PROCESSES OF NURTURING AND MAINTENANCE OF
MULTICULTURAL IDENTITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY.
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCE OF LONG-TERM
TRANSCULTURAL SOJOURNERS.

by

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ABSTRACT

In today’s world, exposure to other cultures has become a symbol of increasing globalization processes. Many people leave their home area to embark on a voyage of discovery and learning that affects their original cultural identity.

This study explores the life experience of independent transcultural sojourners, i.e. people who freely decide to relocate to different cultural contexts after their formative years. The inquiry covers three major themes of their intercultural experience: Multicultural identity, processes of intercultural adaptation, and change and transformation ensuing from multiple intercultural relocations. The aim of this study is to show the effects of multiple intercultural experiences on the identity of transcultural sojourners, and how they dealt with relevant emerging processes of intercultural adaptation.

Following a format suggested by Seidman (1996), five respondents were asked to recount and reflect on their transcultural experience in three separate, asynchronous interviews that covered three dimensions of their intercultural experience: past, present, and reflections. The ensuing text comprised about 16,000 words and was analyzed using both a narrative and a thematic approach using a mixed typology of categories and sub-themes made up of indigenous typology stemming from relevant scholarly literature and researcher-constructed typology suggested by the researcher and the respondents.

The analysis indicates that personal factors like mindfulness, motivation, resourcefulness, and intercultural awareness strongly influence processes of Intercultural communication competence and Multicultural identity development. Contextual factors are also relevant, as they include issues of avowed and ascribed identity. The analysis also shows no specific, generalizable link between the presence of intercultural stimuli in the original cultural milieus and the decision to relocate across cultural boundaries. Furthermore, it points to a strong relation between Piagetian constructivist learning theories and the development of ICC competence. The study also indicates that independent transcultural sojourners are in a position to negotiate the level of their integration and marginality, which in turn affects the spectrum of their Intercultural communication competence.

Finally, this study indicates the limited applicability of traditional functionalist approaches to understanding and conceptualizing processes of intercultural adaptation and multicultural identity building. It also suggests the need for a shift towards a dialogical perspective informed by systems-thinking and Chaos theory.
KEYWORDS AND ACRONYMS

KEY WORDS

Intercultural
Multicultural
Transcultural
Adaptation
Identity
Transformation
Intercultural competence
Marginality
Avowed and ascribed identity

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

IC = intercultural
ICC = intercultural communication
MCI = multicultural identity
Int. = interview
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Kia ora fellow travellers!

The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends.
‘Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.

... It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles......

Ulysses, by Alfred Tennyson
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of adults with a perceived multicultural identity developed over multiple long-term sojourns in cultures/countries different from the one in which they spent their formative years. In this report they are often referred to as *transcultural* people, i.e. people who have lived across cultural boundaries.

In today’s globalized world an ever increasing number of people find themselves at the interface of cross-cultural situations that require appropriate personal resources and adequate learning perspectives to deal with the ensuing challenges. To underline the magnitude of the phenomenon, Willis et al. (1994) talk about "a new Diaspora," and Kim (2008) reminds us how these individuals “represent numerous others around the world who bear witness to the remarkable human spirit and the capacity for self-renewal vis-à-vis the globalizing world” (pp.365-66).

Nowadays, many people are concurrently interacting with multiple cultural settings. The globalizing transformations that have affected the world over the past twenty years have considerably increased opportunities for communicating almost instantly across previously clearer demarcation lines (Nathan, 2009). Such revolution in communication opportunities has changed the dynamics of intercultural (IC) adaptation. New arrivals find a way to stay in touch with the people in their lives through the web, videotapes, photographs, instant messages and webcam conversations, and maintain a connection to their original cultures thanks to technology that provides access to satellite TV and internet broadcasts. The plethora of available opportunities has changed the very rational of processes of cultural assimilation and integration, however one chooses to call them (Nathan, 2009). This new group of transcultural people basically lives at the junction between personal and social dynamics characterized by constantly changing cultural scenarios. They engage in a dialogical relationship with both their present and past cultural environments to which they have been exposed. To that extent, they are involved in the development of Intercultural communication (ICC) competence at an appropriate level that allows them to function in a culturally different setting and to retain a balanced identity. This new scenario provides a backdrop for this research inquiry into the experience of transcultural sojourners and ways in which they develop, maintain, and nurture
their multicultural identity. A word of caution is needed here about the implications of the term *appropriate* with regard to ICC competence. This is a contested issue that involves power discourses within the target cultures (Deardorff, 2004; Xie, 2008), and stretches beyond the scope of this research.

IC contexts are complex scenarios where identity negotiation processes unfold. Stella Ting-Toomey (1993), an ICC scholar, defines *effective identity negotiation* as “the smooth coordination between interactants . . . that requires an individual to draw on a wide range of cognitive, affective, and behavioral resources to deal with novel, identity-improvisation situations” (p.73). As emphasized by Adler (1977), the life experiences of each international sojourner provide vivid and insightful examples of the dynamics that govern the development of a Multicultural identity (MCI). He suggests that people who go through processes of IC acculturation may be in the ideal position to become IC bridges and facilitate cross-cultural understanding, as they would benefit from the broader perspective gained through their acquired MCI.

Although not all IC sojourners become IC bridges, it seems to me a fact of life that all of them experience changes that would not have occurred if they had never moved to diverse cultural contexts, and that many of them refine a kind of identity that includes some or all of the IC learning that has taken place. In whatever way they arrange their lives (work, family, commitments, relations to their original culture/country, immigration requirements, financial stability, and many other context-related issues), the IC dimension embedded in their experience can neither be underestimated nor denied.

In her integrative theory on communication and cross-cultural adaptation, Kim (1988) emphasizes that IC sojourners’ adaptation depend on their ability to improve their communication competence and “actively participate in the interpersonal and mass communication processes of the host society” (p. 81). Similarly, this study spans between processes of MCI formation, ICC competence, IC adaptation, personal growth and transformation. Rather than trying to present a linear understanding of IC dynamics based on a cause-and-effect approach, the present inquiry develops from a systems-thinking perspective that shows the complexity of connections between these areas. The next section clarifies some of the above terms.
1.1.1 Clarifications on terminology

Intercultural adaptation

When considering the amount of literature on this subject, Kim (1988) recognizes that “one is most likely to be left with a sense of disarray. Different terms are used by different investigators to refer to essentially the same process, and the same terms are defined by different investigators in different ways” (p.28). Therefore, to avoid getting lost in a semantic discussion, in this report the term Intercultural adaptation mirrors Kim’s (1988) definition of cross-cultural adaptation, i.e. “the process of change over time that takes place within individuals who have completed their primary socialization process in one culture and then come into continuous, prolonged first-hand contact with a new and unfamiliar culture” (p. 37-38). However, given the degree of globalization existing nowadays, I argue that most people are unlikely to maintain complete unfamiliarity with other cultures during their formative years.

Intercultural, Multicultural, and Transcultural identity

It has been difficult for scholars to agree on a shared definition of IC identity. Y.Y. Kim has written extensively about IC identity and explains that “the term ‘intercultural identity’ is employed exchangeably with related terms such as ‘interethnic identity,’ ‘interracial identity,’ ‘intergroup identity,’ ‘multicultural identity,’ ‘meta-identity,’ ‘transcultural identity,’ ‘species identity,’ and ‘universal identity’ (Kim, 1994, footnote 3, p. 18).

In this study, Kim’s notion of Intercultural identity is used to indicate processes that lead to the emergence of an identity beyond its original monocultural references. The term multicultural, instead, has been adopted from Adler (1977) to signify multiple experiences of living in cultures different from the one people were exposed to during their formative years. Therefore, the term Multicultural identity is used to indicate a more complex form of IC identity developing from multiple exposures to other cultures.

Also relevant to this study is a definition of Transcultural identity. Willis et al. (1996) suggest that exposure to IC situations during the formative years creates the condition for the emergence of transcultural identity and of a higher level of ICC competence. In this research the term transcultural finds broader application so as to include people who have had multiple extended life experiences in other cultures after their formative years and have outgrown their original monocultural
acculturation. Such wider application is acknowledged by ethno-psychologist Tobie Nathan (2009) in his article titled Transnationalism: Diasporas and the advent of a new (dis)order. The term transcultural indicates a newer dimension in a person’s IC experience, one that transcends affiliations to single cultures and is therefore synonymous of multicultural.

1.2 AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.2.1 Aims

The main aim in this study is to describe and explain patterns of IC adaptation and ICC competence building as they emerged from the experiences of the participants. This research does not attempt to generalize findings to other contexts and situations; instead, it presents some living testimonies that highlight the very personal nature of IC human experience and the difficulty of framing it within a rigid typology.

1.2.2 Research questions

Berry (2008) emphasizes the need for the "maintenance of culture and identity" (p. 329) in today’s globalized world. Similarly, the research questions explore ways in which some sort of variegated multicultural identity can be maintained. The inquiry covers three major areas: Multicultural identity, processes of IC adaptation, and change and transformation ensuing from multiple IC relocations. The main research questions in this study explore the processes of nurturing and maintaining a MCI at the dawn of the 21st century. More specifically, this study considers the following questions relevant to the life of transcultural people:

What is it like to be a multicultural person?
What motivates people to pursue repeated transcultural experiences away from their original cultures?
What are the participants’ views of their MCI?
What are the factors of intercultural communication competence?
What are the factors of Multicultural identity?
What are the transformative aspects emerging from IC relocation?
1.3 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

It is important to recognize that this study was not about the participants’ host or original cultures, thus it does not discuss cultural differences.

This study was limited by the time available to complete it (about four months), and by the maximum length allowed for this report. The study was also purposely limited to independent adults with a perceived IC personhood developed over multiple long-term sojourns in cultures/countries different from their original ones. The complexity of mass immigration was not considered in this study.

Although while working on this research I became aware of the overwhelmingly Western bent found in the relevant literature, due to the other limitations I decided not to actively investigate factors of social, economic, and cultural inequality, and their impact on people’s IC experiences.

1.3.1 Significance

This study is directed to those who are interested in learning more about the experience of transcultural people and the development of ICC competence as a process of learning, identity negotiation, and ultimately personal transformation. It may be of interests to scholars, interculturalists, cross-cultural trainers, people working internationally, educators, and to the many people who are living transculturally at the start of the third millennium. As in the case of the research participants, this study offers people who are in life situations that predispose them to the development of multicultural identities an opportunity to reflectively explore the dynamics and significance of their experience, thereby increasing the level of their IC awareness and competence.

The personal significance of this study relates to my growing up in a multilingual border region and to my living for many years in several countries, which triggered my interest in IC issues. Moreover, my participation in the Linköping University’s Intercontinental Master’s Program in Adult Learning and Global Change has convinced me that learning plays a fundamental role in IC contexts. This realization prompted me to do this research on the connections between IC learning, personal transformation, and the shaping of identity in a globalized society.
Given my passion for the research topic, I was mindful to approach this project with an open mind, particularly during the analysis of the findings, so as not to impose my own views (Seidman, 1998). This kind of social awareness is referred to as *reflexivity* (Bryman, 2008).

### 1.4 REPORT OVERVIEW

As a guide to the reader, this section outlines the remainder of this report. Chapter 2 offers an in-depth review of the literature relevant to the main concepts and theories considered in this study, such as – for example - ICC, adaptation, competence, and MCI. Chapter 3 details the study’s research design, methodology, and method. Chapter 4 presents the participants’ case stories - together with two first-person accounts in the form of personal profiles - and discusses the research findings within the relevant literature. Chapter 5 addresses the research questions in light of the findings, draws relevant conclusions, and makes recommendations for practice and future research.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter follows a systems perspective; accordingly, the division of the literature review into sections is somewhat arbitrary, as all sections are intrinsically interconnected.

Section 2.2 introduces the reader to the field of ICC. Section 2.3 expands on that by presenting three approaches to ICC that inform my research perspective and inquiry: systems view, Chaos theory, and the dialogical approach.

The other sections present the literature that is more closely related to the research questions, with an emphasis on the main areas of literature considered for this study: processes of IC adaptation, ICC competence, MCI formation, and transformation. Several direct quotes have been used to make the reader aware of the stimulating academic debate.

2.2 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION (ICC)

ICC is an interdisciplinary, broad-scope approach to the understanding of culture and its impact on the human experience and globalization processes. It offers a valuable perspective for the analysis of complex IC issues such as identity, and personal and cultural transformation. Although this literature review will not present the history of ICC, it is essential to understand the academic debate that takes place in this particular field.

There is a large body of ICC literature stemming from as diverse fields as linguistics, anthropology, education, communication, psychology, and cultural studies. Over the years, ICC studies have extensively explored the experience of transcultural sojourners, levels of participation in their new cultural environment, and relevant issues of personal change, e.g. reflection, adaptation, stress, self-shock, disintegration, acculturation, learning, increased cultural and IC awareness, development of ICC competence, and personal growth. In the past 50 years, ICC has developed into an independent field of inquiry within Social Sciences. This process has been supported by the emergence of specialized publications like The International Journal of Intercultural Relations, The Journal of Intercultural Communication Studies, The Journal of Intercultural Communication published by Göteborg University, and several publishers like
2.2.1 Functionalist approach

The goal in this approach is to describe and predict human behavior in IC settings (Martin & Nakayama, 1999). Accordingly, cultures are viewed as static and separate from one another. This approach emphasizes a rather essentialist view of cultures, which is defined by Evanoff (2006) as “the view that there are certain ‘essential’ values which are shared by all members of a culture or by all humans by virtue of being human” (p. 428). An essentialist view emphasizes the cultural traits by which a particular nation is broadly recognized (Holliday, 2000) and looks for universal truths. This is a contested view, as “the idea that there is a ‘common core’ of cultural values shared by everyone within a given culture is as fragile as the argument that there is a ‘common core’ of values shared between cultures” (p. 428).

According to this approach, the goal of ICC is to equip people with the necessary behavioral and cognitive skills to communicate across cultural differences. Functionalists tend to consider culture as a primary source of identity that would impose its traits on its members by – for example - equating culture with nation and suggesting a causal relationship between country of origin and a certain behavior (Holliday et al., 2004).

Functionalist scholars are mainly preoccupied with suggesting categories like power distance, high context/low context, individualism/collectivism, and time orientation as defining parameters of cultural behavior common to members of the same society or country. Functionalist practitioners offer hands-on practical solutions through structured training. Following prominent scholars are cited in Martin & Nakayama (1999) among those whose works adhere to the functionalist approach. Fons Trompenaars (2010) and Gert Hofstede (2010) provide a complex taxonomy that covers the meta-differences found across all human cultures. Such differences are presented as inescapable cultural traits that can be conquered through appropriate training. William Gudykunst and Stella Ting-Toomey (1988) have also contributed to scholarly studies rooted – although not exclusively - in the same perspective.
2.2.2 Interpretive approach

Following a constructivist tradition, the goal of this approach is to understand and describe - rather than predict - human behavior in IC settings. It emphasizes the value of thick description and narrative analysis and shares its foundations with relevant social studies areas such as anthropology. Martin & Nakayama (1999) point out that in this mainly qualitative research approach “Researchers are concerned with understanding the world as it is, and describing the subjective, creative communication of individuals” (p. 5). Accordingly, cultures are not viewed as sealed, independent boxes, although they are still considered objects of independent observation. Martin & Nakayama (1999) consider culture in the interpretive paradigm as generally “socially constructed and emergent, rather than defined a priori, and [...] not limited to nation-state collectives” (p. 6).

According to Geertz (1973), a scholar that follows this approach, cultural meanings change over time and are passed on from one generation to the next. Cultures are considered dynamic and changeable as people continually construct and reconstruct their “webs of significance.”

2.3 NEW APPROACHES TO INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

More recently, attempts have been made to shift the focus of ICC studies away from the two main perspectives mentioned above.

Evanoff (2001) criticizes current approaches for focusing on the needs of a “cosmopolitan elite . . . to successfully conduct business overseas, participate in international conferences, engage in international negotiations, and the like, all within the framework of the dominant paradigm of globalization” (p.2). He advocates for a revised, more authentic approach to ICC, squarely located within the broader context of globalization processes. Evanoff suggests intercultural dialogue as a practical application of ICC that would allow people to explore a broader spectrum of possibilities with regard to finding solutions to common issues.

McPhail reminds us that “communication, as it has been practiced and continues to be practiced in Western culture, is geared towards social control and the maintenance of existing ideological and epistemological structures” (cited in Rodriguez, 2002, p.4). Furthermore, Rodriguez (2002) challenges current
traditional approaches to ICC and the functionalist view of cultural transmission as a “bedrock assumption of popular definitions of culture” that would support the idea of people as passive cultural bystanders (p.5).

The next sub-sections broadly outline two approaches to ICC that reveal a departure from functionalist and interpretive perspectives: 1) the systems-thinking approach and Chaos Theory, and 2) the dialogical approach.

2.3.1 Systems-thinking and Chaos theory

From a systems-thinking perspective, the world is understood as a whole where parts are interacting with and influencing one another with a level of complexity that transcends a linear Cartesian cause-effect view. As pointed out by Martin & Nakayama (1999), Young Yun Kim, who has been an ICC scholar for several decades, has shifted from an interpretive approach to one clearly anchored in systems-thinking and rooted in a dialectical perspective similar to Martin and Nakayama’s. In rejecting the premises of the functionalist perspective, Kim (1994) affirms:

We now need to acknowledge the common misconception that a person’s cultural reach is categorically fixed forever by whatever slot into which one is born and raised. In so doing, we need to suspend the prevailing notion that such occurrences would necessarily involve ‘throwing away’ or ‘being disloyal to’ one’s original identity (p.7).

In a clear departure from functionalist views, Aneas & Sandin (2009) also support a systems-thinking view of culture. Fred Casmir (1999), recognizing the impracticality of traditional ICC views, goes even further by embracing Chaos theory as the supporting basis of his Third-culture building model. Citing Paul Geisert and Mynga Futrell, he argues that “[when] a system becomes more complex, one’s ability to make precise statements or decisions about it decreases. In a complex situation, a person simply cannot marshal enough meaning or precision to make a logical decision” (cited in Casmir, 1999, p. 94). Supporting systems-philosopher Gregory Bateson (1972), Gregensen and Sailer also argue in favor of Chaos theory as a more appropriate way to address increasingly diverse IC dynamics (cited in Casmir, 1999). Similarly, Rodriguez (2002) believes that cultures can survive and evolve only when behaving like open systems. For him, maintaining a certain level of cultural ambiguity may be the key to survival, as it would ensure a continuity in humanity’s search for meaning and understanding.
2.3.2 Dialogical approach

Above mentioned views of culture entail a high degree of dialogism, a term first introduced by Russian writer Mikhail Bakhtin to indicate that the human experience can be better validated through open-ended dialogue (Brandist, 2001). I see the dialogical approach as part of a systems-based approach to ICC according to which cultures are not viewed in juxtaposition to one another, but as collaborative units of the human experience. Martin Buber (1958) held a similar view and wrote extensively on the importance of multiple perspectives and dialogue to understand human nature. Also physicist David Bohm (1996) recognized that we are social beings; we need language to communicate; and that true dialogue may develop out of trust and openness within a small group context that will promote the emergence of a microculture of multiple views and value systems. These ideas are also found in literature more closely related to ICC. Referencing Stanley Deetz’s work, Rodriguez (2002) argues in favor of dialogical communication, which he sees as the source for processes of identity development.

In their paper on dialectical thinking, Martin & Nakayama (1999) suggest a model for the study of ICC based on the recognition of the iterative role of context; an emphasis on the relational aspect of culture to be considered holistically and not in isolation; and the rejection of dichotomous perspectives.

Furthermore, Ribeau affirms that “intercultural communication research should be more relevant to everyday lives, that theorizing and research should be firmly based in experience, and in turn, should not only be relevant to, but should facilitate, the success of everyday IC encounters” (Ribeau, cited in Martin & Nakayama, pp. 7-8).

2.4 INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION

As mentioned earlier, this study considers adaptation dynamics in individuals who moved after completing their primary socialization process in their original culture. Anthropologist Calervo Oberg (1954) defined culture shock as the main factor in dynamics of IC adaptation. He suggested a U-curve to represent the ups and downs of IC adaptation, which he viewed as adjustment to a changed cultural context. This perspective considered IC adaptation mainly as a psychological hurdle, with processes of IC adaptation entwined with complex developmental issues. There are many studies on IC adaptation as a psychological dilemma. R.S.
Zaharna (1989) explores the connections between the discrepancies experienced in new cultural settings by transcultural sojourners and their search for identity affirmation. From a similar perspective, Ward, Bochner, and Furnham’s (2001) psychological examination of acculturation processes offers a good augmentation to ICC studies. In The Psychology of Culture Shock (2001), they offer useful insights into social identification theories and how they apply to specific groups of international sojourners. Nevertheless, this approach to understanding IC adaptation will not be specifically addressed in this report, as it would transcend the limited scope of this study and its focus on social-scientific analysis. Since the publication of Oberg’s (1954) book, more recent studies suggest a view of IC adaptation that is more related to identity formation processes rather than to issues of psychological adjustment (Kim, 1988).

Another example of studies of IC adaptation is provided by Berry (1997; 2008). He presents four different levels at which acculturation may occur: assimilation, where individuals adhere to the other cultures values; separation, where individuals adhere to their own cultural values, and reject the other’s norms; integration, where one achieves acceptance of both sets of cultural norms to a greater degree (making the best of both worlds); marginalization, where rejection of both cultures occurs.

2.4.1 Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)

In 1993 Milton Bennett developed a six-stage developmental model of IC sensitivity on each individual’s ability to successfully engage cross-culturally. His model builds upon our knowledge and awareness of our and other cultures as codified by Hofstede (2010). The stages are:
1. Denial: Individuals do not recognize cultural differences;
2. Defense: Individuals recognize some differences, but see them as negative;
3. Minimization: Individuals are unaware of projecting their own cultural values and see them as superior;
4. Acceptance: Individuals shift perspectives to understand that the same “ordinary” behavior can have different meanings in different cultures;
5. Adaptation: Individuals can evaluate others’ behavior from others’ frame of reference and can adapt behavior to fit the norms of a different culture. The key skill is perspective-shifting, the ability to look at the world “through different eyes”;
6. Integration: Individuals not only value a variety of cultures, but are constantly defining their own identity and evaluating behavior and values in contrast to and
in concert with a multitude of cultures. They shift frame of reference and also deal with resulting identity issues (M. Bennett, 1993, 2004, and 2007).

The model has been recently revised by Mitchell Hammer. A new developmental model called Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC) presents five stages of IC adaptation and excludes the integration stage of the original DMIS (MBD Group, 2010).

2.4.2 Adaptation as a learning process

From his constructivist perspective, Piaget (1982) believed that the mind creates schemas to organize processes of learning and understanding. Such schemas change based on new experiences and make room to accommodate new experiences through an increasing level of complexity. The goal of such devised constant process of refinement is the integration of accumulating knowledge and experience. For Piaget, understanding and functioning in the world depends on how successfully one is able to assimilate, accommodate, differentiate and eventually integrate the ever-changing schemas that result from multiple exposures to reality.

In IC situations there is a clear link between adaptation processes and learning. Going beyond Oberg’s (1954) psychological definition of culture shock, von Glaserfeld (1989) sees perturbation as a prime event in the learning process that helps achieve a different level of understanding; Jaeger and Lauritzen (1992) call it dissonance. Thus, learning occurs at the interface between meaning creation and experience, and develops within a context that is both personal and social. Von Glaserfeld’s (1989) constructivist perspective provides a valuable tool for the understanding of processes of IC adaptation. Supporting his ideas, Cobern (1993) also emphasizes that “construction takes place in a context – a cultural context created by, for example, social and economic class, religion, geographical location, ethnicity, and language” (p.1).

In earlier studies such as Oberg’s (1954), stress caused by IC adaptation was viewed as something to be first endured, then resisted, then conquered. Kim (1994) instead views individuals as open systems and contends that stress can lead to a high degree of self-awareness and personal growth. Echoing von Glaserfeld’s (1989) idea of perturbation, and Casmir’s (1999) views of cultures as open systems, Kim (1994) asserts:
. . . Individuals as open systems experience a state of disequilibrium or stress in the face of challenges, followed by a struggle to regain an equilibrium. Stress, as such, is viewed as a manifestation of a generic process, a temporary personality disintegration. [...] Stress occurs whenever the capabilities of an open system are not totally adequate to the demands of the environment, as is likely to be the case when a person is confronted by a person or an event whose cultural identity threatens his/her own. (p. 11)

This is consistent with Piaget’s (1992) theory on schemas, with more recent views on cultures being always in flux (Martin & Nakayama, 1999), and with a quantum understanding of culture (Rodriguez, 2002), this latter concept reflecting an appreciation of culture based on systems-thinking.

Kim (1994) also argues that, for people living in an IC environment, active IC adaptation dynamics continue to unfold due to the need for better understanding and functionality in a novel and challenging cultural environment. The interplay between stress and adaptation relates closely to “the process of organizing and reorganizing oneself — the process that, in the context of intercultural interface, involves the continual reinventing of oneself beyond the parameters of the original cultural identity” (p. 11). IC interaction would then see “the creation of new mental constructs” (pp. 13-14).

From a functionalist perspective, Gudykunst (1993) recognizes such dynamics in his Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory (AUM), which applies to interpersonal and intergroup communication. He suggests that the acquisition of new mental constructs in IC situations can be successfully achieved through the mediation of mindfulness anchored in communication awareness.

2.4.3 Role of context

The role of context in processes of IC adaptation is a debated issue that has also transpired from the interviews. Here follow two differing views on how context may influence IC dynamics.

For Peter Adler (1977), MCI is not based “on a ‘belongingness’ which implies either owning or being owned by culture, but on a style of self-consciousness that is capable of negotiating ever new formations of reality” (p.3). Accordingly, a
multicultural person is “neither totally a part of nor totally apart from his or her culture; instead, he or she lives on the boundary” (p. 3). In his study, Adler suggests that an ever increasing level of IC adaptation will result in the development of a MCI detached from previously avowed cultural allegiances. One of the main tenets in Adler’s research is that “the multicultural person is always in flux, the configuration of loyalties and identifications changing, the overall image of self perpetually being reformulated through experience and contact with the world. Stated differently, life is an ongoing process of psychic death and rebirth” (p.7). Such form of identity appears to achieve a high level of independence from specific contexts. Whether these ideas find universal applicability in the experience of IC sojourners is a fundamental inquiry in this research.

Lisa Sparrow (2000), a former ICC teacher of mine, criticizes Adler’s views by emphasizing the importance of context in identity formation processes. In her research on non-Westerners’ attitudes towards IC adaptation, she argues that identity cannot be considered apart from social realities. Her research shows that, no matter what, we remain connected to our original culture, in spite of Western ideas of self-avowed identity construction. She also points out that Western concepts of identity are an illusory luxury. Ultimately, her research shows that context cannot be considered apart from one’s adaptation processes.

2.5 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

In this area, too the literature available is very rich and suggests that processes of IC adaptation and the development of relevant ICC competence are intertwined. Much of it relates to models for ICC training and their application to an array of IC situations, mostly relevant to conducting business internationally. Many definitions of ICC competence reflect a Western perspective and find scholars in disagreement (Deardorff, 2004, p. 51; Xie, 2009).

Here are some of the terms used in the literature to refer to ICC competence: “cross-cultural adaptation, intercultural sensitivity, multicultural competence, transcultural competence, global competence, cross-cultural effectiveness, international competence, global literacy, global citizenship, cultural competence, and crosscultural adjustment” (Deardorff, 2004, p.32). The common goal in all the various definitions of ICC competence is a need to identify affective,
behavioral, and cognitive components of one’s ability to deal with the challenges of ICC. Some definitions of ICC competence are being presented in this section.\(^1\)

As evidenced in the literature examined for this study, transcultural people attempt to maintain an overall sense of balance and functionality when finding themselves in a marginal position where identity negotiation processes are constantly at work. They live at the interface of ICC situations, with a need for understanding a broad spectrum of cultural meanings. To overcome the discomfort and misunderstandings generated in such experiences and to improve the quality of their IC interactions, they develop affective, behavioral, and cognitive resourcefulness that may lead to ICC competence. Collier (1989) defines ICC competence as emerging from the mutual engagement of the interactants towards the advancement of each person’s identity. Similarly, Stella Ting-Toomey (1993) defines it as “the effective identity negotiation process between two or more interactants in a novel communication episode,” and links it to communicative resourcefulness, i.e. “the knowledge and the ability to apply cognitive, affective, behavioral resources appropriately, effectively, and creatively in diverse interactive situations” (pp.73-74).

ICC competence resonates with *communicative resourcefulness*, which implies that “a resourceful intercultural communicator knows how to negotiate self-other identities effectively, knows when to follow situational rules and cultural scripts, and knows when to transcend or transform conventions to obtain maximum relational and situational outcomes” (Ting-Toomey, 1993, p.90). Kim (1988) goes even further, by postulating a cultural transformation ensuing from the stress-adaptation-growth process, whereby people from different cultural backgrounds develop the ability to integrate into a new emerging pattern seemingly irreconcilable aspects of their diverse cultures.

In this study, the term ICC competence is used with a broad meaning that includes several levels of resourcefulness: effective identity negotiation; communication; cognitive, affective, behavioral, and ethical resourcefulness (Ting-Toomey, 1993); but also contextual knowledge and relational factors.

The literature postulates that long-term transcultural sojourners change and gain a broader cultural perspective that not only may facilitate their ICC effectiveness, but also promotes a new, more flexible and adaptable form of identity. Such

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\(^1\) For a comprehensive overview of IC Competence, see Wiseman, R. (2001).
processes of identity development have been labeled by ICC scholars with various terms such as *Multicultural identity* (Adler, 1974), *Third-culture identity* (Useem, 1963; Useem and Donghue, 1963), *Dynamic in-betweenness* (Yoshikawa, 1987), *Marginal identity* (Lum, 1982; J. Bennett, 1993). All these terms do not necessarily define the same degree of ICC competence, though they all include a progression of identity development and the emergence of a transcultural dimension in an IC sojourner’s life.

Howell (1992) believes that effective communication requires a higher level of awareness of how we interact with others. His ideas find practical application in many IC situations and have also been used in the Peace Corps manual for overseas volunteers. He proposes four dimensions of competence:

- **Unconscious incompetence** - this is the stage where you are not even aware that you do not have a particular competence.
- **Conscious incompetence** - this is when you know that you want to learn how to do something but you are incompetent at doing it.
- **Conscious competence** - this is when you can achieve this particular task but you are very conscious about everything you do.
- **Unconscious competence** - this is when you finally master it and you do not even think about it. (p.29-33)

As outlined in 2.4.1, Milton Bennett’s work (1993, 2004, and 2007) on ICC competence finds application in his Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), which offers six stages of IC adaptation. In his revised version (Intercultural Development Continuum), Hammer has expanded on M. Bennett’s work (MDB Group, 2010). According to these models, transcultural sojourners that reach the highest stages of IC adaptation are said to recognize the value of having more than one cultural perspective, and to experience their integration into their emerging MCI and worldview. Both models are used by ICC trainers and find application in the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) for the measurement of people’s ICC competence and awareness (Hammer et al., 2003; Hammer, 2008).

ICC competence theories find practical application also in the field of International Education. The 1996 report of the American Council on International Intercultural Education conference in Warrington, VA provides a link between ICC, learning, and education. The outcome of the discussion was a definition of a “globally competent learner” that emphasized traits such general knowledge of a different culture, the ability to cope with others’ values and beliefs, and a systems-thinking
understanding of the IC relationships. The conference findings also emphasized that commitment to life-long learning, responsibility of global citizenship, and the challenge to make a difference in society are fundamental to the emergence of globally competent learners.

2.5.1 Motivation and mindfulness

As shown in the findings, the two factors outlined below play an important role in the development of ICC competence:

**Motivation** sustains the curiosity at the root of IC encounters and reflects “our desire to communicate appropriately and effectively” (Gudykunst, 1993, p. 44). It also refers to “the set of feelings, intentions, needs, and drives associated with the anticipation of or actual engagement in intercultural communication” (Wiseman, 2001). Ting-Toomey (1993) includes communicative motivation as a factor in her ICC competence theory.

**Mindfulness** is a process by which people draw novel distinctions and categories when dealing with IC situations. This can lead to an enhanced awareness of multiple perspectives in problem solving (Langer, 2000). Gudykunst (1993) suggests that “it is only when we are mindful of the process of our communication that we can determine how our interpretations and messages differ from others’ interpretations of those messages” (p. 43).

This is very relevant to the link between learning and IC adaptation processes. Citing Langer, Onwumechili et al. (2003) remind us that, among people operating in IC situations,

- Those who create new categories resist being stuck with rigid categories, mindsets and ways of seeing the world . . . Mindful communication is juxtaposed to mindless communication in which case one does not lend attention to or allow others’ perspectives and worldviews to permeate his or her way of being (p.51).

The idea of mutual IC mindfulness resonates with Yoshikawa’s (1987) state of dynamic in-betweennes and posits the emergence of a form of identity that may lead to personal transformation and the emergence of a third-culture as envisioned by Casimir (1999).
The bringing into awareness of IC differences through the practice of mindful communication is central to this research inquiry, as it relates directly to people operating at the interface between processes of identity negotiation and IC adaptation. This finds support in Ting-Toomey’s recognition of the relational nature of mindful communication in people with multiple reacculturation experiences (cited in Onwumechili et al., 2003, p.52).

### 2.6 MULTICULTURAL IDENTITY FORMATION

This section presents a summary of definitions of IC identity and ways in which they may evolve towards MCI. Here, too it is important to keep in mind the meaning assigned to specific terminology.

#### 2.6.1 Intercultural identity

For Kim (1988), IC identity is complex and develops along a stress-adaptation-growth dynamic trajectory. It is built on “an individual's ability to grow beyond their original culture and encompass a new culture, gaining additional insight into both cultures in the process” (Kim, cited in Wichert, 1996). She argues that processes of IC identity development are intertwined with issues of acculturation. Specifically, acculturation and the emerging of IC identity are supported by motivation, language competence, and the ability and opportunity to access available personal and mass communication. To that extent, consistent with Adler’s ideas (1977), Kim (1994) suggest that IC sojourners should “engage in cultural cross-borrowing, and understand that cross-borrowing of identities is often an act of appreciation that leaves neither the lender nor the borrower deprived, symbolically or otherwise” (p. 7).

Furthermore, for Kim (1994) processes of IC identity formation depend on external (present, past, context) and internal factors (temperament, desirability), both influenced by power issues. In more recent studies, Kim (1994) embraces an alternative “Systems Approach to identity” that envisions the possibility of complex identities that interact in a constructionist, dialogical fashion towards possible identity transformation. This would lead to the emergence of an in-flux IC identity that “would discourage the obsessive adherence to the rigid categorization of people, [and the] exclusive loyalty based on past group affiliations” (p. 17). This is summarized in a recent paper on Intercultural
personhood (Kim, 2008) on her systems-based evolutionary view of IC identity. The term IC personhood would then be synonymous of MCI.

Kim’s views are clearly located within a systems-thinking tradition such as Casmir’s and Martin and Nakayama’s, although the latter place her among traditional humanistic, interpretive scholars (Martin & Nakayama, 1999).

2.6.2 Multicultural identity (MCI)

For Adler (1977), “the multicultural person is a radical departure from the kinds of identities found in both traditional and mass societies” (p. 3). At some point, a person’s identity takes on a new dimension, beyond that person’s original cultural experience. Such resulting identity “represents a new kind of person unfettered by the constricting limitations of culture as a total entity” (p. 11). Expanding on the idea of bicultural individuals, Adler postulated MCI as a form of identity characterized by indefinite boundaries; issues of marginality; the risk of diffuse identity, loss of authenticity, and dilettantism. Nevertheless, he described this “new kind of person” as an emerging protagonist in today’s global society. “The identity of the ‘multicultural,’ far from being frozen in a social character, is more fluid and mobile, more susceptible to change, more open to variation” (p. 3). For Adler, this kind of universal person has the facility to transcend the contextual boundaries of single cultures.

2.6.3 Cultural marginality

Janet Bennett (1993) uses cultural marginality “to indicate a cultural lifestyle at the edges where two or more cultures meet” (p.113). She suggests that several groups fall under the umbrella of this broad definition, including immigrants, refugees, global nomads, and long-term IC sojourners.

Her understanding of IC identity stems from an ICC training perspective similar to Milton Bennett’s (1993, 2004, and 2007). To appreciate the practical consequences of cultural marginality, she suggests two kinds of marginality: encapsulated and constructive marginality. The marginally encapsulated person has difficulties moving between different cultural frames of reference, mainly due to unresolved issues of loyalty towards one or more cultures. The marginally constructive person instead has developed a more secure sense of identity and has the ability to move back and forth between the different frames of reference.
found in different cultures (J. Bennett, 1993, p.113; M. Bennett, 2007, p. 13). As Evanoff (2001) points out, “moving beyond culturally prescribed norms means either that the individual will begin to decisively construct his or her own identity or that there will be a loss of identity, difficulty in decision making, alienation, excessive self-absorption, multiplicity, and a ‘never-at-home’ feeling” (p. 23).

Both Adler’s multicultural person (1977) and J. Bennett’s cultural marginal (1993) display the characteristics of cultural bridges, i.e. people capable to operate effectively across cultures. Increased ICC competence would then be the outcome of this kind of IC identity development.

Finally, considering processes of identity formation in transient people with recurrent re-entry experiences, Onwumechili et al. (2003) suggest a model based on “Cross and Strauss’ (1998) everyday functions of identity: buffering, bonding, bridging, code switching, and accenting individualism” (cited on page 58).2

2.6.4 The dialogical approach to MCI formation

This sub-section outlines how dialogical approaches to ICC apply to processes of MCI development.

In 1987 Muneo Yoshikawa introduced the concept of the Double Swing Model. Its name derives from the symbol of infinity and signifies a state of cultural “dynamic inbetweeness” where individuals meet on neutral ground. Martin & Nakayama (1999) argue that “the most challenging aspect of a dialectical perspective is that it requires holding two contradictory ideas simultaneously” (14). In such context, interactions among people would entail a synergy of both personal and cultural dimensions. Similarly, Matoba (2003), in his studies on glocal dialogue, suggests the need for IC convergence.

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2 “Buffering is the act of protecting and insulating oneself from potential identity threats. One way this can be done is by “putting up a wall” between oneself and another interactant. Bonding functions to enhance personal connectedness via attachment to the cultural collective as a means of alleviating psychological stress. A transient accomplished this function by reestablishing friendship networks immediately upon reentry. Bridging refers to the attempt to be empathetic toward a cultural other’s worldview. This requires that the transient learn the latest news on community and personal occurrences before or immediately upon reentry and relearn the codes of the ingroup. Code switching is an adaptive function that temporarily relieves others’ negative perceptions of one’s cultural competency by not only relearning the code, but by attempting to adhere to it in order to appear as one of the ingroup members” (Onwumechili et al., 2003, p. 58)
The dialogical approach finds resonance in several articles presented in this review: Rodriguez, 2002; Casmir, 1992; Casmir, 1999; Kim, 1994; Evanoff, 2001; Onwumechili et al., 2003; Xie, 2008. It generally implies letting go of closely-held ideas on one’s cultural identity and venture into a new ambiguous stage of IC transactions (Rodriguez, 2002).

2.6.5 Alternative views of MCI

Sparrow (2000) questions Adler’s and J. Bennett’s views on identity based on categories that transcend national influences. She suggests that some people instead - notably non-Westerners - display a holographic identity that is externally ascribed to a person, and that carries embedded connections to that person’s original culture. This brings her to ask “whether the ideal of a free-acting individual is in itself a western or male viewpoint and second, whether it is an optimal view at all” (p.176), and “whether the concept of an individuated self, capable of free choice and action is not a construct of western languages and cultures” (p. 178). The results of her research suggests IC sojourners’ ability to integrate different cultural selves and develop a form of identity that includes many identities rather than “transcend” them.

This view is shared by Onwumechili et al. (2003) who argue that the idea of a self-constructed identity may be better suited for people from Western, individualistic bent, rather than for those with a collectivist world view.

These ideas find resonance in Xie’s reflections (2008) on ICC competence. Like Sparrow, she criticizes current approached to ICC competence, recognizing that the role of power imbalances has often been disregarded in ICC studies, and that such studies usually focus on the individual and do not consider the larger cultural contexts from which IC experiences originate. The development of personal skills to overcome issues present in IC situations would not be enough; a more comprehensive contextual understanding of ICC is needed. Furthermore, she criticizes the use of standardized ICC competence inventories as being biased and generated by dominant cultural discourses.

2.7 TRANSFORMATION

Processes of MCI formation affect transcultural sojourners differently. The higher stages of IC adaptation correspond to an increase in dynamics of MCI formation.
that may eventually lead, but not necessarily, to a true transformation, as “an intercultural person’s cultural identity is characteristically open to further transformation and growth” (Kim and Ruben, 1988, p. 313). They define transformation as “the process of change in individuals beyond the cognitive, affective, and behavioral limits of their original culture” (Kim and Ruben cited in Deardorff 2004, p.46).

With regard to the experience of IC sojourners, like Adler (1977), Kim (1988; 1994) talks about a disintegration phase that derives from an initial internal and external conflict situation, and serves as the basis for the emergence of new evolutionary dynamics. Accordingly, the ensuing personal transformation may be viewed as a form of internal growth that reflects the sojourners’ ability to interact meaningfully and effectively with their new cultural environment, i.e. their ICC competence.

MCI building may progress beyond the highest stages of IC adaptation presented by Milton Bennett (1993, 2004, and 2007) and reach “a generative stage in which entirely new forms of culture are creatively produced” (Evanoff, 2001, p. 25). This evolutionary view of MCI formation is supported by Mezirow’s (1991) Transformative Learning Theory which postulates emancipatory change through individual transformation. This theory confronts and challenges the taken-for-granted norms, leading to a dramatic shift or transformation in the learner’s way of viewing the world. According to Mezirow, at the core of transformational learning lies individual learners’ ability to construe, validate, and reformulate the meaning of their experience. The emphasis is on ‘perspective transformation’ as a means to promote personal growth and, eventually, the emergence of a new society. In her analysis of transformational learning, Lena Wilhelmson (2002) concurs that “perspective transformation leads to a revised frame of reference, and a willingness to act on the new perspective” (p.187).

Such transformational learning is dialectic, as it discusses cultural assumptions through cognitive reflection, which leads “to a dramatic shift or transformation in the learner’s way of viewing the world . . . [by] bringing of one’s assumptions, premises, criteria, and schemata into consciousness and vigorously critiquing them” (Fenwick, 2001, p. 13). Perspective transformation would then occur through dialectic interaction with others that would promote the critique of people’s cultural assumptions (Mezirow, 1991). Processes of MCI formation that lead to the emergence of a transcultural personhood are therefore intertwined
with processes of social transformation where the IC dimension plays a prominent role (Xie, 2008).

Evanoff (2006) transcends the idea that IC adaptation is unidirectional, i.e. a process “by which sojourners adapt their personal norms to the norms of the host culture” and suggests that “transformation should be seen not simply in terms of individuals changing themselves to fit into their host cultures but also as the process by which host cultures transform themselves to accommodate the presence of sojourners” (pp. 423-24).

Similarly, Roth (2003) envisions the emergence of a cultural Bricolage, or creolization which would lead “to the transgression of traditionally defined cultures along the lines of nation states, leading to the emergence of a new ‘third space’ or ‘third culture’ (Kaya, cited in Roth, par. 82). Creolization leads to the emergence of new, transnational identities and syncretic cultures. Identity and culture no longer develop along fixed trajectories but in dynamic, interactional, and complex patterns“ (par. 82).

2.8 SUMMARY

Processes of IC adaptation are powerful learning experiences that, together with ICC competence, shape cultural identity. From a dialogical and systems-based perspective, in-flux identity rooted in IC experience takes on multicultural traits, influencing dynamics of personal change and transformation. Today, due to an ever-increasing level of complexity in the experience of transcultural sojourners, new ways to understand IC processes are being experimented.
CHAPTER 3: METHODS

3.1 METHODOLOGY

This research develops within a qualitative research strategy informed by interpretive, dialogical, and systems-bases approaches as outlined in previous sections. It is both descriptive and explanatory. Even though there is a need to broaden the scope of ICC to include issues pertaining to social, economic, and cultural inequality (Evanoff, 2001; Xie, 2008), due to the limitations of this study, these aspects of the respondents’ IC experiences were not specifically addressed.

Heeding to Kim’s (1988) call for more qualitative research based on detailed idiographic verbal accounts, this study explores the transcultural experiences of a small number of participants by focusing on their subjective experiences and their interpretations of them. The intensive review of the respondents’ first-person accounts provides revealing material for exploring and discussing the research questions.

The ICC research approach followed in this study concurs with Aneas and Sandin’s (2009), who clearly reject the idea of culture as a “collection of fortuitous traits,” (Par.57) and emphasize the relational, ever-changing character of culture. Considering the influence of essentialism (Holliday et al., 2004) on cross-cultural communication research and my own sway on the interpretation of the finding, a reflexive approach as defined by Aneas & Sandin (2009), Bryman (2008), and Casmir (1983) has informed this study.

Examining competing approaches to the study of culture, Martin & Nakayama (1999) outlined fundamental differences that separate the functionalist from the interpretive paradigm. These include “important metatheoretical differences in epistemology, ontology, assumptions about human nature, methodology, and research goals as well as differing conceptualizations of culture and communication, and the relationship between culture and communication” (p. 1).

In agreement with von Glaserfeld’s (1989), this study rejects the assumption that people are empty boxes - a tabula rasa - eager to be filled with fixed samples of an externally existing world. It affirms that reality in not extrinsic to learners, who instead use motivation to actively construct their knowledge and meaning.
from their personal experience. Therefore learning is seen as the product of self-organization.

3.2 INTERVIEWS

This research is based on in-depth semi-structured asynchronous e-mail interviews. To guide me through the several stages of the research, I have consulted relevant publications on this particular type of interview, such as James, 2007; Selwyn & Robson, 1998; Bampton & Cowton, 2002; and Seidman, 1998.

3.2.1 Participants selection

Snowball/purposive sampling (Bryman, 2008) was used to select the participants. They were first contacted via e-mail in February and March 2010 by the researcher to test their interest and availability. In early March 2010 eight respondents were sent a first official e-mail (FIRST CONTACT RESPONDENT FORM) containing information on the project and their role as participants. It also outlined the selection criteria as follows:

- Individuals who have spent their formative years in one culture, and later lived in more than one culture different from their original one for at least 3 years, and are currently still living outside their country of origin.

- People who perceive themselves as having a multicultural identity (however they choose to define that).

- Independent movers who left their original country on their own free will.

On March 25, 2010 a CONFIRMATION OF ACCEPTANCE and the INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS were e-mailed to six participants who met the selection criteria. Five people returned the consent form, thereby agreeing to participate in the study. To protect the respondents' identity and privacy, in this report aliases have been used and sensitive information has been changed. The enrollment documents are included in Appendix A.
3.2.2 Asynchronous e-mail interviews

Following a format suggested by Seidman (1996), three separate interviews were sent to the participants, to cover three areas of investigation—past, present, and reflections. This is consistent with Kim’s (1994) view of identity formation processes as based on present, past and contextual factors (see 2.6.1).

Questions were defined in advance and e-mailed to the respondents. Asking respondents the same sets of questions facilitated issues of comparability and data analysis, even though it may have detracted some of the clues typical of face-to-face interviews. The interview questions are listed in Appendix B.

To allow respondents time to iteratively explore their own thoughts, the three interviews were sent at intervals of several days. In agreement with the research design, participants were encouraged to reflect on their transcultural experiences. The response from the interviewees was enthusiastic, both qualitatively and quantitatively very impressive. Their narratives amounted to a total of 16,000 words, the equivalent of 75 double-spaced pages. In this report, the term narrative is frequently used to refer to the interviewees’ rich-text accounts and is therefore synonymous of interview.

3.2.3 Advantages and disadvantages of e-mail interviews

Considering my geographic location and the limited time awarded for this study, this method provided advantages beneficial to my research. E-mail interviews allowed respondents to reflect on their experience and formulate written narratives (Bampton & Cowton, 2002). Respondents, particularly non-native English speakers, had the opportunity to find the words to accurately describe their experiences. This method was also inexpensive, did not suffer from time pressure, and eliminated issues of transcription.

As recognized by Aneas and Sandin (2009), language, utterances and gesture are important in cross-cultural research. Since the e-mail interviews did not allow to observe paralanguage patterns such as non-verbal communication cues, or to ask synchronous follow-up questions, utterances and gestures were automatically excluded from this study.
Language issues were partly sidestepped by using English as the language of the research, and by selecting participants who have a certain degree of fluency in English. Though this choice may have introduced a level of bias, it facilitated both the collection and the interpretation of the narratives, based on the assumption that – to a large extent – the respondents shared an equivalency in the meaning of the vocabulary used. I was mindful of this assumption throughout the study and - whenever necessary - contacted the respondents to clarify certain aspects of the interviews.

3.3 PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

Considering that the emphasis of this research is on how people make sense of their experience, along with a thematic analysis a narrative analytic approach was followed to interpret the findings, (Bryman, 2008). "The aim of narrative interviews is to elicit interviewees’ reconstructed accounts of connections between events and between events and contexts” (p.559). This approach allowed the participants to recount their experiences and make sense of what happened, and was chosen to create meaningful renditions of their stories, so as to allow the reader to appreciate the diversity inherent in IC experiences. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the findings according to the mixed typology described below.

Following a format suggested by Seidman (1998), two participants’ profiles have been included in Chapter 4 as first-person verbatim accounts, carefully compiled from the interviews to illustrate the complexity of the respondents’ experience. To improve readability, transitions have been added in square brackets. Seidman (1988) suggests that a profile is a story “crafted by the interviewer from what the participant has said; . . . [it] allows us to present the participant in context, to clarify his or her intentions, and to convey a sense of process and time . . . [it] is a compelling way to make sense of interview data” (p.102). The report length allowed for this report dictated the choice of limiting the number of profiles presented; however, this does not reflect a lack of salience in the other participants’ narratives.

The interviews were coded using a twofold system that includes available indigenous scholarly typology and typologies suggested by the respondents or the researcher, in line with the idea that “at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they
make of that experience” (Seidman, 1998, p. 3). Themes and categories were identified in an iterative process that included the researcher’s informed hunch and available literature, following the idea that the researcher in this study is the “principal information gathering instrument” that acts from a position of reflectivity (Aneas & Sandin, par. 55). The typology is listed in Appendix C. Additionally, following a narrative analysis approach, to emphasize the significance of the each participant’s personal experience, excerpts have been used throughout this report, either as single quotes or as compilations from different interviews. The relevant interviews are referenced in parenthesis.

As a way to bring the interview process to a closure, respondents were asked to write a brief metaphor to describe their sense of identity, intercultural persona, and the way they stay connected to the different intercultural experiences in their lives. Seelye and Wasilewski (1996) suggest metaphors as “a tool for conceptualizing salient aspects of your multicultural self” (p.176). Therefore, inclusion of brief metaphors may help clarify answers to the research questions. The metaphors are presented at the end of Chapter 4.

The method has proved adequate for the aims and scope of this study. Some of the limitations related to the interview format were presented earlier. No particular ethical considerations have emerged during this study. The interviews were conducted respectfully, and the participants were forthcoming with their answers and comments.
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research findings and discuss them within the available literature. The first section introduces the participants and includes two comprehensive profiles as suggested by Seidman (1998). Carmen’s and Yves’ profiles are presented below for their rich and compelling texts that exemplifies the diversity of experience found in many other IC sojourners. Their words provide a vivid reference for the analysis that follows. The other sections present the data collected through the interviews and offer an interpretation by linking them to the literature review.

For the thematic analysis, the findings were interpreted by grouping them into three main meaningful themes: Multicultural identity (MCI), IC adaptation, Change and transformation. I argue that the relationships between these areas are dialogical and systems-based; therefore, interconnections and overlapping across themes are common.

4.1 THE PARTICIPANTS

Three women and two men born between 1938 and 1972 participated in this research study. They come from diverse social and cultural backgrounds and all share multiple life experiences in cultures different from the one where they spent their formative years.

GISELA’S STORY

Gisela was born in Klagenfurt, Austria in 1972. She speaks German as her native tongue, and several other languages. In spite of growing up in what she defines as a monocultural environment, she developed an interest in other cultures from an early age, sparked by family stories about the multiethnic Austro-Hungarian Empire, a teacher in high school, and personal travels. To escape the pressure experienced in her conservative family, at the age of 18 she did a one-year study abroad program in the United States. Her curiosity and sense of adventure supported her desire to re-invent herself. After her return from the States, she received a business degree and became increasingly involved in intercultural activities. Moving to different countries - including Dubai, Brazil, Hong Kong, Switzerland, Germany, and the U.K. - became her way of life. She currently lives in Turin, Italy, where she works as an intercultural trainer and executive coach, and enjoys her role as a cultural bridge. She believes it is important to maintain the connections with friends that she met at different times and places. Her
collection of international music contributes greatly to that effort. In spite of her feeling very comfortable living in Italy, she remains “curious as hell” about places, still showing a strong interest in international relocation.

JEREMY’S STORY
Jeremy was born in Cincinnati, OH, USA in 1938. He speaks French, English, German, Spanish, and Dutch on a regular basis, and also Italian, Russian, and basic Indonesian. He believes he is a different person when he speaks a different language. He was raised in a truly multicultural environment made up of 60 different nationalities. His family included Austrian-German, Polish, Czech, Italian members. He liked imitating his neighbors, which may have influenced his ability to learn foreign languages. His father encouraged him to try out other customs and take risks. His high school friends belonged to many different nationalities and ethnicities. At age 17 he developed an incurable case of Wanderlust, which nurtured his passion for travel. Personal curiosity about other cultures, his university studies, and international career moves took him to several countries, which resulted in the development of a chameleon-like personality that allows him to interact in many different cultural contexts. He currently works as an author and intercultural consultant and, although he still travels extensively, he feels at home in a small town on the French Mediterranean coast.

SARAH’S STORY
Sarah was born in London, U.K. in 1965. Despite growing up in what she describes as a fairly nationalistic and monocultural environment, she did not share her parents’ fear of foreigners. Instead, she was very interested in the people of other cultural background that lived in the area. At 18 she went abroad for the first time with her best friend from Spain. At 23, propelled by her sense of adventure and with no specific plans, she moved to the Far East with her partner. When they returned to England, years later, they had a daughter. Their second child was born in London. Thus, after several sojourns in different countries, and a re-entry period in the U.K., she moved to Spain with her family, where her third child was born and where she teaches at a British School. Although she does not speak Spanish and does not have many local friends, she feels very comfortable there; however, she is not interested in becoming more adjusted. In fact, she and her family are now preparing to move to the Persian Gulf, but they will keep their home in Spain. In general, she thinks of herself as rootless, which she considers a positive thing.
CARMEN’S PROFILE

My name is Carmen. I was born in Lima, Peru in 1964. I speak Spanish as native tongue, English, some Portuguese and some French. I was the only child until I was nine. My parents worked all day and I was raised with my grandmother. Somehow I grew up alone. I enjoyed studying, reading, exploring. I liked to have many pen pals around the world, collecting stamps and postcards. My interest [in other cultures] became bigger when I was 16 and for the first time I went abroad, to Miami, USA. Then my desire of traveling started and somehow, without being conscious of this, I wanted job and studies that have international exposure. When I got information from other countries, I liked to learn the capitals, the language, the geography, the flags . . . [and] enjoyed hearing stories from people traveling abroad.

I grew up in a military government; studied at the university in democracy; and began to work in a global village. In the school we had to wear uniforms. There was no cable, tv was black and white, radio shows filled the daily living at home. The import of products were strict.

[At the age of] 16 I studied in a university for high class people and I was not. My classmates traveled extensively and I wanted to do the same. The inflation and the terrorism . . . impacted negatively to our image in the world, so many international presence in our country was lost. During that decade, I studied the Bachelor and started my MBA.

In 1990, [after Fujimori was elected president], Peru began to have more connection with Asia, specially Japan. In 1993, I [got a government job] . . . and I stayed 8 years. In that time . . . I began to create materials about Peru, interacting with people in English and Spanish, and somehow I think that those times were the seed for my current experience. My first vacation was in Europe (1994) and Middle East (1998) and some other short travels abroad. I invested most of my spare time traveling as much as I could.

In 1997 1998 I was 33, 34, and I found that I needed something new. Peru began to make me feel uncomfortable. I left Peru in the middle of personal crisis, not knowing clearly what to do, I just simply follow my intuition. So I adopted Nike’s slogan: JUST DO IT!
In 2000 . . . I decided to study something abroad and I started a Master . . . in [the United States]. I traveled by study purposes [to the USA, Canada, Mexico, and China] and my intercultural personality began to glow. When I made the reentry in Peru, I was fully convinced that I needed to leave Peru. I applied to Canada, it did not succeed. Argentina appeared as an option. I simply took my luggage and decided to go. My expectation was to live freely as single woman, going to restaurants, being free, living alone, working, discovering, enjoying such the girls in Sex and the City. I live in Buenos Aires, Argentina, since 2004. When I decided to stay, I discover that I was still fearful, that I was hooked at Peru and certain familiar problems, and I was not fully present in Argentina. That changed little by little. Currently, I work independently as trainer and coach, specially in cross cultural topics. In my free time . . . I like to contact people by internet for interest groups, enjoy reading, and walking.

I find home in Peru since is my home country . . . where most of my life is written but I find . . . home in Argentina as well when I go to bookstores or having a coffee. [In the future,] I plan to live less time in Buenos Aires and be less attached to the city. My challenge is South America, starting businesses connections with Peru and Argentina, then adding new countries in South America. I would like to know more about intercultural field . . . [and] expand my intercultural experience . . . maybe [do] a specific study.

YVES’S PROFILE

My name is Yves. I was born [in a town] about 3 miles south of Paris, in 1961. My native tongue is French. I speak English with my wife and most of my colleagues and clients. I have been a cross-cultural trainer for 15 years.

Growing up in a Parisian neighborhood in the 60’s and 70’s felt pretty safe and interesting. I had a fairly sheltered youth, not wealthy, but not in need of anything. My intercultural interactions were mostly with Europeans. I learned English and German in school. I travelled abroad alone early on (England when I was 11) and was fortunate that my parents were open to other cultures.
Religious/spiritual practice had an important effect on me being who I am today. I was raised catholic . . . [and] became Buddhist . . . in August 1987. My identity has been honed through years of intercultural living. The defining moment in my intercultural life was the decision to apply [in 1984] for an [accountant] position in Africa during my [military] draft. I wanted to do something useful with my time, not sitting idly in an office. [The recruiter] at the French Ministry of Cooperation said initially that I was going to Ivory Coast. Fine. He called an hour later to tell me that he had changed his mind. I was going to Cameroon. Pourquoi pas? Why not? To me, it didn't make any difference. Escaping the dull French military environment was what mattered most.

My second experience in Africa was totally different. The full year that I spent in the Congo (1986) . . . was by far the most exciting year of my life. I was young (25), had responsibilities that I would never have had in France and was learning a lot – not only about myself but also about other people, about the local culture, the politics and so on. Even though I was single, I felt very well integrated, and enjoyed a very good relationship with the people I managed and worked with. [However,] loosing one’s illusions is part of growing up, and living on your own in Africa makes you grow up rapidly.

[In 1990] I wanted to do something else with my life (I didn’t like the accounting work I was doing) and one way of “radically” changing my life was to come to the US and study. And the change, along with its long-term implications in my life, were radical, to say the least. Moving to the US at the age of 29 to study for a Masters in . . . Psychology was very different and difficult because I was back in school, didn’t speak much of the language, and had to study while trying to adapt to a foreign place. After three years in Africa and three years [back] in France . . . culture shock was much more violent. I was under the illusion (again!) that things could be similar, and there were not. It was like moving from the North Pole to the South Pole. Something that really surprised and depressed me [while] studying in Wisconsin is that I felt very useless; suddenly no longer “producing” anything after seven years of professional experience. It took me a while to overcome that feeling. The ‘detachment’ from home that I experienced being away in Africa in the mid-80’s helped tremendously – it helped to cut off that “attachment to my roots” that I
still see in many of my friends in France. Living and breathing across cultures makes us more aware of what I would call our universal, fundamental attribute: our human beingness.

I met my wife in school, a Chinese Malaysian person. We live in New Jersey . . . in a fairly conservative neighborhood, primarily white and middle class, with a tiny bit of diversity. It is a safe place to live. I have been here since September 1995. [I feel] very well integrated.

I have very little contact with Africa, and haven’t been in touch with friends out there in a long while. I didn’t get a chance to go back after 1989. Memories remain, friendships are still strong, but time takes its toll. I go back [to France] two to three times a year, usually for less than two weeks at a time . . . it doesn’t feel like a vacation . . . something else; visiting a place where I fully belonged at one point, and where many things and many people are familiar.

4.2 THEME 1: MULTICULTURAL IDENTITY (MCI)

This theme relates to the emergence of MCI, which is broadly understood in this study as the identity resulting from multiple exposure to and interaction with different cultures. I argue that MCI develops from complex processes that encompass the aspects discussed in the sub-sections below. A summary analysis appears at the end of the section.

4.2.1 Original culture

The interviews show that the participants’ original cultural environments played a role in their search for IC exposure and the development of their interest in other cultures. However, the interviews do not reveal a linear, cause-effect relation between original contexts and the respondents’ growing IC interests. Instead, the link appears to be interactional, i.e. the result of dialogical dynamics between the sojourners and their cultural environment, as one cannot isolate the context from their personal experience. The suggestion by Chappell et al. (2003) that the self relationally communicates with context finds corroboration in the following examples.

Carmen grew up under a military government that did not allow much international contact. Nevertheless, as a child she had many pen pals all over the
world. Her first job gave her the opportunity to communicate with people in English and Spanish, which she viewed as the start of her IC experience (Int. 1).

In Yves’s case, his original cultural environment provided for some opportunities at a time which he describes as safe and interesting; that mostly entailed contacts with other Europeans. However, he does not relate those early experiences to his later interest in other cultures. Sarah grew up in a very English nationalistic environment that was not tolerant towards foreigners. But she wanted to be different from her parents:

I was very interested in the different cultural identity of the people surrounding us. At this time one of my closest friends was Spanish and I remember sitting in her house watching her mother cook and completely involved in how different her family food, language, cultural was. (Int. 1)

Although Gisela’s original cultural environment was not as nationalistic, it was predominantly Catholic and monocultural, with very few immigrants, an environment that “did not stimulate nor discourage interest in different cultures” (Int. 1). Jeremy’s case stands out, as he grew up in a very multicultural context with immigrants of 60 different nationalities. Moreover, his family was very supportive of his curiosity about other cultures. In high school he interacted with a large international and multiethnic population. He considers the IC opportunities available in his original milieu as a given (Int. 1).

Furthermore, the interviews suggest that – as argued by Sparrow (2000) – aspects traceable to the respective original cultural contexts influence IC sojourners’ holographic identity (p. 178) and help preserve a link between their current identity and their original cultural experience. I suggest that such link is embedded in their personal biography, as also recognized by Watson (2006), according to whom autobiographies are at the core of personal identity building processes. Like her, I argue that transcultural sojourners “inventively, judiciously, purposefully” build their autobiography through the construction of a narrative made up of carefully selected episodes (p.511). This is clearly shown, for example, in Yves’ interviews, where he consistently emphasizes his Buddhist practice and his doubts about functionalist approaches to IC understanding. Such biography-building process “is conceived as a lens through which the world is seen or as internal model which guides identity and action” (Chappell et al., 2003, p.20).
4.2.2 Factors behind intercultural relocation

Several factors seem to influence the respondents’ interest in IC relocation. The main ones are summarized in Table 01. Below are some of the most common ones.

Escape from pressure.
Carmen and Gisela moved away from their home areas to escape pressure to conformity and the ensuing sense of discomfort. “I left Peru in the middle of personal crisis, not knowing clearly what to do” (Carmen, Int. 1). There was urgency in her decision: “I was 39 when I decided to leave Peru. I did not want to receive my 40s without changing country” (Int. 1). Gisela remembers how “I just wanted go away as far as possible . . . the US seemed the furthest and most remote place accessible for me as a student to go and so I did” (Int. 1).

Travel and interest in other cultures.
All respondents share an interest in other cultures, which led them to leave their home areas and has informed their following relocations. Such interest was compounded by a desire to travel. “I invested most of my spare time traveling as much as I could,” Carmen remembers (Int. 1). Similarly, Jeremy states: “I have always had a passion for travel and seeing different places” (Int. 1).

Self-motivation, the need to do something new, sense of adventure, openness, curiosity.
These similar factors emerged from many interviews. They all relate to a search for new horizons, a new place, and a new beginning. For Carmen, motivation was a strong aspect of her decision to live abroad. She wanted to emancipate herself from the constricting role assigned to women in Peru. She wanted to travel, and a job and studies with international exposure; she also had a real talent and love for other languages, which facilitated her transition into a new culture. “In 1997 1998 I was 33, 34, and I found that I needed something new” (Carmen, Int. 1). Statements from other interviewees are similar: “I was young and all I wanted was to leave Austria and explore the world so did not spend much time thinking about my destination” (Gisela, 1 Int. 1); “we decided to buy a one way ticket, to Singapore. We both wanted an adventure and I had lost my job” (Sarah, Int. 1); [currently] “I need to experience a new environment with new colours, tastes, smells” (Sarah, Int. 3); “I was going to Cameroon . . . Escaping the dull French military environment was what mattered most” (Yves, Int. 1).
Yves’ experience has been particularly marked by his search for change. When he went to Cameroon, he recalls, “I wanted to do something useful with my time, not sitting idly in an office, as some of my friends did near Paris” (Int. 1). Similarly, before his relocation to the U.S., he remembers how “I wanted to do something else with my life (I didn’t like the accounting work I was doing) and one way of “radically” changing my life was to come to the US and study” (Int. 1). And currently he wants to change the focus of his professional practice: “Time to do something else? Certainly” (Int. 2).

Table 01 - Factors that influenced decision to relocate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AFFECTIVE FACTORS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escape from pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of adventure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The need to do something new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COGNITIVE FACTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and interest in other cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in foreign languages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interviews show that affective factors predominantly influence the participants’ decision to move. More specifically, in line with Gudykunst’s (1993) argument, motivation shows up in the interviews as a prominent force behind IC relocation. Along with a strong desire to uproot themselves from their original cultural contexts, motivation appears to support the respondents’ curiosity about new IC experiences. At least in their initial move, participants used relocation as a means to discovery of both other cultures and themselves, which implies that motivation has been instrumental to gaining deeper knowledge and meaning about their personal experience (von Glaserfeld, 1989).
4.2.3 Factors in Multicultural identity building

All interviews show how living and interacting within other cultures have shaped the respondents’ identity. Both general and personal factors influence the development of MCI through the ongoing interaction between the sojourners and their new cultural contexts. However, this occurs in different ways. For Gisela, her identity changes constantly but she still recognizes a core “me” (Int. 1), whereas Jeremy’s identity seems to change according to the language: “I am a different person when I speak a different language” (Int. 1).

Personal factors appear to strongly influence the development of MCI, as they provide the necessary attitudinal and aptitudinal conditions. Among the most salient ones, the respondents cite curiosity, openness to new challenges, not being judgmental, and take things as they are. This suggests the emergence of mindfulness (Langer, 2000; Gudykunst 1993) mediated by their tolerance towards ambiguity (Casmir, 1999; Rodriguez, 2002).

The role of context is evident in Carmen’s awareness of how the locals perceive her, and how that may influence her own perceptions of herself. Similarly, Gisela presents her identity as composite, and influenced by context in the host culture, including how locals “singled her out” because of her gender, religion, language, and skin color (Int. 3). These two latter statements point to issues of avowed vs. ascribed identity. According to Baldwin (2009) “one’s avowed identity is the one that one claims (avows) in an interaction. An ascribed identity is one that we give to someone else.” This reveals differences between others’ expectations and/or assumptions about IC sojourners, and the sojourners’ reluctance to fit that mold. As a way to avoid uncomfortable, forced choices, von Glaserfeld (1989) suggests a dualistic accommodation that “ascribes perceptual and cognitive capabilities to others based on reciprocity” (p.7). From a dialogical perspective, this would allow the maintenance of seemingly conflicting aspects of one’s IC identity, thereby avoiding the sometimes painful choice of one culture over another.

Table 02 summarizes the most significant factors that have contributed to the emerging of some form of MCI in the respondents. They resonate with those listed in Table 01, highlighting the leading role of motivational factors in the development of MCI.
### Table 02 - Factors that influenced respondents’ MCI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENERAL FACTORS</th>
<th>PERSONAL FACTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Intuition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency in other languages</td>
<td>Open mindedness; a sense of non-defensiveness; comfortable with being different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need to re-create my life; not being attached to my roots</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Free spirit; a sense of adventure; curiosity; openness to new challenges; willingness to travel, explore, and try new things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respect for other cultures; not being judgmental; take things as they are.</td>
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</table>

#### 4.2.4 Respondents’ definitions of their identity

As suggested earlier, the choice of the term *Multicultural identity* in this study has been tentative. The interviewees, however, offer their own definitions of their IC persona. Carmen views herself as “cross cultural”; she believes that Multicultural identity “is not a matter of adding experiences in many countries, it is about how to penetrate in another cultural mindset, understand it and then reconnect without losing my original cultural traits” (Int. 3). She thinks of herself as a global citizen who belongs to the world (Int. 2; 3). The main traits of her identity are “(a) not being judgmental with countries (b) envision opportunities in countries (c) resourceful (d) quick thinker (e) flexible (f) adaptable (g) tolerant to frustration (h) networker (i) bilingual” (Int. 3).

Gisela sees herself as “intercultural, defined as being able to communicate effectively in cross cultural situations and to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts... It is not just the exposure to cross cultural encounters that makes you a multi/intercultural person” (Int. 3). It is unclear how she would define “appropriate.” As pointed out in 1.1, this is a contested term, as it is difficult to isolate relevant applicable cultural parameters. In many cases, interactants are pressured into conforming to cultural norms imposed by specific elites (Xie, 2008; Deardorff, 2004; McPhail cited in Rodriguez, 2002).

For Jeremy, MCI “is not a concept, it is just me, a life being lived, time passing, saying yes to what is here and to what comes my way.” He also believes that his is a chameleon-like identity that is the cumulative result of experience, rather than the replacement of previously-held identities (Int. 3). His perspective rejects
the notion of identity as the result of a progressively accumulating linear experience; instead, it signals the emergence of an identity characterized by an increasing level of complexity that can be conceptualized within a systems-thinking approach to ICC, which also reinforces the idea that MCI is an integrated whole rather than a way to transcend single cultural components (Sparrow, 2000).

Yves does not question his identity anymore. It has become a non issue, as if he had transcended culture. He has succeeded to shed what he calls “the primary layers of culture, coats of paint,” and has now no need “to learn about cultures, or how culture shapes our actions, reactions” (Int. 2). As he says, “I am who I am – primarily a human being who experiences what other fellow human beings are experiencing: pain, joy, challenges, revelations, happiness and sadness. Differences do not matter anymore” (Int. 2). Finally, Sarah does not see herself as multicultural, but rather as a world-traveler (Int. 3). “I would like to describe my identity as international, as I listen to international news, read authors from all over the world about different cultures and experiences” (Int. 2).

The aforementioned perspectives on identity suggest a move away from a coherent “authentic” self, towards a model based on “multiple subjectivities,” “multiple lifeworlds,” or “multiple layers” (Chappell et al., 2003, p. 16). This shift clearly questions the functionalist notion of IC identity as a set of rigid, pre-determined traits.

**4.2.5 Maintenance and nurturing of Multicultural identity**

All respondents show a need to stay connected with the people and places in their lives. Table 03 summarizes some of their approaches used for such endeavor. The degree of connectedness to their original cultures, however, varies. Jeremy nurtures connections to people rather than to contexts and recognizes that “my original culture no longer exists except as a set of memories and feelings which I can sometimes recreate and enjoy” (Int. 3). To some, maintaining connections with their respective original cultural milieu relates to their families still living there. Yves believes in “face-to-face encounters rather than in technology-mediated communication” and visits France two-three times a year (Int. 3). Similarly, Gisela’s strong connection to her homeland is maintained through frequent visits favored by geographic proximity (Int. 3).
To explore how the development of MCI reflects on the respondents' sense of belonging, they were asked to provide their definition of home. All of them experience home mainly as a transient locus with affective and emotional connotations, rather than as a specific geographic location. For Carmen, “home is a feeling” (Int. 3); for Gisela, “home is in my heart . . . that I carry with me wherever I go”; Yves believes that “home is where the heart is” (Int. 3); and Sarah feels rootless and her home “is where my family are all together” (Int. 1; Int. 3). In general, their current place of residence is home to them because, like Jeremy says, “home is where I currently live my life, make my commitments and do my work and find the people that I do these things with” (Int. 3). Carmen and Gisela also recognize a bond with their ancestral areas. For Gisela, that is called Heimat, “because I know all the corners and their smells and sounds by heart”; for Carmen, that is Peru, “where most of my life is written there” (Int. 3).

The above seems to support a form of MCI based on individual independence commonly nurtured and promoted in Western societies (Onwumechili et al., 2003). However, in spite of their exposure to predominantly Western ideas of self-avowed identity, IC sojourners seem to maintain a special connection to their place of origin (Sparrow, 2000).

Section summary
All aspects analyzed in this section dialogically concur to the emergence of MCI. The narratives show no clear direct linear link between original cultural milieus and the later development of MCI in the participants. Furthermore, the interviews

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3 Heimat is a German word that conveys the strong, complex, entrenched connection existing between people and their place of birth. The concept finds wide acceptance in Central European cultures.
reveal the respondents’ tendency to carefully select the most salient incidents in their IC experience (Watson, 2006), and to shape their own biographies through the lenses of their personal experience (Chappell et al., 2003).

Affective factors greatly influence the respondents’ decision to move across cultural boundaries and serve as a means to gaining deeper knowledge of both themselves and other cultures. Personal factors set the conditions for the emergence of MCI in the participants through the development of mindfulness and tolerance towards ambiguity. Context, instead, affects issues of avowed and ascribed identity, which in turn influence affective, behavioral, and cognitive processes of IC adaptation and MCI building.

The participants’ definitions of their identities portrait MCI as an in-flux process of ongoing refinement of the personal cultural traits and approaches that result from a dialogical relation with their new and past cultural milieus.

4.3 THEME 2: PROCESSES OF INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION

This theme addresses the respondents’ accounts with regard to IC adaptation as outlined in 2.4. Four areas affecting IC adaptation are outlined below, whereas an interpretation of the findings is offered at the end of the section.

4.3.1 Challenges

Though transcultural sojourners may face some challenges when moving across cultures, it must be noted that not all respondents have perceived relocations to other cultures as challenging, and that the degree of difficulty varies individually from relocation to relocation. For example, Jeremy finds it natural to live and navigate in different places (Int. 1), and Gisela does not perceive any particular challenges that would be different from those encountered in her native country (Int. 2).

For Carmen and Yves, however, things happened differently. Culture shock and re-entry shock are well-known aspects of IC adaptation processes (see 2.4). For example, when Carmen moved to the United States she recalls, “I could not communicate properly in English and I needed a time to be by myself, so I began to feel invisible, ignored and it created me conflict with my classmates . . . I felt isolated and I felt that I did not belong either [to the] USA or Peru” (Int. 1). Those issues became even more severe in Argentina - her current place of
residence - where she developed some health issues that resulted in her feeling “depressed” (Int. 2). She also felt frustrated whenever she returned home to Peru (Int. 1). Yves experienced difficulties after his third IC relocation: “Culture shock was much more violent when I moved to Wisconsin in January of 1990 to study for a Master . . . [that time it] was very different and difficult because I was back in school, didn’t speak much of the language, and had to study while trying to adapt to a foreign place . . . it felt very harsh” (Int. 1).

Within his native United States, Jeremy also made a traumatic transition from his original multicultural environment to the Anglo-protestant work setting:

I was not individualistic enough and cared too much about the other people . . . Secondly, in my family we commonly expressed emotions and argued dramatically. This was forbidden in the US workplace where expressions of emotion, particularly if it looked like anger, cost one his credibility. (Int. 1)

Furthermore, he admits: “in my native USA [I] have more ‘reverse culture shock’ than I feel as ‘culture shock’ in France” (Int. 2). His account indicates that culture shock may occur even within the original national context, and that reverse shock may adversely affect a sojourner even more than the novelty of living in a new culture.

Among the most cited challenges encountered by the respondents are loneliness (Carmen, Yves), lack of support (Yves), loss of illusions (Yves), feeling useless (Yves), IC interactions (Yves, Carmen, Sarah), and different values and beliefs (Carmen, Jeremy). Rather than viewing these events as psychological imbalances (Oberg, 1954; Zaharna, 1989; Ward, Bochner, and Furnham, 2001), I argue that they may be seen as an opportunity for personal growth, part of transformative processes that may lead to the development of some form of MCI.

4.3.2 Knowledge of other cultures

The respondents’ knowledge of their host cultures and relevant language, and their level of preparedness for their new IC experiences are important factors in their adaptation to a new cultural environment. As shown below, the interviews reveal a striking difference in the respondents’ perception and quantification of knowledge of other cultures in their first and later relocations.
When they first moved away from home, all respondents admit that they were interculturally not well-prepared. “I simply took my luggage and decided to go” (Carmen, Int. 1). “In hindsight I was not at all prepared for an international move and the little information I had was from TV and some books” (Gisela, Int. 1). “I cannot say that I had any formal or deliberate preparation at all” (Jeremy, Int. 1). “Both times when I left for Africa . . . I had no cultural preparation whatsoever” (Yves, Int. 1). “We had no preparation at all, we hadn’t done any research, we just had a very open mind” (Sarah, Int. 1).

To fill the knowledge gap, some of the respondents assumed cultural similarities based on commonality of culture and language. That was true for Carmen when she moved to Argentina: “I knew very close Argentina because we have some historical links and the country is familiar to Peruvians” (Int. 1); and for Yves when he went to francophone Africa: “The language was the same (both countries are former colonies of France) and in retrospect, the culture shock wasn’t great. It was certainly an easier transition to the Congo, because of my previous stay in Cameroon” (Int. 1).

In later relocations, however, they were much better prepared. Gisela uses a complex approach to preparing for international relocations that includes “to find out as much as possible about the geography, history and political situation in the new country” (Int. 1), whereas Jeremy says that he generally has friends in the target location or goes on a working assignment where there is a context to receive him: “I either knew the language or studied it before I left or tried to pick it up when I was there informally” (Int. 1). In general, all respondents have learned from their first relocation experience and have become more aware of what moving across cultural boundaries entails. As discussed next, they now prepare themselves accordingly by developing specific strategies that meet their personal needs.

4.3.3 Strategies for dealing with new intercultural situations

The interviews show that the respondents resort to their own strategies to function with minimum discomfort in a new cultural context. It is impossible here to generalize, as each interviewee presents a variety of approaches that are clearly contextual and depend on numerous factors. However, the strategies recounted in the interviews suggest that the sojourners engage socially within their new contexts, aided by factual knowledge of specific aspects of the host culture (e.g. language, verbal and non-verbal communication patterns) and by
the development of personal attitudes. This idea and some of the participants’
approaches are summarized in Table 04.

It is interesting to note that Yves rejects the term strategy outright, although his
approach, too, reveals the merit of specific tactics. Commenting on his culture-
shock experience, he strongly warns: “You don’t plan, you don’t strategize
because your compass has gone wild, and you don’t always know what you are
doing . . . But don’t strategize. We human beings are humans, not machines or
robots, and human laws are at times defied or puzzled by cultural transitions”
(Int. 1). Instead, he suggests the importance of reaching out to others (Int. 1).
In his affirmations, he stands out among the other participants. He sounds
skeptical about making sense of his IC experience using the tools made available
to him by his professional ICC training practice. For him, life just happens and
one cannot try to control its dynamics. Again, it seems to me that his take may
reflect some aspects of his Buddhist practice, though – based on the available
text - I am unable to elaborate further on this specific aspect.

Table 04 – Strategies for dealing with new IC situations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERACTIONS</th>
<th>PERSONAL ATTITUDE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reach out</td>
<td>Be initially a silent observer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find cultural informant</td>
<td>Reflect on experience with cultural insiders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network to meet more people</td>
<td>Self-reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make friends</td>
<td>Curiosity and try to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet &quot;locals&quot;</td>
<td>Openness towards other cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask a lot of questions, talk, listen, talk</td>
<td>A sense of fascination with other cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit the use of expats organizations to initial stage</td>
<td>Be patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintain a good sense of humor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be comfortable with risk taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjust to local customs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-reliance; autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Detachment from home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pretend you don’t understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Go with the flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do not plan; do not strategize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nike Slogan: Just do it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjust persona according to the language spoken</td>
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</tbody>
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ACTIVITIES
Music, art, history, and cuisine
4.3.4 Intercultural communication competence

Meeting the challenges encountered in other cultures leads to the development of ICC competence, which combines several skills and organizes them in a meaningful and hopefully effective fashion. ICC competence develops from issues of IC adaptation, grows out of the need for functionality and understanding, and becomes part of transcultural sojourners’ MCI. In other words, it is the glue that holds together one’s identity, experience, and contextual relationships, and allows sojourners to maintain a sense of cohesion and coherence.

Carmen talks about ICC competence as making “relocation easier in terms of this process of entries and reentries, changing the cultural software easily, talking both languages at the same time” (Int. 1). As Gisela says, “I no longer need to think about how to order, ask, buy and interact with Italians it has become second nature” (Int. 2). Similarly, Jeremy points out that, “depending on the environment and the circumstances, various parts of me ‘kick in’ as they seem appropriate, mostly unconsciously, but occasionally as conscious choices” (Int. 3). Sarah agrees that, “it is very positive to be able to see other cultural traits and to incorporate these into your own” (Int. 3).

IC awareness, i.e. the conscious ability to recognize the dynamics and factors at play in an IC context, plays a major role in the development of ICC competence. Such awareness may come slowly. As Yves recalls from his first experience in Africa, “I don’t think I was aware of what culture is all about, and what culture (either your culture of origin or the culture where you now live) does to you. I was still too ‘tender’ to realize that” (Int. 1). Later, however, he recognized that, “being a fish out of your own water makes you more conscious of who you are, culturally and racially . . . living and breathing across cultures makes us more aware of what I would call our universal, fundamental attribute: our human beingness” (Int. 1).

Gisela remembers that only after moving to the U.S. she became aware of cultural identity: “I discovered new aspects of myself. I discovered . . . where the Austrian in me stopped and where ME began. Which values of my parents and family I had taken on board and which I did not mind leaving behind” (Int. 1). Jeremy believes that “awareness of core values of cultures is useful to help organize and integrate experiences . . . This consciousness continues to grow as I see more and more the effects of globalization” (Int. 1). The incremental
development of IC awareness finds recognition in much of the literature reviewed for this study, including Milton Bennett’s DMIS (1993, 2004, and 2007), Hammer’s IDC (MBD Group, 2010), and Howell’s model of effective communication (1992).

Dynamics of IC adaptation and the development of ICC competence go hand in hand. The interviews suggest that IC adaptation is a learning process in which the respondents engage to develop necessary ICC competence. They also reveal a variation in the degree with which the IC sojourners adapt to their relevant host culture, suggesting different levels of cultural marginality. To analyze this particular aspect, let’s consider the next paragraphs.

Yves talks about his diminishing interest in ICC issues and his skepticism towards essentialist views of culture, as he has come to prefer a perspective that values commonalities over cultural differences. Specifically, he points out that “[we] are on the same path . . . we are all humans and differences do not matter” (Int.2). If examined within Milton Bennett’s DMIS (1993, 2004, and 2007), Yves’ comments would fit into the minimization stage. This was confirmed when he took the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer et al., 2003; Hammer, 2008). “I ended up in Minimization,” he says, “which might be surprising, due to the extent of my living in the US and across cultures” (Int. 2). Yves outright rejects that outcome, as he believes he is well-accepted and integrated in his host culture. This discrepancy could indicate a flaw and biases in the design of standardized ICC competence inventories, as suggested by Xie (2008).

Yves’ identity may also reveal issues of constructed or encapsulated marginality (J. Bennett, 1993; Evanoff, 2001), in which case it would suggest that marginality can be a product of MCI (Adler, 1997). Sarah, too displays traits typical of marginality, as she feels comfortable in her host culture, though is not interested in deepening her level of adaptation mainly because of lack of local connections (Int. 2). She is comfortable being an outsider, and considers that in a positive way. Possibly because of her lack of knowledge of the local culture and language, she relies on cultural stimulation from her original English background.
Section summary

In general, in their first relocation to another culture, the respondents were supported by strong self-motivation but not by any meaningful preparedness. In some cases, that caused episodes of culture-shock. Rather than viewing culture shock as an obstacle to be overcome (Oberg, 1954), the respondents seem to consider it as a mechanism that provides opportunities for personal growth and transformation. By gathering information on their next host culture, and by improving their level of IC preparedness through the practice of specific strategies, they were able to ameliorate the quality of their IC experience and mitigate discomfort. In this regard, I offer the following analysis.

As suggested by Kim (1994), the first IC relocation was characterized by some degree of personal and cultural disintegration due to the density of novelty found in their new experience. This ignited a process of revision of the participants’ mental schema akin to the one suggested by Piaget (1982), aimed at the refinement of the necessary affective, cognitive, and behavioral personal skills to cope with a new cultural context. Similar learning dynamics are identified by von Glaserfeld (1989) in his view of perturbation as a primary mechanism for improved understanding (see 2.4.2). The strategies suggested in the interviews point to the respondents’ capacity to retain old constructs and integrate them into the new schemata required for survival in a novel cultural environment (Kim, 1994). Consequently, as implied by von Glaserfeld (1989), IC adaptability would require tolerance for ambiguity and some level of resilience in an environment characterized by “external and internal constraints” (p. 11). Also Rodriguez (2002) recognizes that meaning and ambiguity are interconnected, “constantly pushing us to construct new and different ways of being and understanding the world” (p.1).

One strategy commonly employed by the interviewees is the use of cultural informants. This, along with the development of context-related cultural and language knowledge, signals a cognitive awareness of the learning processes outlined above and the relevance of context in the dialogical interaction between the sojourners and their host environment. This argument finds support in Cobern’s article on contextual constructivism (1993).

All respondents have developed strategies to meet the challenges encountered in their IC experiences. Through a process of refinement of their cultural awareness, culture-specific knowledge, and attitudes, they have constructed a frame of
reference - referred to as ICC competence - that allows them to carry on with their lives. Issues of marginalization can define the make-up of ICC competence by expanding or reducing its scope based on the needs and interests of individual sojourners.

4.4 THEME 3: CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION

The third area of inquiry in this study comprises the change and transformation that may ensue from relocation across cultures. Given the difficulty of empirically identifying change, this section summarizes the respondents’ reflections on their experience as a way to qualitatively describe processes of personal change and/or transformation.

For Carmen, studying at a university in the U.S. changed the way she communicated with people: “In my daily life, I began to act and talk directly . . . I felt I became more executive for my decisions, I felt that I have more options, I opened my mind and gave me permissions to take risks in many aspects in my life” (Int. 1). Later she said, “What has changed over time is my adaptability skills, appreciation of diversity. I consider it helped me to redesign my professional life, too. Working in cross cultural topics is mastering the adaptability skills, the empathy through cultures” (Int. 3).

Gisela says, “[after I move] I start feeling differently” (Int. 1). Sarah recognizes, “I have become more tolerant and understanding of other people beliefs” (Int. 1). Whereas Jeremy views his IC experience as a continuum rather than change: “At the core, I really don’t see myself as having changed much, but having acquired more possibilities, skills, awarenesses, etc. (Int. 3) . . . I myself am the continuity. The cultures are in me much as files or programs in the computer that I can both reflect on and move between” (Int. 3). To explain the change derived from his IC experience, Yves offers this interpretation: “In Buddhist terms, I would say it was a karmic experience – I needed to expiate some karma and the expiation went twice the normal speed in Wisconsin!” (Int. 1) With regard to her identity, Carmen offers her reflective analysis: “The traits that remain are my sense of humor, my intuition skill, the sense of adventure, the empathy for people from different part of the world. The traits that are new are being visionary about taking the best of each country. Another trait is my capacity of networking” (Int. 3).
Personal transformation reflects the most salient aspect of change. On this, some respondents offer insightful comments. Yves gives compelling examples of personal transformation. Since before his first relocation, he has looked for ways to “radically change” his life. Here are some captivating excerpts compiled from his three interviews.

It feels like a few coats of ‘cultural paint and socialization’ were removed, peeled off, layer after layer. Which also explains why I no longer feel . . . the attachment to my culture of origin, however I want to call it (Int. 1). I have now a better understanding of who I am. It is a process, it is a path that I now pursue much more consciously as I ever did (Int. 3).

Being a cultural being is less interesting to me at this time in my life than being a ‘human’ being. It is possible that my interest and emphasis have shifted from cultural differences to human commonalities . . . I realize that we can have very deep interactions without discussing or even questioning our cultural frame of reference (Int. 1). I am a human being, first and foremost. The cultural-being part of me doesn’t have much importance any longer. I also realize we can work at a very deep level across cultures without even discussing cultural differences. They take care of themselves in the process of human communication, providing the environment is caring and respectful (Int. 3).

[Today] I don’t feel the need to learn about cultures, or how culture shapes our actions, reactions, who we are. I clearly believe in our common humanity and that’s where I see myself going more and more every day (Int. 2). I see my path as going deeper into myself, searching for my true nature, as opposed to meeting new people and discovering new places—although I enjoy discovering new places and people too! (Int. 3)

The narratives show how the respondents’ lives are transformed through multiple IC relocations. After the decision is made to leave the original area, things are bound to change, sometimes dramatically. One important factor in such transformation is the sojourners’ ability to critically reflect on their IC experiences, as postulated in Mezirow's (1991) Theory of Transformative
Learning. Moreover, a critical attitude towards one’s own and other cultures contribute to the development of ICC competence.

4.5 PARTICIPANTS’ METAPHORS

At the end of the interview process, respondents were asked to write a metaphor to describe their sense of identity, intercultural persona, and the way they stay connected to the different intercultural experiences in their lives. As anticipated in section 3.3, participants’ metaphors are presented here to emphasize the importance of “personal cognitive reflections” (Fenwick, 2001, p.13) as a way to make sense of IC experiences.

Carmen

I feel that I am a free spirit sharing and connecting experiences and traits of different countries, encouraging taking the best of each country and creating a new experience without losing the original identity of being born in a particular country. It is like building a pyramid whose top is the summary of the best traits of each country, but first the basement has to be built and it is bigger in size than the top. But the top has the best view.

Gisela

I consider myself like the river MUR. I am instantly recognizable as Mur but constantly different. The color and the depth of the water changes and sometimes even a few bog boulders move but it is still the same river. You need to understand what is below the surface to safely navigate it! Constantly changing to remains the same!

Jeremy

Like the plant that a friend gave me for my birthday some years ago, growth seems imperceptible but real. I keep repotting it to a bigger pot. Then suddenly it flowers abundantly and has offshoots like children.

Yves

Life is a path, and everyone walks it, consciously or not so consciously. Living and working with a purpose across cultures helps to remove some of the original layers of culture, and therefore discover who we truly are. Besides that, it’s very much a question of perception, evolution and consciousness. We’ll all get there, one day!
These metaphors are a reminder of how multiple IC relocations may shape people’s identity and influence – sometimes dramatically, as shown in the respondents’ own accounts – processes of change and personal transformation. As Yves says, “In Buddhist terms, I would say it was a karmic experience – I needed to expiate some karma and the expiation went twice the normal speed in Wisconsin” (Int. 1).

Subscribing to Varela’s (cited in Roth, 2003) notion that identity is a lived experience that involves change, I want to emphasize the importance of a practical approach to the understanding of IC identities. Varela contended that scientific theories should explain our personal experience and recognize the complexity of culture; I would add that it should also recognize the tremendous personal struggles found in transcultural people. As Rodriguez (2002) points out, we live in a “world of chaos and order, ambiguity and meaning, homogeneity and diversity, stability and instability, and equilibrium and disequilibrium” (p. 2). Living the life of a transcultural person requires a high level of awareness of all the above.

The next chapter will summarize the findings and address the research questions in light of the analysis discussed above.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

This chapter sums up the most salient findings in this study and provides an overview of the research questions and the relevant answers that emerged from the analysis. It closes with some final remarks and recommendations for practice and future research.

This study has provided insightful and rich glimpses into the lives of some modern transcultural sojourners. It has interpreted their experience in the three main areas of inquiry presented in this report: processes of IC adaptation, processes of MCI formation, and Change and transformation. Besides showing the interdependence of these areas, the study has illustrated a strong link between processes of IC adaptation and relevant transformative learning dynamics. The emerging scenario is characterized by variations in transcultural sojourners’ modes of learning, adjusting, and personal reflection, and is informed by individual co-participation in the shaping of IC experience.

This research has presented a critical view of traditional functionalist approaches to ICC and has argued in favor of a shift away from essentialist definitions, towards the development of a dialogical perspective informed by system-thinking and Chaos theory.

In the attempt to uncover and understand non-linear relationships, the layout of this research was premised on a systems-based, dialogical examination of the three main areas. Within such framework, processes of ICC competence, adaptation and identity were presented as mutually influencing each other, whereas transformation appears as a likely outcome of MCI. This study has also shown how all these dimensions are being affected, in a feedback-loop fashion, by issues related to mindfulness, motivation, resourcefulness and context. Based on Daley’s (2004) suggestions on the usefulness of concept mapping, this layout is conceptualized in Figure 01 on the next page.

To further clarify the outcome of this study, each individual research question is presented below. The comments refer exclusively to the experience of the participants as emerged from the interviews and do not imply broad generalizations.
Explanations

The left side of the map shows three compatible approaches to ICC: Systems-thinking view, Chaos Theory, and the Dialogical approach. The three approaches directly relate to the research question (RQ), which takes up the central position in the concept map.

The right side of the map shows the main three areas of inquiry: PROCESSES OF IC ADAPTATION, MCI FORMATION, CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION, and – additionally - ICC COMPETENCE. The arrows represent the level of dialogical relationship between and among the three areas of inquiry.

Dashed line
A dashed line indicates the possibility of a relation between two areas. Not every stage of adaptation will therefore lead to the development of MCI, and not every form of MCI will necessarily entail a process of personal transformation and the emergence, and – as Evanoff (2006) suggests - not every IC sojourner with some degree of MCI will influence the host cultural context.

Mono and bidirectional arrows
They indicate factors that may influence the main areas, and the direction in which such influence may occur.
What is it like to be a multicultural person?

The interviews suggest that participants have found different ways to affirm their interest in IC living. The analysis indicates that the challenges typical of new cultural settings lead to a form of disintegration of existing cultural and personal parameters (Kim, 1988, 1994; Adler, 1997), which sees the emergence of IC awareness and relevant ICC competence. The ongoing revision of mental schema helps accommodate complex new cultural experiences and norms into the sojourners’ existing framework (Piaget, 1982; von Glaserfeld, 1989).

This research also indicates that the composite experience of transcultural people is characterized by a high degree of complexity that cannot be understood through a functionalist approach. The interviews have revealed the impracticability of such approach, as it cannot be generalized that people living across cultures would go through pre-set stages of IC adjustment, and neither that they would carry with them specific national traits embedded in their constantly changing identities. The respondents’ own reflections on and perceptions of their IC experiences clearly show that each of them resists essentialist classifications, in particular with regard to their personal struggle in trying to make sense of a highly complex and ambiguous reality; their connections to their original cultural milieu; their interactions with their new cultural settings; and their individual understanding of their complex cultural identity. In all these instances, the participants have displayed a very personal perspective that defies linear classifications.

What motivates people to pursue repeated transcultural experiences away from their original cultures?

Both affective factors - such as curiosity and a sense of adventure - and cognitive factors - such as interest in travel, other cultures, and foreign languages - affect the decision to move. Motivation, however, plays a central role (Gudykunst, 1993), and closely relates to a strong desire for change on the part of the respondents, who embark on a voyage of personal and cultural discovery (von Glaserfeld, 1989). This supports the strong learning dimension embedded in IC experiences.
The study has also shown that the milieus in which respondents grew up may or may not have provided them with any IC stimulation to support their later decision to undertake multiple IC relocations.

**What are the participants’ views of their MCI?**

The respondents’ self-representations suggest a kind of individually-shaped identity that is always changing, akin to Adler’s (1977) concept of **multicultural person**. However, the sojourners also display traits that are mindful of an externally ascribed **holographic identity** (Sparrow, 2000) that retains strong links to their respective original cultures. This may be indicative of the impact of globalization processes on IC sojourners at the start of the 21st century, and mirrors Nathan’s (2009) proposition that transcultural people are creating new spaces for themselves around which their contextual and human connections gravitate. The intensity, quality, and number of links to their original and new milieus may also vary based on the degree of IC marginality experienced by the sojourners (Milton Bennett, 1993, 2004, and 2007; Janet Bennett, 1993).

Ultimately, this study has shown that MCI is not viewed as a collection of traits embedded in a single definition, but instead develops around multiple intertwined centers, away from pre-determined, functionalist and essentialist classifications (Chappell et al., 2003).

**What are the factors of MCI identity?**

Both personal and contextual factors strongly influence the development of MCI. Among the former ones, this study has highlighted curiosity, openness towards novelty and uncertainty, which suggest that mindfulness (Langer, 2000; Gudykunst 1993) and tolerance for ambiguity (Casmir, 1999; Rodriguez, 2002) play a major role in IC adaptation processes.

Contextual factors are relevant to issues of avowed and ascribed identity (Baldwin, 2009). In the respondents’ individual approach to their IC experience, one can recognize their attempts to balance these two apparently conflicting aspects. Here, too transcultural sojourners are dealing with dialogical dynamics affecting their personal views and those of their relevant host cultures. Ideally, as suggested by von Glaserfeld (1989), the two types of identity could be mutually accommodated to the benefit of all parties involved.
What are the factors of intercultural communication competence?

As mentioned earlier, ICC competence is a major theme in ICC training, which results in a very large body of relevant literature. Instead of listing the numerous components of ICC competence, here I want to highlight its relevance to the life of transcultural sojourners.

ICC competence develops from an increased awareness of the nature of IC experiences and helped the sojourners to meet the challenges encountered in novel IC contexts. It has shown how such awareness occurs slowly, almost incrementally, as postulated by Milton Bennett (1993, 2004, and 2007), Hammer (MBD Group, 2010), and Howell (1992). The development of ICC competence entails openness towards other cultures and towards IC learning, which are shown on Table 01 and Table 02 among the participants’ salient personal traits. This indicates a strong relation between learning and the development of ICC competence.

Furthermore, sojourners adjust the spectrum of their ICC competence to their personal needs and perspectives based on their level of IC integration or marginalization (Milton Bennett, 1993, 2004, and 2007; Janet Bennett, 1993).

What are the transformative aspects emerging from IC relocation?

The degree of change and personal transformation revealed through the interviews is substantial and supports the idea that multiple IC experiences not only have an impact on people’s cultural identity, but that they may even promote processes of personal transformation (Kim and Ruben, 1983). As seen in the respondents’ testimonies, transformation may reach beyond the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of IC adaptation dynamics (Kim and Ruben, 1992, cited in Deardorff, 2004), and affect people at the core of their human essence. Yves’s reflections provided a particularly strong example of this level of personal growth.

Also, the degree of transformation observed in the respondents' accounts mirrors dynamics of transformative learning that revise original cultural schema and provide a new frame of reference that is used to make sense of different cultural contexts (Mezirow, 1991, 2000; Wilhelmson, 2002; Kim, 1994). Such process is
facilitated by a dialogical approach to understanding IC experiences that allows for reflective and critical examination of new and old cultural assumptions and schemata (Fenwick, 2001). This would again indicate a strong link between learning and IC adaptation dynamics.

5.1 FINAL REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has shown that personal circumstances, biography, and diversity of context strongly influence processes of IC adaptation and MCI formation. Strategies employed by sojourners to meet the challenges encountered in IC situations require more than a linear, logical understanding (Casmir, 1999); they should include cognitive, affective, and behavioral resources (Ting-Toomey, 1993), as well as attitude-based resourcefulness such as motivation and mindfulness (Langer, 2000; Gudykunst, 1993).

The findings have also shown that the lived experience of IC sojourners cannot be easily generalized, which would indicate that a mechanistic taxonomy, such as Milton Bennett’s (1993, 2004, and 2007) and Hammer’s (2008), is insufficient to define MCI development processes. Optimistically, this study has contributed to increasing acceptance and understanding of a new way of contracting one’s own cultural identity beyond essentialist limitations and monocultural allegiances.

Chappell et al. (2003) suggest that “the self changes according to the relationship in which one is engaged” (p. 15). This study has shown that this also applies to processes of MCI building, supporting the idea of the self as an ever-changing concept that varies based on the relational context people are in, and develops out of the exploration of multiple meanings. IC identity is therefore in flux (Aneas & Sandin, 2009; Martin & Nakayama, 1999; Peter Adler, 1977; Kim 1994), and changes depending on and through the nature of IC relationships. This is particularly important for those who, like the participants, do not clearly fit the mold of a single culture, but instead see themselves as the product of several influences.

With regard to the future of IC research, it would be important to break away from unidirectional approaches that focus on an individual’s adaptation to a specific new cultural context but fail to consider relevant transformative processes within the host cultures (Evanoff, 2006). I advocate that, in future research endeavors, the complexity of processes of IC adaptation be extended to include relationships of third-culture building (Casmir, 1999), an approach that considers
cultural identity not as the result of “fixed trajectories but in dynamic, interactional, and complex patterns” (Roth, 2003, par. 82). As recognized by Onwumechili et al. (2003), “the shift to cultural identity has now generated investigations surrounding issues of culture building and multiculturalism” (p. 46). Such broader dialogical approach could include an investigation of *glocal dialogue* (Matoba, 2003) as a practical application of ICC. A better understanding of dialogue might in fact help people break out of essentialist cultural mindsets and explore a wider range of possibilities for our global society. In turn, this would also improve opportunities for effective co-operation on many common issues (Evanoff 2001).

Finally, the question could be asked whether the MCI emerging in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world would benefit from Chaos theory as suggested by Casmir (1999) and Rodriguez (2002). In other words, would transcultural sojourners gain from a kind of ICC competence derived from an understanding of complex IC dynamics beyond the mechanistic knowledge of fixed cultural traits? Like Evanoff (2006), I argue that it is difficult to develop truly dynamic ICC competence as long as this is build mainly on factual and rather essentialist descriptions of others’ reality. Meaningful ICC competence emerges from reflective, experiential, transformative learning stemming from dealing with the nuances, traps, and dynamics typical of living across cultures. Indeed, transcultural sojourners may benefit from a new paradigmal approach to ICC, one that is outspokenly interdisciplinary, hardly scientific (the way that exact sciences are), and widely chaotic with regards to predictability, ambiguity and definitions.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A: STUDY ENROLLMENT DOCUMENTS

A/i: PRELIMINARY ELECTRONIC INVITATION
A/ii: E-MAIL CONFIRMATION OF ACCEPTANCE
A/iii: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS
A/iv: E-MAIL THANK-YOU NOTE TO PARTICIPANTS
Thank you for signaling your interest in participating in my Masters’ research project on nurturing and maintenance of multicultural identity.

I have received many offers from people who would like to participate in this study, which requires me to follow up with this e-mail. I am contacting you as a prospective participant. In the attached document I have provided some background information on the project and outlined the role of the interviewees. To help me in the selection process, I would like to ask you to fill out the attached form and e-mail it back to me as soon as you can. Your answers will help me identify a small pool of people who may be contacted later to participate in the research.

Thank you again for your interest in this study. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Oscar Vallazza

Oscar Vallazza
Candidate (2010)
Master’s Programme in Adult Learning and Global Change
Linköping University
BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE RESEARCH PROJECT

I am a student in the Master’s Programme in Adult Learning and Global Change at Linköping University, Sweden. Over the next four months I will be working on a research project that will be the basis for my Master’s thesis. The preliminary title of my research is: “Processes of nurturing and maintenance of multicultural identity in the 21st century. A qualitative study of the experience of long-term transcultural sojourners.” The study will examine the experience of adults with a perceived *multicultural* identity (however they want to define it) developed over multiple long-term sojourns in cultures/countries different from the one in which they grew up. In particular, it will investigate what they do to nurture and maintain their perceived *multicultural* identity across international barriers and within the context of their own personal lives.

ROLE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The research design is based on a sequence of three consecutive qualitative interviews. The interviews will take place asynchronously between late March and early May 2010. Interviewees are asked to provide answers to semi-structured questions in a narrative way, and e-mail their answers back to the researcher.

Participation in this research study does not entail any risks.

It is expected that once selected for the study, participants will cooperate by answering the research questions truthfully, credibly and promptly.
PRELIMINARY SELECTION FORM

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR INTERVIEWEES

For this study, I am looking for people who can meet all the following criteria:

- Individuals who have spent their formative years in one culture, and later lived in more than one culture different from their original one for at least 3 years, and are currently still living outside their country of origin.

- People who perceive themselves as having a multicultural identity (however they choose to define that).

- Independent movers who left their original country on their own free will.

YOUR NAME:

YOUR ADDRESS:

YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS:

YOUR COMMENTS: (Please, limit your answer to no more than 200 words)

Please address the aforementioned criteria and explain why you are interested in being interviewed for this study. You may include information on the length of your multicultural experience and an explanation of what the term multicultural identity means for you.

Thank you again for your interest in my research study. I look fwd to receiving your answers to this questionnaire. Oscar Vallazza

- SAVE IT AS WORD DOCUMENT AS LAST_FIRSTNAME_CONTACT1.DOC
- RETURN THIS DOCUMENT AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE AS AN E_MAIL ATTACHMENT TO oscarvallazza@yahoo.com
Dear **name**

Thank you for your patience. I am now ready to move forward with the selection of respondents. Following up on our previous correspondence, I am happy to extend my formal invitation to participate in my research study.

To finalize your participation in my study, please review the attached documents:

- RESEARCH_consentform
- RESEARCH_profile (optional)

and return them by e-mail to: oscarvallazza@yahoo.com within the next few days.

After I receive the documents, you will receive three consecutive asynchronous interviews by e-mail. To allow for time for reflection, interviews will be e-mailed to you with an interval of a few days. Completion time will vary by individual but it is estimated at about 1 hour for each interview.

Thank you again for your interest in this study. I look forward to receiving the attached forms.

Sincerely,
Oscar Vallazza

Oscar Vallazza  
Candidate (2010)  
Master's Programme in Adult Learning and Global Change  
Linköping University
A/iii: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

RESEARCH PROJECT
MARCH 2010
INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS


RESEARCHER: Oscar Vallazza

THESIS SUPERVISOR: Dr. Song-ee Ahn, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Linköping University, Sweden.

The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of adults with a perceived multicultural identity developed over multiple long-term sojourns in cultures/countries different from the one in which they grew up. In particular, it will investigate what they do to nurture and maintain their composite identity across international barriers and within the context of their personal past and current experiences.

YOUR ROLE IN THE STUDY
You will participate as a respondent in a sequence of three asynchronous interviews by e-mail. Interviews will consist of semi-structured to open-ended questions posed by the researcher. To allow for time for reflection, interviews will be e-mailed to you at an interval of a few days. Completion time will vary by individual but it is estimated at a total of 1 hour for each interview.

RISKS
There are no known risks or discomforts associated with participating in this study.

BENEFITS
There is no direct benefit expected to the respondents, but knowledge and insights may be gained from participating. Interview narratives will be used to compile the final Thesis Report and may be used in the future in related publications. No remuneration will be given in any form for present and future use of the interview material.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The information collected from the interviews will be used only for research purposes. The information provided will be kept safe and used confidentially. By agreeing to participate in this study, you will give your consent for the use of the narrative provided by you. To ensure confidentiality, a fictional name will be used in the final report.

CONTACT
If you at any time have questions about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Oscar Vallazza, at oscarvallazza@yahoo.com, or at +1-206-552-0012.
PARTICIPATION
Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed at your request.

By filling out the information below and returning this form by e-mail to oscarvallazza@yahoo.com you agree to participate in this research study.

CONSENT

"I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may withdraw at any time."

FULL NAME:

Address:

E-mail address:

DATE:

SIGN YOUR NAME by typing it above; include date, address, e-mail address

Please save this document as FIRST_LASTNAME_consentform.doc and return it to oscarvallazza@yahoo.com
Dear all,
I am happy to confirm that I have received all your interviews, and want to thank you for your participation in this research. You have been outstanding in sharing your stories and reflections, and submitting them to me in a timely manner.

I have now begun the process of analyzing and interpreting the research findings. It will take me some time to carefully review your narratives and make sense of them. Once this phase is finalized, I will be able to share my findings with you. I will keep you posted.

In this qualitative research I will need to address issues of credibility, to make sure that the results are credible from the perspective of the participants. For this reason I may contact you later – as I have already done with some of you – to verify my interpretations.

Please do not hesitate to ask me any questions you may have on this project.

Thank you again for your interest in this study.

Sincerely,

Oscar Vallazza

Oscar Vallazza
Candidate (2010)
Master's Programme in Adult Learning and Global Change
Linköping University
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

B/i: INTERVIEW # 1
B/ii: INTERVIEW # 2
B/iii: INTERVIEW # 3
B/i: INTERVIEW # 1

INTERVIEW # 1: Life history and context

This is the first of three asynchronous interviews. It is the longest interview. Please read the instructions carefully before answering the questions. Please e-mail back your answers within the next two days.

The term **multicultural** as used in this interview refers to multiple experiences of living in cultures different from the one you were exposed to during your formative years.

PART 1

The following questions cover the time up until you left the area where you spent your formative years.

In the following questions you are asked to think back of when you were growing up and *reconstruct* your significant early experiences up to the time when you left the area in which you grew up. In particular, consider issues that are relevant to your personal intercultural interests and to the development of the intercultural aspects of your identity. When answering the following questions, consider factors that may include your family, school, friends, your home town, your original culture, and your work.

QUESTIONS

i) Please introduce yourself. Where were you born, where have you lived, what kind of work do you do, what are the things that matter to you most, what languages do you speak, what do you do in your free time? Include anything you think may help understand your interest in intercultural issues.

1) Think back and describe the cultural context in which you grew up. In your answer, focus on issues that are relevant to the topic of this research. For example, consider how monocultural, nationalistic, multicultural, cosmopolitan the environment was and how you related to it. Write any illustrative incidents that may help understand that cultural context.

2) Thinking back of that time, how did you develop an interest in other cultures? What things and people stimulated that interest? How did those factors influence the emergence of your cultural identity? At that time, how would you have defined the intercultural aspect of your identity?

3) What were the reasons that led you to leave the area in which you grew up? Can you describe your circumstances at the time you left your home culture? How old were you? What motivated you to leave? What were your expectations with regard to your destination?

4) **Before you left your hometown**, how did you prepare for your relocation? What knowledge did you have of your future host country’s culture? How did you obtain the information? In hindsight, how prepared were you for what was going to be your first intercultural move?
PART 2

In the following questions you are asked to look back and reconstruct your significant experiences in the time after you left the area where you grew up, up until now. When selected for this study, you reported having had more than one intercultural experience at more than one location. This section of the interview covers that portion of your past experience. Do not include your current, present experience. You will have the opportunity to explore that in the next interview.

When answering the following questions, consider the factors that are relevant to your personal intercultural interests and to the development of the intercultural aspects of your identity.

QUESTIONS

5) After you left your home area, what was it like for you to live in a different culture? What important changes did you notice in your daily life? What factors relevant to the intercultural aspect of your experiences did you notice at that time? Do you have any illustrative stories that you would like to share?

6) After you left your home area, what different cultural contexts have you lived in for longer than 6 months? What factors made any additional relocation easier or more difficult and how did they affect you? What were the reasons that led you to make a second and perhaps third or forth move to a new culture? How did those reasons change over time? Can you describe your circumstances at each time you left? How old were you? What motivated you to leave?

7) This question expands on the previous one. Consider each time you moved to a new culture and answer the following: How did you manage the transition into a new cultural context and the changes it entailed? What was the quality of your daily interactions within your new cultural contexts? What were the challenges that you experienced in such interactions? What were your personal strategies you used to cope with the issues that arose? What did you do to improve the effectiveness of your interactions? How did that affect your intercultural interactions? Can you give some examples?

8) Considering your answers to the preceding questions, what are the factors that have contributed to the development of the intercultural aspects of your identity?

Please save this document as FIRST_LASTNAME_interview1.doc and return it to oscarvallazza@yahoo.com within the next few days.

Thank you again for your availability to participate in this study.
B/ii: INTERVIEW # 2

INTERVIEW # 2: Contemporary experience

This is the second of three asynchronous interviews.

Please read the instructions carefully before answering the questions.

Please e-mail back your answers within the next two days.

The term *multicultural* as used in this interview refers to multiple experiences of living in cultures different from the one you were exposed to during your formative years.

This second interview focuses on the concrete details of your present experience in the topic area of the study. When answering the following questions, consider the intercultural aspects of your current experience and the context in which it unfolds. Consider stories and critical incidents that may help elicit details.

**QUESTIONS**

1) Where do you live at present? Describe your current cultural context. What is it like for you to live there? Consider for example your level of comfort, cultural integration, and acceptance. Do you have any illustrative stories you would like to share?

2) What personal changes and issues related to the intercultural aspect of your situation are you currently experiencing and how are you dealing with them? What is the quality of your daily interactions within current cultural context? What are the challenges that you experience in such interactions? What are your current personal strategies to cope with the issues that arise? What do you do to improve the effectiveness of your interactions? How is that affecting your intercultural interactions? Can you give some examples?

3) How do you define your current cultural identity and what are its main traits?

4) In your current experience, how important is it for you to maintain and nurture such identity? Can you provide some specific examples of what you do to nurture and maintain such identity?

Please save this document as FIRST_LASTNAME_interview2.doc

and return it to oscarvallazza@yahoo.com

if possible within the next three days.

Thank you again for your availability to participate in this study.
B/iii: INTERVIEW # 3

INTERVIEW # 3: Reflexions and meanings

This is the last of three asynchronous interviews.

Please read the instructions carefully before answering the questions.

Please e-mail back your answers within the next 6 days.

The term *multicultural* as used in this interview refers to multiple experiences of living in cultures different from the one you were exposed to during your formative years.

*This third and last interview encourages you to reflect on the meaning of your past and present intercultural experiences. Look back at the experiences that you presented in the previous interviews and reflect on what led you to your current circumstances.*

*When answering the following questions, consider the intercultural aspects of your experiences, and the contexts in which they unfolded.*

**QUESTIONS**

1) Consider the definitions of your original and current cultural identities as outlined in the other interviews. What has changed over time in the way you see yourself and the way you lead your life? How has your identity changed? Which traits remain, and which are new?

2) What is it like for you to be a multicultural person, or is there a different term by which you would define your experience across cultures? (Think whether you consider yourself bicultural, multicultural, intercultural, transcultural, or other.) For example, consider any barriers, significant events, disappointments, satisfactions, achievements that you may have experienced. How do you compare yourself to people who do not have similar intercultural experiences?

3) Considering the mechanisms and strategies that have facilitated your intercultural adaptation to the different cultures you have lived in (see interview 1), which ones worked, and which ones didn't work for you? What lessons have you learned?

4) Review the answers you provided in the other interviews and reflect on your connections to your original, past, and present cultural contexts, then answer the following questions.

   a) Can you describe your current connection to what you consider your original culture and to the other cultures in which you have lived?

   b) How do you maintain a connection between the different cultures that you have live in? How have such connections changed over time?

   c) Can you give some examples of things you do and tools you use to maintain these connections? Do you, for example, use any technology, networking tools, or approach to connect with the different intercultural contexts which you have lived? In your experience, what worked and what didn't work?
5) Is/was there a place where you feel/felt more at ease? What is your definition of “home”? What factors support your sense of “feeling at home”?

6) Considering what you have reflected upon in these interviews, what direction do you see yourself going in the future with regard to the intercultural aspects of your life? For example, do you feel the need to further expand your intercultural experience?

7) Is there anything you would like to add that would help better understand your intercultural experience with regard to the research question, i.e. the concept of multicultural identity (however you may define it), and ways to maintain and nurture such identity?

8) Metaphor
In no more than 60 words, write a metaphor that describes your sense of identity, your intercultural persona, and the way you stay connected to the different intercultural experiences in your life. This may be a metaphor for your place and role in a globalized world.

Please save this document as FIRST_LASTNAME_interview3.doc and return it to oscarvallazza@yahoo.com if possible within the next three/four days.

Thank you again for your availability to participate in this study.
APPENDIX C: TYPOLOGY - CATEGORIES AND THEMES TABLE
**THEME: MULTICULTURAL IDENTITY (MCI)**

[MCI defined as the identity resulting from multiple exposure to and interaction with different cultures. What makes up MCI?]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OC</th>
<th>ORIGINAL CULTURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[How did the OC influence the respondents in their search for IC exposure? Did they grow up in a context that was conducive to IC experiences?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VALUES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EXPOS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>INFLUENCING FACTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[What factors influenced the respondents’ decision to leave their home area?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXP</td>
<td>Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADV</td>
<td>Sense of adventure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPOS</td>
<td>Exposure to other cultures (also interactions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRAV</td>
<td>Int’l travel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MCI/F</th>
<th>FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO MCI BUILDING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[What factors contribute to the shaping of a new identity developing from multiple exposures to other cultures?]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| SELF-PORTRAIT | [Respondents’ definition of their identity] |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAINT</th>
<th>MULTICULTURAL IDENTITY MAINTENANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[what do people do to nurture and maintain their MCI?]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| DEFINITION OF HOME |
THEME: IC ADAPTATION (ADAP)
(processes of IC adaptation to changed IC context)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
<th>[What are the challenges respondents encountered when moving to a new culture? What are the commonalities found in their experiences?]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHOCK</td>
<td>Culture shock / re-entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VALUES</td>
<td>Values and beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMOT</td>
<td>Emotional issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTER</td>
<td>IC interactions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KNOWLEDGE OF OTHER CULTURES</th>
<th>[How prepared were the respondents for their new IC experience? What was their knowledge of their new host culture and relevant language?]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LANG</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREP</td>
<td>Preparedness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH NEW IC SITUATION</th>
<th>[What strategies do people use to deal with new IC situations?]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IC COMPETENCE</th>
<th>[How did the respondents develop ICC competence? What are the most valuable traits of such competence?]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ICA</td>
<td>Intercultural awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marginality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[The above may lead to:]

THEME: CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION (CHANGE)
(What are the changes that people experience following multiple IC relocation?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSF</th>
<th>Transformation</th>
<th>ADAP</th>
<th>ADAPTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>ID</td>
<td>identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Growth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

[ADDITIONAL CATEGORIES]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P</th>
<th>PROFILE [interviewee’s personal biography]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MET</td>
<td>METAPHOR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLES
Table 01 - Factors that influenced decision to relocate
Table 02 - Factors that influenced respondents’ MCI
Table 03 - Ways to connect across cultural experiences
Table 04 - Strategies for dealing with new IC situations

FIGURES
Figure 01 – Research concept map