

Bernadette Benjamin

IRB Application

Title: "Beyond their Homeland: Understanding the Experiences of Black Women in Japan"

**Research Question:**

How do Black women conceptualize their identity while navigating Japan? For my senior project I am interested in exploring how being in Japan affects the way Black women understand their salient identities. I plan to interview Black women who are currently in Japan.

**Participants:**

I will interview individuals who identify as Black women and participate in a Facebook group called Black Women in Japan (BWIJ). I will initially solicit interviewees through this Facebook group, seeking women who are currently living in Japan. I will also use a snowball method to extend beyond these women, if necessary to add to the number of interviews. I hope to interview 25 Black women.

**Methods:**

Due to the fact that my interviewees will be in Japan, I will use Skype which is an online resource. The duration of the interview will be approximately 1.5 hours. The interviews will be semi-structured, with open-ended questions as set forth in this proposal. The interviews will be recorded, using the recording feature from Skype. After the interview is done, the recording will be downloaded to my laptop and then I will delete the video from the chat.

**Facebook Message**

I will use the Facebook Group to recruit participants as well as ask them if they know someone who would be willing to be interviewed for my senior project. The message will be as follows:

Hi Everyone! My name is Bernadette Benjamin and I am a senior at Bard College, studying Sociology. I am conducting interviews for my Senior Thesis on the experiences of Black Women in Japan. The interviews will be done over Skype. If you, or someone you know is interested in participating in my research please comment under this message or send me a Facebook message. From there we can proceed to scheduling the interview. Thank you everyone for your time!

**Risks and Benefits:**

Potential risks of participation may include mild feelings of emotional discomfort, anger, shame, embarrassment, or stress when talking about personal histories. Participants will be warned that I do not have a legal right to withhold my interview recordings and notes in the event that they are subpoenaed in a court of law, and this may occasion some mild feelings of worry or distress.

There are no potential benefits for the participants, other than contributing to social scientific understanding.

**Consent Process:**

The consent process will combine electronic and oral communication. I will read the following script and request completion of a google form. I will use Skype for communication. In describing the consent process, I will state-

I am a student at Bard College conducting research for my Senior Project on the experiences of Black Women in Japan. If you agree to participate in this study, I will ask you to answer questions about your experience in Japan. This includes discussing your relationships with other people, and your daily life. The interview is designed to last about an hour, and will be recorded using the recording feature in Skype. I also am taking notes throughout the whole duration of this conversation. If you become uncomfortable at any point during this interview and would like to skip a question or stop participating, please let me know.

It's important that you read the consent form carefully because it describes the potential risks and benefits of participating in this research. It explains how I plan to preserve confidentiality in those instances where I can, and how I will store information. If you have any questions later on, you can contact me, my faculty adviser, or the chair of the Bard College Institutional Review Board. The contact information is on the consent form. You will have the opportunity to indicate whether you agree to an interview or not.

I will send you the link to the google form. Before our interview, you must answer the questions. We can not proceed with the interview until you complete the google form.

**Confidentiality:**

Because my interview process makes use of Skype and Google, my ability to protect confidentiality is limited, and I will disclose these limitations to my interviewees. Insofar as it is within my capacity to protect the confidentiality of information disclosed by my interviewees, here are the steps that I will follow:

If the participants choose to participate in this project, I will assign them a pseudonym. These pseudonyms will be used to replace the names of individuals and institutions that they are associated with throughout the project.

Any identifying details the participant desires to conceal will be concealed, insofar as I am in control of the information. That means that I would either take the information out from the interview or use a pseudonym.

Once the interview has been conducted, I will immediately download the recordings from the Skype chat to my password-protected computer, and delete the recording from the Skype chat. I will maintain the recordings on my password-protected computer until the completion of the project, and then will delete them. I will only transcribe the recordings in my room and keep the notebook in a code protected box.

**Debriefing:**

I will state-

Thank you for participating in this research for my senior project about the experiences of Black women in Japan. Please contact me if you have any questions in the future or think of anything else you'd like to share. My contact information is in the google form and the Skype chat. Do you have any questions for me now?

## **Interview Questions**

1. What is your name?
2. What country are you from?
3. How old are you?
4. Do you live in an urban environment in Japan?
5. Why did you come to Japan?
6. How long have you been in Japan?
7. What is your job?
8. Do you see yourself as being part of a community here?
9. Has this community helped you? If so, how?
10. What does identity mean to you?
11. How do you identify?
12. How has the length of time in Japan affected how you view yourself?
13. What did you learn about yourself?
14. Did you change since the first time you got to Japan?
15. How has your job affected the way you think about your identity?
16. What identity are you most aware of in Japan?
17. What kind of images (TV shows, magazines, movies, etc)do you see relating to your identity?
18. What are the perspectives that Japanese people have of your identity?
19. How has your womanhood affected your experience in Japan?
20. How does your womanhood affect the other identities you carry?
21. Have you had any experiences here that have made your identity salient in a way that affected you emotionally?
22. Have you had any experiences here that have made you changed the way you think about your identity?
23. Do you see your identity as empowering?

## **Consent Form for Research Participants:**

### **Google Consent Form for Research Participants**

“Beyond their Homeland: Understanding the Experiences of Black Women in Japan”

Student Researcher: Bernadette Benjamin, Bard College

Faculty Adviser: Laura Ford, Assistant Professor of Sociology

### **Introduction**

I am a sociology student at Bard College, and I am conducting research for my senior thesis on how Black women navigate the world. I am particularly focusing on Japan for this thesis. I am inviting you to participate in this research study.

If you agree to be in this study, I will interview you using Skype. Each interview is designed to last approximately one hour and I will be audio recording you using the Skype recording feature. The interview will include questions about your background, and your thoughts on your experience in Japan.

### **Confidentiality**

Due to the interviews being conducted using Skype, my ability to protect confidentiality is limited. However, if you choose to participate in this project, I will assign you, other people you mention, and the institution you are a part of, a fake name. Any identifying details you desire to conceal will be concealed, insofar as I am in control of the information. That means that I would take the information out from the interview or use a pseudonym. Once the interview has been conducted, I will immediately download the recordings from the Skype chat to my password-protected computer, and delete it from the Skype chat. I will maintain the recordings on my password-protected computer until the completion of the project, and then will delete them. I will only transcribe the recordings in my room and keep the notebook in a code protected box. Upon completion, the final report will be publicly available at the Bard College Library.

### **Participation is Voluntary**

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. You may ask to stop the interview at any point. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

### **Risks and Benefits**

Potential risks of participation may include mild feelings of emotional discomfort, anger, shame, embarrassment, or stress when talking about personal histories. You may experience some personal benefit in contributing to social scientific understanding, but otherwise there are no benefits to you from participating in this study.

During the interviews, you should not reveal anything that could get you or others in legal trouble. If you say something that could be considered incriminating, I will remove it from the transcription of the interview. In addition, I must inform you that I do not have a legal right to withhold my interview recordings and notes in the event that they are subpoenaed in a court of law. The information may also be stored on servers maintained by Skype.

### **Questions and Concerns**

Please feel free to contact me at any time with questions, concerns, or if you have more information you'd like to share. You can reach me by *Email* ([bb9844@bard.edu](mailto:bb9844@bard.edu)) or *Phone Number* (347-358-7309). You could also reach my faculty advisor, Laura Ford ([lford@bard.edu](mailto:lford@bard.edu)). If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the chair of the Bard College Institutional Review Board at [irb@bard.edu](mailto:irb@bard.edu) or access their website at <http://inside.bard.edu/irb/>.

### **Participant Agreement**

Please check one of the following options:

- I agree to the interview
- I do NOT want to participant in any part of this research

Please check one of the following options:

- I agree to have the interview recorded
- I do NOT agree to have the interview recorded

I am 18 years or older, and I have read and understand the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research

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Please Type Your Name

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Date