing a History of Ski Resort Development at Hirafu, 2011; Kureha, 2008). Due to the concentration of Australians in the Niseko area, the prominence of English and availability of Australian food, it is often referred to as 'Little Australia' (Takeda, 2017). Statistics from the local government office demonstrate this demographic change. For example, in December 2003 eighty foreign residents were recorded in the region, and by December 2016 this had increased to 1,545 foreign residents (KutchanTownOffice, 2016).

While such increased tourist demand and tourism development is positive for the economic outlook of Hokkaido and Niseko, it is clear that international tourism is also having other influences. Research by Nelson (2019) and Nelson and Matthews (2018) investigated the perceived effects of Australian tourism in the Niseko area and highlighted, firstly, a developing Australian tourist enclave and secondly, potential issues with regards to excessive alcohol consumption and other anti-social behaviours among Australian tourists. A report by 2007 business magazine *Japan Inc.* reported Australian snow seekers had, “transformed a near deserted resort – Hirafu [now the main tourist area of Niseko], into a vibrant enclave” (Jackson, 2007), reflecting a similar change in the social environment of Niseko. Only three years later, *STAB* surfing magazine (2010) reported, “so bad had the drunken antics of the Australians become in the quaint ski village of Niseko, that local authorities... [had] appointed a Canadian cage fighter to keep the peace”. While international tourists who return each winter to Niseko debate the accuracy of these claims in online forums, it is evident from their discussions that this security appointment was in fact made, and that it emerged in response to a number of troublesome incidents involving tourists (ski.com.au, 2015). The Japan External Trade Organisation (2006) reports that one of the key obstacles facing the future of tourism in the Niseko area is concern regarding potential friction between Japanese hosts and foreign guests, which is underpinned by the significant increase in foreign tourists (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Australians in Niseko Coffee shop

Source: https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/08/28/national/a-ski-resort-success-niseko-defies-rural-japans-demographic-decline/#.Wm_XekxUL4h

In addition to the impact of Australian tourists on the social environment of Niseko, inbound travel from nearby Asian countries has also increased in recent years, with tourists from Hong Kong (30,835), Singapore (21,425), China (8,179) and Taiwan (3,033) visiting Niseko in the 2014–2015 ski season, albeit in substantially smaller numbers than their Australian counterparts (Niseko Promotion Board, 2015). With a recent increase in direct flights from mainland China to Hokkaido, the number of Chinese inbound tourists to Hokkaido has been steadily increasing since 2007 (Foster, 2011). This is not surprising, given that China is acknowledged as the leading tourism market worldwide (UNWTO, 2014) and Japan is identified as one of the top ten outbound destinations for Chinese tourists (CTA, 2014). The pattern is the same in Niseko with the Kutchan Town Office reporting seventy-six Chinese tourists to the Niseko region in 2005 and 8,179 Chinese tourists in the area in 2015 (personal communication, 2016). In light of this rapid growth and the contribution it is no doubt making to the local tourism economy in Niseko, it should be noted that recent research by Ji, Li and Hsu (2016) has revealed that Japanese domestic tourists in Niseko feel challenged by the different manners and customs of Chinese tourists in the area, and that to combat such issues

the Hokkaido Tourism Board released a guide to appropriate behaviour for Chinese tourists in Japan (Hokkaido Tourism Organisation, 2016) detailing the 'correct' way to eat in restaurants, use Japanese bathroom facilities, queue, behave in shops and at hot springs, and interact with attendants and other service personnel. This brochure (see Appendix I) was developed to address the issues that Japanese hosts in Hokkaido were reporting with respect to Chinese tourist behaviour (Hokkaido Tourism Bureau, personal communication). The brochure has since been taken out of circulation (after complaints from Chinese tourists who were offended by it), but its very existence highlights the fact that though Chinese tourists are arriving in Niseko in much smaller numbers than Australians and other foreign groups, their presence is having a notable impact on the social environment in the area.

3.7 Conclusion

As a regional community in Japan, the Niseko area provides a unique case of a tourism space which has been physically, socially, and economically transformed by international tourism. As a previously rather culturally homogenous area, it has experienced rapid tourism development and significant changes in a short period of time. These changes include the emergence of an Australian tourist enclave, into which other groups, including Chinese tourists, have since moved, transforming the social space of the town.

The influence of international ski tourism in Japanese host communities including the Niseko area has received little academic attention, though there are notable studies by Moon (1997), Ichioka, Kawamura and Narisawa (2009) and Kureha (2008) who have broadly begun this task by considering the geographical impacts of ski tourism including the development of apartment complexes and changes which have occurred to the landscape as an outcome of ski tourism in Niseko. While other researchers have examined the influx of tourists on the local natural environment in Hokkaido (Kanaoka, Ichimura, Yamamoto, & Kurosawa, 2004), as Kureha (2008) and Nelson and Matthews (2017) note, the influence of ski tourism on the community of Niseko remains poorly understood and researched. Despite the clear presence of Australian expatriates and Australian tourism businesses in Niseko, little is known about this unusual social phenomenon that is not replicated elsewhere in Japan. Little academic research, tourism or otherwise, has examined Niseko's cultural anomaly, with the exception of one study exploring Australian-Japanese cultural interactions in Niseko as a 'contact zone', noting the

lack of cosmopolitanism exhibited by Australians, and applying the concept of temporality to liken the migratory phenomena on par with American ‘snow birds’ that migrate from New York to Florida for climatic reasons (Takeda, 2017). Takeda’s (2017) conceptual research highlights the need for further research into this unique social space.

Responding to this paucity of knowledge about the people who live and work in Niseko, Japan and the insights drawn from the literature review which point to the need for reflexive research which explores how tourism spaces are experienced by the people who live in them, the proceeding chapter presents the interpretive research design and methodological approach of this research which seeks to innovatively address these research gaps through the application of a qualitative narrative approach.

In the early hours we sit silently on the bus,
Like cheap immigrant labour, yet we come only for the day.
To earn better wages than possible in our *furasato*.
In our Hilton housekeeping jackets,
We look like them, but we don't speak
Without English we cannot look up.

I want to change, but
we are eating from this business.
Step over the vomit,
nightly soundscape of fights and fireworks
I am here, and yet I long to be *here*.

Chapter 4: Methods

Narrative Ways of Knowing

4.1 Introduction

This research is concerned with exploring and understanding how experiences of living in a tourism space may influence the lifestyles and identities of tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan. As illuminated in Chapter Two, individuals in tourism receiving communities can be influenced by tourism in a range of ways including changes to lifestyles, cultures and identities. Despite evidence of such influence, the review of the literature highlighted the limitations of research to date that has offered in-depth analysis of how tourism may be influencing tourism hosts, in particular, their identities and lifestyles. The literature reviewed in Chapter Two revealed that no studies to date had explored this area of influence in Niseko, Japan. Drawing on this gap in knowledge, this chapter outlines how this research was designed and executed to deeply explore how tourism may be influencing the lifestyles and identities of tourism hosts in Niseko, Japan.

Section 4.2 of the chapter will present the key methodological approaches to social research and consider the contexts within which they are best utilised. The methodological position of the current research will be clarified and how this informs the design of the methods will be outlined, thus demonstrating how this research is positioned to produce data that effectively addresses the research problem of this thesis. Section 4.2.1 will present the narrative methodology which underpins the research design. Section 4.2.4 of this chapter will revisit the research aims, objectives and questions of this research as drawn from the literature review, which will be revisited and discussed. Section 3, aligning with the social constructivist approach underpinning the chapter, will reflect on the role of researcher reflexivity and positionality.

This chapter will also present a detailed account of how the research was executed, including the temporal context of the research in Section 4.4.2 and the ethical considerations in section 4.4.1. Accounts of the sampling framework, recruitment, research instrument of narrative interviewing, and data collection will be given in sections 4.4.3, 4.4.4 and 4.4.7 respectively.

Finally, the chapter will present an in-depth discussion of narrative analysis in section 4.5 and demonstrate how it was employed along with complementary research strategies (section 4.6) to unpack key themes and trends from the data.

4.2 Methodology

It is well established that the choice of a particular research paradigm, and subsequent method, should be guided by what the research is seeking to find out (Seidman, 1998; Silverman, 2005; Trow, 2004; Vaughan & Hogg, 2011). Accordingly, the purpose of this research, which is to explore and understand the experiences of tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan, has steered the methodological position and choice of methods for this research.

There are two major approaches to social research. The interpretivist approach is principally associated with qualitative methodologies and perceives reality as constructed by human perceptions. Interpretive approaches recognise the existence of multiple interpretations of reality (Cresswell, 2013). Fundamentally, interpretivist research seeks to understand lived experience (Geertz, 1973). It attempts to capture participants' meanings, perceptions and experiences of phenomena (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, & Alexander, 2000) through the collection of data characterised by thick description, and, provides in-depth illumination of experiences and contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). An interpretive approach to research requires the researcher to acknowledge and study phenomena in the context of their natural environment and demands that the researcher, rather than attempting to conduct the research objectively, actively reflects on his or her own influence on the research (Killion & Risher, 2018).

The second major approach to social research is positivist. Positivist approaches are characterised by quantitative methodologies which understand reality to be something that is fixed and objective (Kumar, 2011). Positivist research aims to measure or calculate things, or reveal causal relationships (Berg, 1989). When positivism is applied to social research, it presumes that people can be, "studied in the same way as the natural world" (Mertens, 2005, p. 8).

Tourism research has been dominated by positivist approaches focused on collecting data on variables such as visitor numbers and expenditure (Jennings, 2010). Even in tourism research specifically concerned with socio-cultural impacts of tourism on tourism receiving communities, objective measures are often used (see, for example, Kim et al., 2013; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Palmer et al., 2013; Tangit et al., 2014; Wang & Chen, 2015; Zamani-Farahani & Musa, 2012). While such studies generate information about tourism, they do little to address the need to understand the social realities inherent in any tourism context (Killion & Risher, 2018). Furthermore, attempting to achieve complete objectivity in social research is an unrealistic goal. As argued by Burr (1995, p. 165), this is the case as each individual,

must out of necessity encounter the world from some perspective or other (from where we stand) and the questions we come to ask about that world, our theories and hypothesis, must also of necessity arise from the assumptions that are embedded in our perspectives.

Therefore, despite widespread use in tourism contexts, positivist approaches in tourism research are recognised to be less effective when attempting to explore human experiences, perceptions and meanings (Dickman, 1989; McGibbon, 2000; Sharpley, 2014). Illustrating this perspective, Deery, Jago and Fredline (2012, p. 64) state in regard to tourism research, “the quantitative focus from previous social impact research has led to a narrow understanding of the issues surrounding the social impacts”, demonstrating the need for the application of approaches able to reveal the depth and complexity of human experiences of tourism. Thus, as tourism is embedded in human experience, understanding tourism experience requires a research approach which acknowledges and explores the inherent subjectivities of individuals in tourism contexts.

Consistent with this reasoning, this research takes an interpretive methodological approach, which views reality as socially constructed (Mertens, 2005). Accordingly, the interpretive approach has influenced the methodological design of this research. Methodologically, this paradigm requires local, context-bound inquiry which is primarily focused on meaning and interpretation (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Interpretive research largely depends on qualitative methods (Mertens, 2005; Silverman, 2005), and relies on participant perceptions as the key source of data (Cresswell, 2013). Therefore, as informed by Cresswell’s (2013) interpretive framework, this research is focused on the specific context of Niseko, Japan, in order to deeply understand the participants’ social and cultural contexts. This research was designed to valorise

and illuminate the voices of participants. Through the utilisation of narrative interviewing techniques participants were provided space to be reflective and construct their own meanings. In the interpretivist tradition, this research recognises that the researcher makes a subjective interpretation of the data. Examples of rich qualitative studies that reflect the value of exploring subjective experiences of tourism phenomena include Desforges (2000), Noy (2004), Matthews (2008) McCabe (2009), Minnart, Maitland and Miller (2009), Pocock and McIntosh (2013) and Everingham (2016), and these studies have informed the qualitative approach of this research.

4.2.1 Narrative Methodology

There are a number of established positions regarding how to most effectively locate and understand self-identity, including considering behaviour, experience, and narratives as potential windows to comprehending the complexities of self-identity. Narratives are recognised as a common way that individuals understand and create meaning from their experiences (Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou, 2008; Reissman, 2008) and are bound closely with concepts of self (Crossley, 2000a; Westwood, Morgan, & Pritchard, 2016). Craib (1998) postulates that to comprehend self-identity, we must understand individual experiences, and this is often a gap in sociological approaches to studying self-identity. In the same vein, Crossley (2000a, p. 41) offers, “when we actually turn to examine the full range of experiences, knowledge and understanding of self that people live and struggle with, therein resides a sense of unity, continuity and coherence”. Crossley’s use of the word ‘coherence’ implies that the experiences of an individual need to be articulated or constructed together in a logical fashion, suggestive of the approach taken by this research from the sociologist Giddens’ (1991) position that self-identity can be located in the maintenance of a constructed reflexive narrative, as explored in Chapter Two. The idea of drawing on experiences to locate self-identity is also identified by McAdams (1987), who posits that a coherent narrative that individuals construct about their lives is our true self-identity, and that it is through these stories that we come to understand ourselves. Like Giddens (1991), McAdams (1987) sees these self-constructed narratives as socially embedded.

Understanding self-identity by examining the stories that individuals tell themselves and considering how these stories inform and create their identities, is inspired by a social

constructivist approach and has emerged in the field of sociology in the past thirty years (Noy, 2004). Illuminating the power of narratives, Freeman (1993, p. 6) articulates that stories are the clearest, “inroad into the phenomenon of self-understanding and self-hood”. Glover (2003), argues that the narrative is an expression of self-identity, something that both is created from experience, while simultaneously influencing experiences (Ochs & Capps, 1996). This way of understanding self-identity requires examination of the narratives that individuals tell and consideration of how these stories inform and create their self-identities (Noy, 2004) . In tourism, research narratives are argued to be able to, “help us understand the roles leisure activities, setting and experience play in self-identity” (Glover, 2003, p. 152). Therefore, self-identity can be best located by understanding the meanings that individuals attach to experiences, in the context of a narrative, reflective of the methodological design of this research.

There are a number of recent studies which effectively utilise narratives to understand the influence of tourism experiences on tourists’ self-identities (Akerland & Sandberg, 2015; Hibbert, Dickinson, Gossling, & Curtin, 2013; Nelson, 2015) providing a rich, reflexive perspective on self-identity construction (Kim et al., 2013; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Palmer et al., 2013; Tangit et al., 2014; Wang & Chen, 2015; Zamani-Farahani & Musa, 2012). In contrast, to date a narrative approach has not been applied to explore the self-identity of tourism hosts, a group equally exposed to the influences of tourism encounters. Ryan (1995) contends that to be able to have an in-depth understanding of experiences of tourism, the utilisation of methods which allow participants to be flexible and allow them the opportunity to express their own subjectivity must be employed. Thus, presenting participants’ stories as narratives respects both the participants’ central position in the research, as well as their subjectivity (Reissman, 2008).

In the interpretivist tradition, narrative inquiry acknowledges the subjective and dynamic nature of knowledge (Clandinin, 2007). Narrative inquiry is situated in the expression of the lived experiences of participants and such research is underpinned by the assumption that the story is a key way that humans both understand and explain their experiences (Clandinin, 2007). Narrative inquiry has been used widely in sociological research to understand human experience (see for example, Brooks, 2012; Shelton, 2007; Ziff, 2017). After all, human beings have been telling their stories and sharing them to make sense of their own lives and the world that they live in since time immemorial,

People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 375).

Thus, narrative inquiry is a valuable way for social research to explore how individuals perceive and construct events and experiences (Reissman, 2008). This approach requires the researcher to reconstruct the participant's experience in relationship to their context and the literature framing the research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It recognises the value of capturing, illuminating and understanding the particular, locally contextualised individual experience (Geertz, 1973). Therefore, narrative inquiry naturally guides research into focusing on the interpretation of meanings (Clandinin, 2007), and this is reflected in the methodological design of this research and the interview questions used to gather data. As argued in this chapter, accessing narratives helps researchers to, "understand the roles leisure activities, settings and experiences play in self-identity" (Glover, 2003, p. 152), and thus they are consistent with the aim of this research, that is, to understand how experiences of living in tourism spaces may influence identities and lifestyles.

4.2.2 Epistemological and Ontological Assumptions

Epistemology can be understood as a theory of knowledge, which facilitates how social phenomena will be investigated in research, informs how knowledge is acquired and how an individual defines 'truth' (Cresswell, 2013; Holloway, 1997). The epistemological position of this research reflects Gergen's, (1999, p. 14-15) perspective as, "not a picture of the world, but as a form of lens, a way of seeing things". Thus, this research views meanings as both fluid and contextual (Reissman, 2008). By extension, then, the narratives presented in this thesis are not considered as providing direct access to the participants' experience, but rather are acknowledged as interpreted by the participants, and are also recognised as requiring interpretation by the researcher. This perspective is advocated by Bernstein (1983), who recommends that due to the inherent nature of people as conscious, reflective, and meaning-making beings, it is impossible to attempt to understand them solely by observation. Rather, Bernstein (1983) suggests it is necessary to consider the interpreted meanings of individuals which are reflective of the actions and practices of their social lives.

Ontology describes a conceptualisation or an assumption about the nature of reality (Delanty, 2003). Given that this research seeks to understand how living in a social environment transformed by tourism influences the self-identity of tourism business owners, a social constructivist which acknowledges the value of subjective, individual experience as a rich source of data, and recognises that the meanings derived from these experiences are socially embedded (Cresswell, 2013) is an appropriate theoretical frame for this research. Social Constructivism is consistent with Giddens' (1991) position which recognises both the agency of the individual, and that each person is embedded in, and is influenced by, broader social structures. Therefore, individuals through their own actions both 'reproduce' and 'produce' the institutional rules that influence their actions. For example, it will be assumed that participants in this research will concurrently construct their reality through language and through interactions in their socio-cultural environment (Atwood, 1996). Drawing on this theoretical paradigm, this research relies on participant experience in the form of narrative interviews as the key source of data and assumes reflexivity in individuals. Charmaz (2000, p. 525), describes a constructivist approach in the field as requiring, "a relationship with respondents in which they can cast their stories in their terms. It means listening to their stories with openness to feelings and experience". Simultaneously, however, the constructivist researcher must be able to situate their own voice within the narratives of the participants and negotiate the multiple subjectivities presented with their own perceived influence on, and experience of the research.

Constructivist approaches are recognised as particularly well suited to cross-cultural research as they enable the researcher to develop a research strategy which focuses primarily on the interpretation of the participant (Radel, 2018). Orosco and O'Connor (2014, p. 516) describe social constructivist approaches to research as, "culturally responsive", given they take into account the participants' cultural context. Bresler (2009) advocates that in constructivist research, the focus should be on achieving an emotional connection with the participant through empathetic listening, rather than an attachment to a particular outcome in the research. Thagard (2006) describes the need for researchers to create a shared embodied experience of the research process with the participants. Thagard (2006) suggests that such an approach will lead to a feeling of belonging for the participant, and in turn create a warmer relationship, in contrast to the cooler, more formal and structured style often characteristic of researcher-participant interactions. In the present research, the 'I' as the researcher, endeavoured to be consistently responsive, empathetic and responsive to the participants and the narratives that

were shared during the interview process. I found the interview process to be an embodied experience, as I felt heightened alertness enabling me to interpret and respond appropriately to the emotional, physical, and social cues of the participant. In most cases I experienced what Bresler (2009) and Pocock (2015) describe as an emotional connection with the participant as illustrated in the interview section below:

Me: so, whose idea was it to move to Niseko?

Mori-san: my husband.

Me: oh, I see.

Mori-san: He wanted to create everything by himself, make everything by himself. From scratch.

Me: wow, that is amazing.

Mori-san: I had the idea as well, then I came to Hokkaido, so we are very similar.

Me: wow, I think even as you step in, you can see all the love in everything that is made.

(participant starts to cry – then we all cry)

At this point in the interview there was a distinct change in the atmosphere as we (the participant, researcher, and interpreter) bonded over our tears. I could feel the depth of Mori-san's loss and the way that her husband expressed his care through the things he built for her. Mori-san's connection to her late husband, through his carpentry, echoed closely with the way I connected with my own grandfather and the exquisite furniture he made for me before he died. Up until this point Mori-san was quiet and reserved, answering questions politely, however, after the point of emotional connection she opened up and the style of her narrative changed. She spoke at length about significant experiences in her life such as clinical depression, and the death of her husband, topics which are integral to her and her sense of self-identity, but which would have been impossible for me to draw out unless she felt that our relationship was a safe space in which to do so. Being able to connect emotionally with participants created a space within which they felt comfortable to share meaningful narratives and significantly added to the richness of the data collected.

4.2.3 Validity

While some positivist researchers may contend that narratives are based on unreliable recall and interpretation (Westwood, Morgan, & Pritchard, 2006), for narrative analysts (Clandinin, 2007; Glover, 2003; Reissman, 2008), the whole idea of 'objective truth' is not the intended

goal of interpretive inquiry (Butler-Kisber, 2010). Rather, subjective narratives are understood as contributing greatly to understanding subjective experiences and perceptions (Padgett & Allen, 1997). In narrative inquiry in particular, it is argued that the ability of narratives to reflect the complexities and nuances of human experience imbue them with greater value than would be possible when using quantitative based approaches, which are unable to account for local and contextual relationships (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). On this basis, then, the trustworthiness of interpretive studies should be considered in terms of the researcher achieving high levels of engagement with participants, researcher reflexivity (Westwood et al., 2006) and coherence, and clarity in the research process (Butler-Kisber, 2010). Authenticity of interpretive studies can be further consolidated by the accessibility of participant voices in the research text, as well as the offering of candid and in-depth explanations about tensions or difficulties that occur during the research process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Howarth (2000) suggests interpretive research should be considered in terms of the value of the new interpretations or meanings it creates from its inquiry. Narrative inquiry, then, not only opens a window to understanding the participants' experiences, it also enables social researchers to comprehend more broadly how experiences of tourism and tourism spaces may influence the development of self-identity (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). This research follows the criteria suggested by Lieblich, Tuval-Masiach and Zilber (1998), valorising, firstly, the comprehensiveness of the data, in terms of transparency of the research process so that the quality of the field texts, analysis and interpretations can be assessed. Secondly, the research focused on the coherence of the inquiry and how the inquiry fits with existing research and theory. The third criterion this research followed was to create inquiry which is original, resonant, and contributes valuable insights into participants' lived experiences. Fourthly, the research attempted to present research which is both concise and thoughtfully structured to create text which is skilfully crafted and engaging for the reader. Finally, as drawn from the work of Barone and Eisner (1997) who apply narratives in arts-based education research, the narrative inquiry employed in this research attempts to use contextualised language to accurately reflect the participants in the research.

4.2.4 Research Aims, Objectives and Questions

Drawing on the insights uncovered in the literature review chapter (Chapter 2), the aim of this research is to use narratives to explore and understand how experiences of living in a tourism

space may influence the lifestyles and identities of tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan. This broad aim was achieved through the following objectives:

1. To use personal narratives as instruments to understand how interactions with tourists may be influencing self-identity construction amongst tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan.
2. To analyse the narratives of tourism business owners to understand how self-identity is constructed and negotiated in spaces transformed by tourism.
3. To draw upon a social constructivist perspective embodied in a qualitative methodology to contribute to the recognised lack of subjective conceptually driven research on tourism hosts.

Accordingly, the research questions are:

1. What are tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan's experience of international tourism in their social environment?
2. How do tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan perceive the development of international tourism may be shaping their lives and lifestyles? If so, in what ways?
3. Do experiences of living in a social environment transformed by international tourism influence self-identity construction in the reflexive narratives of tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan? If so, how?

4.3 Researcher Subjectivity

Qualitative research is a very human process (Lune, Pumar, & Koppel, 2010), thus, subjectivity and researcher biases do not simply disappear and must be acknowledged as part of the context of the research (Lune et al., 2010). Reflexivity is based on the idea of self-awareness and understanding (Patton, 2002). Researcher reflexivity is highly valued in qualitative research and has been recognised as a strength of qualitative studies, as they become a key means of interpreting and understanding the data (Harding, 1991). Researchers such as Reissman (2008), and Sparkes (2000), contend that the researcher is a key research instrument and that acknowledgement of the individual perspective and creativity of the researcher is critical to the quality and richness of the research text (Pocock, 2015; Westwood et al., 2006). In particular, in research that aims to understand the influence of tourism, it is acknowledged that researcher reflexivity can, "offer unique insights into the meanings people ascribe to tourism experiences, practices and performances" (Westwood et al., 2006, p.33), however, the utilisation of research

strategies which create data and present findings which encompass the researcher's experiences and identity is something which is recognised in tourism research as often being overlooked (Pritchard, 2014).

It is imperative that the researcher recognises that their own context may influence their research, particularly in research that examines other cultures (Bohannon, 1973; Li & Sofield, 1995; Renato, 1993). Therefore, an essential part of the research process is acknowledging the cultural context of the researcher (Westwood et al., 2016), as the researcher is not isolated from the cultural references in which they are embedded (Bochner, 2001). Sarris (1993, p. 6), offers, in understanding another person and culture you must simultaneously understand yourself. The process is ongoing, an endeavour not aimed at a final transparent understanding of the Other or of the self, but of continued communication, at an ever-widening understanding of both.

Therefore, given this research reflects my journey as an Australian researcher entering a Japanese village, to capture, explore, and to understand tourism business owners' experiences of tourism, the need for reflexivity throughout the research process was considered to be acute. It was also recognised that my gender, age, ethnicity, and language skills may influence the data collection process (Minichiello et al., 2000). On this basis, researcher reflexivity was considered an essential, and continuing, component of the research design process, field work and data analysis components of this research.

When employing narrative methodologies, researcher reflexivity is considered a particularly crucial element of the research design (Andrews et al., 2008; Clandinin, 2007; Reissman, 2008). As cautioned by Larson (1997, p. 469), however, there is the danger, "researchers may impose meaning on the lives they study and end up saying more about themselves and the things they value than they do about those they study". Clandinin (2013, p. 81) suggests the narrative researcher must ask the key question, "who are you in this inquiry?", and consider how the researcher's earlier contexts, relationships, experiences and memories may influence the research. Drawing on Clandinin's (2013) guidelines, I carefully reflected on my own position, history, and influence in the research process. I also reflected on Clandinin's (2013, pp. 81–82) suggestion that, "as a narrative inquiry progresses, we, as narrative inquirers, are also making and remaking our lives. We too are in the midst". Thus, I was conscious that the

process of carrying out the research was simultaneously contributing to the construction of a new thread of narrative about my own life.

4.3.1 Reflexivity Statement

As I enter into the data collection process, I understand that as the researcher, I am bringing with me the many layers of my own life and experiences, I am part of broader social, institutional, familial, local and national narratives that weave strands into my own unique story and perspective, with which I perceive all I encounter during this research process. As I collect the participants' narratives, I am simultaneously, reflexively constructing my own narratives about my own life and experiences.

I enter into the field as an English-speaking Australian woman of Caucasian descent. While my childhood experiences reflected the largely insular, rural, socio-cultural landscape of the small country town where I grew up, I have always had an intense interest in Japan and Japanese culture. As a very young girl my reoccurring daydream was of myself trekking through the Japanese countryside collecting stories, quite an unusual idea for a child with no exposure to anything beyond the working-class, Anglo-Saxon community around her. As a young adult, in tertiary education, I finally experienced the capacity to learn about, and travel the world. My strong interest in other cultures, and, particularly, Japanese culture, led me to studying the Japanese language, multiple trips to Japan and a career as an international travel agent, which served as an excellent way to satisfy my wanderlust. The experience of enabling others to travel deeply impacted me, and I formed a strong conviction that tourism can be transformational, and that it can greatly influence identity and the way people see themselves in the world, as well as influencing how they perceive others. I became a person who wanted to be able to be physically and culturally mobile, and although I couldn't have articulated it at the time, I was hastily building up cultural capital, I was forging a new identity that was quite distinct from my familial background. Thus, as I enter into the field to explore how others may be influenced by tourism, I am starkly aware that my own life, my self-identity and the narratives that I have constructed, are deeply interwoven with the idea of tourism having transformational properties. Thus, I am mindful not to unconsciously transfer these perspectives during the research process.

I later had the opportunity to accompany my husband on a two-year post-doctoral fellowship in Sapporo, Japan, and it was during this period that I became acquainted with Niseko, and intensely curious about how this small Japanese village was being influenced by the influx of Australian tourists and tourism businesses. On reflection, my interest in learning about Japan has been a strong theme in my life, thus I come to this research with a deep affection and respect for both Japanese people and culture. In many ways, I feel more comfortable in Japan than in Australia, so while I am ethnically an “outsider”, I also have an innate connection to Japanese ways of being in the world, and thus a different frame of reference to the average Australian. This enables me access to understanding Japanese perspectives, while also presenting the challenge that I may also be unconsciously biased towards them.

I am also aware that as a female researcher in Japan, I may be perceived differently than a male counterpart, and that as an Australian I am connected to the many Australians in the Niseko area and the local discourses about Australians and their influence and behaviour.

4.4 Data Collection

4.4.1 Ethical Considerations

Human ethics approval for the proposed research was obtained in November 2016 (approval number H16162). Ethical considerations were addressed in the research design in a number of ways, including: ensuring that informed consent of all participants was secured (see Appendix II), comprehensive information about the study was provided to participants (see Appendix III). Confidentiality of information and participants’ anonymity was protected through the application of pseudonyms to the transcripts (Bulmar, 2008; Keats, 2000; Lune et al., 2010; Seidman, 1998; Vaughan & Hogg, 2011). It was recognised that there was the potential for insights derived from the analysis to be perceived as negative or critical by participants. In order to minimise this occurring, all participants had the opportunity to read the transcripts if requested, to ensure they were an accurate representation from their perspective. This allowed the researcher to be able to clearly discern the sociological analysis of the data from the participants’ experiences.

Potential harm to participants was avoided by ensuring transparency was maintained throughout the data collection process. This was achieved by providing participant consent

forms, and information sheets in Japanese and English explaining the research and the utilisation of an interpreter (who signed a confidentiality agreement), to ensure that participants had a thorough understanding of the research, and what their participation involved.

As suggested by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), ethical matters were continually reflected upon throughout the entire narrative inquiry process, based on the nature of ethical issues which may shift and evolve throughout the research process. Thus, in addition to adhering to the Charles Sturt University Human Ethics Committee requirements, this research carefully considered, as the research process unfolded, the relational responsibility of the researcher to the participant. Guided by Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998), during the research process, the researcher endeavoured to cultivate an attitude of empathy, engage in deep listening, and attempted to suspend judgement about the narratives presented by participants. Within the context of the narrative interview process in this research, I acknowledged my own influence during the narrative interview process and remained alert to how my presence may have shaped the interview space between myself and the participant.

Issues of confidentiality and anonymity were considered paramount, due to the nature of narrative interviewing in which participants share their personal experiences, and every effort was made to ensure that the narratives shared by participants were treated respectfully. This research recognised that through the process of narrative inquiry, the researcher not only had the privilege of becoming part of the story, they also had responsibility for that story in the context of the research. Given, “narrative inquiry reminds us who we are, and are becoming” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 2001), bringing attention to the ethics of caring for these stories was carefully considered during the design of this research.

The key risk that was managed during the data collection process was the research site being in Japan, thus necessitating international travel. The researcher took steps to minimise any potential risks including having comprehensive travel insurance, adhering to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade travel warnings, working to a strict and detailed itinerary and checking in regularly via email with the principal supervisor in Australia.

4.4.2 Temporal Context of the Data Collection

An important element of any qualitative research design is that the data collection is conducted at the locality of interest rather than employing indirect methods such as online surveys that would not require the researcher to be present. This is particularly pertinent in research involving human behaviours, feelings and experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). On this basis the data collection for the present research was conducted onsite in Niseko, Japan in September and October 2017.

Giddens (1979) argues it is essential to recognise that social activity occurs in a particular time and space, which necessitates the consideration of how the particular time and space within which the research is conducted may influence the study. Therefore, research is not atemporal, but rather, is embedded in a specific context and point of time which may influence the participants, the researcher and the data. At the time that the data collection for the present research was conducted, the residents of Hokkaido had recently received several emergency warnings to their mobile phones from the Japanese government in relation to nuclear missiles being fired by North Korea in the direction of Hokkaido. Political tensions in North Asia at this time were high, and the Australian Prime Minister reported that plans had been made to evacuate Australians from Japan if nuclear war broke out. These conditions were less than ideal for the preparatory phases of fieldwork. Suddenly my research felt insignificant, and the potential loss of the opportunity to conduct it paled in comparison to the potential for devastation in a country to which I felt a deep connection, and these concerns dominated my thoughts. I made the decision to prepare as normally as possible, closely watching travel warnings, secure in my decision that if the situation escalated I would not travel to Japan. Fortunately, tensions did not worsen, and the data collection trip proceeded as planned. In the interviews, however, it was evident that the crisis with North Korea was on the minds of the participants. Almost a third mentioned it, with Tim (a-fifty something Australian) commenting that as long as no one was dropping bombs on him, then, “everything else is good, manageable”. Several other participants also spoke about an uncertain future due to the situation with North Korea, and one wanted to ask me about my perspective as an Australian and how I thought the Australian media might be influencing Australians to not travel to Japan. Thus, the data collection was conducted at a moment in time when the eyes of the world were particularly focused on Japan and when the safety of the Japanese people was threatened. In tourism contexts such events can have devastating impacts, and as a researcher exploring the

influence of tourism in a ski resort community in Japan, these factors must be acknowledged as context of the research and of the participants' narratives. Similarly, for myself as the researcher travelling to Japan with my family, I had a heightened awareness of, and concern about, the broader political climate than I may have had at other times. With several of the Australian participants in particular, this seemed to be a point of rapport, as if their sense of being a foreigner in Japan was heightened by the experience of the nuclear missile.

A section of an interview with Kurt, an Australian tourism business owner married to a Japanese woman, illustrates both of our experiences of the broader global climate due to the North Korea situation at the time of the data collection:

Kurt: I hope you don't get one of those, it is not bloody fun getting a message on your phone.

Me: I must admit the last month everyone keeps saying, "are you still going (to Japan)?" I came just after the earthquake so....yeah.

Me: so, you get it (a message) on your phone, do you?

Kurt: Yeah, have you seen the message?

Me: no, we didn't get one, no.

Kurt: so, there is, I think people posted it on Twitter and stuff and it is in Japanese.

Me: No, well I do, but not all the kanji (Chinese script) so I am lost, I am basic, basic (Japanese language).

Kurt: so at 6 am and one was at 7 am and you get your alarm, your phone starts going.

Me: Oh, really? oh wow.

Kurt: it says "missile warning, missile warning, North Korea has fired a missile and it's headed towards northern Japan, please find shelter, in a sturdy building or underground bunker".

Me: (Joking) and don't panic...

We both laugh

Kurt: so, what the hell have I got on my phone and I could only just read a little bit, and our kids we just don't tell them, they don't need to know.

Me: they really don't need to know.

Kurt: my wife was downstairs, and I could just understand what it said, and I was just like what does this mean? And she says it says get down into an underground bunker, and I am like what the hell?

Me: like everyone get to the underground bunker that you prepared earlier....

Both laugh

Kurt: so yeah, I think after that um, I heard someone say that they had a war, a sort of war crisis plan.

Me: oh really?

Kurt: if it happened, depending how they would sort of keep their business going and survive.

Me: wow, that's interesting.

Kurt: and the tsunami and now North Korea, yeah if a nuclear war goes off I don't think there is going to be many people coming here this winter.

This segment of the interview with Kurt demonstrates how important it is to recognise the influence of broader contexts and how they can influence the experiences of participants. Kurt is clearly shaken by what is happening and is concerned for both his family and for the future of tourism in the area. Interestingly, his concern extends to me and whether I had experienced the unsettling phone warning. In this way, it felt as if this common experience of being Australian in Japan, in a time when Japan was threatened, helped to dissolve the potentially perceived barrier between the interviewer and interviewee. Thus, understanding the research site extends beyond geographic boundaries and characteristics, and requires acknowledgement of how broader global tensions can significantly influence the research and the perceptions of participants.

4.4.3 Sampling Framework

In qualitative research samples are often small in number, which enables the researcher to attain in-depth and detailed data (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Tuckett, 2004). The purpose of the sample is to provide a representative sample of the population, which allows all members of the population being studied an equal chance to be selected (Marshall, 1996). This approach is often utilised in quantitative research. Alternatively, a sample can be selected to, “illuminate a situation, get insight, or collect information about a particular event” (Wadsworth, 1984, p. 14). Given the interpretive approach and exploratory nature of this research, and the aim of exploring the experiences of tourism business owners to offer insights into how Niseko as a social space may be influencing the lifestyles and identities of tourism business owners, the latter approach was clearly well suited to the needs of the research. Purposive sampling then, can be defined as the, “deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses” (Tongo, 2007, p. 147). Purposive sampling seeks rich data about a particular

phenomenon (Ezzy, 2002). Initially, a sample size of twenty was proposed as it was a practical size for the chosen data collection method of narrative interviewing and subsequent narrative analysis and was not intended to be a representative sample. Data saturation is not an appropriate goal for narrative research (Ayres, 2000; Marshall & Long, 2010), and in turn was not the intention of the present research. As proposed by Walker (2012, p. 40), “can the way participants tell their stories reach saturation?” This research was guided by Reissman (2008), who recommends more than one narrative is needed in narrative research to demonstrate variation. The base unit of interpretive research is the individual (Minichiello et al., 2000), and accordingly the sample of the present research is comprised of individual participants.

Tourism business owners were specifically selected as they have regular direct contact with international tourists and the opportunity for in-depth interactions, a characteristic necessary when examining the influence of international tourism on self-identity construction and lifestyle. Due to the seasonal nature of ski tourism in the Niseko area, employees are often transient, thus are less suitable for the purposes of this research. Initially, only Japanese tourism business owners were part of the sample frame, however, due to difficulties securing the proposed sample size of twenty prior to commencing data collection, the sample frame was expanded to include non-Japanese tourism business owners in Niseko (four Australians and one American). Snowball sampling, a variation of purposive sampling whereby participants are recruited from the social network of the initial informants was utilised to recruit these additional participants (Minichiello et al., 2000). Details of the participant selection criteria are outlined in Table 1 and demographic characteristics of the sample are detailed in Table 2.

Table 1. Participant selection criteria for the study

Criteria	Description
1.	Current owner of a tourism business in the Niseko area
2.	Willing to participate in the research
3.	Willing to provide demographic information

A potential bias recognised in the sample is that the perceptions of individuals may be positively influenced by their level of involvement in tourism (Pearce, 1989). This possible

predisposition was considered as context during the analysis. One of the potential limitations of this type of research, in the context of this thesis, is that as an Australian woman asking Japanese people about their experiences of tourism, there could be the possibility of respondents giving falsely positive answers regarding their perceptions of the influence of international tourism on their self-identity (Miyazaki & Taylor, 2008). As I have lived and worked in Japan, I have cultivated a thorough understanding of Japanese cultural norms and a basic command of the Japanese language and I do not represent the average Australian tourist. In my previous Honours study in Niseko in 2013 (Nelson, 2014), it was clearly apparent that participants were able to engage with me in a very relaxed manner without the presence of the 'politeness' and social barriers often in place in such situations in Japan (Haugh, 2007). This is one of my strengths as a researcher that I can contribute to the research, as it is essential to understand the cultural nuances of the group being researched in order to avoid misinterpretations occurring (Becker & Geer, 2004; Geertz, 2004; Keats, 2000).

4.4.4 Recruitment and Data Collection

The recruitment process for this research was purposive. Unlike random sampling which clearly defines the population and strives for all members of it to have equal chances of selection (Marshall, 1996), purposive sampling draws data from a particular section of the population which is best able to answer the research questions of the research (O'Leary, 2004). Therefore, purposive sampling suits studies which are concerned with researching a particular culture (Tongo, 2007). Gender equity was sought during the recruitment process and adhered to strict selection criteria that was made explicit to potential participants. Despite efforts made to achieve gender equity in the sample, thirteen participants out of the sample of seventeen were men. This was unsurprising as the male breadwinner family structure is still dominant in Japan. Women in the workforce in Japan are described as, 'second class citizens', who are disadvantaged by team-based work styles and long work hours, with some companies forcing women to resign upon the birth of their first child (Nagase, 2016). Despite making up almost half the workforce, Japanese women make up less than 10 percent of managerial roles, demonstrating gender inequality in the workplace (Fujita & Tabuchi, 1997; Schneider & Silverman, 2010). Thus, the gender inequality in the sample of the present research was unfortunate but not unexpected, particularly on account of the sample frame requiring participants to be tourism business owners.

All tourism business owners in the Niseko area that met the selection criteria had equal opportunity to participate in the study to ensure fair and unbiased recruitment. The target size of the sample at the time of recruitment commencing was twenty participants. Before leaving Australia, I contacted the Niseko Promotion Board for a list of all the tourism business owners in the Niseko area and then recruited the sample by approaching tourism business owners directly by email prior to the research trip. If the tourism business owner was interested in participating in the study and met the sample selection criteria, I organised, via email, a time to conduct the interview onsite at the place of business or another public location such as a coffee shop if the place of business was not a suitable option. One interview was conducted at a local coffee shop at the request of the tourism business owner. I endeavoured to limit the number of interviews scheduled to a maximum of two interviews per day, however, due to the tight schedules of tourism business owners, on one day three interviews were conducted.

The recruitment process via email prior to the research had limited success, with nine participants being confirmed for interviews prior to the researcher's arrival in Japan. Upon commencing the data collection, participants voluntarily offered suggestions of other business owners that they recommended I contact. I contacted these business owners via email in Japan, and eight further interviews were scheduled using a snowball sampling technique (Noy, 2008b). On reflection, due to the importance Japanese place on relationships in business contexts (Herbig & Palumbo, 1994), the snowball sampling technique proved to be both an effective and efficient way of locating and recruiting the desired sample. The total sample size was seventeen, comprising thirteen men and four women who are tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan.

4.4.5 Participants' Demographic Features

Table 2. Summary of study participants demographic information

Age	74	63	57	70	39-	35	46	62	38	56	59	51	43	59	50	63	60
Gender	Male	Female	Female	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Female	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Female
Nationality	Japanese	Japanese	Japanese	Japanese	Australian	Japanese	Japanese	Japanese	Australian	Japanese	Japanese	Australian	Australian	Japanese	American	Japanese	Japanese
How many years have you lived in Niseko?	10	36–37 years	30	43	12	25	46	26	14	56	32	14	10	40	16	37	30
How many years have you been a tourism business owner for?	8	36–37 years	30	43	11	6	6	26	14	2	32	14	9	21	10	37	29
Previous Employment background	Company employee	Public servant	Auto parts development	Mountain climber	Journalism and Marketing	Travel Agent	Trading (Import/Export)	Office worker	High school teacher, ski instructor	Flight attendant Travel Agency	None	Lawyer	Researcher	Hotel Worker	Lawyer, banking	Farm Worker	Editor in a publishing company
Have you lived abroad? If so, where and for how long?	Yes USA and UK	No	No	Nepal	Japan	Germany	Australia New Zealand	No	Japan Nepal US Canada	Australia	No	New Zealand Japan	Japan Canada	Nepal	Japan UK	No	No
Languages spoken	Japanese English	Japanese	Japanese	Japanese English Nepali	English Japanese	Japanese English German	Japanese English	Japanese	Japanese English	Japanese English	Japanese	English	English Japanese	Japanese English Nepali	English, Japanese Chinese	Japanese English	Japanese
Highest Educational level achieved?	Graduate school	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Degree	Attended university but withdrew	Graduate school	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Degree	High School	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Degree (withdrew from PhD)	Bachelor Degree	Graduate Degree	Bachelor Degree	Vocational School

Data collection took place onsite in Niseko, Japan during September and October 2017. This timeframe was specifically chosen relative to ski tourism activities as it is during the low season when tourism business owners would be most available to participate in the interview process. With the aid of an interpreter, narrative interviews were conducted and audio recorded. The interviews ranged in time from forty minutes to an hour and a half; the average interview time was one hour. Time was allocated between interviews for researcher reflection and writing up field notes, to more fully capture the nuances of each interview (for example, non-verbal cues). Interviews began with me briefly sharing my own story of how I came to be carrying out this research, tracing my time living in Japan, experience of Niseko and subsequent curiosity to understand how people living in Niseko were experiencing tourism and how it was influencing them personally. This introduction not only gave the participants insight into my background, it also served to create rapport as the participant realised I had had an extended and deep interest in Japan and a familiarity with Japanese people and culture. This approach was inspired by Clandinin (2013, p. 82), who notes, “we tell our stories” as we, “listen to participants tell their stories and the meanings they attach to them” during the narrative inquiry process.

4.4.6 Cross Cultural Interviewing

The use of an interpreter had the benefit of avoiding any potential for misunderstandings due to language or cultural barriers, a possible challenge identified in other studies that involve cross-cultural interviewing (Gilbert, 2008; Keats, 2000). Table 3 (below) presents details of the languages in which each interview was conducted. Time was allocated each day for the researcher to transcribe each interview and to consult with the interpreter if required regarding the accuracy of the language translation of the English transcripts. This enabled me to consult with the interpreter if translation issues arose, as well as allowing me to quickly become immersed in the data. Post-data collection, I continued to work with the interpreter to clarify points during the transcription process and, at the request of one participant, to provide a copy of the transcript in Japanese. The ability to consult with the interpreter enabled me to minimise errors in translation to ensure the interviews that were conducted in Japanese and translated into English were as accurate as possible. My Japanese language knowledge also aided this process. Nevertheless, on reflection, in contrast with the interviews I conducted directly in English, it was concluded that the triangulated process of interviewing through an interpreter lessened the degree to which the participants could allow their story to flow naturally, without

pauses to facilitate translation. It was also recognised that the presence of the interpreter, a Japanese woman who had lived in Australia and brought with her, her own set of contexts and experiences, may have influenced the interactions between all three parties.

Table 3. Language use in participant interviews

Name (pseudonym)	Gender	Nationality	Language interview was conducted in	Interpreter present
1. Sasaki-san	Male	Japanese	English/Japanese	Yes
2. Shimizu-san	Female	Japanese	Japanese	Yes
3. Himura-san	Male	Japanese	Japanese	Yes
4. Kurosawa-san	Male	Japanese	Japanese	Yes
5. Kurt	Male	Australian	English	No
6. Kita-san	Male	Japanese	English	Yes
7. Suzuki-san	Female	Japanese	Japanese	Yes
8. Nakano-san	Male	Japanese	English	Yes
9. Brad	Male	Australian	English	No
10. Mizushima-san	Male	Japanese	Japanese	Yes
11. Mizushima-san	Female	Japanese	English	Yes
12. Tim	Male	Australian	English	No
13. Lewis	Male	Australian	English	No
14. Sato-san	Male	Japanese	Japanese	Yes
15. Sheldon	Male	American	English	No
16. Tanaka-san	Male	Japanese	Japanese/English	Yes
17. Mori-san	Female	Japanese	Japanese/English	Yes

Often in cross-cultural interview contexts, it is highlighted that the researcher is an ‘outsider’ and cultural differences in terms of race, language, religion, and social organisation create assumptions of difference and distance between the researcher and the participant (Griffen, 2016). In the context of the present research, I was indeed an outsider on many levels. I did not live in Niseko, was not Japanese and spoke only basic Japanese. If I had lived in Niseko and been a native Japanese researcher, the style of the research and the nature of the data collected may have been different. There were certainly barriers in terms of language and cultural experience that I acknowledge existed between myself and the participants. Through the utilisation of a native Japanese interpreter, and by drawing on my (limited) Japanese language ability and experience of living in Japan, I attempted to minimise the barriers that may have existed in the interview space due to cultural differences. Additionally, I was conscious of finding ‘common ground’ when possible with participants, drawing on shared experiences such as age, gender, maternity and life experiences (such as living abroad). The following section of the interview with Mizushima-san, an immaculately groomed fifty-six-year-old woman and tourism business owner, illustrates how this manifested during the narrative interviewing process.

Mizushima-san: and when I came back to Okinawa to work, I actually spent less than two years with [Japanese company] JTB. I couldn't (mimes covering her mouth) I couldn't say anything but when I just, I tried so hard not to do or say my opinion.

A short time later in the interview, she reflects:

Mizushima-san: and working in a Japanese company in Japan is maybe now it's very hard for me and I couldn't do it anymore, so I found that yeah.

As the researcher, I am then able to connect with Mizushima-san through my own experience of my husband working in a Japanese university and feeling unable to express his opinions:

Me: I can understand. I guess my experience from living in Japan my husband worked at a university at Hokkudai so he had the experience of learning to (mimes covering mouth).

Thus, despite our cultural differences we are able to find commonalities which helped to foster a warm and safe interviewing space.

One of the points of difference with the narrative interviews conducted with this sample of tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan was they were conducted in a range of ways, those with English speakers in English, some in Japanese only with the assistance of an interpreter, and some in a combination of both Japanese and English with both myself and the participants drawing on our dual language capabilities to be understood. Everingham (2018, p. 68), reflects on this phenomenon in her cross-cultural interviewing and her utilisation of "Spanglish" to communicate with her participants, she describes the experience of, "speaking Spanglish at once marks and exceeds boundaries between bodies, but also draws people together through a mutual desire to communicate". The section below of the interview with Sasaki-san, a male guesthouse owner, demonstrates how a mixture of Japanese and English was used in some interviews to enhance direct communication between the researcher and the participant during the narrative interview process.

Sasaki-san (in English): No rich, but good guests.

Me (Japanese): *wakarimasu* (I understand)

Sasaki-san (English): *Like high class*

Me (English): so, has this changed, from maybe ten years ago?

Sasaki-san (Japanese): *chigau, chigau* (wrong, wrong)

Me (Japanese): *omoshiroi desu* (that's interesting).

4.4.7 Narrative Interviewing

Interviews are the most common method of collecting narrative data (Glover, 2003). Narrative interviewing was chosen as the research instrument for this research as it produces rich qualitative data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Interviewing has proven to be effective in revealing participant perceptions of experiences (Boeije, 2010; Denzin, 2009; Lune et al., 2010; Rapley, 2004), as well as thoughts, attitudes, and opinions (Baur, 2007; Byrne, 2004; Keats, 2000; Seidman, 1998), which aligns with the type of data required for this research. Interviewing necessitates the researcher to have face to face interaction with participants, thus providing the contextual element recognised as essential in interpretive research (Minichiello et al., 2000).

The use of narratives as a research tool can be traced to the sociology practiced at The Chicago School and a narrative can be defined as a short or extended story about a significant experience or a life story (Chase, 2005). Narrative inquiry, in particular, aims to understand how the participant interprets their experiences as a cohesive narrative, to reflect their own sense of ‘self’ in a socially embedded context (Glover, 2003). Narratives are characterised as reflecting a natural and universal way that people account for their experiences across cultures (Butler-Kisber, 2010), thus are particularly well suited to this research. In sociology, narrative inquiry can be used to understand the process of narratives and identity construction or to explore how people use stories to make meaning of their lives (Mishler, 1992). Thus, aligning with the social constructivist underpinning of this research, narrative inquiry is directly drawn from perceptions of individual experience which are temporally and socially situated (Butler-Kisber, 2010). Therefore, on account of these characteristics, narrative inquiry is proposed by Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) as an ideal mode of inquiry, as it illuminates how experiences are both selective and continuous, while simultaneously reflecting how a person’s understanding is influenced by social and situational contexts. Narrative interviewing, then, is valuable when seeking to establish an opportunity for respondents to give voice to their stories (Gubrium, 2003), is recognised as a key means of understanding self-identity construction in tourism contexts (Ateljevic, Pritchard, & Morgan, 2007; Freeman, 1993; Noy, 2004), and is thus, as a research instrument, best positioned to provide the quality and depth of data required to answer the research questions of this thesis.

In narrative interviewing the researcher rarely asks the participant directly for a story, but rather structures questions in such a way to invite the participant to reflect upon their experiences, for

example the, ‘tell me something about’ and respond in a story format (Askam, 1982). Creating an unhurried and relaxed atmosphere for the participant can aid in assisting the participant to share detailed narratives (Minichiello et al., 2000). Individual accounts are recognised as providing deeper and more complex understandings of human experience. For example, Bullough’s (2001) *Uncertain Lives* provides resonant narratives illuminating the way poverty is embedded into the lives of the children in the study and revealing how teachers and schools are deeply valuable and facilitators of the potential of these young people. Thus, deep and narrow exploration can yield far greater depth of understanding than broader, more generalised approaches. Narratives can be used to understand cultures and cultural contexts (Geertz, 1983), making them a particularly suitable research instrument for the present research.

Open-ended questions were developed for this research, to unpack the influence of living in a tourism space on the lifestyles and identities of tourism business owners. The interview questions were designed to elicit detailed responses by asking participants to share experiences from their daily lives and the meanings they attach to them (see Appendix IV). Narrative interviewing techniques used in self-identity research recommended by Crossley (2000a) informed the interview question design. The interview questions were constructed with consideration given to the research questions of this research, a common approach in qualitative research (Minichiello et al., 2000). In particular, descriptive questions were used, designed to elicit descriptions of experiences (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984), for example: *Can you tell me about a memorable/stand out story about your experiences with tourists that has particularly influenced you?*

What are known as ‘opinion’ or ‘value’ questions, which seek to understand the interpretive processes of the participant, were also used (Patton, 2002), such as: *In your experience, has your lifestyle changed since the development of international tourism in Niseko?*

Narrative interviewing techniques utilised, were informed by examples of other research examining self-identity through narrative interviewing. Examples include Åkerlund and Sandberg’s (2015) research focused on understanding the nexus of self-identity and lifestyle mobility, and O’Connor and Barrera’s (2014) use of narrative interviews to understand changes in the self-identity of bereaved parents. Based on these examples, the interview questions in this research were designed to prompt reflective narratives from participants about their

experiences of international tourism in their daily lives, and if and how these experiences may affect their lifestyles and identities.

On reflection, the use of narrative interviewing as a research instrument was effective in providing participants space to speak naturally and at length about their experiences. Demonstrating this, the first interview question *Can you tell me about how you became a tourism business owner here?* typically evoked a forty-minute response, which included much of the life story of the participant. Not only did this strategy provide rich, reflexive data, it also enabled the participant to talk about what was most important in the self-constructed story of their own lives. For each participant, unique critical points and experiences emerged, which could not have been located by the interviewer by a more specific question. This was particularly critical, given one of the aims of the research was to understand how self-constructed narratives can offer windows to understanding self-identity. I gave each participant ample time and space to speak freely and at length throughout the interview. At the conclusion of the first interview, I asked the participant whether there was anything else he wanted to add. Sasaki-san spoke in-depth about his plans and dreams for the future and his concerns about sustainability in Niseko. It occurred to me, at this point, that offering the participants the opportunity to imaginatively ‘gaze’ at their future selves may yield insightful data about identity construction, thus in future interviews an additional question asking about hopes and plans for the future was added. This proved also to be a reflective moment for participants as they thought both about where they had been and simultaneously where they were going. Himura-san, one of the oldest participants in the study, owned a guesthouse and outdoor adventure business. He had clear ideas about how the final chapters in his life would look when asked about his future:

The environment that I grew up in informed me. So, at that time I decided...I was born to an agricultural family on a mountain. We grew food to eat. There was nothing around me because it was a mountain and I hated it when I was young and I wanted to leave. I had to work from morning into night. The attitude or culture formed me. So first I want to teach other staff, but at the same time I want to be like an expert of natural drugs, like plants. I am already quite knowledgeable about it, and teaching people who come here. But I want to do more, like I want to focus, be an expert of that. I will not retire, this is my life. Forever, until the end.

Thus, the narrative interview process was deeply embedded in the interpretive paradigm, shifting and responding to the research context. This flexibility created space for respondents to be reflective, and to express rich, nuanced narratives. Additionally, the loose structure of narrative interview allowed the researcher an opportunity to follow unexpected tangents that emerged which offered new insights into self-identity construction. For example, in an interview with a female guesthouse owner, Mori-san, she says,

So, in Niseko, not only foreigners, but Japanese people started coming for a second life. So not only foreigners came here to live, the number of Japanese people um, who come from other parts of Japan increased a lot, like the older people who retired or young people who like Niseko a lot.

This idea of people coming to Niseko for a ‘second life’ was an unexpected topic to emerge for the researcher but one of interest, so the researcher asked an impromptu question to encourage the participant to reflect further on the subject:

So, before you go to number three (story) can I just ask, you were saying that lots of Japanese people moved to Niseko from other places, why do you think that they are attracted to come here to live?

Thus, narrative interviewing as a research instrument was useful in terms of invoking detailed and reflexive accounts from participants, as well as enabling the researcher to delve deeply into the experiences and perceptions of participants. It provided space to follow unexpected threads, which allowed new themes to emerge, and new insights to be obtained. In the context of this research, narrative interviewing proved to be an effective research instrument with which to extract data pertaining to how personal narratives offer insight into self-identity. It also must be acknowledged that narrative interviewing works best in contexts in which the participant is willing to share their stories and experiences and has sufficient time to do so. During this research, one of the seventeen participants, though agreeing to participate during recruitment, was less than willing when the interview was imminent as detailed below:

Reflections from the field notes October 2017

We knock and wait for quite a while for an answer, there is no one about. Eventually, a late middle-aged woman in an apron answers the door and seems annoyed about being disturbed. Despite having arranged the interview with her, she says she is busy but will talk to us quickly but that she has to prepare dinner. Donning slippers in the genkan (entrance) we are led to the

main area of the guesthouse, it is quite dark and country style pine furniture and teddy bears are the decorative theme. I feel like I am imposing, and it does not sit comfortably with me as I am very aware that she is reluctant to refuse us out of politeness. This interview did not have the same open, expansive feel of most of the others, and interestingly she seemed out of all the participants to be the one not only resistant to being interviewed, but also resistant to the change brought by tourism.

While Mori-san offered valuable insights during her interview (as discussed above), it was more difficult to get the momentum achieved in the other interviews when the storytelling emerged freely and with enthusiasm to share experiences. Thus, on this occasion the limitation of narrative interviewing, in terms of requiring a willing participant to draw rich and detailed stories, was evident.

4.4.8 Field Notes

Field notes taken by the researcher during the interview process are recognised as being beneficial in a number of ways, such as immediately drawing the researcher into the analysis, and recording personal interpretations of the context of the interview, and behaviour and personal presentation of the participant (Minichiello et al., 2000). Narrative inquiry, in particular, is characterised as, “ongoing, iterative, and fluid” (Butler-Kisber, 2010, p. 69). Thus, throughout the fieldwork process, detailed field notes were considered critical in terms of capturing an account of what was taking place and the context of this research. The field notes were taken during the interviews in the spaces when translation was occurring and directly after each interview to capture reflections from the interviews. In the evenings after the conclusion of the day’s interviews time was allocated to record researcher reflections, which were considered a critical part of researcher reflexivity. The field notes were drawn upon as data throughout the analysis process and also during the creation of the reflective poetry and micro-stories.

4.5 Data analysis

During the transcription process I took notes and reflected on the data and the research process. The transcription process was considered an initial analysis as I was able to revisit the data in a slow and methodical manner which allowed space for reflections about the data to emerge in addition to those recorded in the field notes. The process of manual transcription also gave me the opportunity to revisit my personal experience of the interviews, and to record my reactions to the respondents and their stories. This offered valuable insight into my role as the researcher and how my positionality may shape my perceptions of the interview data. For instance, as I transcribed the interview with Tim, an Australian business owner, I could feel the rush of anxiety and apprehension I felt before the interview began:

Reflections from the field notes, October 2017

I am a little intimidated going into this interview, I have read the participant's career/business history and it is intense. He owns a network of tourism-based businesses in Niseko and is the largest employer in the area. I am interviewing in the restaurant of the Shibui Hotel, a brand-new ski-in and ski-out development. It feels sleek and contemporary. Minimalist. Tears for Fears 1980s pop music plays in the background. I am unsettled by thinking about how I will combine eating breakfast and interviewing. I am out of the comfort zone that I carved for myself. I have dressed up a little more, in response I suppose to the business environment. Having worked in hotels before I know the setting, the characters, the lines.

Then, as the interview experience is 're-lived during the transcription process, I also re-experienced the feeling of relaxing into the interview:

However, as the interview progressed, I realised that his way of speaking and his mannerisms and accent reminded me of an uncle of mine, this unconsciously relaxed me and made him seem more familiar and less intimidating.

Similarly, when transcribing the interview with Yamada-san, a middle-aged female guesthouse owner, I re-experienced the same intense reaction of disbelief when continually expressed that she preferred to talk about her husband's life rather than her own:

Me: can you please tell me a little about your life and how you became a business owner here?

Yamada-san: It is better to talk about my husband (who was not present at the interview).

Me: Ahh... maybe yourself and maybe together, if it happened together?

Me: So maybe the story of how you came to own this business?

Yamada-san: So for me, it is easier to talk about my husband.

At this point during the interview, I had desperately wanted to say to Yamada-san, “*no, your story is just as important, I want to hear your story, just because you are a woman does not mean your experience is less valuable*”. This was an emotional point for me during the data collection process. On reflection it highlights the potentially culturally based difference between myself as an Australian woman and researcher with a feminist perspective, to my participant who is living the life of a traditional Japanese wife. I was aware that it was inappropriate to push her to speak about herself and while some of her own story emerged, much of what Yamada-san told me centred on her husband and son. The manual transcription process forced me to revisit some of the less comfortable moments of the data collection, and this was valuable in terms of prompting additional reflection.

Thus, the manual the transcription carried out by myself as the researcher offered the opportunity for me to become intimately immersed in both the data and the experience of data collection, which allowed greater insight and reflexivity to be gained than would otherwise be possible through external transcription processes.

In narrative inquiry, the process of moving from data to analysis to text is not a linear process (Clandinin, 2013), and this was reflected in the present analysis. The data analysis was underpinned by a constructivist inspired approach advocating, “the need to focus attention on human existence as it is lived, experienced and interpreted by each human individual” (Crossley, 2000a, p. 45). I undertook the process of manual data analysis using the recorded transcriptions from the interviews and unstructured field notes (Lune et al., 2010). Based on the assumption underpinning this research that personal narratives are a fundamental means for people to understand their own lives and self-identities, great care and sensitivity was used when deconstructing and interpreting the data (Elliot, 2005).

Drawing on the work of Emden (1998), Mishler (1986), and Polkinghorne (1998), a data analysis process was developed as outlined below:

1. Researcher makes reflective notes during manual transcription.
2. Read the text a few times.
3. Delete the interviewer’s questions.

4. Delete all words that detract from the key idea of the sentence group.
5. Reread remaining text for sense.
6. Repeat the process of deleting all words that detract from the key ideas of sentences and reread remaining text for coherency several times (if required).
7. Refer to field notes relating to each interview to add context.
8. Identify key themes.
9. Move fragment of themes together to create one coherent story or a fragment of stories.

The analysis took inspiration from Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou (2008) and was primarily inductive in nature, involving the discovery of patterns, themes and categories within the data (Bryman, 2012; Matthews & Ross, 2010; Patton, 2002). Identifying themes in narrative analysis has been recognised as an effective method of gathering, investigating and analysing stories of lived experiences (Reissman, 2008), despite limited use in tourism contexts (Smith & Weed, 2007). Analysis of narrative data demands careful consideration of the structure of each narrative, and the context of the individual sharing it (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Drawing on the seminal work of Labov and Waletzky (1967) the analysis considered the temporal order and textual cohesion of the narratives. Structural analysis of narrative data is recognised as having limitations in terms of not reflecting on the context of the narrative, cultural differences in storytelling and the partial and constructed nature of reality (Andrews et al., 2008). Thus, in alignment with the social constructivist paradigm underpinning this research the narrative analysis and creative interpretations of the data recognised the narratives as embedded in specific social and cultural contexts, and as a reflection of the socially constructed nature of narratives between both the participant and their social reality and the participant and the researcher within the interview space.

Additionally, the analysis involved consideration of how the narratives were influenced by the interaction of the researcher with the participant (Polkinghorne, 1995). As articulated by Bochner (2001, p. 135-136),

When I sit down to analyse a story, there's the story, and there is me. The meaning of the story is not imminent in the text. The process of theorising, analysing, and categorising personal narratives is shot through and through with the imagination and ways of seeing of the interpreter.

Throughout the analysis it was acknowledged that all narratives are co-constructed, between the teller and the listener, and in this context by the researcher. Similarly, as a person makes meaning through the stories she or he tells, this research attempts to reflexively uncover how living in a tourism space may influence lifestyle and identities through analysing tourism business owners' narratives.

4.6 : Complementary Research Strategies

4.6.1 Poetry

Denzin (1997) calls for alternative qualitative approaches to be utilised, which are able to stir emotional responses in research audiences. He advocates methodologies which can connect the intellectual and emotional worlds of researchers, participants, and research consumers. Over the past three decades, creative research strategies have been steadily gaining influence in the field of qualitative research (Furman, Langar, Davis, Gallardo, & Kulkarni, 2007).

Incorporating a creative element into the strategy of this research was not part of the initial research design. Upon suggestion from a mentor to consider additional creative ways of interpreting and analysing the data, and inspired from my own field work notes in which I had unexpectedly crafted one poem to capture my connection to a particular moment at the research site, poetry was decided upon as a complementary creative research strategy. Poetry was selected as it well suited both my own creative interests and the rich narrative data which emerged during the narrative interviewing process. Initially both Haiku and Tanaka, well-known Japanese poetry styles, were considered as potential ways of crafting the poems, however, a more free-form style emerged during the writing process, although the intention of capturing the minimalist style and cultural elements of Japanese poetry underpinned the writing process throughout.

Although still an emergent qualitative research strategy, poetry is said to offer qualitative researchers new ways to interpret and represent participants' experiences and is considered particularly well suited to research concerned with unpacking layers of meaning and exploring identities (Leavy, 2009). A poem can be defined as, "evoking a snippet of human experience that is artistically expressed in a heightened state" (Leavy, 2009, p. 64). In research contexts,

poetry may be utilised as data, as a way of representing data and also as a means of inquiry and analysis (Furman et al., 2007). Poetry has the potential to elicit emotional engagement and human connection, both with the audience and between the researcher and the participant (Faulkner, 2016), and thus provides a valuable medium through which qualitative data can be both interpreted and presented, as has been the experience in this research.

Representing or interpreting data in the format of a poem enables the researcher to draw different meanings from the data and also offers new opportunities for alternative ways for readers/audiences to connect with the data (Leavy, 2009). As suggested by Furman, Langar, Davis, Gallardo and Kulkarni (2007), poetry can offer space for the integration of both the participants' words and the experience of the researcher. Glesne (1997) contends that the 'third voice' of poetry can help researchers navigate the tension between their own voice and experiences and that of the participants (e.g., see Pocock, 2015). For example, in Poem 7 (below), I explore my own frustration as a researcher at being unable access my participant's story during the interview process as she is more intent on telling her husband's rather than her own story. Her experience is almost invisible. Though we are both wives and mothers, our lenses are vastly different. The interview was a delicate navigation, and the poem expresses the underbelly of my feelings of the experience.

I can't reach her with my questions

Because

She is hidden.

***O-taku*, wife.**

***O-taku*, the woman at the rear of the house.**

Her experience is buried so deep under

her husband's story

She doesn't even know that it is there.

Unexpectedly,

Our 'I's' are of vastly different size, shape, and culture.

I can understand and yet I *cannot* understand.

The view from her *o-taku* lens.

Giddens (1991) contends that within each person's narrative, there are 'critical moments' which may transform self-identity or life trajectory. Poetry is recognised as particularly useful as a method of analysis when attempting to distil moments of truth. Richardson (1998, p. 451)

describes poetry as communicating, “instances when we feel truth has shown its face”. Research such as Furman’s (2004) utilisation of both poetry and narratives to explore his father’s experience of cancer, demonstrates the compatibility of the two forms. Poetry, then, “can capture a unique aspect of the human condition, thereby expanding our understanding of social reality” (Leavy, 2009, p. 67).

Research focused on exploring and understanding issues of identity are considered well suited to poetic interpretation (Leavy, 2009), thus making it a good fit for the aims of this research. The creative process of writing each poem as part of the present research process drew on the work of Faulkner (2006), who uses poetic representation of her data exploring LGBTQ Jewish Americans’ identity, along with the work of Richardson (1993) and Glesne (1997). The process used to create each poem involved re-reading each transcript and the field notes, reflecting on the essence of what the participant’s story was saying or the emotion it was evoking, and then selecting a phrase, emotion or experience directly from the participant’s narratives as the kernel of inspiration for each poem. For example, in poem 2:

**I want to change, but
we are eating from this business.
Step over the vomit,
nightly soundscape of fights and fireworks
I am here, and yet I long to be *here*.**

“We are eating from this business” is a direct quote from the participant, and the underpinning idea of the poem is to offer insight into her distress at the physical realities of tourist behaviour occurring literally on her doorstep and to illuminate the tension between her wanting to leave and longing to stay in a place she has a deep attachment to. Thus, as highlighted by Leavy (2009), one of the valuable characteristics of poetry as a form of data representation is its ability to reveal multiple meanings. The process of creating each poem required me as the researcher to deeply connect with the felt experience of each of my participants and to immerse myself in the layers of meaning within each narrative. Similar to the experience of Richardson (1992), crafting a poetic interpretation of a participant’s story allowed me to become closely attuned to their lived experiences. Poetry also offered the opportunity to express the context within which the research took place, thus it gave space to reflect on my own experiences and responses to the cultural context, the participants and their stories (Furman, 2004; Pocock, 2015).

The use of poetry in research contexts has been critiqued for being ungeneralisable (Furman et al., 2007). However, while unmeasurable, when creating poetry, the poet aims to transform their personal experience into something which is universal, to present experience in a way that the reader might be able to, “enter the work as if it were their own” (Furman et al., 2007, p. 303). Likewise, Stein (2004) reflects that while poetry expresses the experience of the individual, poems may also have the capacity to create awareness or stir resonance in the reader to universal themes. When considering issues of validity, however, it is suggested poetry should be appraised based on its ability to, “evoke emotions, produce connections, and create a scene that *feels* truthful” (Leavy, 2004, p. 82). Similarly, Faulkner (2016) suggests being attentive to the emotional tone of the poem and the kind of feelings that the poem invokes in the reader is of importance. The criteria offered by Faulkner (2009), including demonstration of artistic concentration, embodied experience, discovery, conditionality, narrative truth, and transformation, best embodies the aesthetic and epistemological aspirations of the poems created as part of this research. The intention with each poem was to distil the essence of each narrative into poetic form, in order to illuminate experiences of the participants and the researcher, and to invite the reader into the capsule of time, space, and people, in which this piece of research was conducted.

The placement of each piece of poetry throughout the thesis was carefully considered and informed by the Japanese concept of ‘Ma’. ‘Ma’ refers to is the space between structural parts (in this case thesis chapters) and provides room for pause or room reflection or imagination and is found in Japanese art, poetry and architecture. As this research was conducted in Japan and draws on Japanese concepts in its analysis, aligning its aesthetic structure with Japanese sensibilities through the positioning of the poems between the chapters was considered to contribute to the cultural sensitivity of the work. The selection of where each poem was positioned, was carefully considered in relation to the chapter which would proceed it. For example, prior to the methods chapter a poem which offered insight into the cross-cultural interviewing process was placed, thus, creating a link to the next chapter and as well as providing insight into its focus.

4.6.2 Micro-stories

The narrative interviewing space offered room for participants to be reflexive, to tell their story in their own words, in the contexts in which they lived and worked. Each transcript clearly represented more than words to be coded, analysed, and fitted into a thematic box, as each narrative transcript was the shape of a story. Through the process of sharing their reflexive narratives, the participants were able (in most cases) to access the *why* of their stories, thus shifting the data from collecting descriptions to extracting reflexive insights into the experience of being a tourism business owner in the unique social space of Niseko, Japan.

The decision was made that rather than dissecting the narrative transcripts, there was value in preserving them and providing space for the distinct voices of the participants to be heard, aligning with the social constructivist underpinning of this research. This was particularly valuable as the creation and inclusion of the micro-stories which preserved the cohesive narrative accounts given by participants opened up space for experiences of tourism which did not fit into the dominant discourse of tourist experience to be captured. Micro-stories are, “typically identified as stories under 300 words” (Irving, 2017, p. 150). In Niseko, Japan this was the first time these perspectives had been sought; thus the participant narratives offered a first look at how, as a tourism space, it was being experienced by individuals who had developed businesses there. Presenting the narratives in the format of micro-stories draws upon the value of storytelling to reveal and communicate experiences (Sarosi & O’Conner, 1993).

There are scant examples of qualitative research utilising micro-stories to interpret and express narrative data. An early example of the application of micro-stories is provided by Sarosi and O’Conner (1993) who used a focus group situation to collect experiences of nurses and then reconstructed them into micro-story format and found it conducive to capturing and illuminating lived experience in a highly accessible way. Highlighting the suitability of micro-stories to capture experiences of tourism, Haddouche and Salomone (2018) asked tourists to write their own micro-stories in their research which explored the tourist experiences of Generation Z. The approach which most closely aligned to the process used in this research is the work of Goddard, Armstrong, Kiely, Elliot, Charalampopoulos and Condliffe (2017) and Goddard, Armstrong, Stone, and Sabroe (2016), who captured individual narratives in interview contents and used creative writing to summarise them into the format of micro-stories. This innovative way of analysing and communicating narrative data was found to be

highly effective and the researchers reflect, “These stories have revealed themselves to be remarkable for their ability to reveal and communicate experiences of illness that are fundamental to a deep understanding of an individual’s changing circumstances” (Goddard et al., 2017, p. 2). Thus, while an emergent creative strategy, micro-stories have the potential in research concerned with understanding lived experience to offer new ways of understanding and disseminating data into a format which is both accessible and engages the reader into the world of the participant.

The process of crafting the lengthy narrative transcripts into micro-story format required a process rather like distilling, as the transcript was edited, refined and recrafted to the point that the essence of the story could emerge, and the voice of the participant became clear and cohesive. This process not only shaped the story, it also deepened my understanding of the narrative data as I excavated further into the meanings and structure of the words I had transcribed. Thus, the process of crafting the stories from the transcripts and creating data was simultaneously a process of analysis. By being deeply entangled in the narratives in the process of reshaping them into stories, I was able to unpick with greater clarity the meanings that they held.

In addition to the seventeen micro-stories which were crafted based on the direct narratives of the tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan, the prologue to and epilogue of this thesis are fictional micro-stories. These fictional creations were written based on the composite experiences of the seventeen tourism business owners who participated in the research. The purpose of the inclusion of two fictional pieces to the creative elements of this thesis was four-fold. Firstly, they function to demonstrate the potency of creative strategies to interpret and to disseminate research findings concerned with understanding the complexity of human experience. Secondly, they serve to highlight the common narrative thread of the research participants as drawn from the analysis of the data. Thirdly, these elements attempt to illuminate the cultural differences between the researcher and participants. Finally, the fictional pieces provide both context and orientation for the reader drawing them into the physical, emotional, cultural, and narrative space of the research.

4.7 Conclusion

Drawing upon the gaps in knowledge identified in Chapters Two and Three, this chapter established the research aims, objectives and questions which informed the methodological design of this research. Additionally, this chapter has outlined how this research was carefully designed and executed to position it as best able to explore how tourism may be influencing the self-identities of tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan. The chapter reflected on key methodological approaches to social research and clarified the rationale behind the social constructivist position of this research. Aligning with an interpretive methodology guiding the research design, this chapter presented a researcher reflexivity statement and demonstrated how field notes were used to capture researcher reflections, which were a valuable source of complementary data. The chapter discussed in detail the ethical considerations that were addressed during the research design process and considered the temporal context of the research. Addressing the practical components of the research, accounts of the sampling framework, recruitment, research instrument of narrative interviewing, and data collection were provided. Finally, the chapter presented an in-depth discussion of narrative analysis and demonstrated how it was employed along with the creative research strategies of poetry and micro-stories to simultaneously illuminate and unpack key themes and trends from the data.

The proceeding chapter is the first of two findings chapters in this thesis which present the data collected during the narrative interview process in Niseko, Japan. Drawing on the interpretive framework of this research and aligning with its narrative approach which valorises individual participant voices, the next chapter will innovatively present one of the creative interpretations of the data, a set of seventeen micro-stories. The preservation of these individual narratives, which were composed from the narratives of the participants and the field notes of the researcher, offer a direct window into the experiences of each participant. They demonstrate the depth, quality, and detail of the narrative accounts garnered by the methodological design of this research and make a strong case for both the creative interpretation and presentation of qualitative data.

River rapids of the *Shirabetsu kawa*
rush with liminality
They flip their raft on purpose
to experience the relief
of
remembering
how to feel the current of their own agency

Chapter 5: Findings Part 1

Micro-story Collection

5.1 Introduction

The creative interpretations of the narrative data seek to unpack and illuminate the key experiences of the participants. The present chapter presents the seventeen micro-stories that were composed from the seventeen participant narratives and the field notes. These micro-stories provide a direct window into the experiences of each of the participants and establish the context of each of the interviews and responds to the first research question of this thesis, ‘what are tourism business owners in Niseko Japan’s experiences of living in a tourism space?’

This interpretive research aimed to explore the experiences of tourism business owners to offer insight into how Niseko as a social space may be influencing their lifestyles and identities. This chapter forms the first of two findings chapters which present and analyse the data obtained during the narrative interviews conducted with seventeen tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan during the data collection phase of this research. The perspective of this research aligns with the narrative view of human experience which perceives people’s lives as being essentially storied.

Thus, for this research, the narrative interviews collected during the data collection phase provided the portal through which insight into the experiences of tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan could be accessed. Each narrative was rich, nuanced, and deeply personal. The narrative interviewing space offered room for participants to be reflexive, to tell their story in their own words, in the contexts in which they lived and worked. Each transcript clearly represented more than words to be coded, analysed, and fitted into a thematic box, as each narrative transcript was the shape of a story. Through the process of sharing their reflexive narratives, the participants were able to (in most cases) access the *why* of their stories, thus shifting the data from collecting descriptions to extracting reflexive insights into the experience of being a tourism business owner in the unique social space of Niseko, Japan.

The micro-stories are presented in the order that the narratives were collected, thus maintaining the integrity of the sequence of the narratives as they unfolded in the field. Each micro-story in this chapter tells not only the story of the participant, but in many cases also brings the reader into the context in which the story was shared. Thus, the micro-stories present an opportunity to add context to the narrative data, meaning each story has the capacity to simultaneously offer multiple layers of the story. Each story could be temporally, geographically and at times emotively contextualised, thus offering a more holistic perspective of experience than a transcript alone. My experience as the researcher is embedded in each story, and my perspective no doubt has coloured the way the transcripts have been shaped into micro-stories. I did not objectively collect and record the narratives, I too was a participant in their creation, I was present and sought out the participants' experiences. I related to each participant differently, sensitive to their context and to their experiences. My presence as the researcher, as the listener, as a woman, and as someone who was culturally and linguistically different no doubt coloured both the participants' experiences of the process and my interpretations of the narratives. Much qualitative tourism research presents itself in a way that makes the researcher invisible; illustrating this point Crossley (2019, p. 2) argues,

Tourism studies has typically lagged behind other fields in the social sciences when it comes to practicing reflexivity and it has been argued that the field still produces a significant body of qualitative research written from a position of supposed objectivity, detachment and disembodiment.

This research demonstrates how it is possible, through the utilisation of micro-stories, to create data and present findings which encompass the researcher's experiences and identity, something which is recognised in tourism research to be both necessary and often overlooked (Pritchard, 2014). This collection of micro-stories offers both an interpretation and a presentation of the data derived from this research; it is hoped the stories will not just 'tell' the experiences shared in this research, but rather will invite the reader to be immersed in the research space and the lives and words of the tourism business owners of Niseko, Japan.

5.2 Micro-story 1: Sasaki-san

Sasaki-san is in his early thirties and meets us at the door of his guesthouse, with stylishly cut floppy hair and a suit, like a young Japanese salaryman. The guesthouse has a very European feel, with a faux Tudor exterior and an English pub theme within. Heavy, dark wooden western furniture dominates the dining room and old Persian rugs over floorboards are underfoot. Jazz music plays softly in the background. As I enter, we change from our outside shoes into guest slippers, this small but essential Japanese custom upon entering a house a reminder that we are indeed still in Japan.

Sasaki-san moved to Niseko as a boy. At the age of sixteen the trajectory of his life changed as he moved to Germany for a year to pursue a career in ski racing. As Sasaki-san talks about this episode in his life he is visibly animated, and the calm and controlled young man who had exchanged business cards with me at the outset of the interview vanished; toward the end of his narrative Sasaki-san identifies that the experience of living in Germany is the one that really changed him and his self-identity. The moment of buoyancy is short-lived as Sasaki-san shares that he had to give up ski racing and return to Japan as it was too expensive for his parents, whose guest house business in Niseko was struggling in the pre-boom early 2000s. With his parents' situation in mind, Sasaki-san went to university in a nearby city and became a travel agent. He felt he,

had the chance to come back to home to see what is happening now and then some Australian travel company start to bring people from Australia.

Sasaki-san spoke to the Australians and they told him that Niseko,

will be changed, so Niseko will be bigger, different so get more famous, more world-wide, so different from others.

This captured Sasaki-san's interest and he returned to Niseko.

For Sasaki-san the foreign tourists have been a positive change for Niseko. He says,

If we could not have foreign guests, then I could not be here.

In the peak winter season, he reflects that he feels like a foreign person because all he speaks is English. Interestingly, this change has prompted Sasaki-san to reflect more on his own culture and what it means to him to be Japanese,

looking at them (the tourists) makes me look at myself and they let me think what the good things about Japanese, about being Japanese, about Japanese culture are.

Looking towards the future, Sasaki-san expresses concern about the unbridled development in Niseko and the need to consider how Niseko can move forward sustainably. While Sasaki-san is referring to sustainable development, the undercurrent of his story suggests the need to concurrently consider cultural sustainability in the area.

5.3 Micro-story 2: Shimizu-san

The guesthouse is right in the middle of town in a prime location. We knock and wait for quite a while for an answer, there is no one about. Eventually, a late middle-aged woman in an apron answers the door and seems annoyed about being disturbed. I feel like I am imposing, and it does not sit comfortably with me. I am very aware that she is reluctant to refuse us out of politeness. Despite having arranged the interview with her, she says she is busy but will talk to us quickly, as she has to prepare dinner. Donning slippers in the genkan, the interpreter and I are led to the main area of the guesthouse, it is quite dark and full of country style pine furniture. Large soft teddy bears are the decorative theme; their eyes, like drops of hard toffee, are unsettling.

Shimizu-san speaks rapid fire Japanese to the interpreter, as her story is carefully unfolded. Born in Tohoku, Shimizu-san moved to Niseko in 1980 with her young family to pursue a new lifestyle that would allow them to ski. This was one of the first guesthouses in the area and in the early times she mainly had Japanese guests. An Australian man and his Japanese wife approached her about having foreign guests and because she liked them, she agreed. After that, everyone started copying the idea and many Australian travel companies began to ‘broadcast’ Niseko. Things began to change,

ahh there were more who came and there were people who sold land and they invested and then more buildings were built like this.

Shimizu-san recounts how more and more of the original Japanese guesthouses are being sold

Because they (foreigners) paid three times more than its original value, that is why they sold their properties.

She recounts how her feelings have changed since that first foreign guest,

I appreciated it in the beginning, but recently, when foreigners come, I am sorry, you are a foreigner, well it is stressful. Has been very stressful, still very stressful. It is because, maybe because of this location, Australians scream at night, over drinks. They drink a lot, don't they? And it wasn't here, but there was a fight at a bar. And there are a lot of fireworks, and public safety and peace got worse. And here, last year. Someone who wasn't my guest was sleeping here, of course there was no room, so they were sleeping in the entrance way. It happens every year. My car is parking in front of the guesthouse, it was a little bit damaged. And because of those things I am stressed. More and more stressed. Ahhhhhh.

Shimizu-san is clearly being impacted by the foreign tourists, in winter she describes feeling like she is in a foreign country, and laments needing to use English which she hoped she was finished with at university.

Looking forward, Shimizu-san is thinking about retirement and the possibility of moving, but there is tension around this decision, as she clearly is deeply connected to the landscape of the Niseko area.

we are at a certain age, so we are hoping, we are hoping live somewhere quiet. I hope, in the end.

Ahh. I want to have relaxing time, with doing what I like, like hobby and watch Mount Yotei. Not here, it is too noisy. Quiet place. I like Mount Yotei, as long as I can see it. With watching, looking at Yotei. (laugh). I like mountains. I like mountains more than oceans. Life like that. It's cold though. And I have to shovel the snow. (laughs). But it should be ok.

This interview did not have the same open, expansive feel of most of the others, and interestingly she seemed, out of all the participants, to be the one not only resistant to being interviewed, but also resistant to the change brought by tourism. I could sense a kind of anger in her, and as the interview progressed it seemed to become an opportunity for her to voice her discontent, a space for her experiences to be heard.

5.4 Micro-story 3: Himura-san

The old wooden elementary school has not forgotten the spirited children whose footfalls softened the floorboards. Classrooms with sliding doors have become dorm rooms. The assembly hall where the children had played in deep winter, now a dining area for guests. Though long gone, the children's paintings still hang on the walls. The building has been rescued, transformed, but its deep-rooted purpose remains intact. A space to learn.

Himura-san is a small man in his mid-seventies. Dressed in pressed trousers, a collared shirt, and a hand-knitted cardigan to guard against the October wind which has breathed into the old building. He started the guesthouse and adventure activity centre in Niseko twenty-five years ago. His story begins right at the centre,

The purpose of this business is to tell children of traditional Japanese lifestyle and traditional techniques and way to live. Using nature. Sharing nature and techniques and ideas of living.

Originally from Osaka, Himura-san was strongly influenced by his childhood environment. Born to an agricultural family on a mountainside, he reflects,

We grew food to eat. There was nothing around me because it was a mountain and I hated it. When I was young, I wanted to leave. I had to work from morning into night.

Himura-san's first job after university was helping children learn about nature and camping. His long-term dream was a business, but he couldn't find a suitable place in Kansai. On a trip to Hokkaido to look for a suitable space, he was told there was an unused school in Niseko which was going to be demolished, which is how he came to live in Niseko. Despite financing the renovation of the building and the upkeep, he is still renting it from the local council. His deep connection to the building is evident,

I feel that I have to keep this building, for the people. I feel that Japanese people, especially in Hokkaido are not interested in this place, much. They prefer new ones. This building is around 80 years old and it's quite old for Hokkaido. I think it's a very great building. So as foreigners come, there are new buildings and here is an old building, like time travelling and that makes me think that I have to hold on to it. Protect it. It is good not only for Japanese but also for foreigners.

Himura-san maintains that he has not been influenced by the foreign tourism, but rather, that he has been the one influencing guests. His guests make their own traditional rafts and they go

down the river in them, often they break. *I train them how to save themselves. They don't just come here to stay, but to experience.*

He reflects that after the guests have experienced the danger, they flip their raft on purpose so they can feel the relief of not being controlled anymore. They can feel free.

Himura-san reveals that perhaps he is the person who enjoys this experience the most. He has been guided by the same core idea his whole adult life and does not feel he has changed. He cautions against a life which is too convenient and that does not offer room to spend time thinking.

That's the basis on which I live. Time, and effort, and thinking. I prefer to enjoy inconvenience, it is better than quick, than straight away. So, this theory. It's my theory of living.

Teaching this way of living to his staff while immersed in nature so that his work can go on beyond his own lifetime, is the dream he has for the future. His consistent and clear reason for living has both inspired and sustained him.

I will not retire, this is my life. Forever, until the end.

5.5 Micro-story 4: Kurosawa-san

On a wet Tuesday afternoon, we drive up a precariously thin dirt road and finally locate the log cabin, almost hidden by the forest. Kurosawa-san's wife meets us at the door and ushers us in, she serves us hot black coffee in traditional handle-less cups. Kurosawa-san is on the phone but acknowledges us with a grunt. The guesthouse is jam packed with items of everyday living. Large tubs of rice, snow gear, and enormous jars of jewel-like pickled fruits fill open shelves. No guests at this time of year, though. In the corner, a baby is wrapped in a thick quilt and carried by his young mother, Kurosawa-san's daughter. As we talk, his occasional cries punctuate the silences. Kurosawa-san sits with us at a long wooden table, something of a Japanese cowboy, he is burly and a little gruff, but soon settles into his story.

Kurosawa-san was born in 1947, and moved to Niseko about forty-three years ago to be close to Mount Moiwa. When he first moved here he was a mountain climber and had climbed the Himalayas. He built the guesthouse himself, literally cutting the trees down on the property and building it from scratch. In the beginning, most of his guests were student skiers and at that time he was one of the earliest accommodation owners in the area. Now he has many international guests. In addition to running the guest house, he also climbs Mount Moiwa to give the avalanche report.

Every morning, I wake up 4 am and then go up the mountain by snowcat, then I go around the mountain, check the snow, so then after I make the avalanche forecast. There are so many accidents. So, I had to do something.

Kurosawa-san initiated what is now called the 'Niseko Rule', which is to stop tourists skiing in prohibited areas, however, he finds that rich tourists from Asia and Australia often ignore it. Kurosawa-san feels that because it is a Japanese rule, people don't care about breaking it. Despite the tension around it, he is adamant that the rule is for everyone,

So, it doesn't matter where people come from the Niseko Rule accepts everyone from all over the world, it doesn't matter how they think, the way they think, so the Niseko Rule is for everybody.

Kurosawa-san is clearly passionate about the rule and has written 7,000 letters in his estimation to the government in an effort to make it legally binding. He says he has not taken time off in forty-three years, in order to try and keep the skiers safe.

For Kurosawa-san, climbing the Himalayas about thirty years ago was the experience that really influenced him and his life. While climbing he spoke with people from all different places and those interactions changed him, he started disliking people with narrow thinking. He describes himself as,

More broad. More open (from meeting new people all the time). I started thinking that I have to speak up, my opinion, I have to express myself more.

Indeed, on the day of sharing his story, Kurosawa-san was leaving to campaign a local hotel to better enforce the Niseko Rule. Kurosawa-san's life has been driven by his desire to keep his beloved mountain a safe space for skiers. He is reflective as he ponders his future,

So, you know my age is 70 years old, I will finish soon. So, I have a dream, but I know that life is short. And the world is big. I want to continue my work. But the end will come one day. I wouldn't end my life by myself. It comes anyway, I think.

5.6 Micro-story 5: Kurt

Kurt is in his late thirties and is an expat Aussie surfer who has settled in Niseko with a Japanese wife and children. He runs a tourist magazine and accommodation booking service. Kurt welcomes me to his office with two take-away coffees from the local convenience store and an apology. He is running a little late for our first thing in the morning meeting; at this quiet patch of the year his schedule is fairly fluid, it seems to match his relaxed demeanour.

Kurt's family has long been associated with Japan, and his ending up here seems, in the context of his upbringing, not unexpected. Kurt's father learned to speak Japanese and was a diplomat in Tokyo. His grandfather was also a professional and travelled to Japan frequently. Both of Kurt's sisters were born in Tokyo, but the family moved back to Australia during their primary school years during which time Kurt arrived. During high school Kurt spent a year on exchange in Kobe. After his parents' break up, his father returned to Japan and set up a business in Hokkaido and Kurt continued to live in Australia with the rest of his family.

Kurt describes a turning point in his life when he read a book, at age twenty-two, while living in Australia and working a nine to five job, having dropped out of university. At that time, he describes himself as unambitious and uneducated. He credits the book as having completely reorientated his thinking and opened him up to the idea of designing his own life on his terms.

I finally realised I have got to be not just a bum in my life I have got to do something so that book was the turning point there.

Kurt became hungry to learn and to succeed, and committed himself to writing down his goals, and found himself in a position where those goals were, 'coming true'.

After seeing the emergence of Australian tourism in Niseko, Kurt's father bought a bar in Niseko, and Kurt decided to work there for a while as he planned to undertake further travel.

I was going to be here for three months and then head off to Europe, but when I came here and I haven't left.

In terms of his lifestyle in Niseko, Kurt reflects,

there are so many foreigners around here that umm that I sort of don't need to speak Japanese very often, or like I haven't needed to get it to the next level my level is still at the level that I learnt when I was sixteen you know.

I suppose I was always working 9–5 when I was back there I was always working for someone else, so it was always the 9–5, 9–6 kind of thing but over here it is kind of a weird sort of a place to do business cause you only have three months to make your money basically. It is like full on for like a period and then it is quite cruisy for the rest of the year.

Kurt reflects on the changes he has noticed in Niseko, from the early Australian tourists and business developers, to the new Asian tourists and the large real estate housing developments that have recently begun. He likens his own experience to other Australians in Niseko who have started businesses,

(There is) definitely, lots of opportunity here for business, it is kind of a bit of a blank canvas of a ski resort and ski resorts are renowned for you know money, for business, so that was sort of one of the reasons that I was attracted to it at the start. I thought if we get in at the ground level here then we will be like, in ten years' time, which is now, in the box seat to be able to take advantage of these sort of things. Which is exactly what has happened, to me and all my mates at exactly the same time. We have all done the same sort of thing.

Kurt feels that the international influence in Niseko has made it more interesting, but he laments that there has been criticism that Niseko is losing its Japanese culture. He acknowledges,

you go to the restaurants here these days and you know everyone speaks English, basically, it is not an off the beaten path kind of experience any more, it is not like going to a traditional Japanese town, so we cop a lot of flak for that I think, and I think that that is sort of hurting Niseko in some ways, in a small way.

Kurt expresses concern about the long-term viability of Niseko. He has experienced the financial shocks, earthquakes, and nuclear alerts, and these occurrences have made him reassess how his business could cope in the event of a disaster that could adversely affect tourism to the area. Kurt has become more pragmatic and recognises that he has changed since he first arrived in Niseko.

Reflecting on his early days in Niseko, describes himself as,

just young and naïve and just giving everything a crack like everyone was in those days. Back then and so I had a bit of business, a bit of work knowledge and um and ahh yeah I suppose I had a bit of false confidence you know that I could do anything and just take over the world.

At this mid-point in his life, Kurt seems happy and solidly ensconced in his life and business in Niseko. As he looks to the future, he is bursting with ideas and possibilities. There is immense energy in his agency. For a moment, that twenty-two-year-old surfer with big dreams and a long list of goals re-emerges. Not quite done with designing his life, Kurt describes it as 'always evolving'.

5.7 Micro-story 6: Kita-san

Kita-san is the kind of Japanese man whose energy belies his age. Slightly built with sharp features, he ascends the steep wooden staircase to his guesthouse with ease. Having lived in both the USA and England, Kita-san speaks excellent English and has prepared a whole table of pamphlets and maps that he thinks could be useful. He gives a quick tour, and then we get down to business. No tea or chit chat. Although not a teacher, Kita-san has the presence of a polished instructor, and he is most insistent that everything is covered.

Kita-san was born in Hokkaido, not far from Hakodate, and his wife was born in Sapporo. After they married, they lived abroad for a time, and then returned and settled in Kobe for thirty years while Kita-san worked as a company employee. Uncomfortable in the hot climate of Kobe, they returned to Hokkaido and chose Niseko as it is halfway between their two hometowns. They did not move with the intention of building holiday cottages, however, encouraged by a local builder who was building their house, they agreed to the construction and opened it to the public in 2000.

Kita-san attests the growth of Australian tourism in Niseko to two key factors, firstly the oil boom in Australia, and secondly, Australians wanting shorter travel times when travelling abroad to ski. He estimates ninety percent of visitors in winter were Australians in the early years, around 2004–2005.

Kita-san reflects that when he first moved to Niseko, there were mainly small cottages down the main street and a spa and lots of space between buildings and natural forest close to the houses (he illustrates this with one of his maps). More recently, however, he has noticed many more Asian visitors have been coming to Niseko. Interestingly, Kita-san believes that tourism has had little impact on the local economy as he sees most of the profits going outside of the town due to all the investment.

An important point of difference about Niseko identified by Kita-san is that there are opportunities for citizens to attend town meetings and express their opinions and advocate for change. This is a process that he is very proud of being a part of and he cites numerous examples of recommendations the citizens have suggested that have been acted upon by the local council, such as increased English signage. Kita-san is adamant that Niseko is,

Very very different (from other parts of Japan). Because this town is the first town to declare such kind of regulation. It's the first town. Therefore, we could speak about many problems.

One of the troubling outcomes of tourism business development for Kita-san is that the increased wages offered by large tourism businesses have affected the capacity of farmers to be able to afford to employ workers. He feels this situation is compounded by the very low unemployment rates in the area.

In terms of his own experience of living in a tourism space that has been transformed by international tourism, Kita-san feels that he has not had to adjust at all,

I have an experience, of living abroad, United States and the UK I visited many times Australia also. So, here is not so different for me at all.

He believes that living overseas has been the experience which has really changed him,

One thing is the thinking way. Mm, many things actually. One, the biggest thing is that I recognise individuals is most important thing for human beings, but for Japanese are used to act as a group. Also, along with that, many people have their own way to live or think so, he is he and she is she.

Kita-san illustrates his different perspective as he shares a story about the recent increase in Chinese tourists to Niseko. He remembers how they were largely thought of as, 'trouble makers as they weren't following the rules in terms of things like disposing of rubbish or being quiet in restaurants and many guesthouses didn't want to have them. Kita-san's perspective was quite different. He could see there was a cultural difference and told the other accommodation owners that they needed to be patient and their manners would improve in time. Kita-san felt that for people who do not have experience living abroad, it is hard to understand such cultural difference.

Kita-san has clear plans for his future, and no intention of slowing down. He is very committed to the idea of intercultural exchange and hopes to facilitate this by working with the council to develop a student exchange program in Niseko.

5.8 Micro-story 7: Suzuki-san

Suzuki-san is dressed simply in a checked shirt and long skirt, with an apron for protection. She is softly spoken and welcomes us somewhat hesitantly, apologising that her husband is not at the guesthouse to speak with us. I assure her that I am more than happy to speak with her, and we sit in the eating area of the guesthouse. It is a pleasant sunlit room, a place that feels at once comfortable.

Suzuki-san's story is a little hard to locate, and despite much gentle encouragement otherwise she is sure that,

It is better to talk about my husband (than my own life). So for me, it is easier to talk about my husband.

Her husband was born in Tokyo and herself in Sapporo. Suzuki-san moved to Tokyo to be with him when they got married and he was an office employee. They regularly travelled to Hokkaido as they both loved to ski and they felt that Niseko was the best place. From that time, they shared a dream to open an accommodation business in Niseko. For their family it was a lifestyle choice.

The biggest thing about moving here is that I could raise my kids free, let them run around in a relaxed environment.

Suzuki-san reflects on the changes she has experienced since opening a business in Niseko,

Around ten years ago, international tourists started arriving here and the number of foreigners and Japanese guests maybe, 50/50 in those days, and these last maybe three or four years maybe only foreigners for my guests. About 5 to 6 years ago, the foreign owners started to own buildings and starting building condominiums, shops and restaurants as well, and Japanese owners sold. Japanese business owners sold to foreigners. My friends used to have pensions around here, but they sold them to other people and moved to Kutchan area.

She has also noticed changes in the types of tourists, initially it was almost all Australians but in the past four years she has seen increases in numbers from Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan.

While Suzuki-san feels that her lifestyle hasn't changed much, she has taken the initiative to improve her English,

I studied English to try and communicate. But it is still hard to express what I want to say but I mix words with body language and then I can communicate with them.

The biggest change that Suzuki-san has noticed in herself since moving to Niseko is that the slower pace of life has given her more space to think and reflect.

When we started this business, we met many customers and talked to them, and relaxing in this nature and we can think more, care more, others. I have more free time, more time and also I can pay attention more to other people outside.

Though concerned her English might not yet be good enough, Suzuki-san dreams of visiting all the countries where her guests are from. At the close of the interview, looking back, she laughs at the irony that they have barely had time to ski since moving here, since winter is their busiest season.

She has visibly relaxed since we first sat down, however, I feel that her story is still somewhat hidden, under the top layer she has shared. As we exit, she asks shyly if I have time to see something and shows a large corkboard in the foyer, covered with newspaper clippings. She beams as she proudly shares that they are all of her son, a champion skier. Of course, I understand that they are her victories too.

5.9 Micro-story 8: Brad

Japanese families are busy creating, and recreating memories. Sausages on a stick can be bought from the open grill, and fresh berry ice cream from a stand. The inhouse café has an impressively long menu of coffee varieties. Children are delicately balanced on horses and slowly led around the grounds. The squeal of delighted toddlers punctuates the air as chubby hands discover the bristly touch of the farm animals, safely ensconced in the stalls. Hay is on the ground, and the staff wear long black gumboots. Brad welcomes me like an old friend, our conversation flows easily as we sit on a high veranda and talk over the steady noise of the tourists below. Dressed something between a cowboy and a drover, Brad's Australian accent is unchanged from many years living in Japan.

Brad studied Japanese at school and did a student exchange to Japan involving a trip to Hokkaido. From that point he knew he would somehow return. While at university, he travelled to Hokkaido in the long summer breaks to work in a sausage factory and ski in the non-work hours. Brad returned to Hokkaido after university, and each weekend travelled to Niseko to ski. While there, he stayed at a small guesthouse and became friendly with the owner who was something of a maverick,

he drilled his own onsen and all that sort of stuff and it was just a mish mash of whatever he found lying around – he would build an extension out of it, basically think like 'The Castle'.... Japanese version.

When the guesthouse owner found out he was dying he encouraged Brad to buy the business, so his wife could retire after he died. Brad reflects that he,

was just the right place, right time, there were enough people. (I) basically just sent a letter back to all my friends in Australia saying I have got this ski lodge, I know I have been pestering you all for years to come and stay but seriously come and stay this place is amazing come and check it out. So, lots of bites from friends, so they did a lot of the work for me and passed it on and word of mouth and at that stage there was really nowhere else to stay that was, well certainly not budget that was easy for foreigners to get into so, I mean we were almost full from year one. No business plan required.

The guesthouse thrived, and Brad's life revolved around running it,

I basically worked really hard every winter for about ten years and did not do much in the summer for ten years.

Despite the lifestyle advantages, he felt the running of the business

still weighed on me, I still stressed. Also, it was getting really noisy on that street, we were getting a lot of drunkards as well, snowgans, bogan riff raff coming through. So, most of my clientele were families and it just wasn't nice, waking up with sick on the front of the door or you know they would be walking home not even that late and idiots would be pissing on the door or whatever, so I was just like nah this isn't fun and I was getting stressed of a night because there was doof doof music keeping everyone awake So I am totally responsible. It was just stressful.

Eventually, Brad turned the guesthouse into a restaurant and brought in partners to run it. For a time, he worked in tourism real estate development and then resort development for a large Thai company, as their international development director. He describes this period as changing him from a, 'ski bum' to someone who could understand a corporate environment. At this time, his perception of large companies transformed. He began to see them as entities that could make a positive impact when underpinned by good people with a clear vision. During this period Brad worked on understanding branding and distilling the core values of the company. This experience had a significant impact on Brad and how he views his current tourism business and its context.

It really, really changed me. It changed my thinking, it just gave me a lot more understanding, knowledge about what it is all about and how that relates to everything, and since then I have been constantly changing, it has become a big thing for me. So, what I am doing here is a constant exploration of actually what I want from this place, what I want this place to be um you know how that fits into the land here.

Brad has noticed changes to Niseko in the time he has lived there, from the early days of domestically driven tourism, to the, 'Aussies who came in force' and grew the town and things got,

busier and busier and your Tim Tams and Vegemite and all that sort of stuff started appearing.

More recently, he notes an increase in tourists from Hong Kong, Singapore, and also more Scandinavians, whom he affectionally describes as, 'the tall, blonde, good looking bastards'. Brad remembers turmoil in the community when foreigners started buying up businesses, however, he reflects,

it was inevitable that if the Australians hadn't come in they would have closed, it was that simple. It had a huge impact on the economy, people coming in and buying up and then getting the international travellers to come and ski there ahh saved it, I

mean, you can talk about community all you like. One way or the other, if the Australians hadn't come the resort [it] would have been, bye bye, ahh, so it killed the community while simultaneously creating a new one.

Brad describes his vision for himself in the future as a 'gentleman scientist'. He is reflexive about his own role as a tourism business owner,

I am not the kind of person that is going to come in and bulldoze everything, I am not a, I wouldn't want to come in and (force change), so my branding has to fit in with learning the history of this place and that is really working out what the future is and how that fits into my concept as a gentleman scientist. I think we probably could have treaded, even a little bit softer.

Brad has spent almost his whole adult life in Niseko and reflects that he feels like he has grown up alongside it, he has watched it transform from the rough and ready early days when it was dominated by young Australian snowboarders chasing powder snow and cheap accommodation and beer, to the world class resort it is today offering luxury accommodation, fine dining and a burgeoning holiday home industry. This young Aussie snowboarder, turned businessman and now aspiring gentleman scientist, looks perfectly at ease as he tips his Akubra to thank me and disappears into the crowd of tourists below.

5.10 Micro-story 9: Nakano-san

The hostel is outside the reaches of the GPS, but we find it, just in time, acutely aware that being late to meetings in Japan is particularly bad form. The view is stunning, pristine farmland and paddocks of wildflowers. It feels far from the harsh steel and glass apartment blocks downtown. Nakano-san greets us with an almost Australian accent, and we quickly realise that no interpretation will be required.

Nakano-san is originally from suburban Sapporo but relocated to Tokyo after university to work in a trading company. The role enabled him to work in Australia for four years and then New Zealand for five years. At that point,

I had heard that a lot of foreigners were coming, to start coming for skiing in Niseko so, I thought I could use my skill of English for understanding Australian and NZ people.

Inspired by the outdoor lifestyle he had been exposed to living abroad, he wanted to open a style of accommodation focused on accommodating groups in the countryside. In the wintertime, most of his guests are foreigners, he estimates around ninety percent.

Since moving to Niseko, Nakano-san feels his lifestyle has become more community based, due to the small size of Niseko and because he is running his own business. He feels he is more conscious about organic foods, and has noticed,

there are lots of young families or young single people who come and live in Niseko and many people of them are ... their orientation is a more natural lifestyle, and once they have a family or a child, they are more orientated.

Nakano-san feels that the boundaries between work and home have blurred since opening his own business, he describes his whole life as, 'mixed'.

Everything, work, life, family. So, I have to always think about how to allocate my time. Or sometimes I think about how I can put it all together. Sometimes it works, it is interesting. Now I think that I am more independent. I hope I am (laughs)...like I have to make the decision and I have to be responsible for the result.

Nakano-san attributes his time in New Zealand as having reorientated his thinking which spurred the move to Niseko and change in lifestyle,

It made me and my wife change our minds. Our way of thinking. So, we found New Zealand people more, um enjoying life and er more people doing their own businesses which is what I want.

5.11 Micro-story 10: Tim

Tim greets me in the reception area of the newest hotel in Niseko, a sleek ski-in ski-out multi-storey building. Staff visibly straighten as Tim passes them. He speaks to each by name. The interior is minimalist, and 1980s pop music plays in the background. Tears for Fears suitably encourages us to, 'get it all out' as we sit down to talk over breakfast. Tim speaks with a relaxed Australian accent, and carefully chooses nori, salmon, salad, and miso soup from the buffet. Chopsticks poised, and coffee served, we fall into easy conversation.

Tim describes himself as a, 'schemer' type of kid, who was always trying to make money. He remembers starting a bird breeding business at age eleven at his home in regional New South Wales. His father had his own building business, which Tim describes as, 'never making a dime'.

So, I suppose growing up, I always wanted to be, to have my own business. I come from a fairly working-class background, umm, I didn't know what that was going to be umm, I was also, so I went to university after high school, I went to boarding school for the last three years of my high school in Sydney. At a reasonably upper end school which was great, I think my parents sent me there mainly to keep me out of trouble, my father was dying of cancer, my, I think they were worried that I was going to end up in jail, or running off the tracks or something.

After school, Tim briefly considered following his brother into construction but went to university instead. He dropped out, and then after a brief period working for local government and deciding that wasn't for him he returned to university to study science, then switched to sociology and prompted by a motorcycle accident and a suggestion from his lawyer, pursued and finished a law degree. He and a friend started up a law firm in Canberra and during that period Tim discovered skiing and started travelling to pursue the sport. Being a lawyer turned out to be, 'pretty horrible so Tim packed up and moved to New Zealand to ski for a year. He met his wife, who is Japanese, in New Zealand, and eventually came to Niseko. He recalls his first visit,

I really liked it and then and there was obvious opportunities up here, you know everything was so cheap and so undeveloped.

Along with some other business partners he bought land and built apartments in Niseko. It was a kitchen table run business, he and his wife did everything, cleaning, bookings, marketing. Tim, says that he just,

looked at the model that was in the West and just brought it here.

Tim describes Niseko as, ‘home’ and warmly shares how his kids have Japanese grandparents here who aren’t even related. His experience of Japan is quite a juxtaposition of the impression he had as a child growing up in Australia,

growing up sixties and seventies when it was very much about you know, we were still really focused on the war and all that stuff about we are selling out to the Japanese and we fought them in the war, all that stuff yeah, and my mother was ten years old, her father in WWII you know if the Japanese arrive I am going to slit all your throats. So, it was like oh yeah, the Japanese are going to be very, a pretty hard, difficult people and you come here and they are just the loveliest, nicest most wonderful.

Now when he returns to Australia to visit, he often finds Australians can be rude, and less than helpful in customer service situations.

Tim believes Niseko to be the biggest concentration of foreigners in Japan. He has found the international atmosphere to be, ‘stimulating’ both professionally and personally.

Yeah, [it’s] regional Japan with a global, a global perspective and a global interaction and opportunities as well, you know it is not, there is economic opportunities and also, you are not sort of stuck somewhere.

Tim reflects on the changes he has experienced in Niseko, estimating about ninety-five percent of his business was Australian at the start and now is experiencing an increase from Asia. He describes Niseko as the, ‘place to be’ for wealthy Asian tourists on account of,

the people and the food and the interaction of Japan and this global service you can’t go anywhere else in Japan and get what you can get here. I suppose it’s a bit like the Gold Coast for Japanese, it is this is Australia except it’s full of Japanese shops, this is Japan except its full of Australians.

Tim says he is, ‘ambivalent’ about the newest wave of tourists from China and has guests tell him that, ‘if they come, we won’t. He explains,

we don’t advertise in Chinese and we insist that they bring a tour guide that also speaks Japanese and English, so that’s the only way they can get bookings because we don’t have a Chinese website, so you can’t book unless you can read English or Japanese or Thai.

As an employer and long-term resident, Tim believes most of the Japanese who have come to live in Niseko are, 'lifestylists'. He presently employs around 70 full-time staff and he estimates about fifty percent are foreigners, and shares that the managers are still, 'white blokes', something he hopes will change in the future. Tim is reflexive about his own experience of living in Japan outside his own culture and his wife's experience as a Japanese woman living in New Zealand,

you get to be, you get to be naturally weird and you don't feel it because you are just a foreigner. There is a freedom with being an expat, I don't have to fit in because I am a foreigner. You know my wife was, when we were living in Australia, she loved it, originally when we came back here she was like, I want to go back to Australia and that was the plan, then after a few months here she said no, "I will stay here" and that's what we did. I don't know why but you know she had that freedom out in Australia, when she was here she has got all these perceived obligations and responsibilities and da da da da and then she realised I am just anonymous and no one cares and I am a foreigner and she was ultimately able to transfer that feeling you know, I don't have to worry about what other people think to here, she has brought it back with her.

Tim, when asked if he has changed, leans back in his chair, hands behind his head, "absolutely, I bloody hope so". He describes reaching a time in his life where he feels comfortable with his life and himself,

I suppose as a young person and this was I felt that, the world was wrong and it should, it should fit me, and I don't feel that way anymore, I have grown up to get beyond that and it's like life is whatever you want to make it, do it, be, the world is, the world is what you want it to be and your emotional state is what you choose it to be.

In addition to realising his own agency, he also sees himself as incredibly lucky.

You know, no one is dropping, so things are good, no one is dropping bombs on me... until recently (North Korea). No one is trying to kill me, so you know, so I don't get hung up on, like it's a game. It's an important game, but it's a game, and you know I am responsible for, I look it as though I am responsible for an organisation that provides, I hope some meaning and context and a benefit to the community and a whole group of people, so that and that's really quite important, I really care about that and I get a lot of privileges out of that but it is also, but for me personally if it all disappeared, I would (be ok). I have got my legs and my arms and I have a patch of dirt and I can grow vegies so if someone is dropping bombs on me or is shooting me or if I have terminal cancer, that's stuff that would be, that would be bad, everything else is good, manageable and you just make the best of it.

At the close of the interview, Tim reflects that cycling, a new interest he has taken up with gusto since moving to Niseko, has significantly changed his outlook on life.

Well, because I used to believe that you got ahead by working really hard and cycling, certainly road cycling, is all about saving your energy as much as you can and then deciding when to go hard and go crazy and the winner is probably the person who does the least work in the race as opposed to the one who has the best strategy. So, I learned a lot from (that). I actually don't think business and life is all just a game, it's about what you can create and what you can contribute as opposed to what you can take out of it.

5.12 Micro-story 11: Lewis

Lewis looks a little like something out of a 1990s grunge band, slim with high cheek bones, and skin that is shy of the sun. He speaks in a careful manner, contemplating each question, comfortable with taking his time. It feels like he has lived here a long time, his presence feels Japanese. It is apparent why he found his home here.

When Lewis finished his engineering degree at Sydney University, he wanted to travel, and since his brother had been living in Japan for a couple of years that is where he headed. Although he arrived on a tourist visa he ended up staying over a year in Tokyo, then when his brother moved to Niseko, he visited and developed a love of powder snow. In the uni breaks he would fly over and work for his brother in Niseko,

so I guess I would have been coming back and forward for a number of years, that would be close to 20 years ago so essentially coming back and forward and then in one of those trips I met someone who is now my wife.

Lewis and his wife returned to Australia so he could complete a PhD, but also helped her parents with the booking side of their tourism businesses, a guesthouse and a backpackers, while in Australia. The couple returned to Japan during Lewis' writing up year, but during a fit of procrastination Lewis developed an accommodation bookings software program to help his parents-in-law. At that point, many new self-contained apartments were being built in Niseko and Lewis quickly found his booking system was in demand. Lewis abandoned his PhD to focus on his new company. This dramatic reorientation was a turning point for Lewis,

I think absolutely I have changed. Um, maybe I shouldn't make a joke as to what way, beaten back, not beaten down. I think for me I spent a lot of time in academia and ah when I was working in Australia for example I was working more as a consultant, hired out by the university for a particular industry. Whereas coming over here it is like the wild west, in many ways, there is nothing, it's a frontier that hasn't been established and there aren't guidelines how to do things, it's pretty much a developing resort with a bit of a different need too, to other resorts in many ways. Um, so yeah no, it has absolutely been a very interesting time for me as well, to be thrust from academia into the wild west.

Lewis has noticed significant changes in his lifestyle since moving to Niseko and starting his own business,

I mean when I was living in Sydney it was structured, there were probably a few more boundaries in separation between home and work life, which are less so here, but um, no absolutely.

When he first arrived in Niseko, Lewis mainly encountered Japanese tourists and then later on budget-orientated foreign travellers. Now he finds the type of travellers and the type of services and accommodation have changed. He has noticed an alternative lifestyle trend in Niseko,

there [is] certainly more of a hippy aspect to it as well. I think a lot of the people who ended up owning lodges up here or ended up working up here were fleeing the stereotypical salaryman arrangement, so there was certainly an attraction for a more alternative individual.

Lewis reflects on how Niseko's tourism industry has been influenced by broader economic trends:

So, 15 to 20 years ago was really the lowest point in the economic cycle for the resort. So many of the previous lodge owners and hotel owners that were here had built in the Japanese bubble, and after the bubble had burst the population of skiing as a sport was also in decline. The number of customers and also the nightly rates were also in decline. For probably almost one or even two decades. Fifteen, twenty years ago there was, it was a hard place to run a business, generally not enough money to do maintenance and that sort of thing. It was like an act of love by most people as opposed to a business. It was quite a tough place to be a property owner, and then with the population of the resort increasing and real estate being quite cheap at that time there was a big influx of interest from overseas, so that provided a way for people in their sixties who were quite ready to stop running the lodge to exit with a good price on their buildings, so that was the first I guess benefit from that, so hence a lot of them have since sold and moved on because the price on the property was just, much higher than they had had any chance previously. The ones that sold very early usually probably didn't get a very good rate, but in the context of the time they were still happy with it, but seeing the growth potential, they sold very early. But there were particular points in time when people made better money than others but certainly it was a good exit for people of that age who were ready to retire. To receive a chunk of money so they could move onto the next thing. So that was very good for them.

Lewis is articulate, attentive, and measured with his words. He is generous as he tells his story about his life and his experiences, but I feel unsure about whether he has told much about himself. As our conversation draws to a close, he is reflective, and surprises himself as he touches upon a thread of his story that he has not even considered until this moment,

in terms of my destiny, maybe the flow of that was my mother. [She] did her PhD in Chinese literature, she was translating ancient um Chinese folk stories too and describing how they actually had underlying political content because that was the

only way that it could be expressed at that time being without being hung strung and quartered. So that, probably might, maybe led to my brother studying Japanese in a school, which then led to him spending time over here which led to me spending time over here. Which then led me to be here.

A story can be a tender bridge between who we were, and who we are. An axis-point of understanding.

5.13 Micro-story 12: Sato-san

Tucked in the forest just off one of the main roads leading into Niseko, Sato-san's Nepalese restaurant and guesthouse is housed in a log cabin. Inside, Nepalese clothing and decorative items are hung on the walls, and the warm scent of curry is heavy in the air. Sato-san is in his late fifties and married; he speaks at length in gruff Japanese. Sato-san is not reserved, at moments during the conversation he becomes quite emotional, he speaks from the heart, much like his business which is orientated from the same place.

Sato-san was born in Tokyo and attended university in Hokkaido to study dairy farming. As a student he had visited Niseko to ski and had stayed in a small guesthouse which struck him as a very interesting sort of business, he worked in it for a little while during his university studies and recalls it as being a very unique sort of place,

When there were many customers visited they put them on living room floor and let the guests sleep there, which was unusual, very rare to see.

At that time, all the tourists to Niseko were Japanese, and Sato-san noticed that a lot of food which was edible was thrown away by the guesthouse, and he decided to go overseas to,

go to places where people can't find much food, can't have much food in the world. And I chose Nepal. So, I wanted, in the place where people are in the place when they cannot throw out any food, what would they do, I wondered.

Sato-san lived in Nepal for three years as part of a Japanese volunteer organisation.

When I went to Nepal I saw the reality of like poorness, like what poor really is. And like um human lives, the value of human lives is completely different from here in Japan. In rainy season I had seen the kids' bodies carried on like a small carriage made of trees because kids, young kids died a lot there. Then um, the average span is around 45 years, then I found that it is not only because of the meals, the food that they have, not only because of lack of nutrition, but lack of education.

The experience deeply affected Sato-san and he felt compelled to do something for them,

I couldn't do much, but I wanted to do something. So, I was kind of torn and struggled with those feelings with the reality of what I could do and what I wanted to do. I kind of struggled and after that.

When he arrived back in Japan, Sato-san felt overcome by the experience and found himself standing at the airport crying unconsciously, unable to stop as he thought of the people in Nepal.

Sato-san attempted to acclimatise back into Japanese life and took a job and got married, but describes feeling,

like something is wrong, something is not right. I don't fit, I can't fit in this structure, the company type.

With his wife, Sato-san began the business as a way of telling people about Nepal,

I wanted to tell everyone about Nepal, I wanted to tell stories to everyone and that was kind of the beginning of this business.

Sato-san's business began well, and then tourist numbers decreased,

I thought, it is over. It's the end of the business. There were no Japanese ski people. When the business wasn't good, wasn't going well, I did everything I could.

Despite his wife's reservations about welcoming foreigners due to language barriers, eventually they decided to list their guesthouse on English booking engines, which steadily increased bookings. Sato-san's wife was very anxious about the foreign guests in case there was an emergency and she couldn't cope; Sato-san promised her that he would deal with any situations that arose. He accounts his different attitude towards foreigners to being,

in Nepal for three years on a trip abroad, I don't have special feelings towards foreigners here. Normally, maybe stereotyped Japanese people tend to avoid to be talked to by them, but I don't have that I don't think it matters whether I can speak English or not, I don't feel anything special towards them. When I was in Hirafu I talked to people they talked, well, the people in Hirafu told me that there was a kind of fight or argument which the police had to come so according to that maybe the public safety is going down a little bit, and around Annapurri none, or not so much and sometimes a sign or any signs in front of the building were taken, but I have started thinking that it is normal and we can't help it. (I am) kind of getting used to it. And before in Japan it was safe to leave car key in car but now I lock the car all the time. It is not safe.

Since the arrival of foreign tourists and tourism in Niseko, Sato-san has noticed many changes,

Lots (of changes to the built environment in Niseko). In Hirafu. Like there used to be a lot of pensiones and small accommodations built by Japanese people and now they are all sold and many Australian type buildings were built here and I don't know if it is good or not but one day foreign guests stayed here and told me a story about how we came to Japan, but then we went to Hirafu we didn't feel like it was Japan but more like Australia, and that story kind of told me what Australia is like. Now the owners are foreigners. It is huge (what the guesthouses sell for), and such a large amount of money so of course everyone would sell. Like thirty times more of the original value. This year the price is twice as high as last year.

As Sato-san reflects back on his experiences, he affirms that living in Nepal has influenced his self-identity and life journey the most. At the close of our conversation, it feels as if we have all been on a very emotional journey, we are sitting in rural Japan sipping tea, but our minds are still caught in the Nepalese village. Sato-san knew that his younger self, newly returned to Japan and forever changed, would,
start talking about Nepal. I wouldn't stop.

5.14 Micro-story 13: Sheldon

The drive to this ski area is longer than expected, the holiday houses are elaborate and the blocks of land bigger. It is a grey October day and the air smells like snow. Sheldon's guesthouse looks like it might have been plucked out of the English countryside and the interior is decorated to match. This area feels quite remote, a little less developed, but this is soon to change, a huge international hotel complex is being built just down the road. Sheldon welcomes me with a confident handshake and a New York accent.

Sheldon's background is in law and finance, he described this as, 'quite dry'. He had lived in Japan for about ten years before happening upon Niseko fifteen years ago,

it was amazing because I had arrived and the snow was unbelievable, it was undeveloped and pretty raw, but you know they had the night skiing going on and I immediately jumped on that, it was some of the best snow that I had ever experienced, so that's what got me hooked into it, so I came back every year and that was just when the Australian boom was starting and I ran into a couple of the early developers um on a chairlift once and found out that they were building condominiums and I thought that was interesting and I thought back the first time I ever went skiing was as a small child to Vale, Colorado and this was in 1971. Um Vale was very new and very small and I just thought back to many years later where now it is this massively um, vastly developed resort, very luxurious and as a real estate prospect, I thought like this is Vale 1972, if I don't jump in with both feet then I am missing a once in a lifetime opportunity. Plus, the chance to pursue my passions, because my background career wise has been in law and finance, very dry, great business skills and this was a great opportunity to apply that. That's basically how I got here.

Sheldon moved to Japan straight out of college during the bubble era of Japan and likens his own life to changing in accordance with Japan's economic fluctuations. In this second half of his life, he describes himself as moving out of a global corporate lifestyle to a more entrepreneurial lifestyle since starting his business in Niseko,

I have gone from sort of very dry professional class of over-achieving um, individuals and colleagues to actually having to work with people on a real personal scale where not everything is driven by money or fear of failure but more driven by a service aspect and that is great.

Sheldon sees inbound tourism as being crucial to Niseko's survival,

Hokkaido, most of the towns are very challenged, the economy is dying and fading and the populations are shrinking and the inbound tourism in Niseko has certainly reversed that trend in this small micro economy, I think in very beneficial ways. Niseko is now, I know it has been watched nationally. Throughout Japan as a model that a lot of places hope to emulate, um I mean I am in some of those conversations. Well, [here] there is kind of a unique mix.

He compares Niseko to other ski resorts in Japan that are less open to receiving foreign tourists and to foreign development.

The foreign tourists in Niseko, however, can be a double-edged sword. He mentions complaints from his Japanese friends, particularly on Australia Day. He accounts the poor tourist behaviour to visitors who,

don't have a stake in the community and I mean one of the great things about travel is that you can just get away from yourself when you are away.

Sheldon describes Niseko as an interesting mix of Western and Japanese sensibilities and architecture, which at times is a little haphazard, but he feels that it is actually one of Niseko's strengths,

you have this eclectic flavour in there that is organic um, gives an authenticity that is going to be very hard to emulate in any other resort that is sort of single company dominated.

It is not hard to imagine that Sheldon might have been drawn to Japan in the hedonistic 1980s when Japan's economy was booming. However, as he reflects over his life, it is the experience of his first Japanese meal as a young man that he pinpoints as being his most significant and influential experience in and on his life.

Well, that's what brought me here. If I think of just one thing, because I think without that meal I wouldn't be here, yeah I was 11 years old and I was in New York and we went to a Japanese restaurant and I was just my mind was totally opened by this incredible meal I had and the funny part of it is that one of the main dishes that was part of it doesn't even exist in Japan. It was a sort of an American invention by the Japanese chefs who had gone there and found out that beef was cheap. So, my curiosity about Japan woke up.

Despite having lived in Japan for twenty-five years, Sheldon is planning on a more global lifestyle in the second half of his life. He wants more freedom to travel more broadly and more

often, and he hopes that his move into tourism entrepreneurship will enable him to pursue increased global mobility in the future.

5.15 Micro-story 14: Tanaka-san

Guitar music plays in the background of the honey-hued lodge. It smells comfortingly like fresh cut wood, and the large windows almost brings the forest indoors. Tanaka-san is big and burly and serves strong black coffee in handle-less cups. He speaks softly in English, not quite at ease at times searching for a word or phrase.

Tanaka-san quickly identifies himself as an, ‘outdoor person’ who loves to climb mountains. Born in urban Osaka in 1980, Tanaka-san tried for three years to be a, ‘corporate worker’ but felt drawn to living in nature. He moved to Niseko to work on a dairy farm and pursue his love of the countryside in the early 1980s. Tanaka-san doesn’t see his flight from urban Japan as unusual, as at that time he recalls many other Japanese moved to Niseko from the city to build their own house and have their own business. Tanaka-san and his wife cleared the land themselves and built the guesthouse with the wood from the trees on the plot.

Tanaka-san describes his life in Niseko as, ‘the city people’s dream’,

the city people, many people want to live in the countryside, and they want to spend more, have a more simple and a more natural life but, I am just living in the good place and now I want to share this experience.

When they first opened, the guesthouse was busy with Japanese guests, however in the early 2000s he noticed a change,

From 2001 around the terrorist attacks the situation has changed, and a few foreigners came to here, but not so many, but suddenly Australian people increase, increase, every year more Australian persons stay here and our customer is changing. Now in wintertime, foreigner is about 95 per cent. Japanese people are only 5 percent.

To accommodate the change in guests, Tanaka-san felt he had to hire foreigners to work in the busy winter season. Accessing foreign staff was an ongoing issue as the government set limits on working holiday visas and he mentions that at times some foreigners worked while on a tourist visa and,

immigration, might kind of not ignore, but try not to check much.

For Tanaka-san, foreign tourism has also changed the culture of Niseko, a change which he feels has been difficult for locals,

I think that people in Hokkaido are quite umm, like doesn't accept new things, tend to not (to). So, they try to get, they kind of stick to tradition. So, people in Hokkaido are quite narrow minded. Like the view is very narrow, so I think that if they open their mind, maybe they can accept more, and change their way of thinking.

Tanaka-san, however, sees himself as different due to his 'Osaka spirit'.

because I am from Osaka, I am more like try new things, challenge new things, and that's what hasn't changed much.

He reflects on how his perspective of time has changed as he as aged. Now in his early sixties, Tanaka-san says,

The young time, very living time the future is very much (big), but just now, the future is more limited I think, my dream is completely different and, before I am staying Niseko and only Niseko.

Though deeply embedded in the environment and community of Niseko, looking forward, Tanaka-san hopes to have 'freedom' to travel abroad. He wants to learn new things that he can bring home and incorporate into his business and share with his customers.

As the sun sets and I wait for my lift from the lodge at the corner of the road, I brace against the mountain wind. Looking back, I see the lodge, lit up like a story book house, nestled cosily amongst the pine trees. Simultaneously in nature, and from nature.

5.16 Micro-story 15: Mori-san

There is a cobblestone path and a small wooden bridge leading up to the guesthouse, I navigate a somewhat precarious set of steep stone steps to reach the entrance. It is an adventure to arrive. Windows of coloured glass, windchimes, and colourful sculptures adorn the hand sculptured house. There is more than a hint of the alternative here, it feels like a slice of 1960s hippy culture carved out in rural Japan.

Mori-san welcomes us in formal Japanese, she seems a little uncomfortable with the situation and reads the participant sheet slowly, asking questions to the Japanese interpreter. The interior is pregnant with an abundance of hand-crafted moments. A collection of painted mushrooms on the windowsill, curved wooden kitchen cabinets, carved kitchen implements hanging over the range, pottery bowls glazed in a stunning azure tone. She stokes the fire and makes tea, there is no electricity, so it is a lengthy process. The silence feels like an offering in itself as she carefully prepares and serves the *o-cha*. She sits down in her neatly buttoned lilac cardigan and carefully fold her hands. Her reserve is like a protective force around her.

Originally from Tokyo, Mori-san has always liked the country.

So first, it's a time when I came to Hokkaido. I used to work in Tokyo as an office worker and I could, I felt, no more. I couldn't do it anymore.

She and her husband (from another town in Hokkaido) married and he came up with the idea to move to Niseko. She felt the decision to leave her office job and the city and move to the country and marry was pivotal in her life,

Many good things happened, since I decided to challenge new things. Since, and then everything just opened to me. New things happened because I opened my mind, broadened my mind.

Mori-san arrived in 1987, but her husband came three years earlier to build the first log house while he lived in a tent. She remembers,

He wanted to create everything by himself, make everything by himself. From scratch. He built one house every two years and this place, here, is the house and also the office. In 1988, we started the business with two houses. And after that he built another one, and the fourth one was built by our friends. Not by him. It has been about 30 years, although probably 29 years. There are almost no cottage at that time, hotel and pension and minshuku.

Mori-san and her husband decided to offer self-contained cottages in Niseko to tourists so that their family could enjoy a, 'good lifestyle',

It is important, we wanted to put our lifestyle first so that we could offer nice atmosphere or kindness that's called omotenashi so that's why I wanted to have our proper life first and then, from then they could offer good services.

Mori-san has noticed significant change in the three decades since she first moved to Niseko.

So now it is more like a resort, more tourists, not so much here, but in Hirafu you can see it and here is still better, but I don't like it much.

She explains issues such as the increased cost of eating out and foreigners driving dangerously on the roads as causes for her discontent. Despite these problems, Mori-san likes the international culture of Niseko,

The atmosphere in the town is nice too and it makes me feel like I am abroad, in another country.

Due to the increase in foreign guests and the length of their stays, Mori-san started to eat more foreign food, which is readily available in the local supermarket, and also began studying English. She feels,

it is good for me to study English. So, I can experience what I thought I had to go abroad to experience, such as talking with them in English.

Through her English she shares several stories of how she has developed close friendships with travellers around the world and learned about other ways of living.

For Mori-san, it seems her business and her plans for the future are orientated around her values rather than opportunities for financial gain,

I am not interested in economics or help Niseko to do better economics, I just want guests to have a relaxed atmosphere. I want guests to relax here and I want to provide them, offer them a nice atmosphere. Because they must, the guests must be very busy people and then they get some spare time to come here for holidays so I want to offer them a quiet place to relax, so I am not interested in economics things. I really welcome foreigners because I had the chance to go overseas myself and I felt happy when they welcomed me, so I want the chance to welcome foreigners here as well.

Mori-san sees Niseko as a place where people can come from other places, and like her own family pursue an alternative lifestyle,

in Niseko, not only foreigners, but Japanese people started coming for a second life. So not only foreigners came here to live, the number of Japanese people um, who come from other parts of Japan increased a lot.

She attributes the attraction of Niseko as a place for a 'second life' to be largely due to the natural beauty of the area and also to the progressive local council which allows residents to voice their opinions and instigate change. As a social space, Mori-san has noticed,

The people in Niseko, especially the people in Niseko accept people, people from other places, they don't get rid of others, they just accept everyone here. Myself, I have been in Tokyo and Otaru only so I can't compare much, but I have heard some stories about other villages and towns where they don't welcome other people much, but more kind of more ... Ah. In Hokkaido people are probably are bit more open.

In her own life, she reflects that the biggest influence on her self-identity has been the clinical depression she experienced after the big earthquake in 2011. Their business struggled, and she became sick, unable to sleep and was hospitalised. Mori-san recovered and returned to the business only to be met with the unexpected death of her husband. Rather than plunge her back into depression,

because I went through all that hard time with depression I could hold on. I wouldn't say I was ok about my husband's death but because I went through many things I was strong enough to get over it and now I have to do everything in this business so yeah, so experience really changed me, it made me strong. Yes, this experience made me stronger. I am not sure if it was hard or not now (laughs). I feel, I think because of that I am now stronger.

Mori-san feels she is at a point in her life when it is time for change,

to ask the next generation. I think it is the time to kind of to change the generation from parent to son. So eventually the baton will pass (to my son), eventually.

As our conversation draws to a close, we pose for photos together. There has been an imperceptible shift through the journey of sharing this story. The punctuations of silence, whether for tears, or a look of mutual understanding, has opened up space for an unexpected bond to emerge. Between two women, across two languages, in a house shaped by love.

5.17 Micro-stories 16 & 17: The Mizushimas

Unexpectedly, both husband and wife are waiting at the table of the upmarket deli, sipping coffee. The couple are immaculately turned out and look as if they are about to board a first-class flight. Together, they own numerous tourism business in Niseko, yet do not seem at all pressed for time. They share that they are planning to drive two hours to Sapporo this afternoon, so they can eat at a favourite soba restaurant. I thought I had made it clear that I was going to interview one after the other, and I wonder how to navigate the situation. Then I realise, she speaks fluent English and is there as his support. I speak to both, one after the other, however, Mrs Mizushima instinctively translates for her husband and often adds her own opinions. She is quite direct and outspoken compared with most Japanese women I have encountered and has an undercurrent of confidence. We warm to each other quickly, bound by several commonalities, both women, both have worked in the travel industry and have lived overseas in each other's countries. She lets him speak first, however, it is her story that lingers like a novel that has ended too soon.

5.17.1 Mizushima-san (husband)

It is immediately apparent that Mizushima-san lives life according to his own rules. He was born in Tokyo and at age sixteen spent forty days riding a motorcycle to Hokkaido. It was the first time he had ever spent a night away from home. He travelled to a remote island and partied with other young people, relaxed and worked a part-time job. He saved his money and spent nine months in Europe motorbiking and camping. This experience motivated him to want to work in the tourism industry. Returning to Hokkaido in the late 1970s he worked in a guesthouse in Niseko and then opened his own in 1985. His wife explains that lots of guesthouse owners in Niseko also came from other places and were not born here. She describes it as,

kind of a period you know when they can quit the job and come to Niseko to own, to have their own business they started like a small lodge, like everywhere.

For Mizushima-san, the international tourism and businesses in Niseko require no adjustment for him personally. He attributes this to,

because I have been overseas many times, you know going abroad, so having international guests or foreigners is not a big deal for me. Yes, [foreign people are] natural for me.

He says that Niseko, as a community, is welcoming to people from other countries, but he feels that if you go just fifteen minutes' drive to the next town over, people's attitudes towards foreigners are very different. While he is unconcerned about the foreign presence in Niseko, Mizushima-san feels that the accommodation prices in the area are getting too expensive and he has noticed many tourists who came every year are now going elsewhere. He estimates that eighty percent of the guesthouses have now been sold to foreigners because the value of land has got so high. Mizushima-san's wife explains,

because they are just targeting profit they are just building buildings and now selling the portions, like a three bedroom one, to the rich clients and they don't see any, this place as a local, it is just like an investment. Yes, [it is] just about money and investment, so they don't send any clients here, they don't communicate with local people, they just build the expensive one and so that's why they don't have any passion or feeling.

Mizushima-san feels that despite the injection of money into Niseko through tourism-based development, the flow-on economic impact on the community is minimal because both the land and buildings belong to foreigners.

As an employer across a number of tourism businesses, Mizushima-san says that the number one language he wants his employees to speak is English. Despite wages being driven up in Niseko by the demand for tourism employees, Japanese workers from nearby towns who want to take advantage of the higher wages have very limited options in Niseko due to their lack of English and can usually only secure housekeeping positions.

Reflecting on his life overall, Mizushima-san identifies travel as the experience that really changed him and influenced his life the most. He laughs heartily, and describes himself as, 'unusual, really unique'. Mizushima-san's wife nudges him and teases that he has never held a proper job. Mizushima-san's theory is that,

if I make a lot of money in the winter season which I can't do other stuff much, and then I can have a lot of fun the rest of the year.

He has followed this lifestyle his whole adult life and does not wish to change it,

I enjoy my life here and it is not like working Monday to Friday, 9 to 5, not like that, I couldn't do it. So, I just work hard in the wintertime and from April to November it is relaxing time. It is unusual to Japanese.

In his expensive grey suit and matching silvery hair, the solo adventurer, perhaps inspired by Pirsig's classic *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, is well concealed. When asked about the future, however, it is clear his adventures are not over. He plans to return to the remote island he visited when he first came to Hokkaido and renovate old schoolhouses into accommodation for foreign tourists. He says he is excited by the creative opportunity of making a completely new tourist destination. Still determining his own path, on his own terms.

5.17.2 Mizushima-san (wife)

In her early twenties Mizushima-san worked as a flight attendant. At that time she was married to her first husband. When he got transferred to Okinawa for his work, she had to quit her job to move with him. Their marriage ended, and Mizushima-san decided to move to Australia where she ended up living for twenty years. In Australia she lived in Cairns and Sydney and worked as a travel agent for a Japanese company, eventually becoming a manager. Despite getting Australian residency, she felt pulled back to Japan,

my parents are getting old and only see them once a year and I am just counting now, how many times I can see them. It is very hard so, also tourism in Australia for Japanese people is decreasing as well. I just thought I am done here, it is time to change.

Returning to Japan, Mizushima-san briefly considered moving to Niseko as she loved to ski, however, she got a job in Okinawa at the same Japanese travel company and settled there. A Japanese colleague she had worked with in Cairns also returned to Japan at the same time, and found a job in Niseko, a place he had never been to before.

Mizushima-san recalls her own trip to Hokkaido back in the early 1980s when she first met Mr Mizushima while on holiday at a remote island when they were both very young.

So we started to go out together for a while, but it's a long distance, it is hard and we [were] apart, and we got different partners and he got married, we haven't got contacted for twenty-five years.

Remembering her old boyfriend knew the area, she searched Facebook and found Mr Mizushima and asked if he would help her colleague from Cairns meet people in the area, which he was happy to do. Knowing he had kids, she was surprised to learn he was divorced

and they stayed in touch, despite being at the two ends of Japan. Mizushima-san decided to visit Niseko and their relationship was rekindled. He was shocked that she spoke English fluently and had lived in Australia as his business was orientated around Australian guests.

his company he needs somebody who speaks English as well, who knows something about tourism, so “oh ok” so I decided to move here to marry him. Yeah, that’s why I came here.

For Mizushima-san, the Australian soundscape of Niseko is familiar, and she feels very safe and comfortable. She is sure that fate has led her to live in Niseko and reconnect with many Australians she knew when living abroad.

And ah it is kind of all came back, what you did in young days is coming back again. I just feel that way. And I met some local people and my dentist he went to Russutsu and that kind of thing, because the world is getting smaller. So, I am so precious so very feeling so happy that there are, because you are young you didn’t think anything, just met someone, whatever, whatever, but now it is all coming back.

Mizushima-san reflects that over her lifetime she has changed because of the things that have happened to her,

but because of experiences, lots of tragic, sad things and good things, everything, I feel like you know I been changing too.

She identifies living in Australia as being a key experience that influenced her. She keeps referring to it as, ‘the big thing’. When she first moved there she felt frustrated by locals’ lack of punctuality and perpetually easy-going attitude to work. She reflects,

(Since living in Australia) I am more tolerant, broad minded. People are all very different and you don’t have to ahh put the people in your way, you can accept the people how they are, so if so, that’s why being in Australia is quite a big thing.

When Mizushima-san returned to Japan to work, she demonstrates how she felt by covering her mouth as if she isn’t allowed to speak.

I couldn’t say anything but when I just, I tried so hard not to do or say my opinion, but when I decided to quit, lots of co-workers they said, “oh you are so brave you are being so brave you just say anything”. So being in a different culture is quite profitable for me.

After marrying Mr Mizushima and working in the businesses together, she had to get used to his unusual lifestyle.

I used to have Monday to Friday and when I came here, the first season. We just worked from December to the end of March. Then from the first of April he is just like “oh ok we finished”. And I was dreaming when I was an employee – oh I need a one-month holiday but after two months I thought, is that ok, we don’t have to work? Are you sure?

Mizushima-san doesn't think she could ever go back to working in a regular company now, especially a Japanese one. As she prepares with her husband to develop a new tourist destination in the remote island where they first met, it seems unlikely that she will.

5.18 Conclusion

This collection of micro-stories demonstrates how a reflexive narrative approach can illuminate experiences of tourism spaces, and in particular has illustrated how narrative accounts can capture rich detail about a place and how it is experienced by the people who live there. While each narrative in this collection offers a subjective perspective and is comprised of unique experiences, when the stories are considered as a whole, a holistic picture of Niseko, Japan as both a tourism and a social space emerges. Thus, these micro-stories offer insight on both a micro and a macro level view and establish in detail the context within which this research was undertaken.

In addition to offering understanding into how Niseko, as a tourism space, is being experienced by the tourism business owners who live there, this collection of micro-stories demonstrates how narratives are used by individuals to both understand and make meaning out of their experiences and their lives. This supports the theoretical perspective of Giddens (1990), as discussed in the literature review chapter (Chapter Two), who proposes that the construction and maintenance of a narrative about ourselves and our experiences is the means through which individuals create meaning and coherence through their lives.

As highlighted in Chapter Four, the micro-stories crafted from the narrative transcripts served dual functions in the research design, as both data and analysis. Throughout the process of creating the micro-stories, commonalities in experiences and trajectories shared by the participants began to emerge quite naturally and the shape of a larger story about what was being experienced in Niseko, Japan started to crystallise. In order to further unpack how the individual narratives pointed to particular themes across the data set, the micro-stories were used as a data source in the process of thematic analysis which was undertaken as part of the analysis phase of this research. The depth, quality, and detail provided by the narrative accounts meant that the thematic analysis process was able to draw on a substantial bank of rich qualitative data, and the following chapter, which comprises the second findings chapter of this thesis, will discuss the key themes which emerged as findings from this data.

By using both a narrative and thematic approach, the research design enabled a dual focus to be attained, broadening the scope of the findings. The micro-stories presented in this chapter demonstrate the value of preserving the integrity, structure, sequence, performance, and context

of an individual narrative to illuminate experiences of living in a tourism space. They provide an unprecedented and in-depth account of what is happening in the unique social space of Niseko, Japan, and shed light on how it is experienced and affects the lives of the individuals who both work and live there.

Deep powder queues of western faces
the taste of English on my tongue.
Looking at *them* makes
space to look at myself.
All these experiences,
somehow,
are making me feel like I am
more *Japanese*.

Chapter 6: Findings Part 2

Lifestyle (re) Construction in Liminal Niseko

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is the second findings chapter of this thesis and presents the findings extracted from the thematic analysis of the data. Aligning with the purpose of this research to explore the experiences of tourism business owners to offer insight into how Niseko as a social space may be influencing their lifestyles and identities, this chapter reveals what the research has found, and consonant with the research design draws upon the narrative data to demonstrate how these key themes manifested and were determined during the analysis phase of the research. The key themes which will be discussed in this chapter include cosmopolitanism, Niseko as a liminal space, lifestyle migration, and *Ikigai*. These key themes will be considered in relation to the current literature and the research questions posed by this thesis. Additionally, nine of the seventeen poems created as part of the analysis phase of this research are presented in this chapter. While all of the seventeen poems were crafted to capture a particular, ‘moment of truth’ within each narrative, each presents a unique connection to the emotional world of participants and creates space to integrate the experiences of both the researcher and the participants. Nine of the seventeen poems were identified as particularly connecting with and/or illuminating one or more of the four key themes that were identified from the data. These nine poems are presented as data in this chapter. The remaining eight poems appear between the chapters of this thesis.

The proceeding section will discuss the first theme, which considers how Niseko is being experienced as a social space by tourism business owners and explores how it has manifested cosmopolitan qualities, why participants consider it distinct in Japan and what factors have underpinned the emergence of cosmopolitanism in Niseko.

6.2 Regional Japan with a Global Perspective: Cosmopolitan Niseko

As reflected in the participant narratives presented as micro-stories in Chapter Five, Niseko is far more than just a tourism destination. It is, as identified by Snepenger, Murphy, Snepenger and Anderson (2004), a complex social space within which individuals are living, interacting, negotiating, and creating their lives, livelihoods, and relationships. The aim of this research, described in Chapter One, is to explore the experiences of tourism business owners to offer insight into how Niseko as a social space may be influencing the lifestyles and identities of tourism business owners. Thus, understanding how participants viewed Niseko as a social space and whether they were personally influenced by it was at the forefront throughout the narrative analysis process. Additionally, during the process of the creative interpretation of the data, as the micro-stories and reflective poetry were crafted, close attention was given to unpacking how participants were experiencing Niseko as a social space, and how it may have influenced their lifestyles and their own perception of themselves.

Participants consistently described Niseko as distinct from other parts of Japan due to its cosmopolitan atmosphere. The term ‘cosmopolitan originates from the ancient Greek word *kosmopolites*, meaning ‘citizen of the world (Delanty, 2006). Kendal, Skrbis and Woodward (2009) posit that cosmopolitanism also requires the ability to know and utilise a vast cultural knowledge and it is argued that cosmopolitan individuals make a conscious attempt to become familiar with other cultures that sit outside their local or national environment (Schueth & O’Loughlin, 2008). In sociology, cosmopolitanism has been used to understand social transformation by recognising new or emerging social realities (Delanty, 2006), thus cosmopolitanism is a concept that has substantial ramifications for the way people perceive each other, the world around them and their own self-identity (Warf, 2012).

The physical evidence of the foreign influence brought by tourism to Niseko is easily discernible to any visitor and was identified by all participants who were interviewed. For example, Sheldon (male, guesthouse owner, fifty years) spoke of Niseko as representing a, “fusion of Western and Japanese sensibilities”. Descriptions of Niseko provided by participants in the narrative interviews noted its fusion architecture, international culinary offerings, dominance of English signage, and visibility of non-Japanese tourists. However, beyond these surface indications of cosmopolitanism in Niseko, the perspectives of the participants shared through their narratives reveal much deeper, individual impacts on themselves and their lives

in this space. Participants shared a consistent narrative around the history of Niseko as a ski resort, from its early beginnings as an exclusively Japanese resort serviced by small guesthouse owners, to the wave of Australians beginning in the early 2000s and subsequent rapid development of apartment blocks and foreign-owned businesses. Most recently a shift towards high-end Asian tourism and luxury accommodation was noted by participants, illustrating the immense changes to the cultural mix of the space in the past fifteen years.

Participants reported repeatedly that especially in the peak winter season, Niseko looked and felt like a foreign country. This opinion was expressed by both Japanese and Western participants. For example, Mori-san (female, guesthouse owner, fifty years) feels, “the atmosphere in the town is nice too and it makes me feel like I am abroad, in another country”. Sasaki-san (male, guesthouse owner, thirty-five years), the youngest tourism business owner of the interviewees, reflected that the environment of Niseko made him feel that he was foreign himself, on account of speaking English all the time. Consolidating this point, an Australian tourism business owner Kurt (male, tourism booking business, thirty-nine years), commented that he doesn’t really need to speak Japanese in Niseko at all. Some Japanese participants, such as Shimizu-san (female, guesthouse owner, sixty-three years) and Suzuki-san (female, guesthouse owner, fifty-six years), mentioned they felt compelled to study English so they could communicate with their foreign guests. Several participants noted that the cosmopolitan environment of Niseko had become a point of attraction for Japanese wanting to experience other cultures and learn English. For some participants, such as Mori-san (female, guesthouse owner, sixty years) the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Niseko gave her the kind of intercultural experiences she hadn’t imagined she could have living in Japan. She says that in Niseko she can, “experience what I thought I had to go abroad to experience” As a rural community in Japan, Niseko is recognised by participants as distinct in terms of its cosmopolitan environment. As Tim (male, multiple tourism business owner, fifty-one) articulates, Niseko is indeed, “regional Japan with a global perspective”.

Niseko’s progressiveness in terms of openness to foreign tourism, development, and residents was highlighted by participants as being underpinned by a quality of openness, amongst both the community and the local council. For example, Kurosawa-san (male, guesthouse owner, seventy years) comments that in Niseko, “it doesn’t really matter where people are from, because Niseko is for everybody”. This perspective was shared by other Japanese participants such as Mori-san (female, guesthouse owner, sixty years) who feels, “the people in Niseko,

especially the people in Niseko accept people from other places, they don't get rid of others, they just accept everyone here" and Mizushima-san (male, multiple tourism business owner, fifty-nine years) who describes Niseko as, "welcoming to people from other countries". During his interview, Sheldon (male, guesthouse owner, fifty years) compared Niseko to other ski resorts in Japan and noted them to be less open to receiving foreign guests and accepting foreign development. A contrary perspective was offered by Tanaka-san (male, guesthouse owner, sixty-three years) who while identifying himself as very open to change on account of being born in Osaka and having the, "Osaka spirit", had observed that Hokkaido-born Japanese such as his wife were "quite narrow minded" and preferred to "stick to tradition".

The local council was also identified by several participants as being a key factor contributing to the rapid changes in Niseko. For example, Kita-san (male, guesthouse owner, seventy-four years) notes that the council is a point of difference compared with other towns in Japan, as citizens in Niseko can attend meetings and express their opinions and advocate for change. Examples of the council allowing the citizens to instigate change were given by several participants and included changes to the footpaths, English signage, and the building of a library which includes foreign language books. This openness to foreign influence was almost uniformly considered a positive characteristic by participants, with the exception of one participant Shimizu-san (female, guesthouse owner, sixty-three years) who expressed her disappointment that the council approved every development application, which had the outcome of eclectic streetscapes as Western style apartment blocks were built next to traditional inns.

In their own lives, participants reported changes to their lifestyles which were attributed to the cosmopolitan environment of Niseko. Examples included increased use of English, increased availability of and consumption of foreign food, and an increased desire for personal travel. Illustrating this change, Suzuki-san (female, guesthouse owner, fifty-six years) and Tanaka-san (male, guesthouse owner, sixty-three years) expressed the desire to travel abroad to the countries of the tourists they welcomed in their businesses. Brad (male, farm tourism business, thirty-eight years) recalls that once the Australians started arriving in Niseko, the offerings at the convenience stores began to change with items such as Tim Tams and Vegemite becoming available. Japanese participants such as Mori-san (female, guesthouse owner, sixty years) made the same observation, recollecting that the supermarkets began to stock more foreign food as international tourism increased. She shared that through her conversations with international

guests she learned about foreign foods, and ate more of them, which she felt was a positive lifestyle change.

In terms of the influence of the cosmopolitan environment on Niseko as a social space, non-Japanese participants uniformly considered it a positive attribute, which enhanced their lives in Niseko. For example, Tim (male, multiple tourism business owner, fifty-one) describes the cosmopolitan atmosphere in Niseko as, “stimulating” and Kurt (male, tourism booking business, thirty-eight) feels that it is, “interesting” and, “unique”. Several participants, both Japanese and non-Japanese, spoke of the positive opportunity Niseko provided for their families to create and nurture global friendships. For some Japanese participants such as Sasaki-san (male, guesthouse owner, thirty-five) the cosmopolitan atmosphere was a drawcard for living in Niseko. He says he, “could not live here without the foreign guests”. For others, such as Shimizu-san (female, guesthouse owner, sixty-three years) who feels overwhelmed by the changes and the foreign tourist behaviour, it has been less positive; she longs for “quiet” and appears to have maintained her traditional Japanese lifestyle despite the changes happening around her.

It would seem reasonable to assume that the changes in the social environment of Niseko, and in particular, the influx of foreign tourists would be contributing to the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Niseko, however, many of the participants in this research shared stories of foreign tourist behaviour which appears to indicate a distinct lack of cosmopolitanism. Both the Japanese and Western participants shared similar stories of unsociable behaviour from foreign tourists, for example alcohol-fuelled behaviour on Australia Day. The more recent influx of Chinese tourists was also highlighted by several participants (again both Japanese and Western) as struggling to culturally navigate social situations in Niseko. For some participants such as Shimizu-san (female, guesthouse owner, sixty-three years), the culturally insensitive behaviour of the foreign tourists has caused extreme distress to the point that she is considering moving. It is useful, then, to question whether the influence of foreign tourism has actually been the stimulus for cosmopolitanism in Niseko?

The data suggests a common element amongst many of the participants that points to another factor being present which is contributing to the cosmopolitan environment in Niseko. Eleven of the seventeen participants had lived abroad for significant periods of time throughout their lives and spoke two or more languages. Most identified that living abroad was the experience

that changed them the most overall. Mizushima-san (female, multiple tourism business owner, fifty-six years), repeatedly referred to her time living in Australia as “the big thing” which has influenced her life and changed her personally,

(Since living in Australia) I am more tolerant, broad minded. People are all very different and you don't have to ahh put the people in your way, you can accept the people how they are, so if so that's why being in Australia is quite a big thing.

Her husband Mizushima-san (male, multiple tourism business owner, fifty-nine years), similarly attributes his time spent travelling abroad on his motorbike as having equipped him for living in an environment with many foreigners,

because I have been overseas many times, you know going abroad, so having international guests or foreigners is not a big deal for me. Yes, [foreign people are] natural for me.

Similarly, Kita-san (male, guesthouse owner, seventy-four years), draws on his time abroad to explain why he feels at ease in the international atmosphere of Niseko. In his interview, Kita-san expresses his belief that the years he spent living in the UK and the US were transformative in that they changed his way of thinking. For Kita-san, the change in thinking is in terms of how he perceives other people. He notes that now he sees people as individuals rather than as nationalities or groups as other Japanese would. Kita-san has also noticed that in his experience, the people in Niseko who don't have experience living abroad seem to struggle coping with cultural differences. Sato-san (male, guesthouse and restaurant owner, fifty-nine years) expressed a similar perspective and identified the differing attitudes between himself (who had lived for an extended period in Nepal) and his wife (who had not lived abroad) towards foreigners. Sato-san felt quite comfortable with foreigners, while his wife resisted opening up their guesthouse to them as she felt she could not communicate if an emergency situation arose. Kita-san's point concerning the difference between people who had lived overseas and those who had not, is also observable in the narratives of several of the participants who have not lived overseas. For example, Shimizu-san (female, guesthouse owner, sixty-three years) and Mori-san (female, guesthouse owner, sixty years) both express discomfort with some aspects of the foreign influence in Niseko, and neither have lived abroad.

Thus, the data suggests the experience of living abroad may have equipped participants with the skills, cultural sensitivity and openness (or cosmopolitanism) to be able to comfortably navigate the culturally diverse social space of Niseko. Illustrating this point, Kita-san (male, guesthouse owner, seventy-four years) who has lived abroad for many years, describes feeling

that Niseko is, “no different for me at all”. Similarly, Nakano-san (male, youth hostel owner, forty-six years) who spent many years working abroad in New Zealand and Australia felt he could use his cultural acuity to develop a business in Niseko and live comfortably, “I thought I could use my skill for English for understanding Australian and New Zealand people”. Kurosawa-san (male, guesthouse owner, seventy years) reported feeling, “more broad”, and “more open” since his experience of living abroad. Sato-san (male, guesthouse and restaurant owner, fifty-nine years) attributes his three years in Nepal as the reason that he doesn’t have any special feeling towards foreigners compared to typical Japanese people. He says he has got used to the poor behaviour exhibited by foreign tourists in Niseko and is not bothered by it.

In the narratives of the non-Japanese participants, evidence of cosmopolitan attitudes is also apparent. For example, Brad (male, farm tourism business, thirty-eight years) expresses that as he builds his new tourism business he does not want to “bulldoze” the Japanese culture and is concerned his business should fit in with the existing cultural environment. Tim’s (male, multiple tourism business owner, fifty-one) story illustrates how context and experience can change a person’s attitude to cultural difference. He recalls growing up in rural Australia in the 1960s and 1970s and receiving quite negative messages about Japan and Japanese people. When he finally came to live in Japan as an adult, he was surprised to find the attitudes of his youth were not congruent with his experience of Japan. Tim now cites the cosmopolitan atmosphere as one of the most appealing aspects of living in Niseko. Sheldon (male, guesthouse owner, fifty years), who has lived in Japan most of his adult life, identifies pursuing a more global lifestyle as one of his key goals for the future, demonstrating the value he places on both physical and cultural mobility.

The narratives of the participants in this research demonstrate how Niseko is functioning as a cosmopolitan space. However, this cosmopolitanism is not exclusively due to the influx of foreign tourists and tourism development. Niseko was found to be significantly influenced by foreign tourists and development both in terms of the built and social environment. Participants also reported personal changes to how they felt, spoke, ate and conducted their businesses on account of the foreign influence in Niseko. Both the people and the council of Niseko were found to exhibit a quality of openness to ‘outsiders’ and ‘change’ which participants felt had strongly contributed to Niseko’s functioning as a culturally hybrid space with what was described as a ‘global atmosphere’. This cosmopolitan environment of people able to utilise cultural knowledge and who are open to learning about other cultures, was found to be derived

not from the international tourists, who are clearly at times displaying very non-cosmopolitan behaviours, but rather is more likely the outcome of the intercultural experiences of participants gained from living overseas prior to moving to Niseko.

This finding of cosmopolitanism in Niseko is significant in the context of the recognised lack of academic understanding regarding the intersection of tourism and cosmopolitanism (Byrne Swain, 2009). It also contributes to understanding cosmopolitanism as it exists in tourism contexts outside the more commonly focused upon, ‘cosmopolitan tourists’. For example, Schiller, Tsyplyma and Gruner-Domic (2011, p. 404) articulate the need for research into cosmopolitanism to draw its focus away from tourists and towards host communities. Cosmopolitanism as a social reality has been suggested as having the capacity to foster tolerance, respect, and a celebration of cultural differences (Salazar, 2010). This correlates closely with many of the descriptions of Niseko as a social space given by participants through their narratives. Although none of the participants articulated that they identified themselves as ‘cosmopolitan’, most could be described as embodying Walden’s (2001, p.1) description of cosmopolitanism as a, “way of being in the world, a way of constructing identity for one’s-self that is different from, and arguably opposed to, the idea of belonging to or devotion to or immersion in a particular culture”. Therefore, the presence of cosmopolitanism, both socially and individually, may create fluidity in the relationship between the self and the other, and by extension may lead to broader transformations in communities and cultures (Spisak, 2009) in spaces such as Niseko.

The echo of my grandmother's voice
If the Japanese come, I will slit your throat.
Yet, somehow, I have ended up here.
And found freedom in my foreign-ness
At the foot of mount Yotei
I am home.

Slip gently away from the heaviness of the unwritten
To the wilds of Hokkaido,
Away from the academic canons,
That slowly suffocate.
Intoxicated by a deep sense of agency,
Here, I can create
And be recreated.

Wash away my face
As I board the plane.
Old self slipping away,
Running towards the possibility of
Escaping the incongruency
That has punctuated my life

6.3 Finding Freedom: Niseko as a Liminal Space

This research has identified Niseko as a cosmopolitan space that is culturally and linguistically influenced by foreign tourism, expatriate residents, and Japanese residents who have lived abroad and brought with them different ways of living and interacting. Niseko, then, appears to be functioning as a unique social space in Japan. An aspect of this expressed by participants was the experience of feeling they have an enhanced sense of agency and psycho-social space to express themselves and pursue change within their community. This sense of spaciousness can be attributed to a quality of liminality in the social space of Niseko. Turner (1979, p. 465), defines liminality as literally being, “a state or process which is betwixt-and-between the normal, day-to-day cultural and social states and processes”. Liminality is a recognised characteristic of tourism spaces and describes a sense of being physically, socially, and ideologically in a space that is outside of a person’s usual environment and social boundaries (Freidus & Romero-Daza, 2009).

Sixteen of the seventeen participants who participated in this research moved to Niseko from either another part of Japan or from another country, thus, almost all of these participants were removed (to varying degrees) from their local environment and actively chose to move to Niseko. For example, guesthouse owner, Tanaka-san (male, sixty-three years) moved from urban Osaka to Niseko as he wanted to feel free to pursue a more natural life. Similarly, Morisan (female, sixty) who owns a collection of self-contained log houses, chose to pursue a life in Niseko so her family could have freedom to live the way they wanted to.

Participants consistently reported feeling that Niseko was a space outside reality and perceived social and cultural norms and expectations. Niseko emerged as a space where participants felt a sense of freedom and agency over their own lives. Himura-san (male, seventy-four), who opened an adventure sport business and guesthouse, tells of how he escaped his oppressive family in southern Japan so he could live by his own rules in Niseko. This sense of Niseko as being a place that is ‘outside the rules’ is something that Himura-san wants his own guests to experience. During his narrative he shares how he helps his guests build their own rafts and then takes them river rafting and encourages the guests to upturn their rafts on purpose and then be in a position where they have to save themselves. Himura-san advocates that this experience will enable his guests to have the relief of feeling not being controlled anymore, thus encouraging them to experience a deep sense of liminality. Liminality, then, as observed

by Turner (1979, p. 466) may be, “full of potency and potentiality. It may also be full of experiment and play”.

For several of the Japanese participants, the quality of liminality in Niseko is expressed through their perception of it being a place where they had freedom to speak up for themselves and instigate change. For example, Kurosawa-san (male, guesthouse owner, seventy years) spoke about how he could express his opinion more freely and that this freedom enabled him to campaign for change to rules and regulations in Niseko. Similarly, Kita-san (male, guesthouse owner, seventy-four years) describes Niseko as a place where he can “speak out”. For Sato-san (male, guesthouse and restaurant owner, fifty-nine years), his restaurant and guesthouse in Niseko provide him with a space in which he can talk about his experiences of Nepal and raise awareness and funds to send back to Nepal. The Japanese participants compared Niseko to other places in Japan where residents lack the opportunity to engage with local councils to stimulate change.

Many participants reflected on the nature of Niseko as a ski tourism destination and how the seasonality of work had the outcome of creating a lifestyle for participants that was very much outside mainstream Japanese reality, contributing to a sense of liminality. For example, Kurt, Brad, and the Mizushimas all share the experience of working intensively during the peak winter months and then not working for the rest of the year. For Suzuki-san (female, guesthouse owner, fifty-four years), this unique lifestyle provides her with enhanced psychological space to think and reflect. She feels that, “relaxing in this nature and we can think more, care more, others. I have more free time, more time”. Suzuki-san feels a sense of freedom and spaciousness in Niseko.

In tourism contexts, the quality of liminality is said to provide individuals with the psychological space to explore and reflect upon their perceptions and behaviours (Nash, 1996). Former lawyer and now guesthouse owner Sheldon (male, guesthouse owner, fifty years) speaks about the idea of travel as being a conduit for freedom from socially constructed selves. He notes, “one of the great things about travel is that you can just get away from yourself when you are away”. Recent liminality research recognises liminal spaces as offering the opportunity for renegotiating identities and cultural concepts (Bennett & Woodward, 2014; Huang et al., 2018) . For example, Wearing and Wearing (2001, p. 157) describe that in liminal tourism

spaces, “each individual will construct his/her own hybridisation and thus enlarge social space, rather than closing it down”.

From the participant narratives, it appears that Niseko is a space where there is freedom for people to move away from mainstream society, whether it be Japanese or otherwise, and pursue personal change. Illustrating this, Nakano-san (male, youth hostel owner, forty-six years), reflects that after living in New Zealand he wanted to emulate people he met there who had their own businesses and were in control of their own lives. Niseko, then, is a place where there is room for individuals to explore different ways of living and working. For example, Brad (male, farm tourism business owner, thirty-eight years) has reinvented himself and his career several times since moving to Niseko in his early twenties. During his adult life in Japan, Brad has lived outside societal or familial expectations that he may have been influenced by, had he remained in Australia. Brad describes Niseko as somewhere that is very much separate from reality.

An Australian participant, Tim (male, multiple tourism business owner, fifty-one years) similarly reflects on the freedom he has experienced being a foreigner living in Niseko,

you get to be naturally weird and you don't feel it because you are just a foreigner. There is a freedom with being an expat, I don't have to fit in because I am a foreigner. You know my wife was, when we were living in Australia, she loved it, originally when we came back here she was like, I want to go back to Australia and that was the plan, then after a few months here she said no, “I will stay here” and that's what we did. I don't know why but you know she had that freedom out in Australia, when she was here she has got all these perceived obligations and responsibilities and da da da da and then she realised I am just anonymous and no one cares and I am a foreigner and she was ultimately able to transfer that feeling you know, I don't have to worry about what other people think to here, she has brought it back with her.

Tim's reflection demonstrates how for both himself as an Australian living in Japan and for his Japanese wife who lived in Australia, part of the experience of being a foreigner is experiencing the sense of freedom or liminality that is the outcome of living outside societal norms. Lewis (male, forty-three), who runs an accommodation booking system business, reported experiencing a similar feeling of freedom when he escaped a partially completed PhD in Australia to move to Niseko. Lewis compares his highly regulated life in Australia in

academia with Niseko. He describes Niseko as the, “wild west, in many ways there is nothing, it is a frontier that hasn’t been established and there aren’t guidelines how to do things”. Lewis’ description offers insight into how Niseko is a space with less rigorous social and cultural norms, which in turn opens up space for people to live their lives differently.

Niseko’s cosmopolitanism, therefore, has created a space where both expatriate Westerners as well as Japanese residents can experience a deep sense of liminality. Both groups, then, are living physically, socially, and ideologically outside of their usual environment and social boundaries (Freidus & Romero-Daza, 2009). Therefore, as a liminal space Niseko is not just a place to inhabit, it is a space within which people may negotiate and construct their own sense of self and their lifestyle (Pritchard & Morgan, 2006b) as has been expressed through the participant narratives in this chapter.

In the concentric circles of our lives

I was called back to you
We shed our former selves
And found each other again.

Here.

We can live a second life,
Of spaciousness
In an antipodean enclave,
softened by the soundless snow.

6.4 Second Life: Niseko as a Site for Lifestyle Migration

This research aimed to understand how tourism spaces may influence the lifestyles and self-identities of tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan. From the analysis of the narrative interview data Niseko emerged as a place of migration, a place where participants moved to from other parts of urban Japan or from abroad, to pursue a more nature-based lifestyle and to engage in non-regular company work (*hiseiki kyo*). The participants' tourism businesses appeared to function to facilitate an alternative, more natural lifestyle. Mizushima-san (female, multiple tourism business owner, fifty-six) reflects on how many Japanese who moved to Niseko,

quit the job and come to Niseko to own, to have their own business they started like a small lodge, like everywhere.

Sixteen of the seventeen participants in this research migrated to Niseko on the basis of pursuing an alternative lifestyle. The outlier participant who did not migrate to Niseko as an adult, had parents who moved to Niseko so that their children could have more freedom, thus, demonstrating alignment with the rest of the participants.

All seventeen participants interviewed exhibited a heightened degree of mobility, both as migrants and as travellers. Increased mobility enables individuals to move more flexibly through both time and space (Hannam & Diekmann, 2010) and may also enhance the ability of individuals to actively shape their own lives (Bauman, 2007). Mobility is also recognised as having altered the relationship between self and place. For globally mobile individuals such as the participants in this study, place is not just geographical (Cohen et al., 2015, p. 166), “place is hence pivotal in constructing transnational identities” and transnational networks (Mitchell, 2009). Illustrating the influence of mobility on identity and sense of place, in Pocock and McIntosh's (2013) study of long-term travellers who had returned to their home country, participants were found to exhibit fluidity in their identity and conceptualisation of home.

Reflecting on the demographics of the tourism business owners who were interviewed for this research, fourteen out of the seventeen participants held a university degree, and all were from first world countries. These characteristics reflect broader conceptualisations of global mobility as a choice being dominated by more privileged individuals, originating from developed countries (Hall, 2005) and also relating to social class (Bourdieu, 1984). A finding from this

research identifying participants as cosmopolitan further consolidates the link between cosmopolitanism and mobility. The data revealed that not only were participants highly mobile, they had embraced their mobility as a means of developing for themselves an alternative lifestyle. For participants, this was initially prompted by tourism experiences, which reflected their desire to move away from mainstream work culture. These commonalities align with the concept of lifestyle mobility (Korpela, 2019) which explores the interconnections between tourism, leisure and migration and describes the phenomenon of people moving as a lifestyle choice (Cohen et al., 2015). Of the seventeen participants in this research, nine cited, ‘chasing snow’ as the key lifestyle factor contributing to the decision to relocate to Niseko. It is recognised that lifestyle migration to pursue a particular sport is most common amongst socially privileged individuals (Bourdieu, 1992), aligning with the demographic data of the sample of this research. Sixteen of the participants had visited Niseko on one or more occasions as a tourist prior to moving to the region, illustrating the connection between tourism, lifestyle choice and migration. Illuminating this point, Brad (male, thirty-eight), an Australian with a background in education, was initially attracted to Niseko as he was a keen skier and spent several summers working in a sausage factory to facilitate his snow-centric lifestyle. Brad ended up buying a guesthouse on a whim with no business plan prepared, and basically ran it based on word of mouth to his Australian friends. Brad’s decision was motivated by the lifestyle such a purchase offered him, access to snow in the winter and time off in the summer. Work is often a component of lifestyle migration and, “the divide between work and not-work, or work and leisure, can, therefore, be persistently and continually blurred” (Cohen et al., 2015, p. 161).

In the data it was evident that the businesses developed by participants functioned to facilitate their desired lifestyle and several made references to their home lives and work lives being less separated than before they moved to Niseko. Nakano-san (male, forty-six) describes his work time running a youth hostel style accommodation as, ‘mixed’ with his family time. Lewis (male, forty-three), who runs an accommodation booking service, reflects,

I mean when I was living in Sydney it was structured there were probably a few more boundaries in separation between home and work life, which are less so here.

Since 2000 in Japan there has been an emergent trend of young Japanese workers (15–24) who are increasingly choosing non-traditional work (*hiseiki kyo*), as explored in Klien’s (2016) work examining young creative workers migrating to the rural town of Ishinomaki in order to

pursue a better quality of life through a rural context and alternative workstyle. Much like the Japanese urbanites in Klien's (2016, p. 54) study, tourism business owners in Niseko were principally concerned with curating a self-directed lifestyle and were similarly found to "openly dismiss the emphasis of mainstream Japanese society on stable, secure jobs, fixed work routines, and material values". Mizushima-san (male, multiple tourism business owner, fifty-nine years), is a participant who describes himself as, "unusual, really unique" compared with other Japanese people. Mizushima-san reflects,

I enjoy my life here and it is not like working Monday to Friday, 9 to 5, not like that, I couldn't do it. So, I just work hard in the wintertime and from April to November it is relaxing time. It is unusual to Japanese.

A common narrative shared by participants in this research followed the pattern of initially attempting to fit in with traditional corporate structures in urban contexts (both in Japan and elsewhere), then prompted by a desire to dramatically change their lifestyle, choosing to move to Niseko where they could live in nature, run their own business, and feel more in control of their lives. This aligns with Cohen, Duncan and Thulemark's (2015, p. 160) description of lifestyle migrants as searching for, "a route to a better and more fulfilling way of life, especially in contrast to the one left behind". Similarly, Benson and O'Reilly (2009) and Klien (2016) posit that lifestyle migrants are relatively affluent, moving to places which they feel will offer them a better quality of life.

Demonstrating how lifestyle migration to Niseko was prompted by the desire to improve lifestyle was the example of the participant Tanaka-san. Tanaka-san (male, sixty-three years) was born in Osaka and tried for three years to be a corporate worker but felt increasingly drawn to living in nature and so hand-built a guesthouse in the forest. Reflecting on his own experience, Tanaka-san does not see his trajectory as unusual, as many other Japanese at that time moved to Niseko from the city to build their own house and have their own business. He recalls,

the city people, many people want to live in the countryside and want to spend more [time there], have a more simple and natural life.

Sato-san (male, fifty-nine years), originally from Tokyo, reported a similar feeling of dislocation with mainstream Japanese work culture. After several years living in Nepal to study dairy farming, Sato-san returned to live in Japan and married but felt,

like something is wrong, something is not right. I don't fit, I can't fit in this structure, the company type.

Remembering an earlier time when he lived in Niseko and worked for two summers at a guesthouse, Sato-san relocated and started his own business so he could have more control over his life.

Similar experiences were also reported by non-Japanese participants. For example, Kurt (male, tourism booking business, thirty-nine years) dropped out of university in Australia and was working as a journalist in a nine-to-five office job and felt disenchanted with his lifestyle. He was inspired by a self-help book to, 'design his own life', and prompted by earlier travels to Niseko, Kurt relocated and began a seasonal work rhythm which saw him work hard for a few months then "take it easy" for the rest of the year. Likewise, Tim (male, fifty-one years), an Australian lawyer, opened a law practice but quickly figured out the job was, "pretty horrible" which prompted him to pursue his newly found interest in skiing which led him to a period living in New Zealand before settling in Niseko and beginning his company. Another Australian participant, Lewis (male, tourism booking business, forty-three years), escaped a restrictive PhD to live in Niseko in an environment which he describes as, "without rules", that demonstrates this theme of Niseko being a space for escaping traditional work environments. Lewis reflects,

there [is] certainly more of a hippy aspect to it as well. I think a lot of people who end up owning lodges here or ended up working here were fleeing the stereotypical salaryman arrangement, so there was certainly an attraction for a more alternative individual.

Mori-san (female, sixty years), who runs a collection of log-house holiday cottages, had a similar realisation which prompted her move north,

I used to work in Tokyo as an office worker, and I could, I felt not more. I couldn't do it anymore.

Mori-san describes Niseko as a place where people can come from other places, and like her own family pursue an alternative lifestyle,

in Niseko, not only foreigners, but Japanese people started coming for a second life. So not only foreigners came here to live, the number of Japanese people, um, who come from other parts of Japan increased a lot.

She attributes the attraction of Niseko as a place for a “second life” due to the natural beauty, progressive council and openness of the people in Niseko. Tim similarly cites Niseko as a place which is full of opportunity. He believes most of the Japanese who have come to live there are “lifestylists” and perceives Niseko as a place of opportunity.

Several participants expressed how important the good lifestyle Niseko offered was for their children. For example, Suzuki-san comments,

the biggest thing about moving here is that I could raise my kids free, let them run around in a relaxed environment.

Mori-san and her late husband were similarly motivated when they relocated to Niseko and built their business. Describing running a tourism business in Niseko as offering their family a ‘good lifestyle’, she comments,

It is important, we wanted to put our lifestyle first.

In addition to the attraction of snow, the other lifestyle consideration which attracted participants to living in Niseko which emerged was the opportunity to live close to nature. For example, Himura-san (male, seventy-four years) moved from Osaka to Niseko in pursuit of opening his dream business to teach people about traditional ways of living in nature. He teaches his guests to make rafts built out of wood from the forest and describes his lifestyle in Niseko as, ‘simple’ and allowing him to live by his own rules. Another participant, Nakano-san (male, forty-six years), was inspired by the more natural self-directed lifestyles he observed while working and living in New Zealand and wanted to emulate that when he returned to live in Japan. Nakano-san sees his life in Niseko as very community based. He notes that people in Niseko are conscious about natural lifestyles and organic food. He comments,

there are lots of young families or young single people who come and live in Niseko and many people of them are...their orientation is a more natural lifestyle.

Nakano-san feels that he is more independent and has can make decisions about his life. He wanted to emulate what he saw in New Zealand – people being in control of their own lives.

This feeling of control over their own lives indicates a strong sense of agency, both as a motivating factor and as an outcome of their lifestyle migration to Niseko, for the majority of participants in this research. For example, Suzuki-san (female, fifty-six years) reports that since moving to Niseko and opening her guesthouse she feels she has a more relaxed life with more free time to think and reflect. Nakano-san identifies that he feels more independent and more able to make decisions about his life since moving to Niseko and opening his business. Tim (male, fifty-one years), who is the largest employer in the Niseko area across his numerous tourism businesses, articulates how a sense of agency is central to his life and his experience of it,

life is whatever you want to make it, do it, be, the world is, the world is what you want it to be and your emotional state is what you choose it to be.

The participant who had moved to Niseko with her family in the 1980s to open a business and be able to ski, Shimizu-san (female, sixty-three years), felt less agency than the other participants. She was uncomfortable with the impact of foreign tourist behaviour on her life and in her town, however, felt there was little she could do about it as she and her husband were dependent on the business to live. Nevertheless, she expressed that she hoped to be able to move away once she retired to somewhere that is quieter, demonstrating some sense of control over her life circumstances.

Thus, for the participants in this research, living in Niseko was very much a choice of lifestyle precipitated by a desire to remove themselves (and for some participants their families also) away from structured urban working environments and into a more flexible nature-based lifestyle that they perceived Niseko could offer them. Aligning with the perspective of MacCannell (1976), participants viewed their lifestyles as a combination of both work and leisure. The ability to ‘choose’ or ‘construct one’s lifestyle’, was expressed by participants and is recognised as an outcome of globalisation, with increased focus being placed on, “change, choice and reflexivity in and through lifestyle choices” (Cohen et al., 2015, p. 157). Giddens (1991, p. 81) suggests that lifestyle choices are increasingly decisions about, ‘who to be’, highlighting a shift in identities from being socially constructed to being intertwined with lifestyle choices. Thus, for participants in this research, the shift they underwent from an urban

corporate lifestyle which was very much prescribed and controlled by exterior structures and social norms, to a *self-constructed* life in Niseko where they built their own houses and businesses and had greater control over their work and home life, demonstrates how Niseko is operating as a location for lifestyle migration. Additionally, this common trajectory for participants in this sample and the commonalities in their personal reflections about the experience suggests that the process of lifestyle migration is not only about reconstructing their lifestyles but also concerned with reconstructing the narratives of their own lives and their own role within it. This finding strongly aligns with the work of Cohen, Duncan and Thulemark (2015), who suggest that lifestyle choices are key contributors to self-identity. Thus, the lifestyle migration as evidenced in the sample of both Japanese and non-Japanese former urban dwellers who relocated to Niseko to pursue an alternative lifestyle, offers insight into how highly mobile, cosmopolitan individuals in tourism spaces relate to place and are affected by it.

As night melts into the morning
the avalanche report is cast
Out to the foreign skiers below
Retracing my journey up the Himalayas
Reorientated my thinking and
Cracked open a new expansiveness.
Now I *must* speak up.

I am changing,
consciously and unconsciously,
As I move through my story.
From one experience, I am reorientated
And my questions change.
I burrow deeper into the core of understanding
From an *imperceptible* shift.

6.5 *Ikigai*

Beyond migrating to Niseko to pursue a better quality of life, another layer of impetus which connected both the migration to Niseko and how participants made sense of their lives was revealed in the data. Numerous participants articulated that they felt they had a particular purpose for their life they felt called to pursue and this was facilitated by their lifestyle as a tourism business owner in Niseko. It was the emergence of this very individual and very strong sense of purpose within the participant narratives and the creative interpretations which led to '*Ikigai*' being identified as the fourth theme derived from the data. For example, Sheldon (male, fifty years), who transitioned from being a lawyer to a guesthouse owner, described the move to Niseko as a way of, 'pursuing his passion'. *Ikigai* is a Japanese concept which refers to, "that which most makes one's life seem worth living" (Mathews, 1996, p. 51) and is recognised as offering insight into self-understanding (Yamamoto-Mitani & Wallhagen, 2002). The term *Ikigai* can be used to describe,

1. A *specific experience* that creates a sense of worth and happiness.
2. The *resultant cognitive evaluation* that finds one's life meaningful because of the experience.
3. The *sense of fulfillment and joy* that is derived from the cognitive evaluation (Yamamoto-Mitani & Wallhagen, 2002, p. 401).

Therefore, recognising and exploring how the concept of *Ikigai* presented itself in the narratives of participants in this research addresses one of the key objectives of the study which was to understand what kind of experiences influence self-identity construction.

Illuminating the theme of *Ikigai*, is the example of Himura-san (male, seventy-four years) who owns a small guesthouse and adventure centre based in an ex-primary school building that he has restored himself with the hope of preserving it for future generations. In Himura-san's interview, when asked about how he became a tourism business owner, his initial response intersected directly with his *Ikigai* which was, "to tell about traditional ways of living in nature". Himura-san felt drawn from a young age to living in nature and sharing his philosophy of life with others, and he searched for many years for a location where he could open such a business. In Niseko, Himura-san has developed a business which allows him to live immersed in nature and teach guests how to make their own rafts and understand the natural world around them. Himura-san identifies that he has been guided by the same core idea his whole adult life,

that is the basis on which I live. Time, effort and thinking. I prefer to enjoy inconvenience, it is better than quick, straight away.

At the conclusion of the interview, Himura-san returns to his *Ikigai* and reflects on how he hopes his work will continue beyond his own lifetime,

I will not retire, this is my life. Forever, until the end.

For Himura-san his *Ikigai* is the driving force underpinning where he lives, how he lives, and the kind of work he does. The depth of Himura-san's personal commitment to his *Ikigai* is revealed in his wish to continue to live a life orientated by it until he leaves the earth. Niseko is the space in which Himura-san can carry out his *Ikigai*. He feels a sense of freedom in Niseko in that he can live a life which is less imposed upon by external rules and structures. There is room for him to live in a way which is congruent with his *Ikigai* and reflects the concept's dual composition of functioning as an individual's purpose and their meaning in life (Arnault, 2016).

Another participant in the research, Kurosawa-san (male, seventy years) is a guesthouse owner, however, his narrative reveals his *Ikigai* is deeply rooted in his sense of himself as a mountain climber who has climbed the Himalayas and is now responsible for keeping Mt Moiwa safe for tourists who visit Niseko. Every morning Kurosawa-san gets up at 4 am to climb the mountain and give the avalanche report, a commitment he carries out no matter what the weather conditions. He is passionate about campaigning for more strictly enforced rules and boundaries on the mountain, having witnessed the death of several foreign tourists who were not following the rules. For Kurosawa-san, climbing the Himalayas was not about physical strength, but rather the experience opened up for him the ability to speak up about things that concerned him, so that he could instigate change. Niseko, with its progressive council and citizens, is a space in which Kurosawa-san can both speak up and be heard. In his narrative, Kurosawa-san returns to his *Ikigai* of speaking up about the need to make the mountain safe on numerous occasions, highlighting the potency of it as an influence in his life. Echoing a similar sentiment to Himura-san about the desire not to retire from this work when thinking about the future, Kurosawa-san says,

so, you know my age is 70 years old, I will finish soon. So, I have a dream, but I know that life is short. And the world is big. I want to continue my work. But the end will come one day.

For other participants, Niseko similarly provides a rich space in which to pursue their *Ikigai*, for example Kita-san (male, guesthouse owner, seventy-four years) wants to utilise his language skills and cultural acuity to be a facilitator of cultural exchanges with other countries in Niseko. Brad (male, farm tourism business, thirty-eight years), articulates a deep-seated alignment with idea of shaping himself and his life as a gentlemen scientist who is committed to,

a constant exploration of actually what I want from this place, what I want this place to be um you know how that fits into the land here.

Participants such as Tanaka-san (male, guesthouse owner, sixty-three years) articulated their *Ikigai* as both their purpose and the lens through which they see and understand themselves. For example, Tanaka-san describes himself at the beginning of his narrative as an, “outdoor person”, who despite growing up in urban Osaka was always drawn to nature and now through his business as a guesthouse owner is committed to sharing this experience with guests. Morisan (female, guesthouse owner, sixty-years) expresses a similar sentiment of opening and running a tourism business, not as a means of employment or financial gain, but rather as a way of sharing a particular way of living with others. She reflects,

I am not interested in economics or to do better economics, I just want guests to have a relaxed atmosphere.

Perhaps the most salient example of *Ikigai* which emerged from the data was the narrative of Sato-san (male, guesthouse and restaurant owner, fifty-nine years). Fundamentally changed by his time living in Nepal and witnessing extreme poverty, Sato-san returned to Japan deeply committed to helping the Nepalese people. He reflects,

I couldn't do much, but I wanted to do something. So, I was kind of torn and struggled with those feelings with the reality of what I could do and what I wanted to do.

Sato-san described himself as, “struggling” to fit back into mainstream Japan when he returned from Nepal and motivated by his desire to help the people of Nepal he began his Nepalese restaurant and guesthouse,

I wanted to tell everyone about Nepal, I wanted to tell stories to everyone and that was kind of the beginning of this business.

Living in Niseko has enabled Sato-san to live his life in a way which is congruent with his *Ikigai*. He spends his days raising awareness about Nepal, sharing Nepalese culture and collecting donations from his guests for his cause.

Tim (male, multiple tourism business owner, fifty-one years), easily the most affluent of the participants, was no less certain about purpose being separate from financial gain.

It is not what you gain, but what you create.

For Tim, and for many of the participants, Niseko functioned as a unique space in which they could craft a life which was orientated around the pursuit of living in alignment with their *Ikigai*. From the participants' narratives *Ikigai* emerged as a creative process that underpinned and shaped their lives, lifestyles and sense of self. The participants' expression of *Ikigai* in their narratives reflects *Ikigai* as functioning both as a life experience from which a sense of purpose is drawn, as well as the positive emotional response they experienced as an outcome, or the felt experience of *Ikigai* (Yamamoto-Mitani & Wallhagen, 2002). The emergence of *Ikigai* then, as a key theme drawn from the data reveals that *Ikigai* may be functioning as a kind of lens through which the participants understand themselves and their lives as reflected in their narratives. The theme of *Ikigai* and the various ways it manifests in the participants' stories offers insight into the participants' key life experiences, as well as their underpinning motivations and influences, and how these shaped their sense of self and decisions around lifestyle choices.

Through the heart of a Nepalese village
Small bodies are carried through the rain,
 Last cradle in the groove of a tree.
 Returning home,
I carried those children in my mind.
 Tears falling into my *ramen* and
onto my tie as I stand on the *densha*
 Grief is embedded into my fascia.
When I open my mouth, I am flooded
 with their stories.

6.6 Conclusion

Chapter Five, the first findings chapter of this thesis, presented a set of micro-stories created from the narrative interview data, and in this the second findings chapter the thematic analysis was presented. Drawing upon the data and creative interpretations, four key themes were identified and discussed in this chapter including cosmopolitanism, liminality in tourism spaces, lifestyle migration, and *Ikigai*.

From the participant interviews and creative interpretations of the data a common narrative thread emerged. This thread was identified in a large portion of the narratives provided by participants and reflects the key themes identified as findings in this chapter. The common story was of a participant who lived abroad for a time and had a transformative experience in some way, which shaped their view of the world, their sense of self, and purpose in life or *Ikigai*. Often the individual felt they did not fit into their culturally prescribed social and work contexts in their native country or city and wished to have a greater sense of agency in their lives. All but one of the participants moved to Niseko with the expressed purpose of pursuing an alternative lifestyle, hence Niseko emerged as a site of lifestyle migration. Niseko was experienced by participants as a ‘liminal space’ in which they felt a sense of freedom as they were removed from their home contexts. In the participant narratives Niseko presented as a unique social space due not only to the presence of international tourism, but also on account of the cosmopolitan characteristics of the lifestyle migrants, both Japanese and non-Japanese, who chose to move to Niseko. Niseko emerged as distinct as it offered the opportunity for participants to depart from conventional work and social roles and to develop tourism businesses which facilitated their desired lifestyle, and in many cases, provided the chance to pursue and express their individual *Ikigai*. Thus, Niseko became for participants a space in which they could endeavour to balance their need for living in a way which was congruent with their own values, while at the same time also allowing them to contribute through their *Ikigai* to society more broadly.

This interpretive research aimed to explore the experiences of tourism business owners to offer insight into how Niseko as a social space may be influencing the lifestyles and identities of tourism business owners. This chapter has explored and discussed the nuanced experiences of the tourism business owners who participated in this research and demonstrated how the narrative data and creative interpretations of the data have revealed a common narrative which

emerged across the data set. This narrative, which encapsulates the four key themes identified from the data and discussed in this chapter, offers a unique insight into how Niseko is functioning as a liminal social space and site for lifestyle migration. Further, it illustrates how Niseko is being experienced as a space in which individuals have freedom and psycho-social space to renegotiate and reimagine themselves, their lifestyles, and their life purposes.

The following and final chapter of this thesis will critically examine and interpret the findings presented in this and the preceding chapter and extract the implications of these findings in light of the literature which frames this research. It will consider how these findings offer insight into the unique social space of Niseko, Japan and how they contribute to the ways in which we view, research and understand tourism spaces more broadly.

The shape of my eye changed.
From living over there.
Those who stay, they have a more limited view.
Seeing only *gucha-gucha* leaves on the just swept path
Missing the distinction of an unfamiliar tree.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion

Lifestyle Choice as an Expression of Narrative Identity. When 'where to be' is 'who to be'.

“People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful”

(Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p.375)

7.1 Introduction

This research has focused on a small village in northern Japan which has been transformed by international tourism, and has received scant academic attention, despite evident physical, social, and cultural influences that have shaped the tourism space. In particular, the literature reviewed in Chapters Two and Three highlighted the need for further investigation into the unique social space of Niseko, which has underpinned the direction of this research. While this research has concentrated on the tourism destination of Niseko, it has also acknowledged that Niseko is embedded in a broader context of global influences and interconnectedness. It is these conditions of the contemporary world, including increased mobility and greater fluidity in social structures, which exist alongside tourism in creating the circumstances in which individuals in Niseko are constructing and living their lives. As evidenced in Chapter Two, tourism research has long considered the transformative properties of tourism on tourists such as changes to lifestyles, behaviours and identities, yet has paid far less attention to those who live and work in tourism contexts. While the literature demonstrates the liminal qualities of tourism spaces and how they may influence tourists, research to date has not sought to understand how the liminal qualities of tourism contexts may shape the lives of tourism hosts. This is problematic as tourism hosts as residents are more exposed to the liminality of tourism spaces than tourists. On this basis, the aim of this research was to explore the experiences of tourism business owners to offer insight into how Niseko as a social space may be influencing the lifestyles and identities of this group of people.

This chapter will critically examine the findings presented in Chapters Five and Six and draw out the implications of these findings within the context of the current literature. The chapter will interpret the findings and explore the contributions this research makes to understanding both the current evolution of the socio-cultural space of Niseko, Japan and our knowledge and experience of tourism spaces. Additionally, this chapter reflects on the design of the research and considers the implications for future research processes. The chapter will close by highlighting the unique qualities of the knowledge produced by this research, outlining the specific theoretical and practical contributions it makes and revisiting the common narrative which emerged from the data.

7.2 Connection to New Knowledge Through Narratives

The overarching aim of this research was **to explore the experiences of tourism business owners to offer insight into how Niseko as a social space may be influencing the lifestyles and identities of this group of people**. During the research design process, one of the research objectives which was developed and became foundational to the work was **to use personal narratives as instruments to understand how tourism spaces may influence the lifestyles and self-identities of tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan**. The first section of this chapter will reflect on how the narrative approach which informed the design of this research facilitated findings which offer new insights vis a vis the overarching research aim.

The second objective of the research as identified in Chapter 1 was **to draw upon a social constructivist perspective embodied in a qualitative methodology to contribute to the recognised lack of subjective, conceptually driven research on tourism hosts**. This objective was met as the research employed an interpretivist approach which sought to understand lived experiences of tourism spaces. The research design was embedded in the social constructivist paradigm which acknowledges the value of subjective, individual experience as a rich source of data. In this research, the narrative approach, as detailed in Chapter Four, facilitated what Charmaz (2000, p. 525), describes as a, “a relationship with respondents in which they can cast their stories in their terms. It means listening to their stories with openness to feelings and experience”. The reflective poetry, created as part of the analysis process, enabled my own voice as a constructivist researcher to be situated at times alongside

the participants' narratives and in doing so allowed the research to sensitively negotiate the multiple subjectivities presented.

As explored in Chapters Five and Six, this thesis has demonstrated that a research approach which acknowledges and explores the inherent subjectivities of individuals in tourism contexts is necessary to understand the rich diversity of experiences in tourism spaces. The interpretive design of this research captured participants' meanings and perceptions through the collection of narrative data which is full of thick description and provided in-depth illumination of the experiences and contexts of tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan. The interpretive approach acknowledged multiple and fluid contexts including the geographical and social environment of participants, the temporal environment of the research, and my own circumstances and perspective as the researcher.

As illuminated in the opening quote of this chapter, the underpinning assumption of this thesis was that narratives are a common way that individuals understand and create meaning from their experiences (Andrews et al., 2008; Reissman, 2008). As evidenced in both the creative interpretations of the data (Chapter Five) and the thematic analysis (Chapter Six) the narrative data collected for this research reflect the capability of narratives as a research strategy to unpack individual experiences of tourism spaces. The narrative interviewing approach created conditions which provided space for participants to engage in lengthy reflective narratives and to pursue unexpected tangents which allowed new directions to be explored. This greatly expanded the range of material the research was able to explore as evidenced in the emergent themes, such as lifestyle migration and *Ikigai*, which were unexpected and not generated in response to predetermined interview questions. The findings of this research have demonstrated that when utilised, a narrative approach can provide rich insight into the experiences of tourism business owners.

Reflecting on the influence of the narrative approach in this research, it is apparent that the research findings presented in this study reiterate the assertion of Freeman (1993, p. 6) that stories are the clearest, "inroad into the phenomenon of self-understanding and self-hood". In particular, narratives were found to be an effective means of exploring narrative construction of participants' identity. While the research was underpinned by Giddens' (1991) conceptualisation of self-identity as a reflexive narrative, an unexpected and meaningful

outcome of the narrative data analysis was the illumination of another of Giddens' propositions of lifestyle choice, as an expression of self-identity. Thus, rather than simply demonstrating how narratives offer insight into self-identity, the findings of this research establish how narrative self-identity can be understood from the perspective of lifestyle choice. This was evidenced in the narratives of the seventeen tourism business owners, all of whom (except one) had migrated to Niseko from other parts of Japan or abroad for lifestyle reasons.

The transcripts generated from the narrative interviewing process provided rich data which were drawn upon to create two creative interpretations of the data (micro-stories and poetry). These creative strategies functioned both as data and as a means of analysis. The next section of this chapter focuses on the impact of the creative strategies as alternative means for understanding the data.

7.3 Creative Strategies as a Meaningful Way of Creating, Interpreting and Communicating Research Data

Research at its core is a creative process, whether quantitative or qualitative. It requires the researcher to imagine beyond current known limits, to explore, to experiment, and to be flexible as the process unfolds. Qualitative research, in particular, requires the use of intuition and emotion to allow sensitive interpretation and meaning making to take place (Wolcott, 2001). Responding to the recognised scarcity of emotionally reflexive tourism research (Noy, 2008a; Pocock, 2015), this research has sought to explore innovative forms of qualitative inquiry through the creation of poetry and micro-stories inspired by the narrative data and experience in the field. This approach added an additional layer of data and analysis, and created space for expression of researcher reflexivity, demonstrating how creative strategies can be integrated into interpretive research to generate robust, nuanced enquiry. The creative strategies provided a unique perspective which enhanced the capacity of this research to make new and meaningful connections from the data.

Specifically, this research has illustrated how the creative strategies of micro-stories and poetry can be utilised in interpretive research contexts to offer a direct window into the experiences of participants. It has provided space to foreground participant voices, rather than fragmenting

their stories as is often the case in more common qualitative approaches. The reflective poetry functioned to capture, 'moments of truth' in the data and provided connection into the emotional world of participants. Enhanced awareness and understanding of their experiences was generated in the creative space of these strategies. The creative approaches also provided an opportunity to integrate the experiences of both the researcher and the participants, a distinctive feature of this research. Thus, presenting and interpreting the data in this way not only imparts knowledge, but also invites the reader to partake in the experience of the research and make their own connection with it.

Drawing on researcher reflexivity through creative interpretations of the data, this research demonstrates how researcher reflexivity can be transformed, "from a problem into a resource" (Harding, 1991, p. 164). Thus, this research illustrates how creatively applied researcher reflexivity can add further insight into experiences of tourism spaces. It highlights the value of acknowledging the researcher as a key research instrument and builds on Westward, Morgan and Pritchard's advocacy that the creativity of the researcher is vital, "to the quality, depth and interest embodied in the research text" (2006, p. 34). Creative interpretations of the data have both highlighted and offered insight into the key experiences of the participants of this research.

More attention, then, should be given to research that encompasses strategies which provide spaces open to quiet listening, both to the participants but also to the intuition of the researcher. The expression of this through creative strategies creates room for new discoveries that would otherwise remain absent from the research findings to unfold, enabling this research to attain a deeper and richer understanding of the socio-cultural micro-climate of Niseko, Japan. Further, this research illuminates the potential of creative strategies in interpretive tourism inquiry to offer unique insights into experiences of tourism spaces and strengthens the case for alternative research strategies to be more readily accepted in the tourism academy more broadly.

7.4 Cosmopolitan Niseko: Illustrating How Experiences of Living Abroad

Change Both the People and the Places they Inhabit

The first research question, as outlined in Chapter One, sought to understand **what are tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan's experience of living in a tourism space?** Participants were asked to reflect during the narrative interview process on what it was like to live in Niseko. Each spoke of Niseko as a 'unique' space within Japan due to its cosmopolitan environment and perspective, despite being situated in a rural context. It was anticipated, prior to conducting the data collection, that the influx of international tourism would be the key factor shaping the socio-cultural environment of Niseko and by extension contribute to increased cosmopolitanism. However, by selecting the interpretive approach of this research, the narrative accounts and creative interpretations went beyond considering the visible cosmopolitan aspects of Niseko and excavated deeper to unpack the individual experiences of those living in tourism spaces, which elicited a quite unexpected outcome. Instead of tourists being the dominant source of influence on the participants, the participants in this research revealed that it was their experiences of living overseas that contributed to shaping their cosmopolitan outlook and, in some cases, inspired them to seek out a more cosmopolitan lifestyle within Japan. This, in turn, augmented the cosmopolitan socio-cultural environment of Niseko. The collective findings of this research draw focus to the way experiences of living abroad change both the people and the places they inhabit. Thus, this research explains how experiences of living abroad can both prepare individuals to thrive in cosmopolitan spaces and how their experiences may contribute to the perpetuation of them.

7.5 Liminal Tourism Spaces – places to explore different ways of living and working

Reflecting on the first research question, **what are tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan's experience of living in a tourism space?** One of the key experiences participants in this research reported feeling was an enhanced sense of agency and psycho-social space which can be attributed to a quality of liminality in the social space of Niseko. This finding is a departure from the current status of the literature around liminality as evidenced in Chapter

Two, which highlighted that the current focus of research in this area is on the liminal qualities of tourism spaces in relation to the experiences of tourists, rather than hosts (Deery, Jago, & Fredline, 2012; Sharpley, 2014). Thus, the findings of this research offer an alternative perspective, that is, that tourism spaces are liminal spaces not just for tourists but also for hosts. In addition to experiencing enhanced agency and psycho-social space, this research has further unpacked the way experiences of liminality are expressed temporally by the tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan who were the focus of this research. For example, as demonstrated in Chapters Five and Six, this research has demonstrated how the liminal qualities of tourism spaces can provide room for people to explore different ways of living and working. Participants in this research left corporate positions in urban spaces both in other parts of Japan and abroad and relocated to Niseko where they experienced a sense of freedom as a result of being removed from their home contexts. This finding is meaningful and indicates a need to think about tourism spaces differently, not just as places that tourists visit, but that future research should acknowledge that they are complex social spaces often with less rigorous social and cultural norms, which in turn open up space for people to live their lives differently. Thus, this research points to the opportunity for other tourism spaces to similarly be examined as locations within which the quality of liminality can facilitate socio-cultural change.

7.6 Lifestyle Choices as Part of the Narrative of Self

One of the questions this research has sought to answer is **how tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan perceive their lifestyles have been shaped by their experiences of travel and tourism?** As this chapter thus far has illuminated, the experiences of participants prior to moving to Niseko, in particular experiences of living abroad, were found to have influenced the cosmopolitan outlook of participants and opened them up to exploring different ways of living and working. Participants actively chose to move to Niseko from urban contexts both inside and outside of Japan. Thus, Niseko emerged as a site of lifestyle migration, a place to which participants relocated with the goal of pursuing a more nature-based lifestyle. This was initially prompted by their own tourism experiences. These commonalities align with the concept of ‘lifestyle mobility’ which explores the interconnections among tourism, leisure, and migration and describes the phenomenon of people moving as a lifestyle choice (Cohen et al., 2015). Work is often a component of lifestyle migration (Cohen et al., 2015) and as discussed in Chapter Six, it was evident that the businesses developed by participants functioned to

facilitate their desired lifestyle. A common narrative shared by participants in this research followed the pattern of initially attempting to fit in with traditional corporate structures in urban contexts (both in Japan and elsewhere), then, prompted by a desire to dramatically change their lifestyle, choosing to relocate to Niseko where they could live in nature, run their own business, and feel more in control of their lives. This aligns with Cohen, Duncan, and Thulemark's (2015, p. 160) description of lifestyle migrants as searching for, "a route to a better and more fulfilling way of life, especially in contrast to the one left behind".

A further objective of this research was **to analyse the narratives of tourism business owners to understand how self-identities and lifestyles are negotiated in spaces transformed by tourism**. The research findings indicated the tourism space of Niseko, Japan was not significantly shaping the self-identity of participants as the participant narratives revealed the primary influence was derived from experiences of living abroad. Thus the findings of this research demonstrate that, in relation to self-identity, in tourism contexts, lifestyle choices can be, as suggested by Giddens (1991, p. 81), increasingly decisions about, 'who to be', highlighting a shift in identities from being socially constructed to being intertwined with lifestyle choices. Thus, for participants in this research, their shift from an urban corporate lifestyle, prescribed and controlled by external structures and social norms, to a *self-constructed* life in Niseko where they built their own houses, businesses, and had enhanced agency, demonstrates how Niseko is operating as a location for lifestyle migration. This common trajectory for the participants and the commonalities in their personal reflections suggests the process of lifestyle migration is not only about reconstructing their lifestyles, but is also concerned with reconstructing the narratives of their own lives and their own role within them. Therefore, this research makes an important contribution to understanding how tourism spaces are not just places to visit or inhabit, but are locations in which people may negotiate and construct their own sense of self and lifestyle. This means that understanding what is happening in tourism spaces is not just about economic capacity, it is about acknowledging that tourism spaces have the potential to be sites where individuals may be experimenting and engaging with new ways of living and working, as part of their narrative self-identity. The kind of lifestyle migration in Niseko, Japan that this research has illuminated points to the need for tourism spaces to be more closely examined. Further, it draws focus to the need for consideration to be given not only to how they welcome tourists, but also how they may provide psycho-social space for residents to negotiate new lifestyles facilitated through their tourism businesses and how these lifestyle choices form part of their sense of self-identity. This builds

on the emerging research area which explores the link between tourism and lifestyle migration (Montezuma & McGarrigle, 2018) and offers new understanding into how tourism businesses can facilitate lifestyle migration.

7.7 Living in Alignment with *Ikigai*

One of the key findings that emerged from the data analysis was that numerous participants articulated that they felt they had a particular purpose for their life, or *Ikigai*, which they felt called to pursue and which was facilitated by their lifestyle as a tourism business owner in Niseko. The findings of this research demonstrate how the liminal qualities of tourism spaces provide room for people to pursue their *Ikigai* that allows them to live in a way which is congruent with their *Ikigai*. From the participants' narratives, *Ikigai* emerged from the data as a creative process that underpinned and shaped their lives, lifestyles, and sense of self. Identified by the process of analysis in this research as a key theme, *Ikigai* appeared to be functioning as a kind of lens through which participants understand themselves and their lives as reflected in their narratives. *Ikigai* offers insight into participants' key life experiences, as well as their underpinning motivations and influences, and how these shape their sense of self and decisions arounds lifestyle choices. Thus, one of the key contributions of this research is its exploration of how the liminal qualities of tourism spaces allow individuals to cultivate lifestyles which are congruent with their *Ikigai*.

Studies in lifestyle migration have identified the link between the desire for a better way of life and lifestyle migration (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Ono, 2015), however, how individuals' lifestyle choices may facilitate the pursuit of *Ikigai* in tourism spaces has not been explored. Thus, the connection between *Ikigai* and lifestyle migration in tourism spaces made by this research opens up a new area of enquiry, and offers an innovative perspective when considering how tourism spaces are experienced by those who inhabit them.

7.8 Reflections on the Research Design and Limitations

This research was bound by the financial and time constraints inherent in a PhD project. This restricted the travel to the research site to a single visit and limited the amount of time that

could be spent onsite in Niseko conducting the research and thus did not allow the opportunity to reconnect with participants post-analysis. An executive summary of the thesis has been provided to the participants who have requested it; however, it would have been valuable to have had the opportunity to share and discuss the findings and in particular the creative interpretations of the data with participants. Future research of this kind would benefit from longer periods in the field and possibly a research design that encompassed multiple visits to the research site, which could potentially also facilitate the co-development of micro-stories. As an Australian, English-speaking researcher studying a phenomenon in another country, culture, and language, I acknowledge there may have been increased opportunity for errors in translation, for linguistic roadblocks to occur (such as during recruitment), and that my own perspective, experiences and cultural biases may have influenced my interpretation of the data. Should a Japanese researcher have undertaken the same project the findings may well have differed. While my experience of living in Japan, knowledge of culture and basic language skills and the use of a translator to assist during the interviews, transcription and analysis may have lessened the effect of the cultural and linguistic difference, it remains a limitation of the research design that was unavoidable.

This research sought to understand the experience of living in a tourism space in Japan. The development of the research design and the underpinning concept of identity as a self-constructed narrative were very much derived from the perspective of Western sociology. Thus, there was an assumption that Western theories would be applicable in a non-Western context, potentially a limitation of the research. As evidenced in the findings of this research, however, the experiences of both Japanese and non-Japanese tourism business owners were extremely similar, to the point that a coherent narrative could be extracted from the data amongst all participants. Interestingly, the emergence of the Japanese concept of *Ikigai* in the data and its resonance in the narratives of non-Japanese participants suggests that the cultural difference was less pronounced than expected, and by extension the application of Western sociological theory in non-Western contexts less problematic. There is also opportunity for Western sociology to benefit from understanding Japanese concepts such as *Ikigai*. Additionally, future research might be enhanced through collaborative projects that incorporate both Western and Japanese concepts as well as researchers from both cultures.

7.9 Conclusion

This research has sought to deeply explore the experiences of individuals living in tourism spaces. It has drawn upon qualitative and creative methodologies to unpack new layers of understanding of the complexity of tourism spaces as social constructs. It demonstrates the capacity of creating space for deep reflexivity of both participants and researchers to bring rich and multifaceted insight about social phenomena. In particular, this research has focused on the tourism receiving community of Niseko, Japan, which has been transformed by international tourism. Using a narrative approach to understand the subjective experiences of tourism business owners, the findings of this research have drawn focus on how Niseko is a liminal tourism space which is being shaped by the cosmopolitan individuals who relocate there to pursue their ‘second life’ after experiences of living abroad. Lifestyle migration was evidenced in the sample in both Japanese and non-Japanese former urban dwellers who relocated to Niseko as a conscious lifestyle choice. The findings of this research suggest lifestyle migration in tourism contexts can be understood through the lens proposed by Giddens (1991), that lifestyle choice is motivated by the desire for narrative congruency in the reflexive project of self. In summary, this research contributes to understanding how highly mobile, cosmopolitan individuals in tourism spaces relate to place and are affected by it.

To illuminate the potency of creative strategies to interpret and to disseminate research findings concerned with understanding the complexity of human experience, this thesis will conclude with a final micro-story. Unlike those presented in Chapter Five, which were composed based on the direct narratives of the tourism business owners in Niseko, Japan, this final micro-story, like the prologue which opened this thesis, is a fictional creation based on the composite experiences of the seventeen tourism business owners who participated in this research. The intention of this final piece is to draw on the reflexive creative process which considerably enriched the yield of this research, and to highlight the common narrative thread of participants. In doing so, it is hoped that the reader is invited to be immersed in the physical, emotional, and narrative landscape of this research.

Epilogue

Mā (space)

On the edge of the Niseko-Shakotan National Park, sheltered in a patch of forest ripe with autumn foliage, Karen waits for her two boys to return from play, sitting on the front steps. She still can't get used to them going off by themselves; when they lived in Australia they had driven them everywhere, supervised the visits to the park, and attended to every minute detail. Kennichi climbs down the ladder of the old farmhouse and smiles, "I know that look Karen, and they are fine, they are loving it", he inclines his head to the rich wooded expanse that surrounds the house. She knows this, and wouldn't trade it for the scheduled chaos of their old life in Melbourne. With no family support and two full-time jobs and a large mortgage, they juggled the boys between them, the four of them rarely together in one place, never still except when asleep. Even sleep felt imposed upon, compressed into the least possible amount needed to function. She felt a rush of tiredness remembering it. Her mind and body tethered to the pull of a hundred different demands.

They sit down on the front step of the house in the last light of the day with two cups of *sencha* in the silence. Somehow the constant sense of urgency has slipped away, the thief of time in their former lives. "Remember you weren't keen to do this?" Karen reflects, it seems unbelievable now.

Kennichi pauses, remembering the late-into-the-night talks they had had. Karen had been ready to make a drastic change fuelled by memories of the freedom of her year as an exchange student in Germany while at university, he had been more cautious. "I was scared I guess, in Australia, yes I had financial pressure, time pressure all that stuff, but there were less expectations from other people you know? I knew I couldn't come back and work for a Japanese company and live that life, I know that life, I saw my father everyday living for his company, not himself".

"I think I felt that pressure in Australia too though", Karen countered, "the big house, bigger cars, it is so ingrained in the culture, I think it is harder to tune that out if you stay put. There is a different kind of space here, it's like we are in Japan but at the same time we are not in Japan".

Karen smoothed her apron and took two *kakis* from the bowl in the entry of the retreat, returning to the front step she sliced the orange fruit carefully on an old chopping board with a cleaver that had been left by former occupants of the house. Guests came only on weekends, and mainly Australian ones, it seemed to have worked out that way. They visited Niseko to ski and many were curious to stay in a traditional farmhouse and try out a silent meditation retreat. Every weekend it was the same, the look of intense discomfort as guests realised there was no internet or phone access. "It's ok", Karen would soothe them, "you can't talk to anyone here anyway". When they took on the abandoned farmhouse as part of a local government initiative to save old buildings, they hadn't realised they would have to drive half an hour into town to send an email. An unexpected gift.

The boys arrive like a dust storm in full tilt, they are grimy and grinning with pockets full of treasures. A perfectly round black stone, a tiny green frog that has miraculously survived the journey, three mushrooms to be checked against their mushroom field guidebook before making it to the dinner table. "I am going to be an explorer", Momota informs them over dinner, "a famous one".

"Well I'm not", says Yuki, "I am going to be an artist like Mum, Mum how do I be one?" he sits in her lap, legs tucked in, body heavy with the relief of being held.

"Painting wasn't always my job Yuki, but I was always a painter, it just took me a while to remember it".

"You are always forgetting your keys" counselled Momota sagely, "old people do tend to forget things", he looks to his father with a grin, willing him to bite.

"The best bits can take a while to remember, sometimes you need to make a little space for them to grow, like my vegetable garden, that was something new since moving here, and something I couldn't live without now". Kennichi cleared the table and got down the tin of old wax crayons and handed them gently to Yuki, "we had better make some room".

The old farmhouse is lit up from within as night settles. An invitation to pause is offered here. For the people who live in it and for those who pass through, perhaps looking for parts of

themselves. The house is connected to all the activity within it and around it, and it holds what has come before. The house and the people in it are embedded in a bigger story, and are part of each other's story. They are in this space and the space is within them. Even in the seasons of emptiness this house has been full.

Tea boiling on the range, she arranges the cups with care,
The silence is a gift.
I am perched, ready to hear her story.
It is not hers alone.
No longer here, yet his care is expressed in every part of this handcrafted house.
It feels like everything is made with love
I offer for slippery translation.
Warm tears in both our cups.
Something has shifted, formality has fallen away
We no longer need a translator to understand each other.
In the telling she changes,
In the deepest place of listening,
I too am transformed.

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Appendix I: Chinese tourist brochure



了解日本人,旅行更开心!

北海道 旅行心得

开心旅行的
5大要点



感受日本人的心灵，

享受旅行



热情好客的大地·北海道欢迎您!

欢迎来到北海道!无论是初访还是来过多次的游客,我们都会诚心诚意地接待您。旅行的乐趣因人而异,但是如果了解了当地居民的想法、习惯,旅行就会变得更加开心。我们由衷地希望各位游客通过《北海道旅行心得》,或多或少地了解日本,感受日本人的心灵,体验更多的喜悦和感动。北海道所有的设施竭诚为您服务,也感谢您的配合。



POINT 1 低调的日本人

人们常说日本人“低调”、“温和”,这源于日本人一直注重的“和谐精神”。岛国日本自古以来就重视与周围的“协调性”,宁愿克制自己也尽量保持与对方及周围的合拍。并且大家都认为与别人不同的言行会被周围嘲笑,是很羞耻的事情,于是就养成了在观察周围状况的基础上采取行动的习惯。



1 小声说话?

日本人在餐厅、地铁等公共场所显得尤其温和、安静。与美国人或中国人相比,日本人说日语是抑扬顿挫较少的语言,并且大家更倾向于顾虑周围地小声说话。因此,旁边的人如果大声说话,日本人就会很吃惊。在日本请尽量压低音量小声说话。



2 控制打嗝

日本人担心给周围添麻烦,会尽量避免或者极力控制一些生理现象,例如呃逆或者矢气。当然这属于自然产生的生理现象,但至少请注意尽量克制。



POINT 2 和谐精神

日本人总结出了适应在狭岛国共同生存的智慧,自古以来就非常重视“和谐精神”,做事将重心偏向于社会和集体而非个人。并且在集体行动中最重视的就是规矩和礼节。这也是日本人具有遵纪守法精神的原因所在。也许正是因为这样的社会背景,日本也与中国一样拥有“入乡随俗”的习惯,旅行中也会尊重当地的风俗。



1 请尊重大家的时间

日本人在集体行动中特别注重的是时间。例如,在乘坐巴士旅游的过程中,如果有游客沉迷于购物,擅自离团而错过集合时间,给巴士司机造成混乱。对于遵守时间,任何事情都按计划进行的日本人而言,之后的日程被打乱是一件焦虑不安的事情。因此请尊重大家的时间,切勿迟道。



2 垃圾的处理方法

喜好洁净的日本人有着“自己的垃圾自己清理”的习惯。因此,请不要将垃圾扔在地板或道路上而是要扔进垃圾桶,并将可燃垃圾和不可燃垃圾分类后扔掉。使用过的纸尿布等请扔进公共厕所内的纸尿布专用垃圾桶。如果没有垃圾桶,请带回家自行处理。



3 排队也要安静等待

日本人非常注重遵守规矩,不给别人添麻烦,即使排队也会安静等待。在日本排队被视为违法行为,这些都是日本固有的礼节与常识。



4 侵入私有土地

当游客在观光地游览途中,想进入一些广告或电视剧、电影的外景拍摄地拍照或合影时,有时会不知不觉间踏入田地等私有土地。在田地上乱踩乱踏会造成作物枯萎、破坏难得的美丽景色等,给整个观光地造成困扰,所以请不要闯入私有土地。



酒店中可以带走的物品仅为消耗品和一次性用品

酒店客房中所提供的消耗品或一次性用品包括肥皂、洗发水、剃须刀等可以带走。但除去消耗品或一次性用品的餐具、热水壶、吹风机等,如果从住宿设施中带走将被视为盗窃行为。请您一定要注意不要引起误会。



POINT 3 日本人的饮食

以前的日本不用餐桌,而是直接跪坐在榻榻米上用很矮的小饭桌吃饭,因此有手持饭碗和味噌汤碗吃饭的特殊饮食礼节。在筷子文化中,日本人也不是用脸去靠近盘子,而是使用筷子将饭菜优雅地从盘子里夹起送到嘴边。让我们再来看一下其他的饮食礼节。



1 餐桌保持清洁

日本传统饮食礼节中有吃饭时不出声音、咀嚼时不说话等习惯。并且在原本没有餐桌文化的日本,如果桌子上和地板上散落有食物的渣滓、骨头等,就好像榻榻米被弄脏一样日本人会感觉非常不舒服。



2 “光盘行动”

受佛教影响,在日本反对“浪费”精神非常浓郁,他们认为将提供的食物全部不剩地吃完是一种礼貌。食物如果残留在盘子中,接待方则会认为这是因为“不好吃”,而觉得失望。



3 不可带餐及打包



另外,在酒店吃自助餐时,游客将餐厅的饮料倒入水瓶、把米饭或菜肴装进塑料容器、将勺子等餐厅用品带走,这些在日本人的眼里都是有损形象的行为。



酒店中的穿着要讲究

在日本的住宿设施中,有的酒店允许穿着房间里为客人准备的室内便服/浴衣或拖鞋走动,有的是不可以的。日式旅馆等部分酒店可以这样穿着,但大部分西式酒店会在住宿须知中写明“请不要穿着浴衣、浴袍、拖鞋等在走廊等客室外走动”。敬请大家注意。



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POINT 4 公共浴场的礼节

在公共浴场与很多人一起裸体入浴,这是世界罕见的日本特有的入浴方式。日本人非常喜欢泡澡,在日本人喜欢的词语中有“裸体交往(真诚交往)”一词。意思是在浴室裸体,就可以人人平等地交谈,超越对方的职业和地位。同时有洁癖的日本人非常注重浴池的清洁,“欧美人为了洗净身体而入浴,而日本人则是洗净身体后再入浴”。



1 裸体交往(真诚交往)

请拿着毛巾裸体进入浴室。其他可带入浴室的包括个人用的洗发液和肥皂等。如果穿着泳衣或浴衣、拖鞋等进入浴室,在场的日本人会大吃一惊。



2 进入浴池前请先洗净身体



浴池是大家裸体共用的场所。对于喜好洁净的日本人来说,进入浴池前一定要先洗净身体。进入浴室后请不要直接进入浴池泡澡,请务必先洗净身体。

3 浴室中也很安静的日本人

如果在浴室里大声吵闹、在浴池中游泳、有其他如照相或者饮食行为,在场的日本人都会大吃一惊,敬请克制。在淋浴处淋浴时请注意不要溅到周围的人。淋浴后请将洗脸盆及椅子用水冲洗后放回原处。



4 回到更衣室前先擦净水滴

从浴室出来如果径直返回更衣室,身上的水滴会弄湿更衣室的地板。其他游客有滑倒的危险,因此从浴室出来时请先擦拭掉身上的水滴后再返回更衣室。



关于沐浴税

在日本,对使用温泉和矿泉沐浴的游客征收地方税。使用温泉沐浴,对于不管是住宿还是当天往返的游客全部征收该费用。住宿的游客,按照每人每天150日元左右,当天往返的游客,按照每人每天50日元~100日元收税。住宿的游客,即使不泡温泉也基本上要交沐浴税。



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POINT 5 习惯与文化的差异

在海外旅行时经常会遇到因历史、习惯和文化差异而感到吃惊的时候。例如，日本的住宿设施不是按照“房间”为基数收取费用，而是以“人”为基数收取费用。这是因为与很多“食宿分离”的国家不同，日本自古开始就盛行个人旅游，有“一晚两餐”（住宿和饮食配套）的传统。在日本可以观察到这种社会体系的差异。



1 住宿费用不是按“房间”而是按“人”收费

正因为如此，日本的住宿设施基本是以“人”为基数收取住宿费用。一间客房中有3个人住宿时就要按照3人份付费。早饭、晚饭也是按照人数付费。因此在退房时，请游客不要着急地误认为是“收了3倍的钱”。



2 可以信赖的日本产品

在日本购买商品后，付完款才能打开商品包装。在日本的高超技术和商品管理下制造出的商品品质相同，没有偏差，因此无需打开确认就可以放心购买。如果购买前打开商品，有可能会被当作“小偷”，请大家注意。



3 伤害保险

在乘坐观光巴士旅游过程中，或在观光地摔倒受伤时需要去医院，这时如果旅游团没有参加意外伤害保险，则没有保险可以适用。另外除了在上下车过程中，如果在巴士车外摔倒受伤等，巴士公司不承担赔偿责任。请大家认真确认在自己的国家是否已经投保。



4 厕所礼仪

喜好清洁的日本人总是保持厕所洁净。日本的厕纸是可溶水性纸，可以溶于水，而且排水管粗、水压高，因此请将已经使用过的厕纸直接扔进便器与排泄物一起冲走即可。如果排泄物弄脏了厕所，请大家为下一位如厕者着想，务必打扫干净后再离开。



马桶坐浴器的使用方法

马桶坐浴器的显示板上有“臀部清洗”、“阴部清洗”、“除臭”、“暖座”等功能。只是大多数的马桶坐浴器上没有带有“冲水”功能。如遇此情况，请游客不要因为“怎么才能冲水!”而慌张，请沉着地观察周围设施。在厕所水槽旁侧一定设置有手动杆或周围墙壁上一定会安装有冲水按钮。



北海道旅行心得

▼ 北海道旅行心得 可以免费下载此PDF手册。 ▼
<http://www.vist.hokkaido.jp/t/company/data/index2.html#eiquette>

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Appendix II: Consent form



SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES

FACULTY OF ARTS AND
EDUCATION
Charles Sturt University
Panorama Avenue
BATHURST NSW 2795
AUSTRALIA
Tel: +61 2 1234 5678
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Email: knelson@csu.edu.au

CONSENT FORM

An exploration of the construction of self-identity through tourism: in Niseko, Japan.

Researchers:

Chief Investigator: Ms Kim Nelson
Bachelor of Business in Tourism
Bachelor of Social Science (Hons)
Doctor of Philosophy in Arts Candidate – Charles Sturt University

Principal Supervisor: Dr Angela Ragusa
Senior Lecturer in Sociology
PhD & MS, Sociology
MS Science & Technology Studies
BA(Hons) Psychology

Co-supervisor - A/Prof Rosemary Black
Associate Head of School, Environmental Sciences
PhD in ecotourism,
Masters in Natural Resource Management
Bachelor of Science (Hons)

I have read and understand the information sheet given to me including:

- I agree to participate in the above research project and give my consent freely.
- I understand that I must be over the age of 18 to participate in the study.
- I have had the opportunity to have questions answered to my satisfaction.
- I understand that the project will be conducted as part of a PhD as described in the Information Statement, a copy of which I have retained.
- I understand I can withdraw from the project at any time and do not have to give any reason for withdrawing.
- I consent to participating in an interview and having it audio recorded, subsequently transcribed, and that extracts of anonymous quotes may be used in thesis' and other publications to illustrate the presented analysis. However, my personal details will not be identifiable from any such text.
- I understand that my personal information will remain confidential to the researchers.

Print name _____

Signature:

Date:

Contact Details (please provide if you would like to be sent information an Executive Summary of the study results at the end of the study)

www.csu.edu.au

Charles Sturt University's Human Research Ethics Committee has approved this project. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this project, you may contact the Committee through the Executive Officer.

The Executive Officer
Human Research Ethics Committee
Tel: +61 2 6338 4628 Email: ethics@csu.edu.au

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix III: Participant Information Sheet



SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES

FACULTY OF ARTS AND
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PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

An exploration of the construction of self-identity through tourism, in Niseko, Japan.

Researchers:

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MS Science & Technology Studies
BA(Hons) Psychology

Co-supervisor - A/Prof Rosemary Black
Associate Head of School
PhD in ecotourism,
Masters in Natural Resource Management
Bachelor of Science (Hons)

Thank you for expressing your interest in participating in a study exploring experiences of tourism. This information sheet explains the research purpose and the details of what your participation will involve.

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study on guest house owner's experiences as tourism hosts in Niseko, Japan. The study is being conducted by Ms Kim Nelson, Dr Angela Ragusa from the School of Social Sciences and Humanities and A/Prof Rosemary Black from the school of Environmental Sciences at the Charles Sturt University, Australia.

Before you decide whether or not you wish to participate in this study, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of this study?

The aim of the research is to explore and understand experiences of guest house professionals who are living in Niseko.

Why have I been invited to participate in this study?

We are seeking Japanese guest house owners who have lived over half of their lives in the Niseko area and to participate in the study.

What does this study involve?

www.csu.edu.au

The Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) Provider Number for Charles Sturt University is 00005F. ABN: 83 878 708 551

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in an up to hour long semi-structured interview with the Kim Nelson, the Chief Investigator. The interview will take place at a time that is suitable for you either at the guesthouse or other prearranged public location such as a café.

This interview will be audio recorded and later transcribed by the research team or a professional transcriber. The interviewer will ask open ended questions to explore your perceptions and experiences as a guest house owner and interactions with international tourists. A Japanese/English interpreter will be present throughout the interview process and will sign a confidentiality agreement prior to the commencement of the research.

Are there risks and benefits to me in taking part in this study?

Although, there will be no direct economic benefits from participation, the information you provide will help us gain a better understanding of the influence of tourism experiences on guest house owners and hopefully provide you with the opportunity to share your valuable life experience to contribute to academic and applied research.

Your privacy and the information you provide will be protected through the use of pseudonyms during the publication of the results. As Niseko is a small area, there is the minimal risk that other participants may nevertheless recognise the your identity, which presents a risk that needs to be considered by participants prior to agreeing to participate in the study. The results will first be used in the Chief Investigator's PhD thesis and in addition results will be published in an articles and conference presentations as part of the broader roles of the researchers. You will not be identifiable from any report or other publication.

How is this study being paid for?

The research is being funded by the operating cost funds provided as part of the Chief Investigator's PhD scholarship.

Will taking part in this study (except travel) cost me anything, and will I be paid?

There will be no financial cost involved for participants who choose to take part in this study and you will not be paid.

What if I don't want to take part in this study?

Participation in this research is entirely your choice. Only if you give their informed consent will you be included in the project. Whether or not you decide to participate, is your decision and will not disadvantage you. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason and have the option of withdrawing any data, which identifies you. In the unlikely event that participation in the study causes you any distress you may wish to contact TELL Lifeline Counselling on 03- 4550-1191 <http://telljp.com/lifeline> (9am-11pm daily) for confidential support.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

All information you provide during the interviews will be kept strictly confidential and is non-identifiable. The recording will be transcribed, and the audio-file will be kept securely and destroyed at the end of the study as prescribed by the ethics committee guidelines. The Japanese/English translator will sign a confidentiality agreement.

www.csu.edu.au

CRICOS Provider Numbers for Charles Sturt University are 00005F (NSW), 01947G (VIC) and 02960B (ACT). ABN: 83 878 708 551

Appendix IV: Interview questions

Interview Questions September 2017

Hello, my name is Kim. Thank you so much for your time today. I am from Charles Sturt University in Australia. I am a PhD student researching about tourism. The aim of the research is to understand experiences of guest house owners in Niseko. I lived in Sapporo from 2007–2008 which is how I became familiar with Niseko and the development of tourism here. When I returned to Australia, I was curious about how people in Niseko were experiencing living in a tourism destination, and so I decided to return to university and to do research on this topic. If it would be ok, I would like to ask you some questions about your experiences of tourism?

Can you tell me a little about your life, and about how you became a business owner in Niseko?

Please tell me about what it has been like for you to live in Niseko since you opened your business here?

Looking back, have you made different lifestyle choices (such as routines and habits) in your own life since you moved here? If so, in what ways.

Do you think that the types of tourists coming here changed over time? In what way? Who, different groups?

Can you tell me about how tourism may have influenced the economy in Niseko?

Can you tell me about how any changes to the built environment that you have noticed due to tourism development?

In your experience, how has tourism impacted people's jobs and employment here?

As a tourism business owner can you tell me about a memorable / stand out story about an experience with international tourists that has particularly influenced you?

Looking back, do you feel the same as you were when you first owned a tourism business here? If not, how do you see yourself differently?

When you think back over your life what are the experiences that you feel have influenced you and most and shaped how you see yourself?

Is it ok if I get back to you with further questions after the interview if necessary?