

International Identity Development and Mental Health in the International  
Culturally Identified Community

A Psy.D. Clinical Dissertation  
Presented to the Faculty of the  
California School of Professional Psychology  
at Alliant International University  
San Diego

In Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirement for the Degree  
Doctor of Psychology

by  
Brandi N. Eijsermans, M.A., M.Ed.

2014

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation would not have happened if not for the love and support of my darling family. My greatest supporter, my husband, here is to a life filled with unbounded curiosity together...where ever it brings us. Thank you for supporting me on this journey through all its ups, downs, bumps and turns. You have remained my connection and reminder of something greater in the sea of academia. Also, a special thanks to my little study buddy for keeping me focused on what matters. Your presence in my life is the definition of inspiration. And to my sister for reminding me of the healing power of humor and presence to balance life's challenges.



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### Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the international identity development with people who have experienced living in another country. The central research question is how international living impacts identity development and mental health needs. The population studies individuals who identify with the global community regardless of country of origin, residence, citizenship, nationality, or other diversity features through living in another country. The research design is qualitative using a grounded theory approach. Data collection included semi-structured interviews conducted in-person or via online interface and surveys for descriptive purposes. Data analysis was performed through the Constant Comparative Method. This study intends to add to the knowledge within social and cultural psychology of the identity of individuals living internationally, their experience of this lifestyle and the mental health challenges they may experience. People living internationally have varied levels of cultural integration, personally and interpersonally, making this population vulnerable to isolation and lack of support services in this transition. Knowledge of this population is essential to providing adequate care and mental health services in support of international lifestyle and identity development.

*Keyword:* Culture, Social Psychology, Internationalism, Global Nomads, World Citizens, Third-Culture, Third-Space, Expatriates, Transculturals, Transnationals, Internationals, Multinationals, Polyculturalism

## Chapter I

### Introduction

As the global landscape changes, so do our cultural interactions with each other and our self-identity. For those individuals who spend their life in various cultural contexts, through a lifestyle based on relocation and daily life in multiple countries throughout their lifetime this phenomenon can impact personal and social levels. With a lifestyle and identity that traverses several cultures, understanding the complexity and nuances of multiple cultural affiliations may be challenging. This dissertation proposes that the international lifestyle has fostered the emergence of an international identity. The international lifestyle is defined as an actual or semblance of daily living established in another country. Furthermore, the effects of globalization have created a *third-space* whereby the intersection of multiple cultures in an international locale create a culture unto itself, often mimicking the historical patterns of Western domination of values and morals (Useem & Cottrell, 2001; Useem, Useem, & Donoghue, 1963). While it is possible some people identify with multiple cultures do not identify as internationals, those who do identify with this third-space culture. As global citizens, these individuals are diverse in cultural make-up but are confronted with a world that continues to view culture through a singular cultural lens. Due to their exposure and identification with multiple cultures and the globalized space of third-space culture, many of these citizens do not identify with a singular grounding ethnic or national culture, nor do these fit the



duality of hyphenation identity (Bélanger & Verkuyten, 2010). However, international identification does not negate the richness of individual connections to any of the other ethnic, national or cultural affiliations held. This dissertation aims to reveal knowledge of the international identity phenomenon and the resources of in the international, third-space culture, to support these individual's wellbeing by studying the lifestyle, identity development, and mental health of these individuals. Particular sensitivity includes marginalized segments of this population for diversification of current research on this phenomenon.

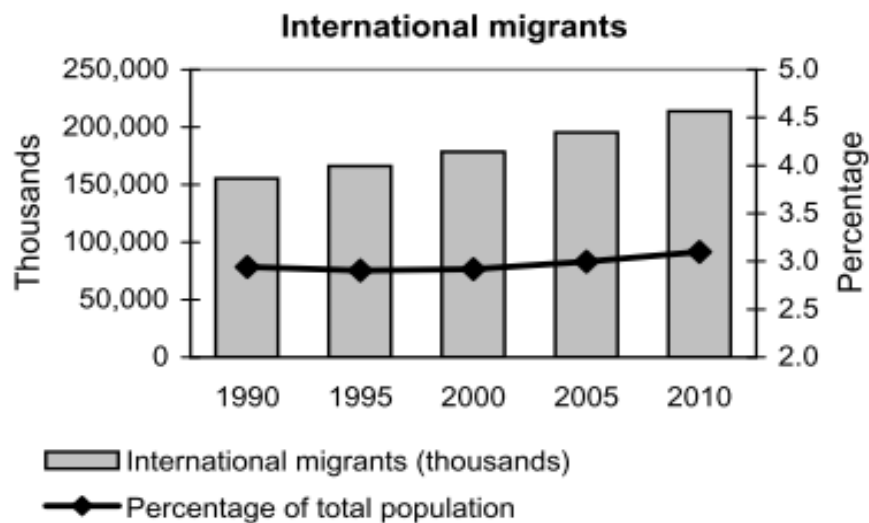
The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the international identity development with people who have experienced living in another country. The central research question is how international living impacts identity development and mental health needs. The population of concern included individuals who identify with the global community through living in another country regardless of country of origin, residence, citizenship, nationality, or other diversity features. The research design is qualitative using a grounded theory approach. Data collection included semi-structured interviews conducted in-person or via online conferencing and surveys for descriptive purposes. Data analysis was accomplished through the constant comparative method (Maykut & Moorehouse, 1994). It is intended that this study adds to the knowledge in social and cultural psychology of the identity of individuals living internationally, their experience of this lifestyle and the mental health challenges they may experience. People living internationally have varied levels of cultural integration, personally and interpersonally, making the population vulnerable to isolation and lack of support services in this transition. Knowledge of individuals living internationally is crucial to

providing adequate care and mental health services in support of international lifestyle and identity development.

### ***History and Background***

According to the *United Nations International Migration Report 2009: A Global Assessment*, the population of foreign-born people living in countries other than their country of origin increased 36% in size from 1999-2010, approximately 214 million individuals (UN, 2008). For some individuals, this international experience becomes part of their identity.

Table 1 *United Nations International Migration Report 2009 Findings*



(UN 2008, 2009)

This dissertation uses the term *international* functionally to describe those who identify as international. In our globalized world, an emerging population of those who identify as *international* continues to grow. Modern life highlights the interwoven

complexity of an ever-present connectedness to the global economy, mind-think, global environment, and global politics. However, services and research regarding the nuances of this group, their identity, and mental health concerns have been largely under studied. Knowledge of this population is crucial to providing adequate care and mental health services through this identity transition (Campbell, Assanand & Di-Paula, 2003; Choi-Misailidis, 2010; Donahue; Linville, 1987; Robins, Roberts & John, 1993). Due to the fact that internationals have varied levels of cultural integration, this population is vulnerable to isolation and lack of support services in this transition (Bennett, 1986; Bennett, 1993a; Bennett, 1993b).

Others have adapted cultural metaphors to account for the impact of globalization on identity. Mathews (2000) conducted a study of global identity through the metaphoric and literal example of a global cultural supermarket, where the individual consumes and identifies through consumption of food, arts, spirituality, beliefs and culture. This data challenges the traditional definition of culture as a way of life. Mathews (2000) introduces the search for home in the global supermarket but lacks explanation about psychological homelessness of a global identity, whereby belonging to an international community means a sense of belonging to any one place is lacking.

Research showed an effort to define this phenomenon of international identity (Hudspeth, 2009): cultural hybrids (Wurgaft, 2006), global nomads (Mascheroni, 2007), internationally mobile (Gerner & Perry, 2000), adult third-culture kids (ATCK) (Jordan, 2002), Internationals, World-citizens, New Global Nomads, Third-culture (Useem & Cottrell, 2001; Useem, Useem, & Donoghue, 1963), Multinationals, Expatriates, Families in Global Transition (FIGT), and Sojourners (Bennett, 1986). These definitions narrowly

define a distinct introduction and experience in the international community. As such, *Third Culture Kid (TCK)* refers to children who live internationally with expatriate parents, who spend a large portion of their childhood development years in a culture not of their parents, many of which whom return to their parent's culture later in life as a largely foreign re-entry experience. By living in differing home and host cultures, TCK's develop a new cultural identity reflecting this experience with the absence of affiliation or feeling belonging to any particular culture (Bonebright, 2010). TCK's have a distinctively Western and privileged perspective with a particular worldview not shared by all internationals. Accordingly, a divide has been made to separate the experience of those from Western, privileged society and those who have less privilege. Such is the case in the removal of refugee children from the TCK definition to create, *Cross-Culture Kids* (Van Reken, & Bethel, 2005). Such authors as Van Reken and Bethel (2005) and Hervey (2009) argued for a separation of terms due to power and privilege on the basis of a desire not to dilute the term. Similarly, the organization of categories is mostly limited to Westerners and those with economic or political privilege, such as those in the military, diplomats, people in international business, missionary or non-profit workers, media representatives, and technical aid workers.

Historically, research on the psychological or identity development level of the individual has not approached internationalism beyond the third-culture approach. The terms "*third-culture*" and "*third-space*" refer to the behavior patterns established, shared, and learned by people of diverse societies in the process of connecting societies, or portions thereof, to each other (Useem & Cottrell, 2001; Useem, Useem, & Donoghue, 1963). While the study of individuals raised in the third-culture is emerging, little is

known about the impact of an individual entering third-space at differing developmental stages and the effect that entrance has on the development of international identity. To date, in the discussion of the international lifestyle and international identity, no data incorporates the study of international identity from multiple host and origin backgrounds, developmental stages, with varied age of international identity development. While research emphasizes the developmental significance of early childhood (Bhabha, 2001; Erikson, 1959; Moinian, 2009; Schwartz, Zamboanga, Weisskirch, & Wang, 2010), adulthood (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001; Tragakis & Smith, 2010) and late adulthood (Banks, 2004), less is known about the developmental process of international identity, particularly beyond childhood. However, no data incorporates the study of international identity from multiple host and origin backgrounds, developmental stages, and varied age of international identity development. Furthermore, less is known about the experiences of people in third-space who are marginalized, or who lack political, economic, or social power.

U.S. and Canadian based research narrowly frames internationalism as expatriatism. An effort must be made to shine light on sociopolitical forces impacting many in the international community by studying the impact of global lifestyles on identity and mental health. While expansion beyond expatriate and TCK constructs on international identity is needed to move the knowledge regarding this phenomenon forward, election of this identity, confirmed as one, develops as a key feature in differentiating the population for study. The intention is not to take out individual aspects of diversity with a new label; rather, it is to understand the diversity of international identity impacting worldview and mental health issues.

Social, historical, and political experiences impact identity development (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). Difficulty with personal affiliation, whereby international individuals identify as not belonging and belonging to all simultaneously, is complicated due to limitations of external heritage identification verification (U.S. Department of State, 1995). The contextual catalyst for change in identity from heritage exclusive identification to international identity needs further exploration. Similarly, researchers are interested in the outcomes of identity on mental health, functioning, self-concept, and well-being (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). Historically, research focused on the maladjustment of cultural experiences of acculturation based on assimilation models, particularly in the U.S. (Ruesch, Jacobson & Loeb, 1948). A historical perspective of the way adjustment and acculturation were viewed was helpful for seeing the strong influence of politics as a lens through which identity theory develops (Schildkraut, 2007).

Historically, self-identification was separated into social identity and personal identity, with limited research on personal identity through cross-cultural social adaption of identity (Monkiewicz, 1994). The processes that facilitate international identity development are unclear. The practices of identity organization that foster the best physical and mental health outcomes lack consensus. While some research has supported compartmentalization as a strategy that produces positive health outcomes (Bigler, Neimeyer & Brown, 2001; Sheldon, Ryan, Rawsthorne & Ilardi, 1997), other research has suggested contextualization (Campbell, Assanand & Di-Paula, 2003; Donahue, Robins, Roberts & John, 1993; Phinney & Kohatsu, 1997; Simonsen, Blazina & Watkins, 2000).

As United Nations (2009) figures suggest, the population of people exposed to international lifestyles is growing, as is the sub-population that develops international identity within the third-space cultural community they reside. International identity has been suggested to develop through the intercultural contact in the third-space. Third-space is created by blurring cultural boundaries, as code-switching exhibits; cultures merge in sharing language, ideas, cultural contexts, and ideologies (Bhatt, 2008). Third-space is synonymous with the international community. Furthermore, less is known about the experiences of people in third-space who are marginalized; i.e. lacking political, economic, or social power. Choi-Misailidis (2010) established that social, historical, and political experiences impact identity development. The marginality of segments of this population, and remaining gaps in research in the way socioeconomic status, minority status, and social or political marginalization impact international identity. What is known is that identity development can be derailed by cultural marginality (Bennett, 1986). Because of this gap in research, little is known about what the marginalized segment of the international identifying population experience.

Beyond the lacking definition and inclusion of diverse portions in the study of this population, the mental health needs of this populations are under researched. What is known is that the area of psychology has a long history of addressing the challenges of assessing the mental health challenges and needs of the culturally diverse (Cheung, Van de Vijver & Leong, 2011; Dana, 1993; 1998; 2003; 2005; Ortiz & Dynda, 2005). Progress in developing more culturally sensitive measure have emerged, such as the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003; Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, 2003) based off of the Development of

Intercultural Sensitivity Model (DMIS), which posited that the population defined a sojourners identity development progress as a worldview, leading to transcendence from culture and nationality (Bennett, 1986; Bennett, 1993a; Bennett, 1993b).

While these theories and measures offer understanding of intercultural interaction with some correlation to identity, the argument returns to contextualization versus compartmentalization. There are studies of expatriates which give weight to the development of a model which accounts for the utilization of both skills, such as in the case of the importance of language acquisition on well-being (Warnes, King, Williams, & Patterson, 1999) and the common experience of code-switching as a means to navigate the social and political pressures of social adaptation and acculturation. It is lesser known to what extent individuals with an international identity have protective factors promoting positive mental health outcomes.

Linville (1987) found that individuals with complex cultural identities develop traits that act as buffers, protecting against life stressors. Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman (2003) suggested stress was lower in culturally integrated populations. They also found that life and work satisfaction was higher than others in the international community; higher job accomplishment is experienced, along with lower conflict and violence with others. From this perspective, frustration in deciding to identify based on ethnicity or nationality, and desire to transcend these groups, is consistent with the struggle between compartmentalized and contextualized identity (Moinian, 2009, p. 31).

Research on the sociocultural influence on mental health revealed that social culture can both positively and negatively impact mental health (Eshun & Gurung, 2009). Similarly, academic study of the influence of social life on the development of the brain



led to the rise of social neuroscience to decipher what leads to each outcome (Baumeister & Finkel, 2010). Those in the international lifestyle negatively experiencing intercultural adjustment showed common experiences of isolation, transition difficulties, and feelings of being different from others (Fowler & Silberstein, 1989). It is suggested that the differentiations in positive or negative mental health outcomes for this population are due to personal experiences in the third-space. People living internationally have varied levels of cultural integration personally and interpersonally, making this population vulnerable to isolation and lack of support services during transitions. Without further exploration, this population runs the risk of not having their identity acknowledged as valid due to lack of research and psychoeducation for mental health professionals and the general public. Furthermore, discovery of the experience of this population can highlight the varied levels of validation of international and other features of identity experienced.

With the ever-growing mobility of this population and the lack of specialized training for mental health professionals serving the international community this topic is current and relevant for exploration. A growing body of research is emerging that supports the application of ethics of training and practice to the international populations (Behnke & Bullock, 2010; Dana & Allen, 2008; Stiles & Campbell, 2010). A drive to establish flexibility to meet regional norms, such as European Federation of Psychologists Associations (EFPA) Meta-Code standards, attempts to balance universality and cultural context (Korkut, 2010). Unfortunately, research has revealed that U.S. mental health professionals are largely unaware of the progress in international ethics (Leach & Leong, 2010). Nevertheless, slow progress has been made to develop the “Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists” (Gauthier, 2008).

Regardless of this progress, in the field of psychology concerns for cultural colonialism persist globally. A spreading interest in the investigation of international ethics will directly impact this population. Behnke and Bullock (2010) argue for a concerted effort to thoughtfully address the complexity of international policy and practice in the field of psychology.

In our ever-globalized world competency training needs to specifically encompass the impact of the international community on identity development. Schools of psychology are voicing an interest in international coursework development to foster global citizenship (Stiles & Campbell, 2010). The APA Division 52 International Psychology advocates to this end. However, research has established that classes with international and cultural themes only slightly influence world-mindedness and identity awareness. The influence of such classes contrasts with the influence of language diversity and international travels, which are more likely to develop international identities (Stiles & Campbell, 2010).

### **Statement of the Problem**

There remains a general lack of literature, research, and consensus regarding those who identify with the international community through experiences of living or having lived in another country. Furthermore, little is known as to what cultural and contextual factors may impact identity development and mental health needs. There exists a need for clarification of definition and understanding of this community, as the current definitions are outdated, too narrow or incomplete. Minimal information is known about the personal and social challenges to identity development, particularly surrounding the identity development of culturally dynamic individuals (Downie,

Koestner, El Geledi & Cree, 2004). Hudspeth (2009) documented the simplification of international identity into one of many constructs of the self in the global context.

Furthermore, Hudspeth (2009) showed the identity conflicts may be experienced by an individual who identifies with a culture other than the culture of the family of origin.

Little is known as to what cultural and contextual factors may impact cultural identity development and mental health needs of those experiencing an international lifestyle.

Research has demonstrated mental health correlations to the stages of acculturation. With more people living internationally what remains unknown is the impact of reoccurring acculturation on mental health or the resources needed to support healthy lifestyles and adjustment in those who identify culturally as internationals.

This study used in-depth interviews as guided by a qualitative approach to examine these dynamics and to synthesize the resulting data to reveal themes related to the experiences of internationals. International and acculturation research suggest a gap in current research regarding diverse theories of adjustment in the acculturation process among various populations (Nguyen, 2006). To understand the cultural and contextual factors, identity and mental health, and personal and social challenges of this population this study aims to gain further understanding of the acculturation process influencing identity and mental health in this population. The current research attempts to offer a glimpse into the less visible members of the internationally mobile population. They may meet the definitions of the membership to smaller segments of the diaspora of internationally mobile individuals, but it is posited in this study that it is primarily through their experiences in the international space and community that they come to frame their national and global identity.

A qualitative approach is germane to this line of study given that the central research question is how international living is experienced through identity development. A qualitative approach allows discovery of the phenomenon of international identity development, and of the nuances of experience, allowing the essence of the meaning of international identity to emerge. A qualitative approach is apropos given the lack of clarity about how this population defines themselves. There is currently not agreement in the term or a definition of international identity. This study does not focus only on the international lifestyle but rather on the impact international experiences have on identity formation and mental health. Formation of identity has traditionally been seen in the context of nationalism, ethnicity and culture; however, it remains unclear how those living in a flux of cultural and national boundaries develop the self. This study appropriately applies grounded theory to develop a framework for a developmental identity model. This framework increased understanding the definition and terms of the population studied, the point at which lifestyle becomes an identity, and the impact of life stages.

### **Literature Review**

To study the development of international identity, this literature review presents the approaches to the study of the self through various theoretical frameworks. The literature review addresses the historical support for the social self as is pertinent to the social context in the international community, along with the, challenges to the study of cultural identity and intercultural phenomenon. It reviews the psychological research of identity development. Current issues for membership and development of this community reveal the challenges to finding consensus in population terms and definitions inside and

outside of academia. To highlight the impact nations and experiences across nations have on the lives of the individuals studied, the literature review discusses the contextual background by which sociopolitical experiences impact identity. Furthermore, research findings on identity development and psychosocial functioning illuminate the need for expanded research. Finally, to support the pertinence of the current study, the limitations of current research are presented.

### **Historical Support for Social Self**

In the 1800s, psychologist and philosopher William James put forth the concept of self through the equation  $I + \text{Experience} = \text{Me}$  (James, 1961/1892). James argued that the self is both contextual developed through experience. Several authors developed theories to support not only the context of the self within experience, but also the social nature of the self (Berry, 1980; Cooley, 1964/1902; Goffman, 1959; James, 1961/1892; Mead, 1934). McAdams (1993; 1997) supports this notion by establishing “I” as the process of being one’s self. Others posited that the self-identity is both personal and social (Ashmore & Jussim, 1997; Monkiewicz, 1994). In 1902, Charles Horton Cooley developed the concept of the *Looking-Glass Self*, to explain that the self develops from self-evaluation through the lens of the other (Cooley, 1964/1902). In 1934, George Herbert Mead introduced the concept of the *interacting self*, whereby the self is created as a product of the social experience (Mead, 1934). In 1959, Erving Goffman expressed that self is socially situated, such that self cannot be taken out of social context (Goffman, 1959).

Erikson (1959) introduced a developmental psychosocial theory of self, termed Lifespan Identity Development, based on his popular theory of psychosexual

development. Over time, the influence of Erikson's science on the field of development established the foundation for exploration of social development. Researcher Milton Bennett applied the understanding of Erikson's developmental stages to the social development of intercultural sensitivity in the Development Intercultural Sensitivity Model (DMIS). Stages in the individual's perception of difference progress from ethnocentric (denial, defense, minimalization) to ethnorelative (acceptance, adaptation, integration) (Bennett, 1986; Bennett, 1993a; Bennett, 1993b). Through the last century, many attempts have been made to understand the social nature of the self, as well as how social and cultural interaction impact the development of the self.

Modern approaches to the social nature of the self attempt to accommodate a multilayered perspective in understanding social reality. The concept of national identity is a modern concept. From a post-modern perspective, identity based on nationality is insufficient to express the individual's experience in a changing globalized world. Therefore, the post-modernist approach to self is "born out of the uprising of the marginalized, the evolution of communication technology, the fissures of a global multinational hypercapitalism, and our sense of the limits of Enlightenment rationality, all creating a conjunction that shifts our sense of who we are and what is possible" (Lather, 1994, p. 102). While this approach offers a broader framework for understanding, the experience of modernity and the emergence of globalization it is limited in describing the generalized experience of modern life versus the dynamic interaction between international living and international identity development. The transcendence of national identity from its modern concept has led to post-modern and even post-post-modern identity, consistent with the proposed international identity as a

unique expression of life in a truly international world in daily and episodic life. The current study explores is whether the international identity development phenomenon represents a transcendence of nationality reflective of a post-postmodern phenomenon impacted by experience of global mobilization of a populations in their worldview and cultural identity.

### **Challenges to the Study of Cultural Identity and Intercultural Phenomenon**

The concept of identity as changing and fluid emerged from the above theoretical foundations; but when applied to the study of identity development interculturally, much research remains historically tied to the zeitgeist surrounding beliefs of assimilation (Gordon, 1964), acculturation (Berry, 1997, 1998; Ruesch, 1984), and global change. Early on, healthy acculturation was seen as psychological sustaining personal identity despite environmental or cultural shift, defining culture shock as a state of anxiety created from the difficulty of preserving a sense of stability or permanence in a new setting (Nash & Schaw, 1963). Current research suggests that both social and personal identities are impacted by intercultural contact (Monkiewicz, 1994). Berry (1997) defined acculturation as the experience and resulting outcomes of intercultural interaction. Berry (1998) developed a model of acculturation based on an adaptation to acculturative stress in the intercultural experience, creating four possible modes: marginalization, separation/segregation, assimilation and integration. Determination of the mode of acculturation an individual is currently in depends on two issues: (1) extent to which they value maintenance of relationships with outside groups and (2) whether they value maintenance of cultural identity and characteristics of their origin (Berry, 1998).

Figure 1 *Berry's Acculturation Model*

		“Home” Culture Identity	
		High	Low
“Host” Culture Identity	Positive	Integration	Assimilation
	Negative	Rejection	Marginalization

(Berry, 1980)

International identity breaks the mold of two-culture intercultural interactions. International identity is suggested to develop through the intercultural contact in the third-space. Third-space is created by a blurring of cultural boundaries, as exhibited by code-switching as an example of how cultures merge in sharing language, ideas, cultural contexts, and ideologies (Bhatt, 2008). Third-space is synonymous with the international community. The term is less relevant than its meaning. Code-switching marks this population, representing a paradigm switch in the linguistic culture. Code-switching leads to third-space, such that identity converges in local and global context. Unfortunately, most studies remain limited to duality of creation of third-space based on the blend of cultures through historically significant convergence such as in colonialization, whereas in the multicultural, multiethnic, and multinational context of third-space only partially expresses what is currently happening in the third-space phenomenon of the international community. Acculturation in international identity not only has complexity based on the



multiplicity of intersecting cultures in the international community, but also is nuanced by the evolution of third-space.

### **Psychological Theories for Social and Cultural Identity**

Lauring (2008) used Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Socio-psychological Identity Theory (SIT) to assert that competition in code-switching fosters creation of a third-culture. The theories of SIT and SIT posit that linguistic resources and recognition of linguistic dominance are influenced by current systems of social ranking and power. For expatriates in particular, linguistic and cultural diversity allow for more communication within and between other members and non-members, but do not negate difference (Lauring, 2008). Lauring's anthropological theory accounts for group shifting, but not individual identity shift. Instead, it adds to the social and historical context of the international identity phenomenon. Cheng, Lee, and Benet-Martinez (2006) stated the *cultural frame switching (CFS)* is linked to the foundations of third-space, similar to the way in which the concept of code-switching advances that individual characteristics alter performance and adaptation, bringing depth to cultural identity.

### **Psychological Research on Identity Development**

Developmental research emphasizes the significance of identity development in early childhood (Bhabha, 2001; Moinian, 2009), late adolescence, early adulthood stage of identity development (Josselson, 1987; Schwartz, Zamboanga, Weisskirch, & Wang, 2010), adulthood (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001; Tragakis & Smith, 2010), and older adulthood (Banks, 2004). All life stages offer distinct features for international populations. This study follows several of the above studies with the use of Erikson's Identity Development Model. Erikson, an immigrant himself described the process as

“cruel” (Monkiewicz, 1994, p. 90). His experience in the challenges and mental health impact of identity development add to the richness of his model. Erikson’s model presents eight stages of human development whereby each stage the individual face different developmental tasks: Trust vs. Mistrust (Birth to 1 year), Autonomy vs. Shame/Doubt (1 to 3 years), Initiative vs. Guilt (3 to 5/6 years), Industry vs. Inferiority (6 to 12 years), Identify vs. Role Confusion (12 to 20 years), Intimacy vs. Isolation (Young adulthood), Generativity vs. Stagnation (Middle adulthood), Ego Integrity vs. Despair (Late Adulthood) (Erikson, 1959).

Table 2 *Erikson’s Psychosocial Stages of Development*

Stage	Approximate Age	Significant Event	Positive Outcome or Virtue Developed	Negative Outcome
Trust vs. Mistrust	Birth to 1 year	Child develops a sense that the world is safe and reliable place because of sensitive caregiving.	Hope	Fear & mistrust of others
Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt	1 to 3 years	Child develops a sense of independence tied to use of new mental and motor skills.	Willpower	Self-doubt
Initiative vs. Guilt	3 to 5 or 6 years	Child tries to behave in ways that involve more “grown-up” responsibility and experiment with grown-up roles.	Purpose	Guilt over thought & action

Industry vs. Inferiority	6 to 12 years	Child needs to learn important academic skills and compare favorably with peers in school.	Competence	Lack of competence
Identity vs. Role Confusion	12 to 20 years	Adolescent must move toward adulthood by making choices about values, vocational goals, etc.	Fidelity	Inability to establish sense of self
Intimacy vs. Isolation	Young adulthood	Adult becomes willing to share identity with other and commit to affiliations and partnerships.	Love	Fear of intimacy
Generativity vs. Stagnation	Middle adulthood	Adult wishes to contribute to the next generation, to produce, mentor, create something of lasting value, as in the rearing of children or community services or expert work.	Care	Self-absorption
Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Late adulthood	Adult comes to terms with life's successes, failures, and missed opportunities and realizes the dignity of own life.	Wisdom	Regret

(Erikson, 1959)

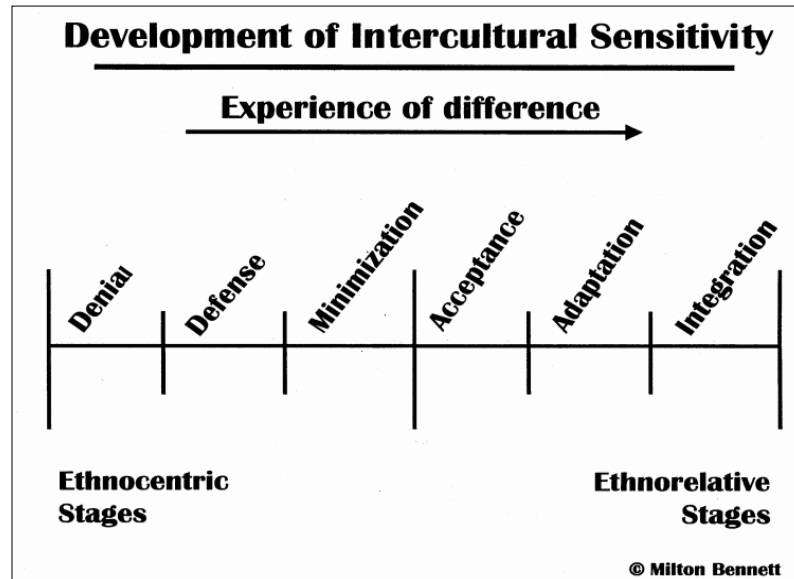
Bhabha (1994) posits that 'Hybrid identities can be performed and confirmed in an in-between space of culture, in which the traditional fixed identities are questioned and criticized. Such a space is constituted temporarily through the re-appropriation and

transformation of cultural symbols, including language, which are made to mean in new ways' (Bhabha, 1994). This demonstrates that the frustration in having to decide based on ethnicity or nationality, and desire to transcend, is consistent with a contextualized identity. In 2001, Bhabha expands to elaborate that this hybrid identity development in early childhood demonstrates an opportunity for constructing a foundation of this adaptive identity in a life stage that leaves possibilities open for exploration. Moinian (2009) expands to state, "agency and choice are crucial issues for these children and that they resist oversimplification, reductionism and categorization based on their cultural or ethnic backgrounds" (Moinian, 2009, p. 31). Since their identity is challenged in the third-space and, therefore, evolving Moinian introduced terms *fragmented, multiple and hybrid identities* supporting a dynamic approach to fluid identity in identity development of early childhood in third-space. Moinian notes that children express an added generational stress of adults who are not informed of their identity, expectations of consistency and lack of interest in their process of identity negotiation resulting in the feeling of having their identity challenged in and out of the home.

Schwartz, Zamboanga, Weisskirch, and Wang (2010), associate cultural identity development with adaptive and maladaptive psychosocial functioning. Developed from Erikson's Model of Identity Development, they correspond the significance of identity exploration and development in adolescence and early adulthood with the emphasis on the need to consolidate and integrate multiple social and cultural identities with meaning to foster adaptive psychosocial functioning, versus a compartmentalization of identity affiliations. Banks (2004) echoes the significance of meaning searching in identity development in older adulthood when confronting identity shifts. Banks notes that there

appears to be a developmental significance of the rhetoric and communication styles adapted by this population which purports to show life choice as a reflection of self-identity through meaning.

Bennett (1986, 1993a, 1993b) posits that self-identity development is significantly impacted by intercultural engagement and development of sensitivity to the other and the outside world. The Development Intercultural Sensitivity Model (DMIS) stages ranging from ethnocentric to ethnorelative offer experiential depth to Erikson's model when exploring the impact of interaction with the international community in the development of the self.

Figure 2 *Bennett's Development of Intercultural Sensitivity Model (DMIS)*

(Bennett, 1986)

### Challenges to Find Consensus in Population Terms and Definitions

A significant gap in theory is the lack of consensus regarding definitions and terms for and about the international population and their experiences. Examples include *glocalization* defined as global translation and expansion of social structures (Kjeldgaard & Askegaard, 2006). Globalization, third space, and other definitions describe similar global dynamics. Some researchers prefer the term, “*hyphenated identity*”, defining a person’s identity by their culminating cultural parts (i.e. German-Canadian) (Bélanger, & Verkuyten, 2010). However, hyphenated identity does not correlate to acculturation integration, but is tied to self-identification. Bélanger and Verkuyten (2010) found that a majority of people with hyphenated identity prefer such an identity to rejecting one or more components. Preference for hyphenated identity suggests that even if these components of identity are integrated or contextualized, each part of the individual’s

identity remains pertinent to self-identification. While the interaction of multiple cultural influences and feelings towards host country or culture shift of identity are important, the presence of such interaction does not express how this process is negotiated. Also, within the international population, some have difficulty defining or determining where their homeland is operationally defined (Moinian, 2009).

Research has shown many attempts to define the phenomenon of international identity (Hudspeth, 2009) including: cultural hybrid (Wurgaft, 2006), global nomad (Mascheroni, 2007; McCaig, 1994), internationally mobile (Gerner & Perry, 2000), adult third-culture kid (ATCK) (Jordan, 2002), international, cross-culture kid, world-citizens, new global nomads, third-culture (Bonebright, 2010; Hervey, 2009; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001; U.S. Department of State, 1995; Useem & Cottrell, 2001; Useem, Useem, & Donoghue, 1963; Van Reken & Bethel, 2005), multinationals, expatriates, families in global transition (FIGT), sojourner (Bennett, 1993), global citizenship (Karlberg, 2008), hyphenation identity (Bélanger, & Verkuyten, 2010), 'Kaigai/Kikoku-shijo,' and overseas/returnee children (Kano Podolsky, 2005). The current study looks at those who are less visible and more peripheral in the community, as opposed to the specific study groups above. Although participants may identify with membership in the groups listed above it is the overarching experience in the international community context which draws the tie between the groups. This study aims to specifically address this experiential phenomenon of identity development for international individuals.

### **Sociopolitical Experiences Impact on Identity**

Social, historical, and political experiences impact identity development. Holstein and Gubrium (2000) acknowledge both positive and negative influences of external

powers on the self. The sociopolitical nature of current research, both as defined and as studied, is exclusionary due to ethnicity, socioeconomic status, power, and nationality (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Much of the research focuses on developed nations, generally Western and on Caucasians of upper or middle class. However, research reveals that many more than the expatriates or TCKs are developing international identities. McCraig (2001) acknowledges the challenging dilution of terms by adding refugees, people who have lived with civil strife and immigrants to the TCK definition. Within the CCK (cross-culture kid) spectrum, these terms are included to expand upon the TCK term without challenging the definition of what it is to be a TCK. Across research, there has been little progress to maintain the inclusion of marginalized or less visible participants in the international community. However, Pollock & Van Reken (2009) acknowledge the role of CCKs more fully than was previously the case. Systematic and categorical exclusion of large components of the diverse population of those with TCK identities does a disservice to the entire group and creates strife toward group understanding (Kraus, Piff, & Keltner, 2011; Van Reken & Bethel, 2005). Furthermore, limitations to the definition of international identity along expatriate and TCK lines leaves out a significant portion of the international identified community. Karlberg (2008) spoke of this issue in terms of an intellectual and moral hazard to the path of social discourse, expanding to state that developing a culturally complex global identity without an understanding of disparity and inequality of power and privilege across the global challenges global humanity and becomes the main force against the development of peace and justice in the global community (Karlberg, 2008).



### **Identity Development and Psychosocial Functioning**

Identity development is tied to psychosocial functioning (Campbell, Assanand, & Di-Paula, 2003; Donahue, Robins, Roberts, & John, 1993; Phinney, & Kohatsu, 1997; Schwartz, Zamboanga, Weisskirch, & Wang, 2010; Simonsen, Blazina, & Watkins, 2000; Tragakis & Smith, 2010; Waterman, 2007). According to Tragakis and Smith (2010) predicting psychosocial functioning outcomes should be predicted with more than social and cultural identity integration, especially in when distinguishing mainstream and marginalized cultural identities. Conversely, compartmentalization is correlated with difficulties in psychological adjustment and functioning (Bigler, Neimeyer & Brown, 2001; Sheldon, Ryan, Rawsthorne, & Ilardi, 1997). These findings conflict with Linville (1987), who stated that cultural complexity of the self buffers stress and promotes psychological functioning. However, Downie, Koestner, El Geledi, & Cree (2004) found that among individuals with broader cultural identity, such as those with international identity, it is more difficult to predict psychological adjustment.

Alternatively, studies revealed that social identity integration, a contextualization of identity in situations of multiple social identities, supports psychological and physical health (Campbell, Assanand, & Di-Paula, 2003; Donahue, Robins, Roberts, & John, 1993; Simonsen, Blazina, & Watkins, 2000). Specifically, contextualization is supported as developing improved self-esteem, well-being, and objective performance (Phinney & Kohatsu, 1997). Conversely, to the concept of contextualization, some research supports compartmentalization of the components of an individual's social identity that support psychological health (Bigler, Neimeyer, & Brown, 2001; Sheldon, Ryan, Rawsthorne, & Ilardi, 1997).

In Davies and Harré (1990), the structure of the self reflects an understanding that the organization of the self is more dynamic than either compartmentalization or contextualization stating that “while certain aspects of identity may be negotiable in given contexts, others may be less so, since individuals may be positioned and have identities imposed by dominant groups in ways they did not choose. In these situations, individuals or groups may seek to challenge, resist, or transform accepted identity categories to allow for greater identity options” (Davies & Harré, 1990, p.45).

Pollock & Van Reken (2001) hypothesized that transculturals may seek support a range of mental health issues including identity development, depression, lack of belonging, feelings of displacement/rejection/isolation, loneliness/alienation, inability to trust, or issues relating to high mobility (e.g., loss and strain on the family unit). Research suggests that the development of the individual along with protective factors can indicate the trajectory for those living in third-space, as to whether their transition will be adaptive or maladaptive (Banks, 2004; Bhabha, 2001; Moinian, 2009; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001; Tragakis & Smith, 2010). However, no single study has offered an exploration into how identity development and mental health in this population interact.

### **Limitations of Current Research**

Another area of mental health concern for those with international identity is the depth of knowledge of how to provide accurate cultural assessment (Cheung, Van de Vijver & Leong, 2011; Dana 1998, 2003; Ortiz & Dynda, 2005). In spite of progress in the development of valid identity development measures (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003; Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, 2003), there remains little

research on the adaptive strengths of this population (Warnes, King, Williams, & Patterson, 1999).

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this grounded theory study is to explore international identity development among people who have lived in a country other than that of their origin, and who have integrated the lifestyle of the other country into their identity. The central research question is how international living experiences impact cultural identity development. This study is aimed to be a pilot study in the development of a model and definition of the international identity development phenomenon. The purpose is to understand how the impact of international cultural experiences significantly alters aspects of cultural identity development. The study also seeks to form a model which accounts for how the cultural identity stage of the individual changes the lens or the worldview they develop. The intent of this study is to develop a model and definition for international identity to add to the knowledge of individuals living internationally, their experience of this lifestyle influence on identity development, and the mental health challenges they experience.

This study attempts to answer the following research questions: The central research question is how is national/cultural identity developed through the experience of international living? What categories emerge for identity in the lives of those with a selected international lifestyle? What are the lived experiences of people living internationally? How do these individuals identify? What theory will emerge from themes of international participants' interviews?

### **Cultural and Clinical Relevance**

Areas of exploration are the developmental age upon entry to the international lifestyle, the identity development process, the self, the other, and experiences of mental health. Identifying current gaps in research related to transnational identity, and challenging Western dominant assumptions, expands the knowledge of the growing international population. Social and cultural psychology can greatly benefit by a broader perspective and understanding of the subjective experiences of those who integrate membership in the international community into their identity (Baumeister & Finkel, 2010). A new model will conceptualize international identity beyond a compartmentalizing and contextualizing model to expand understanding beyond adjustment and acculturation. A key point of emphasis is not to decrease diversity with new labels but to understand with more depth the impact of international lifestyle and worldview on identity and group diversity. As previously noted, the sociopolitical nature of current research is concerning in that current definitions exclusively describe this population relative to ethnicity, socioeconomic status, economic power, and political power (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Refugee children who do not see themselves as internationals, or a similar term may be better defined as *cross-culture kids* (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Van Reken & Bethel, 2005). As previously noted, this study research offers is a glimpse into the less visible members of this population. They may meet the definitions above but it is primarily through their experiences in the international third-space that they come to frame their national and global identity. Furthermore, this study sets out to explore is whether the current phenomenon represents a transcendence of nationality reflective of a post-postmodern phenomenon impacted by experience of

global mobilization of a populations in their worldview and cultural identity as a collective group of individuals with this shared experience and identity formation.

The current study approaches the broad array of international experiences and the impact on international identity development. While each individual experiences their own nuances, contradictions, experiences, and shifts that in turn contribute to international identity development, the process and outcomes of these experiences and the impact on the self intersecting with the third-space are more constant. This aspiration expands from peace and social justice movements that place global citizenship in the context of social justice. Discourse theory from Bhatt (2008), similar to social constructivism, provides support for how culture and zeitgeist form mental and social realities. Examples include the negative impact of xenophobia on worldview. Global citizenship is not currently a legal construct. The discourse of social movements is currently significant. In adapting to a global world, an inclusive identity must be cultivated through socially conscious discourse, such as the expanding international Baha'i community. International identity should not be exclusive and oppositional. The operationalization of international identity should consider the history of Anglo-European males by which domination has led to group norms determining perceived universal norms. Given international precedence of dominance, social classes routinely create cultural identity based on subjective social-class rank rather than on an equal integration of cultural strengths (Kraus, Piff & Keltner, 2011). By reiterating social and power dominance of particular cultures in the creation of third-space the potential of the third-space community and individual internationals within it are forced to recapitulate

dominance and hierarchy. This process stagnates the growth of the community and the individuals within it by unquestioningly repeating historical norms.

The clinical implication of the proposed research focuses on the researcher gathering and expanding further knowledge about a possible vulnerable population. People living internationally have varied levels of personal and interpersonal cultural integration, making the population vulnerable to isolation and lack of support services not only during but also after times of transition.

Stress of adjustment without adequate support systems can contribute to mental health issues. Knowledge of the population is crucial to providing adequate care and mental health services in support of international lifestyle and identity development. Without knowledge of this phenomenon and the facets affecting the members of this population, the resources and support needed in this community will remain unaddressed. Given the present perspectives which dominate the current studies of the international population, this study broadens the diversity of perspective that others have of the community through a purposive strategy focused on inclusion of those voices underrepresented in the research. The techniques and strategies for purposive recruitment of participants is discussed further in the Methods chapter.

## Chapter II

### **Methods**

#### **Research Design**

The strategy of inquiry for this study is the grounded theory approach. The intent of grounded theory is to generate a theory, an analytical schema of a phenomenon (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The term “grounded” is due to the theory being grounded in the data collected (Patton, 2002). Given the lack of theory in research for international identity development, this approach is fitting to establish the phenomenon of international identity. Current theories focus on multicultural, biracial, invalidated, social and transcendent identity; however, no theory completely addresses the nuances and aspects unique to this emerging and growing population. To examine how individuals interact or respond to the phenomenon of international lifestyles in their identity formation, this research primarily collected interviews and field observations, interrelate categories of information, and form a theory. Based on the constructivist approach this study used a systemic approach to develop theory rooted in the expressed experiences of the participants (Charmaz, 2003; Charmaz 2006). From this perspective, the study benefits from the grounded theories link of research to theory as opposed to taking theory and applying it to form research (Elliott & Higgins, 2012). Glaser (1992) posits that by not leading research with the preconception of theory, grounded theory inquiry can explore undiscovered patterns of social behavior and experience. This study used an emergent research design, allowing new patterns to appear by simultaneously collecting and

analyzing data to establish results based on the specific phenomenon. Unlike predetermined design, emergent design evolves with the data as it unfolds (Patton, 2002).

The studied population would benefit from the grounded theory approach given that current models and theories omit the population categorically. Epistemologically, the constructivist values of grounded theory merit that people construct their reality as they form and assign meaning to their experiences in the world (Appleton & King 2002; Breckenridge, Jones, Elliott, & Nicol, 2012). In particular, this international identified population faces challenges of visibility to address their issues and concerns. Patterns of cultural and political stratification can lead to various levels visibility of populations. People living internationally have varied levels of cultural integration personally and interpersonally, making this population vulnerable to isolation and lack of support services in this transition. Knowledge of this population is crucial to providing adequate care and mental health services in support of international lifestyle and identity development. To give voice to this population's experiences Charmaz (2003) suggests in the constructivist to grounded theory offers a vantage view of the "relativism of multiple social realities" when forming meaning and interpretation of meaning. Due to the exploration of the construct of the self in this population, analysis was guided with feminist theory and techniques to listen for the features of the self like "I," "me," "my" as expressed in the interviews conducted with the use of the Voice-Centered Listening Guide developed by Brown and Gillian (1992).

### **Participants**

In this study, interviews were conducted with participants who have experienced an international lifestyle and who self identify as international or a like term. As



previously defined, the international lifestyle is defined as an actual or semblance of daily living established in another country. Participants were selected based on their international lifestyle in a country other than birth or citizenship for at least six months. In interviews were conducted in the United Arab Emirates, China, South Africa, the Philippines, the Netherlands, Germany, Great Britain, Russia, and France. International hubs were identified through the UN International Migration Report and Migrant Stock Data for their global rank of international foreign-born populations (UN, 2008; UN, 2009), limiting one city per country. In cases of multiple cities in one country, the city of largest migrant population has been selected. Dubai was substituted for Riyadh due to its unique standing in the international community (i.e. due to the influx of foreign-born residents). Note that the UN International Migration Report and Migrant Stock Data figures use the term “migrant” which more broadly includes immigrants, some of which may be outside of the target international group for this study.

The United Nations figures are intended to identify the percentage of people living outside of their country of origin, defined by citizenship. While these figures offer a quantifiable target population, it must be acknowledged that the definition of an international lifestyle is limited and insufficient to quantify those who identify as international. First, individuals may not necessarily define country of origin based on citizenship. Second, living outside of the country of origin does not, in and of itself, create international identity; personal factors and characteristics must also be accounted for. Similarly, those who are forced to enter another country due to war, sociopolitical, or economic necessity may reject the shift to an international identity. In the absence of a better definition, the definition of international lifestyles delimits international foreign-

born populations for the purpose of identifying sites to study. In situations of an imposed international lifestyle, such as third-culture kids, it is necessary to separate those who both identify and embrace international identity. An international sample was identified to minimize distortions of limited experiences through a single source location (Schildkraut, 2007).

### **Description of Participants**

A total of nine participants who have experienced the international lifestyle and are self-identified as international or like term participated in this study. Participants were selected based on international lifestyle in a country other than birth or citizenship for at least six months. In-person interviews were available in United Arab Emirates, South Africa, the Netherlands, Germany, Great Britain, and France. Online interviews were conducted for China, the Philippines, and Russia. Those who cannot meet for in-person interviews were interviewed via online video conferencing. Each participant provided descriptive facts through a demographic questionnaire. Theoretical sampling in the selected international hub sites is intended to emphasize the diversity of participants represented in the study to attain *maximum variation* (Patton, 2002, p.234). Expanding the sample to nine international hub sites, versus a single site, provides geographical variation for the sake of breadth and depth of international identity and lifestyle experience. Variation was established both geographically and demographically.

Due to the limitation of time and resources, the sample consisted of predetermined nine participants. The desired goal for sampling is to conduct interviews until saturation is reached; that is, until no new information is discovered. Maykut and Moorehouse (1994) indicate that qualitative research has no minimal sample size.

Saturation was in need to be evaluated to clarify whether sufficient information on international identity emerges.

In initial peer review, it was posited that participants must have lived in at least two countries other than their country of birth or citizenship. However, by limiting the sample to individuals who have lived in more than one country other than origin, the early developmental stages of international identity development would be absent from the study. Therefore, participants who have lived in only one other country were included in the study to examine the early developmental stages of international identity. The researcher recruited a purposive group of participants based on their affiliation to the international community to the point it impacts their identity and focus on diversity of participants to gain the widest breadth of diversity.

### **Inclusion Criteria**

The following were the inclusion criteria for participating in the study:

1. Participants lived daily for at least six months in at least one country other than country of birth or citizenship
2. Were available for interview live or via online video conferencing
3. Have English proficiency
4. Identify with the international lifestyle and/or community
  - a. Identify primarily as transnational, a member of the international community not a cross-cultural participant
  - b. Unlike the rest of the Diaspora of international living individuals, participants do not identify as the primarily visible members of the international community; i.e. diplomats, expats, and TCKs. However, they may meet these definitions.

- c. Have experienced a change in the lens of their identity to view themselves as citizens of the world, but not negating nationalistic membership but making this membership secondary.
  - d. Participants attribute the change in shift around national identity, global society and borders through their experiences living abroad
5. Participants are able to provide informed consent

### **Exclusion Criteria**

The following were the exclusion criteria for participating in the study:

- 1. Are unable to provide informed consent due to diminished mental capacity
- 2. Have a severe mental illness, including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder or borderline personality disorder?

### **Protection of Human Participants and Ethical Practices**

To ensure participants' privacy and protection in this study, this study follows the *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* proposed by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2002) and the guidelines of the California School of Professional Psychology at Alliant International University's Institutional Review Board. To provide transparency and clarity of the process, all participants were notified of the voluntary nature of the study, including their right to withdrawal at any time and for any reason without repercussion. Participants were informed of the purpose and scope of the study, their right to confidentiality, the limits of confidentiality, and the benefits and risks prior to participation.

Before participating, potential participants were asked to read and confirm via signature their acceptance of consent to participate, including consent to audio and video

recording. Participants were provided a copy of their signed consent forms prior to the interview. If requested, in situations of distress during or after the interview process, participants would have received a referral to a local crisis line in their current country of residence. Crisis resources are identified by the psychological association of each country as identified by the APA Office of International Affairs.

To protect the confidentiality and anonymity of participants' information, data that can identify participating individuals were recoded into generalized terms. For example, countries were identified according to their corresponding regional, such as Europe versus Paris, France.

### **Materials**

This study utilizes the following two recording devices, including a video recorder and audio recorder.

### **Measures**

#### **Self-Report Measures**

For triangulation of data and to expand descriptive depth of the phenomenon of international identity, surveys were used to explore divergent and disparate concepts of identity, hierarchy of terms, and mental health concerns in this group. Complementary data from the applied survey measures help to understand the social story of the group for fuller understanding.

***Demographic.*** A self-report screener containing the inclusion and exclusion criteria was given to assess eligibility of potential participants. Additionally, a demographic questionnaire was provided to obtain demographic information including: sex, country of origin with self-definition, native language, other languages and level of

proficiency, sexual orientation, social identity (independent, collectivism, combination, other: describe), socioeconomic status, occupation, immigration status, ethnic heritage, culture, country of birth, citizenship(s), passport(s), host countries lived in, and duration.

**Identity.** Twenty Statement Test/”Who Am I?” (TST) is a 20-item measure to provide description of the self to free-association response. The measure involves twenty individual responses to the question, “Who am I?” This measure was validated by the Erikson Identity Development Model (Erikson, 1959). Driver (1969) established the cross-cultural application of the measure in India and the United States. This measure has been adapted to include “When, where, and how am I?” (Holstein and Gubrium, 2000, p105) as applied in similar complex and fluid identity research (Trinh Minh-ha, 1991).

**Worldview.** Worldview Analysis Scale (WAS) is a 45-item questionnaire establishing seven dimensions of worldview: materialistic universe, tangible realism, communalism, indigenous values, knowledge of self, spiritual immortality and spiritualism (Obasi, 2004). The total reliability estimate was .93, test-retest reliability was .95, criterion related validity established ethnic differences of all seven subscales producing a main effect ( $F(7,301) = 17.38, p < .001, \eta = .54$ ) and the follow up ANOVA ( $F(7,392) = 53.68, p < .001, \eta = .70$ ) (Obasi, 2004). Worldview surveys have been used to understand the individual and cultural level values, and establish value perspectives (Van de Vijver & Poortinga, 2002).

**Mental Health.** Health Dynamics Inventory (HDI) is a 50-item self report measure used to screen current mental health status of subjects ages 3-84 (Saunders & Wojcik, 2003). The measure was normed with 2,161 patients and 1,574 non-patients from a representative population of the United States. Although this measure has not been

normed in the international population, it is correlated to DSM-IV-TR, a diagnostic measure of mental health widely used internationally. Internal reliability ranges from .70 to .95 (Saunders & Wojcik, 2003). Validity was established through a compared patient and non-patient t-test, specific subscales were analyzed through ANOVA, and correlational analysis between clinician's rating and the patient report. Raw scores are converted to T-scores and graphically compared to patient and non-patient profiles.

***Semi-Structured Interview Guide.*** A qualitative interview guide was used as a semi-structured, conversational approach to guide the interviews. Interview questions were derived from findings covered in the literature; conversations with internationals, peer review and the personal experience of the researcher (see Appendix H). Building on prior research, questions pulled directly from other studies were related to international experiences (Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009) and third-culture research (Bélanger & Verkuyten, 2010). Collectively, the questions were prepared to highlight the development and experience of international identity. Interview questions are flexible and were presented in the order that best eases the flow of the interview, allowing for spontaneous lines of question, as needed. In advance of the study, participants were informed of the study interest in how they think about their identity, who they are, and how they would like to be viewed by others, experiences in the international community, and their experience of mental health.

### **Procedures**

Participants were solicited through online advertisement, email, and social network postings. Known international social networking sites, such as Expatica or Internations, were used to recruit in specific international hubs. Brief screening

containing the inclusion and exclusion criteria was conducted in writing or orally to establish eligibility among potential participants. Upon confirmation of eligibility, the participant the process and procedures were provided in-person or by telephone. If eligible, during initial contact, participation details were given by email or phone. These details include expected duration of time needed, participant rights, confidentiality, rights of voluntary participation, and notification the ability to withdraw at any time without consequence. Informed consent and consent to authorize audio and videotapes were provided in-person or email, with ample time to review before the interview. Questions regarding the process were addressed before scheduling the interview appointment. Upon receipt of the signed consent forms, the participants were emailed a digital scanned copy within 48 hours. Questionnaires were provided online prior to the scheduled interview. The instructions to the questionnaires indicated the expected time needed to complete each measure. Survey measures were completed at any time before the scheduled interview. In preparation for interview scheduling, participants were informed that the interview process is expected to take 45 minutes to an hour, with an additional 10-20 minutes for survey completion.

Interviews were conducted in the closest public libraries, homes, or other public space where participants are comfortable disclosing information of a personal nature. The location of the study was in several of the top international hubs. Naturalistic observations allowed depth and detail of the international phenomenon. This approach allows the researcher to see the social context of this phenomenon holistically (Maykut & Moorehouse, 1994). The intent is to observe participants in their natural setting. In the absence of establishing interviews in the international hubs, online video conferencing



interviews was conducted in place of in-person interviews. All interview settings required participants to be alone, not facing a window or other visually distracting stimuli, and environments without extraneous background noise.

The researcher started the interview with rapport building, including disclosure of international community membership. The researcher engaged the participant in the interview. Afterward, the researcher debriefed the participants to assess experienced distress of the participant, make a referral to crisis resources, if needed, and discuss procedures going forward. The debriefing took approximately 10-20 minutes. The participant was thanked and provided the equivalence of a \$25 gift card. The researcher provided contact information to participants, in case the participant needs assistance or has further questions. The researcher scheduled a time for the participant to review the transcripts, overall results, and interpretation. Participants were provided two weeks to provide critique and feedback.

### **Data Analysis**

Data was analyzed with a voice-centered Listening Guide developed by Brown and Gillian (1992) based on its use in Walters and Auton-Cuff (2009) exploration of the experience of growing up in a third culture. Through a voice-centered relational method, this study explores the experiences of participants at their developmental stage by listening to the collectivity of the difference voices they share. Each individual has a voice or style of communications that brings to light their inner world unique to them and this method seeks to understand the individual through understanding of this inner world. The Listening Guide was used as a method to psychologically analyze communication as it pulls from on voice (range, distinctive tonality, signatures, pitch and rhythm),

resonance, and relationship as embodied in culture and interpersonal interaction as a glimpse into that individual's psyche. The interpretation of text and interviews were made through transcriptions that led to units of meaning (Polkinghorne, 2005). Holstein and Gubrium (2000) provide support for the narrative and interpretive practice of exploring the self. This practice uses a concept of the self, based on the discursive nature of self-construction to document the experience of being (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000). Historically, personal narrative has served as a means for discovery of the self-construction process, particularly the story of the self in a contextual setting and interactive experiences (Cooley, 1964/1902; Goffman, 1959; James, 1961/1892; Mead, 1934).

Data gathered from in-depth interviews, researcher notes, demographic questionnaires, Twenty Statement Test (TST), Worldview Analysis Scale (WAS), and Health Dynamics Inventory (HDI) were synthesized to reveal common and overlapping themes of this study. Participants' interviews, demographics questionnaires, and results of the Twenty Statement Test (TST), World Analysis Scale (WAS), and Health Dynamics Inventory (HDI) provided an overview of the 10 participants sampled along with a demographic description of each participant. Subsequent to the interview, the researcher coded and analyzed the data according to Auerbach and Silverstein (2003). Then the constant comparative method, discovered by Maykut and Morehouse (1994), was utilized to analyze the data. Initially, each interview was extensively analyzed in the process of "culling" for "units of meaning," resulting in numerous pieces of data (word, phrase, sentence, paragraph) in search of meaning in the data (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Maykut & Moorehouse, 1994, p. 134). These units of meaning and the culmination of

interviews, questionnaires, and field observations were categorized by relevant observed patterns, organizational patterns, and statistical analysis identified through NVivo software, vetted by the researcher as part of a multifaceted, multi-tiered strategy of analysis (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 41). Repeated units and corresponding ideas were identified and categorized through the discovery process. In the discovery stage, as repeated themes emerge details about the phenomenon as potentially important experiences, ideas, concepts, and themes surface. The researcher remained sensitive to the emerging themes of the phenomenon as they surface to identify the overall patterns and themes of international identity (Maykut & Moorehouse, 1994). As meaning and relationship of emerging themes surface, international identity theory and modeling developed. The purpose of this qualitative study is to find themes common to individuals who identify internationally for advancement of an international identity development model and theory.

### **Provisions of Trustworthiness**

Qualitative research relies on credibility and validity established by documentation providing trustworthiness (Maykut & Moorehouse, 1994). To establish credibility and validity, this study involved observations; transcripts; recordings; analysis; memos; field notes; the researcher's journal; and consultation with advisors, international psychology professionals, and peers. The research journal provided a record of researcher thoughts, strategy, concerns, feelings and observations serving as an audit trail (Maykut & Moorehouse, 1994).

To reinforce validity, member checks incorporate participant feedback of transcripts, data analysis, and the resulting conclusions of the study. This study allowed a

two-week response time for participants to think over the material supplied to them for input and feedback. Furthermore, the dissertation, cultural oversight, and data analysis committees provided oversight on the analysis of meaning and cultural significance of interpretation. Recruiting for the data analysis and cultural committee took place at the International Congress on Psychology in South Africa. The poster “International Identity Development and Mental Health Issues in the International Identified Community” was presented to elicit participation of internationally based, culturally diverse psychology professionals. The cultural oversight and data analysis committees provided diverse perspectives, worldviews, cultures, nationalities, ethnicities, orientations, and languages, including supervision and collaboration to better decipher units of meaning and cultural significance of interpretation. Holstein and Gubrium (2000) reasoned that collaborative analysis is vital to overcome the current dominance of Western perspectives on international identity, especially because such a Western perspective makes viewing alternative subjectivities difficult.

Another provision of trustworthiness is transparency in the intentions of this research and the researcher’s personal ties to the research topic. The self-identification of the researcher as an international was expressed to participants, as well as the dissertation and cultural oversight committees. By identifying membership, values, biases and worldview of the researcher, the committees were able to directly address, monitor, and comment on potential bias in collection, data analysis, and interpretation.

### **Researcher Description**

The researcher is a Caucasian, married, heterosexual, female who self identifies as an international. She is completing her doctorate degree in Clinical Psychology and has

obtained two Master's degrees, one in Education and the other in Psychology. The researcher, her brother and her sister were raised in a middle-class suburb of Southern California. She graduated undergraduate university at the University of California, Berkeley at the age of seventeen. She attended graduate school at Loyola University in Maryland and currently attends Alliant International University doctoral program in Clinical Psychology in Southern California. Prior to her second Master's the researcher taught in the United States, China and the Netherlands. The researcher has eleven years of work experience in the field of education and mental health. She has founded and owned a consulting firm in Beijing and Rotterdam, specialized in psychoeducation of acculturation and transition for international families. She has firsthand international and cultural exposure in the international communities of Cartago, Costa Rica; Hong Kong, China; Beijing, China; and Rotterdam, Netherlands. The researcher experienced the daily challenges of culture, acculturation, transition, language, nationality, and power differentials in the international community. Based on these diverse experiences, the research developed interest and curiosity in the international lifestyle and those who identify with this community. The researcher conducted community and professional roundtables and conferences to address the need for mental health resources in the international community. Through these experiences topics of cultural competency of international mental health practitioners, ethical practice across borders, appropriateness of fit in treatment, culturally sensitive assessment, diverse psychology approaches, and choice became worthy topics to pursue for the aim to better serve the needs of this population.

While conducting this study the researcher experienced a persistent feeling of interest and comfort. The material discussed was familiar and resonated with the researcher. The researcher approached the interview with curiosity. The interview felt conversational and questions appeared to have a coherent flow. The interview was successful mostly in part to the interviewees' forthcoming disclosure of their experiences. The researcher experienced moments when the reflexivity of her presence in the interview when some interviewees made remarks indicating knowledge of counties and experiences known about the researcher. Overall, the researcher experienced feelings of intrigue of what was revealed and admiration for the depth of the content revealed during the interview process.

### Chapter III

#### **Results**

This chapter investigates the emerging themes resulting from data analysis. It provides individual descriptions and themes related to each individual participant while presenting pertinent overarching themes and trends of the participants in summary profiles. Tables provide visual aid to the themes resulting from the data for ease of conceptualization of the reader. A group qualitative profile is presented to highlight the emerging categories and themes discovered.

#### **Participant Background Information**

Nine participants were interviewed during this study using a semi-structured interview guide. Recruitment took place through internet advertisements placed on international networking and resource sites like Internations or Expatica; e-mail announcements sent through list serves, and referral from participants and collaborating researchers. Demographic information on Table 3 shows that the sample was comprised of five females, four males. The sample mean age of participants was 37 years-old, ranging from 23-59 years of age. Country of origin disbursement of this sample reveal, three (33%) were Western European, one (11%) was Eastern European, one (11%) was Middle-Eastern, one (11%) was from Oceania, one (11%) was Southeast Asian, one (11%) was North American, one (11%) was South American. In terms of relationships, five of the participants were married at the time of the study and six (67%) were in a romantic relationship, and three of them had children. Educational status ranged from

some college to having a graduate degree; all had completed some college, one (11%) had earned a Bachelor's degree, and five (56%) had earned a graduate degree. Income ranged from under \$20,000 to over \$100,000, median income annually was less than \$70,000.



Table 3 *Self-Reported Participant Demographic Information*

Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Nationality	Ethnicity	COO*	Annual Income	Education Level
Maria	33	Female	Portuguese	Caucasian and African	W. Europe	\$61-80K	Graduate Degree
Intl Ali	38	Male	Iran/UAE	Persian	Middle East	\$41-60K	Graduate Degree
Madame	32	Female	Dutch	Caucasian	W. Europe	\$61-80K	College Degree
Berlin	29	Female	Malaysia	Asian	SE Asia	Under \$20K	Graduate Degree
NL	59	Male	United Kingdom, New Zealand	Caucasian (Anglo)	W. Europe	\$61-80K	Some graduate school
Volga	48	Female	US, Russia	Caucasian	E. Europe	Over \$100K	Graduate Degree
Patagonia	24	Female	Chile	Latin American	S. America	\$61-80K	Some graduate school
Adventure	28	Male	Australia	Caucasian	Oceania	Over \$100K	Some graduate school
BaguioSteve	46	Male	United States	Korean & Caucasian (Anglo)	North America	\$21-40K	Graduate degree

\*Note: COO = Country of Origin was generalized to region

Table 4 *Health Dynamics Inventory Scores*

	Maria	Intl Ali	Madame	Berlin	NL	Volga	Patagonia	Adventure	Baguio Steve
Morale	60*	51	64*	47	51	55	68*	55	64*
Global Symptoms	50	56	42	47	44	41	45	40	39
Depression	57	59	48	52	48	39	41	42	39
Anxiety	52	46	43	46	40	61*	55	43	49
Attention Prob.	49	56	41	49	49	56	41	40	49
Psychotic Thinking	43	64*	43	59	43	54	43	43	43
Eating Disorders	43	67*	42	42	46	42	58	42	42
Substance Abuse	46	52	46	49	46	46	46	46	46
Behavior Prob.	43	43	43	43	48	43	43	43	43
Global Impairment	43	47	38	54	55	59	43	38	50
Occupational	44	57	40	40	57	57	53	40	44
Relationship	45	41	41	54	59	54	41	41	45
Self-Care	44	44	39	65*	48	61*	39	39	39

\* Annotates an elevated score

Table 5 *Worldview Analysis Scale Findings*

	Intl Ali	Madame	Berlin	Maria	NL	Volga	Patagonia	Adventure	Baguio Steve
Materialistic Universe	31	20	27	25	14	25	22	32	39
Tangible Realism	44	36	41	44	34	49	40	49	49
Communalism	41	36	30	36	37	37	42	34	21
Indigenous Values	27	18	18	26	8	26	20	26	11
Knowledge of Self	40	37	34	32	31	37	38	33	29
Spiritual Immortality	31	11	25	28	8	21	21	38	37
Spiritualism	34	13	18	29	9	33	33	37	32
<i>Total WAS:</i> All of the items	248	171	193	220	141	228	216	249	218

Description of the Worldview Analysis Scale (WAS):

The WAS assess seven conceptual dimensions of worldview.

Worldview was operationalized as the philosophical assumptions which determine the way in which people perceive, think, feel, and experience the world. Factor analysis confirmed a seven factor structure that included the following:

1. *Materialistic Universe* – The belief that studying physical matter is the best method for explaining ontological relationships that exist in the universe. Furthermore, scientific explanations of reality represent the apex of human thought where spiritual connections are not needed.
2. *Tangible Realism* – The belief that reality should be based solely on physical objects that can be counted and measured.

Furthermore, this subscale assesses the epistemological relationship between knowledge and the five senses.

3. *Communalism* – A teleological commitment to ensuring the welfare and interest of each member in a society. This subscale also examined relationships outside of the nuclear family.
4. *Indigenous Values* – Non-Western axiological systems rooted in old traditions. More specifically, this subscale assesses indigenous pre-colonial values related to metaphysical relationships between humans, nature, and knowledge.
5. *Knowledge of Self* – The acquisition of cultural information which induces symbolic imagery that reflects interconnected information about the self with those things external to the self. This subscale investigates the importance of knowing information about one's cultural history, the accuracy of its depiction in education, and its ontological connection to mental health.
6. *Spiritual Immortality* – A person's belief that s/he existed before birth and will continue to exist after physical death.
7. *Spiritualism* – The cosmological belief that the universe was created by a Supreme Being. Furthermore, everything is understood to be spiritually interdependent and interconnected.
8. *Total WAS* – Worldview reflected on a continuum from a material to a spiritual.

Responses to items with a worldview that is rooted in spiritualism generates higher scores, and responses to items with a worldview that is rooted in materialism generates lower scores. For interpretative purposes, note that a stronger orientation toward materialistic universe and tangible realism are demonstrated with lower scores and a stronger orientation toward spiritual immortality, communalism, indigenous values, knowledge of self, and spiritualism are demonstrated with higher scores (Obasi, 2004).

### **Participant Description**

This section provides participant background descriptions of the nine participants in this research study. Directly following the descriptions of participants, a researcher description is included.

***Maria.*** Maria is a 33-year-old single (never married), heterosexual, female born and raised in a by her single mother in a small city in Latin, Western European country. Her first experience of international life initiated through early family relocation to her mother's Southern Africa country of origin. This was her identified point of entry to the international community. She was raised in Southern Africa until the age of 16 before going to Western Europe study. She found the lifestyle to be pleasant and social but there were fewer resources than her country of origin. This was the point which Maria began to identify entry into the international community. She recalls that keeping in the same schooling system and experiencing independence spurred her interest in international living, she recounted that she took opportunities as they came and initiated her relocation. Her high school final years were spent living in small Europe village at a boarding school she worked diligently to enroll in. This was her first time living alone and found the first year "tough" and "isolating." She found connecting with locals was difficult in this small village. While there, she connected to the other students who remained on weekends instead of returning home. She found the space and independence provided in the boarding school to be developmentally supportive. She transitioned to a larger city to expand her college study and living independently.

After schooling, she worked in another Western European country for ten years to gain experience. Maria sought individual outpatient counseling for emotional support for

three months while in this country. She sought treatment because she “had the feeling (she) was getting very overloaded at work (burnout). It turned out that (she) was actually just getting bored and being micro-managed by (her) boss.” She reports that she found therapy very helpful. She experienced struggles to adapt to the language but through a concerted effort was able to learn the local language and overcome this barrier. However, work opportunities as a research and development manager offered the chance to move to South Africa where she now works and lives independently. She is on a short-term contract in her current country of residence and describes separation from her partner back in Western Europe as a challenge. One of the factors she which she identifies as supportive in her current living situation is socializing through common interests, such as MENSA. With these added social connections, she is able to socially interact with those in the community for which she has common intrigue, creating a sense of place.

She describes her life in the international community as “not always easy but always learning something from it.” Through her international experiences, Maria identified patterns of hierarchy in the international community stratified by patterns of engagement and level of interaction with the local culture. She described that her idea of being international is not simply interacting solely with other internationals or expatriates, but she feels the labels are less significant. While both fit within the group of internationals, those who value and engage on the local level have developed further their international identity to meet the “citizen of the world” concept she relates to international identity. She found being part of the local lifestyle more rewarding and found biases of those who only interact with other internationals to be limiting and incongruent with her own values.

One of the most significant challenges Maria found in her international lifestyle was being away from loved ones and missing significant life events, but she also found seeking out socialization made these moments more manageable. Despite the use of internet technology, such as Skype, Maria finds herself frustrated in the limitations of those resources in keeping her connected, particularly her with her partner back in Europe. She discussed the support provided by her work through psychoeducation on the adjustment and “peaks and valleys” of the transition made this adjustment better to recognize and verbalize; however, she felt more resources may have opened her more to other social opportunities.

*Qualitative Description of Cultural and Self Identity.* Maria describes internationals as resilient, adaptable, sensitive to cultural nuances, possessing an ability of adapting and learning cultures and language to interact and engage locally. Maria describes her self-identity as a “lack of identity” because there are so many labels that apply to how she identifies. She found picking out only aspects of her identity to be limiting. Consequently, she defines her identity in a series of individual traits, for example being a calm person, humorous, a “citizen of the world.” She feels these values are realized in the international community as part of accepting a greater context of her place in relation to others. She categorizes individual traits that originate from her culture of origin, such as a reliance on her social network to survive. Because of this feature, she feels she has a consciousness to seeking out social interactions and exchanges. As she elaborated her cultural identity, she drew from various aspects of the cultures she has experienced. For example, she identifies with the values of having strong social and family ties from her country of origin with a role of being a “family person.” She



identifies as being a dancer and partyer from her ethnic and cultural heritage. She has also incorporated the French passion for food, the Dutch direct communication and non-hierarchical approach, along with a wide array of other influences from her travels and social exchanges into her social and cultural identity. She describes herself as “citizen of the world,” which to her means a tendency to quickly adapt wherever she is. She expressed a duality in the way in which she identifies. As such, as much as she feels that she does not really belong to a particular group, she also feels as though she belongs everywhere. She notes her feelings of belonging and integrating are rapid, “if the 'other' groups are open.” In forming her identity, she describes taking the “best of each culture and adopt/adapt into (her) own lifestyle.” Another critical feature of her international identity she highlighted was an emphasis on the acceptance of differences, beyond that which she has seen outside of this population.

She remarks that there are similarities and differences with her family of origins, such as having broader openness to differing concepts of others seen in her ability to let go of some of the different values or expectations of others. She described an array of attributes of the international community and those with international identity, from arrogance in those who exclude and isolate to those who are respectful, flexible and adaptive in their engagement with others. Her own international identity she attributes as a primary identity due to the significance of her experiences as an international but she found the articulation of her identity through the research participation to be challenging and helpful in her own personal discovery of the nuances of her own international identity.

*Qualitative Description of Worldview.* Maria describes her worldview as largely independent. She feels this is due to never fitting in one social group, despite being quite social. Furthermore, she believes in values that each individual must contribute in a way to society so aspects of collectivist thought are present in her worldview.

According to her responses on the Worldview Analysis Scale, Maria scored highest in the domain of Tangible Realism (44). This score suggests a strong value for a reality and knowledge base founded on that which can be ascertained through measurement through the senses. Secondly, she values Communalism (36), with an emphasis on the commitment each member of a society has to contribute to the interests of society and each of its members. Thirdly, she holds a worldview based on Knowledge of Self (32) created by acquisition of cultural information which interconnects self and group knowledge and emphasizing the importance of knowledge of the self, one's cultural roots, and its connection to mental health. Lower scores represented in her responses include Spiritualism (29), showing she is less tied to a belief in some form of creationism which interdependent interconnections of all things; Spiritual Immortality (28), representing a less significance in the belief of life after death; and Indigenous Values (26), showing a more Western value system with a lesser reliance on knowledge from traditions rooted knowledge. Her lowest score was Materialistic Universe (25) showing that despite lower reliance on spiritual knowledge she is not absolute in her approach to knowledge based solely on physical materialism, leaving room for the possibility of spiritual connections of knowledge. Her Total WAS score (220) places her in the 4<sup>th</sup> highest rank in the spectrum of worldview represented in the participant group from material to spiritual. She places in the middle of the group within the spectrum of worldview represented in this study. This reveals that her worldview is rooted slightly higher in spiritualism from the African worldview but

her she holds space for the significance of materialism in forming perspectives of her experiences and interactions.

***International Ali.*** International Ali is a 38-year-old divorced, heterosexual, male born and raised in several cities in the Middle East. He lives alone in the United Arab Emirates, working as a purchasing manager. His story began with a description of losing all of his family, except his sister, in a car accident at the age of nine. This accident had a significant impact on his life and the person he has become. He lived with grandparents, cousins and became independent from college age forward. He reported that he developed an independent and curious mind, not led by any one person or system. He found his questioning of the world around him beyond the belief systems he was presented as a child played a strong role in his entry to the international community. In high school, he decided to learn another language to learn more of the world, starting with English. He felt at this time there were few people to share his curiosities with who would understand his perspective. He spoke of having more open experiences in the capital city of his country of origin, where he attended university but in comparison to where he currently resides the concentration of locals and narrow values are present despite regional differences. Individually, he found learning another language was the initial catalyst for his transition into the community, because it came from a place of genuine curiosity and interest in discovery of ways to attain co-existence and peace. He discussed the significance of seeking out diverse groups and individuals with the international community to foster exchange and respectful discussion as a valuable factor in his engagement with the international community. He expanded that these exchanges can be challenging but offer many opportunities for growth and change in the mental

maturity he ties to the international identity. He studied language and found it a tool for communication but acknowledges its limitations in discussions of God, truth, philosophy, and other non-concrete objects and subjects. While he reports deep relationships with his family origin, he discusses limitations and boundaries to what he can share with them due to the rigidity of beliefs, particularly with regards to religion. He remarks that his questioning of religious practices is often interpreted negatively within his culture and family of origin.

He reflected that balance is important to be an international person, mentally, physically and socially; however, he remarks that individuals have potential for regulation and dysregulation in this community. He does find that an international community which offers avenues for dialogue, discovery, respect, equality and exchange is a critical factor in establishing balance systemically. Connection with others is important to this participant in the successful practice of the international lifestyle, especially those who are also seeking the development he articulated in the interview; however, he did not express any disconnect with those based on their identity being national, ethnic or culturally based.

One frustration is his limitations of how much he can do and how many people he can connect with based on the current resources in the international community. He looks forward to having a chance to give back more and foster bigger connections and exchange. He feels that the limitations and restrictions of government policies based on his country of origin limit his mobility and, therefore, his ability to fully attain his goals and aspirations as an international and as an individual.

*Qualitative Description of Cultural and Self Identity.* International Ali defines international as a maturity of mental development to “see beyond the values for which you have been brought up in,” based on respect, patience for coexistence and acceptance of others and is grounded in values of peace. He ties these values to a philosophy that right and wrong are relative, and thus different worldviews are also relative. He feels those who are connected and aware of this community are international but their development is spectrum of attainment of the above values, not just felt but expressed in their actions. He finds members of the community have varied levels of enlightenment to their connection with the core values of being international he expressed.

He noted traits of internationals as being respectable, calm, serene, communication, open to criticism, positive attitude towards learning. He defines himself as being from “nowhere” because he does not identify with the traits and values of one locale or culture. Culture is describes as one’s history, traits, representation of self. His is a blend of his experiences and conscious awareness of interpretation of these experience and the unconscious values of his country of origin. He notes a personal path in seeking truth in a world of relativism, rejecting absolutism and the conflicts that arise from this disruption of balance. International Ali remarks that living the values of connection, equality, and respectful understanding through intentful actions with others is the highest level of international identity.

*Qualitative Description of Worldview.* International Ali declined to categorize himself as individualist or collectivist in his worldview. However, he noted that international experience contributed to the features of being “more tolerant,” according to International Ali. He associated the concept of home is based on people whom he can

connect, not related to blood relation or culture, and neither is it related to a location for him.

According to his responses on the Worldview Analysis Scale, International Ali scored highest in the domain of Tangible Realism (44). This score suggests a strong value for a reality and knowledge base founded on that which can be ascertained through measurement through the senses. Secondly, he values Communalism (31), with an emphasis on the commitment each member of a society has to contribute to the interests of society and each of its members. Thirdly, he holds a worldview based on Knowledge of Self (40) created by acquisition of cultural information which interconnects self and group knowledge and emphasizing the importance of knowledge of the self, one's cultural roots, and its connection to mental health. Lower scores represented in his responses include Spiritualism (34), showing he is less tied to a belief in some form of creationism which interdependent interconnections of all things; Spiritual Immortality (31), representing a less significance in the belief of life after death; and Materialistic Universe (31), showing that despite lower reliance on spiritual knowledge he is not absolute in his approach to knowledge based solely on physical materialism but leaving room for the possibility of spiritual connections of knowledge. His lowest score was Indigenous Values (27) showing a more Western value system with a lesser reliance on knowledge from traditions rooted knowledge. His Total WAS score (248) places him in the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest rank in the spectrum of worldview represented in the participant group from material to spiritual. He places in the upper of the group within this spectrum. This reveals that his worldview is rooted in higher levels of spiritualism. He shows a stronger orientation toward communalism, knowledge of self, but with a strong significance of the use of tangible realism to form balance in his worldview perspective.

**Madame.** Madame is a 32-year-old married, heterosexual, female born and raised in a small city, village in Western Europe. She has lived with her spouse, in France, for the last 10 years. She reports having a close and supportive family of origin and a protected upbringing. Her experiences with travel in school sparked her interest to explore the world through living in other cultures. She reports meeting a partner from North America out of college and an adjustment period to adapting her family and peers to this new relationship due to age and cultural difference. She reported the events of 9/11 and illness of her partner resulted in increased challenges on her and her partner's level of stress. Shortly thereafter, the couple relocated to France without a job or connections but found life sorted itself out over time.

Madame was 23 years old at the time of this entry to the international community. At this time, she relocated with her husband from her country of origin to France. She reported challenges with establishing housing with the proper amenities such as heating because she moved into a "project home," where she proceeded to remodel and customize. She succeed in this renovation, even receiving interest from the design community. At the time of the interview, she was considering another relocation due the local government's interest in purchasing her property for rezoning. She felt torn about leaving a "project home" she has invested so much time into. She currently works independently from home for several national and international companies.

She found that her language skills helped to facilitate her transition acculturating and connecting with others. She reported traveling frequently, starting at a young age. She reports that sharing similarities in experiences with other internationals eases

connection. She expressed that having a partner who is also an international and understands her experiences is a helpful resource for support.

Her husband's work with the topic of immigration also fostered the Madame's awareness to mental health factors of the international population. She is aware of the challenge of isolation but has not endorsed experienced this herself. She does note that when reconnecting with some from her country of origin that she may be seen as different to them, although she rather sees herself as just having different lifestyle and experiences. In her host country of France, she is attracted to those who are more open-minded and willing to teach things about French culture and life in France. She finds that these social interactions make life interesting through exchange, shared knowledge and inside information that give insight into experiences.

*Qualitative Description of Cultural and Self Identity.* Madame finds the experience of living internationally to be a key factor in international identity development. She remarks that the bureaucracy and daily life dispelled myths of the local culture, whereby thereafter she gained an international identity through collaborations of international teams. This was the point she began aware of her international identity. Through this process, she found her international identity including identifying features of her culture of origin and features she has adapted from the host culture.

She describes herself as having a very down to earth attitude, with critical perspective stating "don't believe something until you see it." She reports having little hierarchy in interpersonal relationships in daily life and in business. She describes her "actual culture" as a mix of French proudness, French avant-garde, an International mindset and a hint of Dutch impatience. She expands that sometimes she feels in between



two cultures. In her country of origin she is "the one who lives abroad", which for she does not feel is as different as people in her country of origin interpret her to be. In her host culture of France, she feels people readily associate her with her country of origin. While she noted that this association has lessened over the last ten years she feels it discredits her full participate in French life. Madame finds internationals like herself have strengths in their positive attitude, resilience, determination, and knowledge of this lifestyle as a decision. She found personal trait advantages of curiosity, her drive to action, creativity, endurance and persistence. She reports her traits of having strong opinion come from her family of origin but she notes that she differs from them in her level of adventurousness. Her culture she defines as having a foundation in her culture of origin but eschewed by her particular family values and culture which differ from her country of origin, and she mixes those values with experience with host cultures and the culture of her husband.

Over the course of her international experiences abroad, she has become more drawn to people that travel or come from different countries to live in her host country. She remarks connecting and identifying with their values and experiences. By interacting with those of similar background and/or identity, she finds exchanges in interactions enjoyable due to their readiness to discuss and compare their different cultures. Similarly, this identification helps her to seek out those in the local culture who value and appreciate the diversity of internationals like herself. She remarks that she feels most comfortable when people are less concerned with where she came from versus who she has become through her cultural experiences.

Madame defines international identity as someone adapting and incorporating the local and international values, concerns and lifestyle with a global view of their place in these contexts. She finds it fascinating the framework of others and the contextual use of knowledge of others and diversity of experiences. She also sees that some people can be overwhelmed by the depth of contexts one is faced to consider when living internationally. She is less convinced that there is a tangible community, seeing rather as abstract. She does not identify with those who from an island from the host culture and call themselves internationals. She values the cultural exchange and lifestyle within the local host culture.

*Qualitative Description of Worldview.* When asked about where she is from Madame describes it in terms of her current physical residence in her host country. Home to Madame is where she is resides presently with her husband and personal effects, but this is fluid and can change at any time. She describes herself as holding a blend of independent and collectivist view. She notes that at times she prefers operating independently to discover things and to discover herself. However, she also seeks out the collective thoughts on her perspectives to hear what others have to say, think, and do in their group interactions.

According to her responses on the Worldview Analysis Scale, Madame scored highest in the domain of Knowledge of Self (37) created by the acquisition of cultural information which interconnects self and group knowledge and emphasizing the importance of knowledge of the self, one's cultural roots, and its connection to mental health. She scored similarly to Tangible Realism (36) connoting Western values of empirical evidence for reality and knowledge, and Communalism (36). Her lower scores were in the areas of Materialistic Universe (20) showing that she holds the possibility of spiritual explanation of

values but relies more heavily on framing reality based on the physical world, explaining lower scores in Indigenous Values (18), Spiritualism (13), and Spiritual Immortality (11). Her Total WAS score of (117) places her in the 2nd lowest score of the studied group. This means that in the worldview continuum reflected from a material to a spiritual she responded to items indicating a more European or Western-based value system.

**Berlin.** Berlin is a 29-year-old single (never married), heterosexual, female born and raised in a village in Southeast Asia. She comes what she describes as a marginalized, mixed Asian background. She currently lives alone in Germany. She shared several significant life events that shaped who she has become and how she identifies. At the age of 15, her parents divorced, shifting her role in the family. Being the eldest child she was set with the task to support her parents and siblings through this process. At the age of 19, she left for school and was eager to be independent and pursue her own interests, politics at that time. After school, at the age of 23, she moved to work in Singapore but found it small, slow moving and wanted to get outside of Asia for new experiences. While she found Singapore to be small she delved into its thriving international community. This was the point of entry to the international community she self-identified. She did not feel that she fit in while in Asia. This feeling of not belonging and being isolated was a significant theme of her share experience discussed throughout the interview. Berlin reports that her siblings are the most similar to her in her family of origin. She finds they think similarly to her but have not yet had the opportunity to experience the international community to develop their own international identity. In Singapore, she connected initially with colleagues due to common interests and socioeconomic status. By seeking those who shared some of her experiences, she felt more understood and validated.

She then moved to Germany to pursue her graduate degree in engineering and to step outside of the expectations of her culture of origin. She reported that she learned “how to enjoy life” once in Europe. She was able to challenge her values, worldview, and lifestyle and start to incorporate things of her choice and liking. In Singapore and Germany, to start she found a pattern of attaching with other international but sharing little of her own culture and just focusing on theirs. However, she found that there was a high turnover in friends moving due to relocation to another city or country. Over time, she started to balance her friends but found she still primarily communicated in English. She struggled with the limitations to connect with others, especially locals, without speaking the local language. She stated that language has a strong association with isolation and depression. In her early arrival to Germany, she lived in a small town with few people she was able to communicate with and she stated a lack of support from her family made her struggle significantly the first two years. She forced herself to dedicate to her studies to distract her from her isolation. She made a friend who convinced her to get psychological support. She reported that talk therapy made a large difference after three months. She found that the therapist only could help her with her life in Germany but there was a lack of understanding of her identity and experiences impacting her life in a new country.

She dedicated to learning the local language and found this improved her feelings of connectedness socially. She also noted that her lifestyle has made forming and sustaining relationships challenging, due to the temporary or short-term nature of her lifestyle and practices. She noticed she befriended people too quickly upon her entry to the community but finds it is hard to break through all of the superficial nature of

interactions to have an authentic connection with friends or partner's. Through her experiences, she found authenticity is a key factor to meeting people in the international community. She intends to continue to live internationally, but notes she has not found any location she would consider settling down in the long term.

*Qualitative Description of Cultural and Self Identity.* When discussing her international identity, Berlin uses the metaphor of a bowl of salad, comprised of a blend of influences of Eastern and Western cultures. What she believes or has faith in are here various cultures. She notes that they are not constant and might change from time to time due to environment, profession, personal life, etc. She elaborates that her cultural membership impacts her lifestyle in several regards, not having a constant group of close friends, not finding deep friendships easily, hesitancy to settle down early and an unwillingness to commit easily. She is able to remark that she has many contradictory features if herself, often complaining while also holding a strength in her flexibility and easy going nature. Strongest of these attributes appears to be her ability to adapt to new people, environments, and work teams easily.

To define her culture she pulls parts of several features, Buddhist, Asian, American, German, etc. She finds her culture to be fluid and contextual to different situations, often going against expectations of stereotypes by bringing out the unexpected features of her culture to challenge others' expectations. She finds that trait of being goal oriented and doing things versus just talking about them as key characteristics for her success as an international. She feels flexibility to go beyond your own citizenship, country, culture, experiences and values is important to international identity development. Being rigid in one's perspective keeps the identity from developing fully.

She does not appreciate when other's label her as an international as a substitute word for the "other."

*Qualitative Description of Worldview.* Berlin finds her worldview perspective to be independent leaning as opposed to the collectivist values for which she was raised culturally. This is contrasted when discussing where she is from. She states that she is from her country of origin and her first host country, Singapore. Home to her is defined as where one feels comfortable and has found happiness, she also identifies her home as Singapore since she also owns property there.

According to her responses on the Worldview Analysis Scale, Berlin ranked Tangible Realism (41) in her responses, demonstrating the use of Western-based knowledge founded on a physically measured and verifiable reality. Secondly, her responses endorsed Knowledge of Self (34) as a means of knowledge through cultural discovery, social exploration and knowledge through the interaction of the personal and social self with others. Thirdly, she endorsed Communalism (30), representing values of connectedness and responsibility to the greater social group. Her mid-range scores included Materialistic Universe (27) relying on measurable versus spiritual explanations of experiences and Spiritual Immortality (25) noting a lesser significance of afterlife factoring into explanations or planning of her values. Her lower scores endorsed are in Indigenous Values (18), and Spiritualism (18), consistent with the opposing values listed above. Her Total WAS score (193) places her the 3rd lowest score compared to other members of the studied group. While her responses place her in a worldview closer to spiritualism reflected on a continuum from a material to a spiritual the European value system is demonstrable in her worldview, particularly in the areas of worldview with her strongest endorsement including Tangible

Realism, balanced by strong spiritual forms of knowledge from Knowledge of Self and Communalism.

*NL.* NL is a 59-year-old married, heterosexual, male born and raised in a small town in Western Europe. He currently lives with spouse and his three children in the Netherlands. He was the second child of four in a family formed out of the historical period of WWII. He attended preparatory school as a child. At this time, teachers recognized he was skilled in mathematics and he was sent to specialized boarding school. He stated he did not fit in socially as an adolescent, influencing his choice to not return. He started with studying mathematics in a prestigious university in his country of origin. He was humbled by the experience and he shifted to a study in management. He took up the sport of scuba diving, unknowing its impact on his life path. At this time, the North Sea oil industry was expanding and he applied for a job. He joined and worked in various roles in underwater engineering. This experience blended his love of diving and engineering over a six year period.

He then shifted to supervision of safety inspection protocol development. After which, he found work in New Zealand working with new technology in the same industry. At this point, he found himself a specialist in his field where he was recruited by leading companies in his industry. His specialty led to flexibility in his occupational roles. As he continued on in his career, contracts shifted eventually from international contract to local terms leading to a reduction in income for similar roles served. His first and second children were born while living in a small town in New Zealand. He found that the limitations of the small town lead to his and his families self resilience.

As his children became small children, he found an offer of work in Nigeria with multinational corporation. He was made to marry his partner to make this job role

possible. He remarked that this imposed the value system of his host country upon him and his family. Additionally, while family visited a few times he found that the distance welcomed extended visits that led to family conflict. Aside from these sparse family visits, he relied on local and work ties socially. He was confronted with cultural differences in addressing corruption with his new role in the company, balancing international and local practices. He felt this exposed him to new perspectives and ways of navigating differences in viewpoints. He recalls adapting a “do what you can” attitude. He felt discomfort with the disparities in lifestyle, resources and systems of reinforcing the status quo. He became interested in studies of the Diaspora between rich and poor. NL and his family lived in Nigeria for 6 years. He felt his children were largely insulated from the social strife he witnessed in the larger community.

After he had another child, he and his family moved to the Netherlands and has been there since. He expressed that this transition held several challenges for himself and his family. His wife began to suffer with arthritis, and this became a stressor for the family. She could not leave the home much. He recognized that this physical isolation led to frustration and discontent in his wife. He also began to recognize signs of depression in himself. He sought out counseling and started medications and counseling. Over two years ago, he found a suitable counselor where he felt a therapeutic relationship was established. He also reported struggling with sleep apnea. He reported that with support resources he felt better and he also felt he is better in his role as a husband. He took language lessons to be able to escape what he terms an “English speaking bubble.” He encouraged his children to join local sports teams to expand and connect more with the local culture. Although he reports struggling to meet his goal of connecting richly within



his host culture, he discussed not giving up on this goal. He still strives to move beyond the expectations of expatriates. Emotionally and intellectually, he felt he entered the international community in 2003 once being in a community standing for the justice and values he identifies strongly. Despite living internationally for a significant period before this point, NL acknowledged this move to be distinct in his identity development as an international. He felt age was less relevant to determining this shift in identification. He noted offense to the racist and prejudiced values represented in the new emergence of nationalism in his country of origin. While he feels not all forms of nationalism manifest in such a way. By interacting with people all over the world, through work and socialization, he finds the depth of his understanding enriched. Linguistically, he feels international and intercultural experiences help one to adapt flexibly to a mode of expression easily understood by others, deepening the connections made.

NL noted the international lifestyle is largely supported with economic stability and luxury creating the flexibility to take part in many opportunities. He feels these moments are fleeting and challenges of language, culture and access to mental health services make the lifestyle less fun. NL accessed services for his children to aid with adjustment. Initially, he could not find resources but after diligence was able use the international network to meet a psychologist. He found the high turnover of staff frustration, having to reintroduce himself or his family and their struggles. At times, he gave up and would not seek out services and would try to manage and suffer through it. He found the depletion of the search often was harder than trying to cope without. He also witnessed others struggle with significant family dysfunction abroad and commended their efforts despite the challenges they face accessing stable services. He

felt his access to the right services was by chance of luck. He also reported no specialized training of the service providers. One of the resources he sought out was a self-guided internet based cognitive-behavioral depression intervention. He felt this provided a structure and psychoeducation on what he was experiencing in an accessible modality when other resources were not readily available. He stressed that this kind of resource was a sort of safety net to give some support in the absence of face-to-face therapy or other resources. He attributes the connection with others, whether other internationals or locals, to be a strong mediating factor in wellbeing and health.

*Qualitative Description of Cultural and Self Identity.* NL feels since entering adult life he has largely stayed relatively the same in other aspects of his culture and identity. Culturally, he identifies having his culture established through his culture of origin by birth, but remarks that he has “no great feelings of patriotism towards (his country of origin)”. He notes an evolution of his cultural identity, belong now to a set of broadly liberal values, including but not limited to human rights, acceptance of diversity in most aspects of life, and values of justice beyond any specific country. He notes that these values are Western in an international sense. He supposes that these values in some way influenced his choice to live in the home of the world court system in the Netherlands. He defines the community based on shared values stated above. He acknowledges that these values are founded in the European tradition but he finds them to be more applicable than within European borders.

He reports a wider perspective than most of his family origin, although several of them are also internationals. He reports an “enduring interest in different parts of the world” because it matters, influencing what he reads and discusses with others. He

believes to understand others one must know where they are coming from. He defines international identity as the way you see yourself with respect of the rest of the world. He feels a stronger affinity towards those whom share this perspective. He feels the spread of this belief is the necessary foundation for greater goals of global peace, through an understanding of the interconnectedness we all share. The personal traits he attributed to success in the international lifestyle are approaching people as equals (he found people find what they look for, if you seek good people and experiences that is what you find), be positive, generous and try to be a good neighbor. He stated it is simple and straight forward, maybe even universal, but it works. He refutes the notion that people have to travel the world to gain an open worldview and posits that many who do show they have not gained this view despite living abroad.

*Qualitative Description of Worldview.* NL felt less comfortable with the termed categories of individual or collectivist values, but found collectivist values to be closest to his worldview, counter to his culture of origin. He terms himself a “liberal,” based on a European usage of this word. He feels fortunate in having been born into a prosperous family in a prosperous country and speaking the world’s most widely spoken language. He feels this privilege puts upon him an expectation to live through example his values. He still identifies country of origin as where he is from; however, he describes home as where his family is at any given time. He stated this association is likely connected to him not returning to his families region of his country of origin.

According to his responses on the Worldview Analysis Scale, NL endorses a worldview with values of Communalism (37) reflecting the values of justice he holds as truth. He endorsed similarly strong values of Tangible Realism (34) using empirical reasoning reflected in the European values he expressed in his interview, alongside

Knowledge of Self (31) balancing this empirical knowledge with the social experiences of self in relation to others with a global appreciation of the interconnected nature of things. This score is of particular interest for this participant as it reflects the connection to mental health that the self in relation to others creates, as evidenced by his own experiences of navigating membership in a socially stratified world with levels of connection and isolation influencing the individual's mental health. His lower scores reflect lower endorsements in the absolutism of knowledge based on science with Materialistic Universe (14), Spiritualism (9) showing a value system not heavily guided on spiritual reasoning of knowledge, Indigenous Values (8) with metaphysical explanations of values, and Spiritual Immortality (8). His Total WAS (141) placed him with the lowest score of the group in the spectrum from material to a spiritual, consistent with his self-identified "Liberal European values." Responses to items indicate noteworthy distinctions of the differentiating values of communalism explaining a draw to the connection and responsibilities of individuals to the collective group and knowledge of self, giving value to the knowledge gained through social experience.

**Volga.** Volga is a 48-year-old remarried, heterosexual, female born and raised in a small town in North Eastern Europe for 35 years. She currently lives with spouse in Western Europe. Growing up she was not satisfied with the limitations of her small town. She applied for a tourist visa to Germany and America to explore the world and new opportunities beyond what she experienced in her country of origin. She briefly visited Germany but could not imagine staying there. Through her travels in the United States, she decided to explore the possibility of living abroad. Her son was 11 years old at this time and stayed with her mother for three years until she was able to arrange for him to come over. She reports this separation to be the hardest part of the international lifestyle

for her. She sought work when living in Manhattan and soon after married an American citizen. She found the cultural events in the city particularly rewarding aspects of her host culture. She felt she entered the international community while learning and meeting people in the international community in New York from all around the world.

She had initial limitations to her language but found working as a bartender, she needed listening skills more than speaking skills early on. Her experience with the international community started with her work as a bartender where she started to meet a diverse range of people. She moved to Connecticut and then to Florida and started her own business. She liked the sense of community in Connecticut. While in Connecticut, she expanded her English skills by taking a course where she reports meeting people from all over the world, many of which she still shares close relationships. In Florida, she became unhappy with the environment and lack of social connection in found there. She also went through a divorce during this time. She stayed and continued raising her son. She focused on expanding her customer services related business.

Six years after her divorce she met and married her husband who was also an international living in the States. They relocated to London to explore new opportunities. Aside from the weather, she reported enjoying the large city feel of London and the interactions with people that are reinforced by the lifestyle there. While seeking a job in London she felt limited and created her own business which is travel and customer service oriented, blending her interests and lifestyle. She pursued her plans of expanding her business to better fit her talents and interests in the global community and travel. As part of her business plan, she collaborated with friends all over the world to bring

together her resources. She feels her language skills and experience as an international gave her the confidence to pursue this career.

In her experiences abroad, she found mental and emotional support expectations from her culture of origin to be different from the expectations of others in the international community and her host communities. In her culture, one would seek out a friend socially over drinks. She found other women to be the greatest source of support. She considered therapeutic support when in the U.S. when feeling depressed and losing track of her goals, as a goal-oriented person she felt lost. However, she decided against it and attributed the feelings to transitions. Instead she delved into her work as a way to get back on track. Since her husband is more private she learned to seek out social connections such as dancing, networking events, cultural gatherings, etc. as a means of finding social support and balance.

*Qualitative Description of Cultural and Self Identity.* Volga defines her culture as the culture of her origin modified by her experiences returning to Europe, despite the fact she has no intention of ever returning to live. In this regard, she identifies her culture as one as a world traveler, collecting features of other cultures in thoughts and behavior but her culture of origin is the foundation. For example, she has found the communication response style in the U.S. has strongly influenced her business practices with rapid response times and focus on customer service. She identifies herself as a world traveler, describing it as a “hunger” for experiences. Her passion for photography she reports as an extension of her identity with the lifestyle.

She reports having the greatest similarity with her brother who has also experienced some time abroad. She feels that international identity is seen in one’s ability

to feel connected to another place, people or culture. She stresses that open-mindedness is a key feature of individuals in this group but what differentiates them is how they apply this in their values and behavior. She feels this comfort fosters creativity and creation, whether in relationships, home or business. She became aware of her own international identity after several years in the U.S. when she stopped considering her country of origin as a place to return. When she would returned she found people in her country of origin had no curiosity to her experience. She reports limiting her interactions to those who are strictly nationalistic, sharing less of her experiences in the world. She does not want to push her value to those not open to them.

She feels that peace is interconnected to the international community values. She believes and practices non-aggressive practice of communication and interaction to promote change. Volunteering and helping others is a role she connects to internationals, choosing to be part of the solution in any way they can interact with the broader society. Her focus became the people she can help not the countries she can help as she has developed her international identity. She feels this connection to others is one of the greatest rewards of the international lifestyle. She views the international identity as a spectrum and she has connections with people across the spectrum. She describes the resource of technology is broadening this interaction level with those across the spectrum and those in and outside of the international community.

*Qualitative Description of Worldview.* Volga reports a worldview in combination of independent and collectivist values. She reports that she likes to be around people and socializing but prefers to work independent and keep her private life undisclosed. She describes her country of origin as where she is from although she had difficulty

interacting with people from her culture of origin when initially interacting with them abroad. She felt this shaped her transition by moving her towards different cultures. Now that she is more confident in her communication skills, occupation and status she is proud to share where she is originally from. If she gets to know people further, she shares that her views, values are not that of a typical person from her country of origin. Her responses are fluid and adapted to the situation. When defining home she described the house that she had in the States where she felt able to settle; now she is in a flat but does not find it home. Currently, she states that home does not exist for her because she has no roots anywhere.

According to her responses on the Worldview Analysis Scale, Volga is similar to the other members of the study with higher endorsement of Tangible Realism (49), Communalism (37), and Knowledge of Self (37). However, she also endorsed Spiritualism (33) at a higher level than most of the group reflecting a belief system influenced by spiritual knowledge and experience. She endorsed lower scores in Indigenous Values (26), Materialistic Universe (25), and Spiritual Immortality (21). Her Total WAS score (228) placed her with the 3rd highest score of the group. Her worldview, therefore, reflects a stronger reliance of the spiritual formed knowledge continuum from a material to a spiritual. This is likely due to the endorsement of Spiritualism influencing her relatively Western-founded views.

***Patagonia.*** Patagonia is a 23-year-old single (never married), heterosexual, female born and raised in a city in Latin America. She lives alone abroad and with parents in when in her country of origin. She first contact with the international community was at the age of four when she began to travel with the family on holiday. She has been traveling independently since the age of 17. She was drawn to travel to see



other people and other cultures. At the age of fifteen, she moved to Argentina for three years. She was captivated by the richness of the culture she experienced there. She returned to a larger city in her country of origin to establish her studies. She joined university to study international business administration, studying in Brazil, France, Italy and is now working in Russia. She lived in Brazil for 3 months for study. She felt the people had a lot of pride in sharing their culture with her. She went on internship in France in a small city to gain business experience for four months. She described the city she lived in as more international influenced than French. This was the point she became aware of her international identity, and she felt encouraged to push herself further beyond her comfort zone by seeking new and different situations. At the time of the interview, Patagonia resided in Moscow, Russia, where she has lived for four months and will be staying for at least two more. She finds Moscow quite different from the cultures she knows. Every day she feels she picks up on new cultural nuances. After her stay, she will have to return to her country of origin before moving to Brazil or Australia. Her experience of the international lifestyle based on sharing of cultures in an exchange. In this way, she feels like an ambassador to others sharing the cultures she know of from her experience.

People from her country of origin found her decision to move abroad to be odd, and perhaps extreme due to the climate she moved to. She shares her love of travel with her family of origin and they share the attitude towards opportunity taking. She differs from her family in that most of them stay closely together. She felt despite the lack of support she needed to make the move. She experienced culture shock upon arrival because it was such a different atmosphere. She thinks internationals must be mentally

and emotionally strong and healthy to adapt, especially if the culture has less emotional cues such as smiling or warm greetings such as kissing. She uses the narrative process to write down funny aspects of her experiences to share with her friends in her country of origin. This activity she describes as a beneficial support to balance and mental health. Aside from emotional strength, the traits she finds helpful in internationals are openness to given and receive information, a positive prospective, a curiosity to continue to seek out new experiences, and being sociable to connect with new people so that you are not alone.

This participant was originally set to be interviewed in person but was unable to because she had to leave the country urgently to secure a new visa. She was asked to share more about this experience and how it ties into her international experience. She reported this was her first challenge with a visa. Her employer was supposed to file the paperwork and did not. She took it as a new opportunity and tried to make the best of it, turning it into a travel holiday and the opportunity to visit new countries and some friends. Afterward she remarked it was definitely the best way to spend her time due to the visa issues. She endorsed that the result was positive which she was unable to see because it was alarming and frustrating at the time.

*Qualitative Description of Cultural and Self Identity.* Patagonia finds her culture to be of her culture of origin but not 100%. With her experiences she describes it as positive always looking for new horizons to connect with other people of the world. She identifies herself generally as adventurous, positive and grasping all new opportunities that come to her for new experiences without judgment. Her international identity is grounded in her behavior of cultural exchange. She acknowledges that her views are

biased by her own culture and, therefore, she seeks alternative views to challenge and shape a new and well-rounded worldview. In this regards, she feel each and every connection or exchange is an opportunity for growth.

She feels the international identity fosters tolerance and in her personal experience has made her a better person. She feels a connection with other internationals because of their appreciation of cultural exchange and common interests in this dialogue and experience. She describes them as having a special spark in their eyes and interesting stories to tell. She reports feeling an energy from these people whom she is drawn to. She is curious to exchange with those who are nationalistic or have strong ethnic ties because she at times feels a lack of identity in comparison. She enjoys these unique perspectives and exchange, despite being different from her own values and views. In practice, she does not intentionally adopt traditions of other cultures but practices them when in other cultures. However, she expressed that becoming an international involves becoming more tolerant of others and their views, being more open minded in approach, and electing a positive and flexible communication and interaction with others. She believes international identity significantly affects one's individual and group behavior.

*Qualitative Description of Worldview.* Patagonia reports a worldview in combination of independent and collectivist values. When describing where she is from she uses her country of origin as a frame of reference or locality of her origin. She felt home was a term difficult to define. She described it as her close family but during long periods of travel, she finds the place she resides as home. It is a more relative term to her.

According to her responses on the Worldview Analysis Scale, Patagonia also followed the pattern of many in the study with high levels of endorsement of Communalism (42), Tangible Realism (40), and Knowledge of Self (38) in her worldview

formation. She endorsed Spiritualism (33) at a higher level than most. Her lower level endorsements were found in Materialistic Universe (22), Spiritual Immortality (21), and Indigenous Values (20). Her Total WAS score (216) placed her on the groups continuum with a 4th highest score. This indicates that on the spectrum from a material to a spiritual her values of Communalism, Knowledge of Self and Spiritualism worldview rooted in spiritualism values of the interconnected nature of things.

***Adventure.*** Adventure is a 28-year-old married, heterosexual, male born and raised in a small town in Australia. He lived in his country of origin for 25 years of his life. He grew up in a family of six. In his sophomore year of high school, he took French and took a three week trip to France. He lived with a family there and practiced the language. He was excited about this opportunity and planned trips to follow to explore more of the world.

First, he took some time off before university and toured Europe for six weeks. This was when he decided he wanted to live abroad. He realized the world was much bigger than the life he knew in his country of origin and he wanted to explore it more. He met his wife when he was 21, and was married at 23. She is also from his country of origin. After marriage, he continued to live in their country of origin for one and a half years. His wife worked in education and he works in the field of psychology. He wanted to continue his studies and looked around for international jobs to be able to afford this study. He found teaching work in Shanghai, along with his wife but was unsuccessful in finding a university to meet his needs. He recalled the introduction to Shanghai was a bit jarring, due to how culture shock. He recounted his first night trying to order food and water but receiving hot water and being a bit confused on how to navigate his new environment. Eventually, he felt they found their place thereby establishing social

support, daily life and routines. This is when he identifies entering the international community. He felt he made connections to the international community, making friends and settling into the lifestyle. They traveled extensively in Asia during the holidays seeking out and exploring interactions with different cultures.

They spent two years in Shanghai and after a visit to Hong Kong found study opportunities that met his goals. He found it hard to leave his newly found group of friends and support in the international community of Shanghai. He connected with a particular group of internationals and expatriates by playing basketball. Despite their newly established ties, they relocated to Hong Kong and have been living there over a half a year. He is transitioning into his doctoral studies while his wife teaches at an international school. To pay for school he works as a substitute teacher as his schedule allows. He found his own housing this time around and is trying to develop a new social group of friends. He describes feeling his adjustment is quicker this time around. He also noted his affiliation with his international university has also provided support and structure as he adapts to life in Hong Kong. He has been surprised at the speed in which he is able to progress and develop, already working as a teaching assistant. Hong Kong is different from the community he lived in Shanghai, leaving the expatriate neighborhoods and seeking housing among locals. He enjoys the balance of work and life within Hong Kong's international community while connecting more closely with the local people. He reflected that unlike many expatriates he has not primarily socialized with others from his country of origin. He feels meeting new people has been a highlight of his experience in the international lifestyle.

He has explored and learned more about traditional Chinese approaches to well-being and health, alongside an education of Western views of mental health. He worked on a local crisis line but found it was relatively unknown. He found that Shanghai has less services for support than in his current locale. As part of his training, he is encouraged to seek personal counseling. Although he has an interest in finding counseling services, he reports he is having difficulties in finding appropriate services. He has found that many services are expensive and cost prohibitive as a student. Despite his language skills in Mandarin and French, these languages are at a beginner's level limiting their use in therapy. He feels finding therapy in English is geared towards expatriates who have more economic means for higher rates for treatment. Currently, he has not found any services that are in his language and within his price range. As the only Westerner in his classes at school, he wonders how the suggestion of counseling as students fits into the stigma of seeking services he has witnessed in the local culture.

At the time of the interview, he reported feeling he is at an impasse with his life choices, having to decide whether living internationally is part of his plans as he moves forward in expanding his family and career. He feels often that his thoughts, values and lifestyle, being in flux reveal conflicts. He is unsure whether he will continue to live internationally abroad or live with as an international in his country of origin. Family pressure and support resources appear to be contributing factors in his current processing of this decision. He has also seen families successfully thrive abroad which is a consideration. He is unsure about his own social and familial network being matched abroad.

*Qualitative Description of Cultural and Self Identity.* Acceptance is a feature of internationals Adventure attributes to success, even in times when things could be better. He thinks internationals are more adaptive when open-minded and flexible to new experiences. Due to the above, he feels patience is an important trait of internationals, respectfully offering knowledge and insights in appropriate times. To adjust and connected with others he suggests breaking routines and pushing oneself outside of one's regular patterns to be around others they are less familiar with and seeking out activities, even if they are challenging or intimidating to learn and grow.

His culture he describes as being an "internationalized Australian," a mixture of British, American and Chinese cultural values being the main influences. He feels this makes it harder for people to pinpoint where he is from, mostly because he brought up around people who were not from his country of origin originally with close friends from Ethiopian, Bosnia, etc. He found less of a connection with those who he describes as "painfully patriotic." His parents modeled this embracing multiculturalism, which he says he adopted. He states that although he is Australian he does not cling to this term, picking and choosing when it is relevant and meaningful for this side of him to take prominence. He says he has been able to detach from parts of his culture of origin he does not like, such as a binge drinking culture among youth he does not identify with. He has adopted some of the cultural features of the Chinese such as closeness of family interaction but finds from of the emotional stoicism to be less appealing to adopt.

The individual traits he finds important are his family, his faith, learning, discussion with others to expand his knowledge and views. He finds his temperament and attitude towards acceptance to be similar to his family of origin. He felt his family models

values of helping and supporting others, traits he feels he has taken on. He differs in the diversity of his approach to faith and religion. He reports a naturalist approach that his family does not ascribe to such as use of balance, nature and nutrition for wellbeing. When family visit he encourages these approaches within his family.

He defines international identity as someone who approaches experiences with the opportunity to see, find, and do things in other ways. He describes it as a willingness to incorporate parts of places and people you have interacted with and blending it harmoniously with their ways of doing things and values. He also states these individual live as a member of the communities they live not as visitors, changing the way they engage and interact. He became aware of his own international identity on holiday from Shanghai, when he realized that he was looking forward to return “home” in Shanghai.

He feels that internationals have responsibility to help others adjusting to the lifestyle and community, having been through the experience. This way one can share their knowledge with others, even locals understanding the experiences of internationals in their locality. He reports that the impact of his cultural membership results in being more tolerant of others, likely help others less fortunate and likely learn more about other cultures. While he does not have exclusive interaction with internationals he finds connecting and being understood easier in the international community, generally. He believes international identity to be developmental spectrum with people progressing from interest, to willingness to do things outside their comfort zone, to those who explore this as a lifestyle, to those who independently pursue and sustain the lifestyle.

*Qualitative Description of Worldview.* Adventure describes his worldview as independent and consistent with his culture of origin. When explaining where he is from



he starts with his country of origin but may explain where he is currently living, so he is not mistaken for a tourist. He defines home as his country of origin but when he was living in Shanghai and visited his country of origin because he felt like a visitor and looked forward to returning “home” to Shanghai. He found it odd being in his country of origin because of the conflict with people in there visiting and then your return “home.” He stated it is odd to not be part of the framework or fitting in, you return as a “different element in that environment.”

According to his responses on the Worldview Analysis Scale, HK demonstrated patterns of endorsement somewhat dissimilar to many in the group with his highest endorsements of his worldview values based on Tangible Realism (49), Spiritual Immortality (38), Spiritualism (37), Communalism (34), Knowledge of Self (33) and Materialistic Universe (32). While others similarly endorsed Tangible Realism, Communalism and Knowledge of Self the strong spiritually based values on interconnectedness perhaps influenced by his experiences in Eastern versus Western cultures. While this measure is generally depicted in a range of European to African based value systems it is notable that his responses endorsed the opposing values to that of his country of origin. HK endorsed lower level scores in Indigenous Values (26) reflecting a rejection of traditionalism based knowledge consistent with the move from the values endorsed by his country of origin and limitation to adoption of traditionally based values of his host culture reflected in his interview. His Total WAS score (249) placed him with the highest score on the spectrum from material to spiritual. Responses endorsed represent his stronger orientation toward spiritual immortality, communalism, knowledge of self, and spiritualism.

***BaguioSteve.*** BaguioSteve is a 46-year-old married, heterosexual, male born and raised in a large metropolitan city in North America. He was born to an interracial

couple, of Korean and Caucasian parents. He noted that this was unusual for the time but he felt the location he was raised was supportive to a “non-white” child. He noted that his family was relatively non-communicative but noted being close to friends socially as a child. He describes himself as quite introverted. However, he still describes himself as social when appropriate, but still prefers independent experiences. Growing up he reported struggling in school academically. The summer after high school graduation, he became a Christian, which was a monumental moment in his life. He attended church as a child before that but entered the Christian community as a member at this point. He discovered the gospel to be a significant draw to the Evangelical denomination. For him, the relationship with God made sense to him. BaguioSteve lived in his country of origin from birth to the age of 23 when he moved to the Philippines to work as a missionary. Except for occasional visits of less than 6 months to his country of origin, he has resided in the Philippines for most of his adult life, from 1990 until now.

He attended a state college for two years after high school, but then was called to work as a missionary through a vision. It was ten years later before he was comfortable sharing this experience with anyone. Shortly after the calling to work as a missionary, he was guided to transfer to a Bible college. He reported his family had difficulty understanding this change and shift in life goals. Despite his strong interest in discovering his faith, he found Bible College to be a low point in his personal development, with his peers showing greater interest in drinking culture versus discussing some of the religious experiences he has found valuable and meaningful. He stated having no doubts in his decision to pursue his missionary calling but after four years was unclear on where he was to go. He expressed this frustration to a roommate who suggested BaguioSteve go

intern for his father in the Philippines. He noted that the transition was easy due to historical factors such as the prevalence of English in the Philippines and Filipino familiarity with Western cultures. Additionally, he reported receiving financial support from his local church which eased his transition to his new location.

Upon arrival in the Philippines, there was a severe earthquake in his destination of Baguio so he lived in Manila his first month. He worked with a team of church planters local and international in the region to fulfill his missionary work. He lived and worked within the church community. He reported working continuously on the church planting process. After two years, he began work on establishing a Bible college locally. He taught and served as president of the college for six years and served as a pastor in one of the newly formed churches before leaving Baguio after 22 years of service. At this time, he also returned to school, beginning graduate studies. He took block courses for a few years and found a new passion for education. He made a conscious effort to not dominate discussions in his courses because he was often the only native English speaker and came from an education background where expressed curiosity and engagement through challenging dialogue was encouraged. He did not want the classes to be tailored to his needs at the expense of others. He noted a cultural moray in his fellow students to not challenge the teacher because it can result in the professor “losing face.” It was a concerted effort on his part to remain understanding of the other students’ adjustment to a Western-based education system beyond their comfort zone. After continued studies, he was advised he could complete his Master’s degree with only a few more units so he completed the requirements to gain his Master of Arts. Afterward he pursued his Master

of Divinity and Doctorate in Ministry. He just recently completed the terminal degree before leaving Baguio and moving to Manila.

At the time of the interview, he lived in Manila with his spouse and three children between the ages of 11 and 15, as a permanent resident of the Philippines. He works there as a missionary and teacher. He and his family relocated to the large metropolis of Manila from his small mountain town of Baguio ten months prior to the time of the interview. The international and missionary community of Manila is significantly larger than in Baguio with fewer local and more international attendees at his school. He found it awkward when missionaries in Manila gave him cultural advice, assuming him to be new to the Philippines when he and his family were only new to the city.

Socially, he reported enjoying the relationships formed with those from his country of origin abroad and host culture, later from other countries of origin. He reported that this started with inheriting the social groups of those he worked with and slowly expanding his social group with the connection through common interests like sports and through his expansion of his use of the local languages. He found himself shifting to social ties in the international community but he remains cognizant of making new relationships due to the high turn-over in people living there and then returning to their country of origin. He further notes that he connects more culturally to those internationals who have lived abroad similar lengths of time. This behavior of keeping distance initially with newcomers to the community was due to the common pattern of meeting people only for them to leave, shortly after. In this regard, relationships to BaguioSteve are an investment with social and emotional costs to consider. However, he noted that common interests can often supersede or overcome this boundary in social

connection. Given his new relocation, he notices this same pattern of distance applied to him and his family members by others in the international community. They are now in the stage of reestablishing this sense of community.

He reports that formal mental health resources are limited in the international community. He heard that there are only twelve clinical psychologists in the whole country for example. He feels that informal resources become a strength of the community, supporting each other like family. He feels this is especially true in the missionary community abroad. He noted that in Manila there are more resources in the form of a counseling center through his school, again the community helping the community. He also noted a researcher/student working on research of mental health needs in the missionary child and adolescent community. He feels the resources do not have to be face-to-face when the alternative is nothing at all. He reports that technological resources such as VOIP and Skype connect him to ways of seeking self-help and support if anything comes up for him or his family members. He found that assumption of some that those with mental health difficulties are not well suited for the international community to be false, noting exceptions from observing others who found the host culture to be a better match with their needs.

*Qualitative Description of Cultural and Self Identity.* BaguioSteve defines his cultural identity into what he describes as major components. He was born in North America to parents in an interracial marriage (Korean, Caucasian). He became an Evangelical at 17-years-old. At the age of 23, he moved to the Philippines to serve as a missionary and is now 46 years old, which means that he has lived half of his life (and all of his adult life) outside of his country of origin in the Philippines. He noted that he is not

a TCK but has never seen or heard a label to describe what he identifies as having spent his entire adult life overseas. This difference is significant given that his wife is a TCK and he knows there are similarities and differences but never found anything written on his experience or identity. He defines his culture as very specific and individual to him (33% country of origin, 33% blend of his family culture and 33% of his international identity). He identifies through the elaboration on his experience abroad, as a Christian missionary who has lived internationally for half his life. He differentiates from his family of origin's identity especially in regards to spirituality.

He defines international identity as the personality you present in the country where you are living, more fluid and contextual to each situation that arises. He also feels international identity is also linked to how internationals view themselves in these situations. He believes everyone has an international identity to various degrees by which they connect to the rest of the world. He feels that it may be latent in those who do not normally connect or interrelate with someone internationally. When someone lives abroad he feels this identity cannot remain latent and is formed and developed by access and prominence of international experiences. As such, he noted moving to another culture would further develop his own international identity by challenging him in new ways. In this way, diversity of experiences results in a strengthened identity development. He also expressed a concern about his children returning to his country of origin, having never lived there for a long duration. Developmentally, he appreciates that their experience as TCK's may be distinct from his own, including their feelings and ties to his country of origin. Having also adopted a child from his host culture he noted that his adopted child may or may not wish to return to his country of origin for college. Living in a family of

TCKs, BaguioSteve finds his definition of cultural identity to be distinct from their experiences but with many overlapping qualities.

He describes the impact of international membership as having shaped his self and cultural identity, stating that the experiences of the international lifestyle

...give me an objective perspective on other groups and cultures. I find myself able to be very open-minded to other cultures, including other religions. This is very biblical. While the Bible teaches that salvation is only possible through faith in Christ, Christians are also commanded to treat others with 'gentleness and respect' (1 Peter 3:21). I find that my cultural flexibility has allowed me to accept others and their beliefs and to respect their beliefs and behavior. I teach my students that while it's legitimate to evaluate other people's decisions and choices, it's unreasonable to condemn or look down on anyone for behaving the way their culture has trained them to behave (BaguioSteve, personal communications, March 27, 2013).

He reports that internationals need to be flexible and there is a factor of fit between cultures and personality traits in the success of internationals. From experience in his locality, he notes people have to accept the way things are done in the host culture even when there is the feeling that alternative practices are better or more efficient. He finds the "Only in the Philippines!" kind of statement of comparison is a particularly harmful attitude that stands at odds with the acceptance needed to succeed as an international. He alternatively prefers the perspective of "It's not wrong, it's different" he

learned in his pre-field orientation when doing service in Hong Kong. He believes it to be much more than a mantra; it is a value essential to being effective in the host culture. He further believes that long term success is grounded in this value. Coping skills are also a meaningful trait for international success according to him. He finds that being teachable is critical to accessing the international experience. He noted that mentoring and trial-and-error can aid in developing skills to connect to international experiences with more meaning and value. Conversely, an un-teachable attitude expressed in statements such as “this isn’t how we do it in my country” can inhibit people from being effective in their host culture. Similarly, mentorship can guide newcomers to orient to the new culture in a more thoughtful and sensitive way. Some may be independent enough to do this alone but he feels most would benefit from a mentoring relationship during their initial adjustment. He also notes a difference in those who purchase a one-way ticket as a distinguishing moment of entry to the community, depending on visa status allowing for this symbolic purchase.

He feels internationals have a responsibility to be respectful, most importantly not projecting their own values on the host culture. He expressed sorrow in his own linguistic limitations in helping him to be more closely involved in the host culture, being insulated by the prominence of English in the nation. He acknowledges this is a harder hurdle in his host culture for non-English speaking internationals. His relationship with non-internationals depends on whether they have other shared interests but he finds social ties limited when the other party has little or no interest in the international features of his experiences and identity. In the international community, he finds that there is a



subsection of those who have adopted a child from the host culture and notes that this is a common process and experience which is especially bonding to these members.

*Qualitative Description of Worldview.* He describes his worldview as independent and consistent with his culture of origin. When describing where he is from to others he discussed that he responds based on the situation. He usually states his country of origin but having lived half of his life abroad. He is unsure of the point when one starts to expand to others their origin or even claim the host country as their own. He takes this on a case-by-case basis. When defining home he describes home as his country of origin when visiting and home his host country when returning. He expressed feeling that living abroad has given him an objective perspective on different cultures, including his country of origin and adopted culture of the Philippines. He noted that he can always find points of similarity with other people from his country of origin, his spouse's culture of origin, expatriates, and local Filipinos, but has never met anyone whose cultural identity is the same as his, even if their experiences and background hold striking similarities.

According to his responses on the Worldview Analysis Scale, BaguioSteve endorsed higher levels of Tangible Realism (49) indicated consistently with the rest of the group. However, his responses reflected higher responses to Materialistic Universe (39), Spiritual Immortality (37), and Spiritualism (32) mirrored in the responses of other participants located in Eastern based Host cultures. Moderate levels of endorsement include Knowledge of Self (29) and Communalism (21), values significant to most participants. He also reflected the group pattern of lower level endorsement of Indigenous Values (11). His Total WAS score (218) placed him with the 5th highest score showing his middle range placement on the spectrum of material to spiritual. Undoubtedly, his responses reflect a

worldview that is rooted in spiritualism consistent with his stronger orientation toward spirituality represented in his expressed value of his faith and vocation.

### **Qualitative Categories, Themes & Subthemes**

The data analysis process yielded 8 categories organized into 25 themes based on the process of the developing international identity. The following section presents the categories, themes, and subthemes in detail, providing descriptions and quotations for each (see Table 6). The categories and themes were discovered when participants respond in similar ways or patterns which the researcher found to be important to the description of the phenomenon currently under examination (see Table 6). Figure 3 provides a diagrammatic illustration of the categories, themes, and subthemes. These categories and themes categorize the identity development process of self-identified internationals. Table 6 summarizes the participants' endorsement of categories, themes, and subthemes for illustration of distribution of each for the participants.

Table 6 *Categories, Themes, and Subthemes*

## Category 1: Influences facilitating joining international lifestyle and community

Theme 1: Personal characteristics, values and interests in travel and other cultures

Theme 2: Transcending familial, cultural, and national origins

Theme 3: Relocation for education, work and economics

Theme 4: Point of entry to the community

## Category 2: Process of adaptation to lifestyle

Theme 5: Preparation as a solution for challenges

Theme 6: Expectation and adjustment as a solution for challenges

Theme 7: Overcoming cultural and language differences.

Theme 8: Resources to promote health and wellbeing

## Category 3: Significance of language experiences

Theme 9: Necessity of language acquisition for cultural integration

Subtheme 1: Blending languages

Subtheme 2: Benefits of language acquisition

Theme 10: Cultural misunderstandings and language barriers

## Category 4: Influence of challenges on international experiences

Theme 11: Stress resulting from lifestyle influencing mental health

Subtheme 3: Isolation and lacking support/access to support

Subtheme 4: Uncertainty and temporary nature of lifestyle

Subtheme 5: Transitions and constant adjustment

Subtheme 6: Finances and circumstances

Subtheme 7: Governance

Theme 12: Challenges for the family system

## Category 5: Social aspects of international experiences

Theme 13: Tools for social adaptation in the international community

Subtheme 8: Internet technology as a means to maintain contact

Subtheme 9: Using flexibility of interests to adapt socially

Theme 14: Transformative social experience of re-entry to country of origin

Theme 15: Social experience of partner selection and raising children

Category 6: Defining community and identity

Theme 16: Creating identity, a struggle for cohesive definition

Subtheme 10: Identity formation

Subtheme 11: Integration of culture

Theme 17: Community based on connection through common interest and experiences

Subtheme 12: Roles of internationals

Theme 18: Traits of internationals

Theme 19: Types of internationals and organization within the community

Category 7: Influence of developmental stages on the experiences

Theme 20: Pros and cons of exposure in childhood

Theme 21: Pros and cons of exposure in adolescents

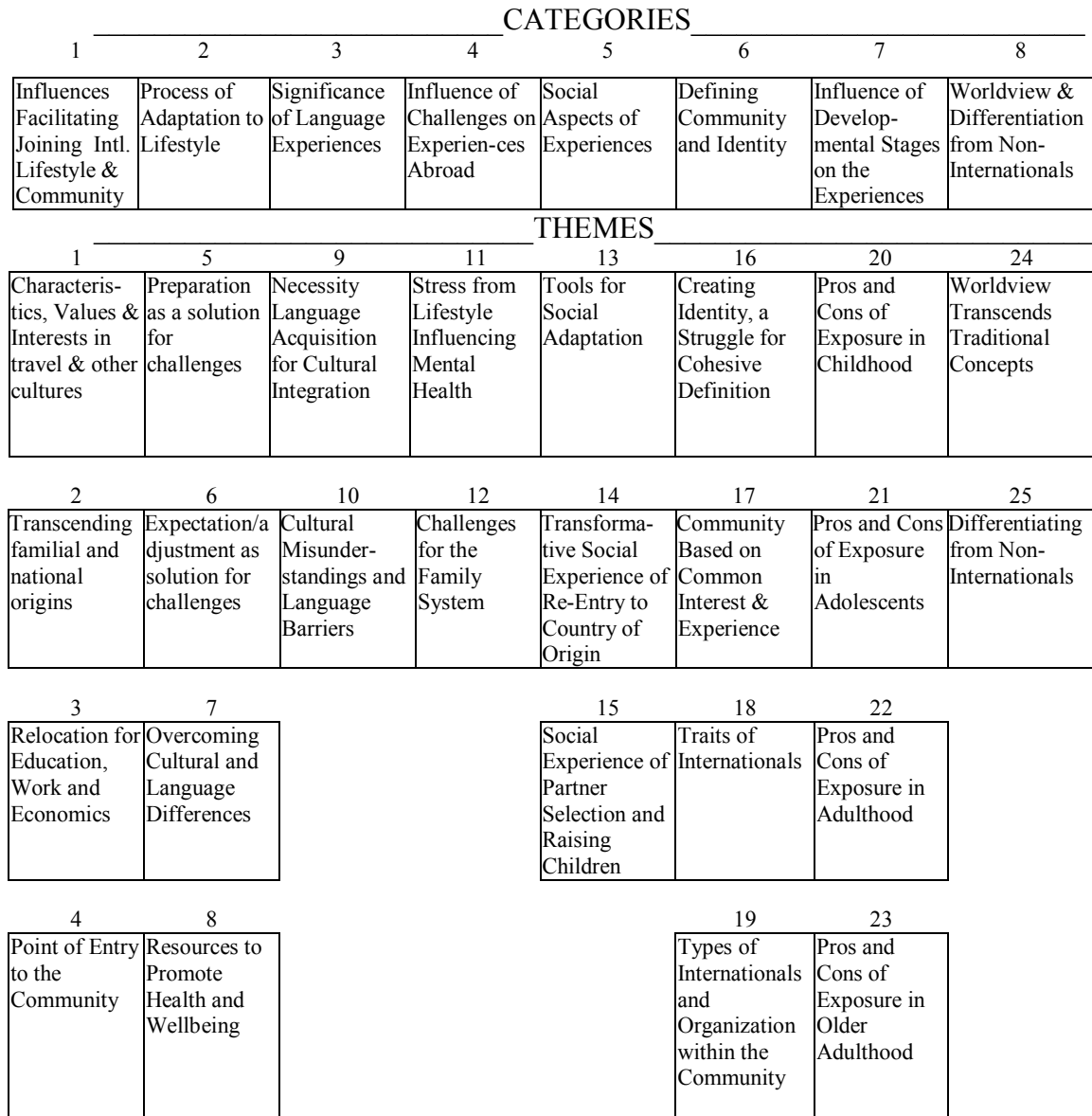
Theme 22: Pros and cons of exposure in adulthood

Theme 23: Pros and cons of exposure in older adulthood

Category 8: Worldview and the worldview of non-internationals

Theme 24: Worldview transcends traditional concepts (Home, world citizenship, and nationalism)

Theme 25: Differentiating from non-internationals

Figure 3 *Diagrammatic illustration of categories, themes, and subthemes*



	Categories 4: Influence of Challenges on Experiences	Categories 5: Social Aspects of Intl Experiences				Categories 6: Defining Community and Identity			
	Theme 11: Stress from Lifestyle Influencing Mental Health	Theme 12: Challenges for the Family System	Theme 13: Tools for Social Adaptation	Theme 14: Social Experience of Re- Entry to Country of Origin	Theme 15: Social Experience of Partner Selection and Raising Children	Theme 16: Creating Identity, a Struggle for Cohesive Definition	Theme 17: Community Based on Connection through Common Interest and Experiences	Theme 18: Traits of Internationals	Theme 19: Types of Internationals and Organization within the Community
Participant's Name									
Maria	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Intl Ali	X					X	X	X	X
Madame	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Berlin	X		X		X	X	X	X	X
NL	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Volga	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Patagonia	X		X	X		X	X	X	X
Adventure	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
BaguioSteve	X			X		X	X	X	X

	Categories 7: Influence of Developmental Stages on International Experiences				Categories 8: Worldview & Differentiation from Non-Internationals	
Participant's Name	Theme 25: Differentiating from Non-Internationals	Theme 24: Worldview Transcends Traditional Concepts	Theme 23: Pros and Cons of Exposure in Older Adulthood	Theme 22: Pros and Cons of Exposure in Adulthood	Theme 21: Pros and Cons of Exposure in Adolescents	Theme 20: Pros and Cons of Exposure in Childhood
	X	X		X	X	X
	X	X			X	X
	X	X		X	X	X
	X	X	X	X		
	X	X		X		
	X	X		X	X	X
	X	X		X	X	X
	X					
	X	X				

### Category 1: Influences Facilitating Joining the International Lifestyle and Community.

The participants described a familial exposure to world travel, early international experiences, factors from their country and culture of origin, an interest in exploration, along with personal opportunities and global economic factors for joining and sustaining



an international lifestyle. The participants described this choice as generally internally-motivated and at times circumstantially motivated, built from personal interest and various paths to positive early exposure to different places and cultures.

Inclusion: Internal and external factors that encouraged engagement in the international lifestyle.

Exclusion: Internal and external factors that discouraged engagement in the international lifestyle.

***Theme 1: Personal Characteristics, Values and Interests in Travel and Other***

***Cultures.*** The participants shared internal and external factors, including characteristics serving as a catalyst for exploration of other cultures through travel.

ADVENTURE: “I grew up all over and I think I just realized it once you get out and travel uh it’s a lot of a lot of you sort of you sort of expect to would have seriously considered and you realize the worlds a lot bigger than your little city at home. I really enjoyed it and that I did a lot of what I could do I think I liked the fact that I could travel the world and live abroad.”

BERLIN: “I was called rebellious and always people think that this [is a] crazy kid? She's also always doing something that I don't like. And they meet me [and I say] ‘Okay, I think, I do not belong to these countries. I need to go somewhere else.’”

INTL ALI: “My life story is kind of unique in itself.”

“[Trying to] figure out what is right with this world. As a kid, I remember always that I would question each and everything around me.”

MADAME: “We traveled quite a lot when we were in high school and I was always drawn to other people. I always I really like discovering other people.”

“I have this, I hope, a quite global view so and watching that with that global view to my own community my very direct community. I guess it might be interesting. I guess so, I hope, or place I start to discover and meet new people so that’s where it comes in.”

PATAGONIA: “I’m more interested in the people and the culture rather than my

landscapes. And I don't know touristic fact so that's the reason why I joined the university for business and then that decision brings me to a new like country to discover and since I am entered a new university I traveled to Brazil then to France, Italy and now Russia."

***Theme 2: Transcending Familial and National Origins of Internationals.***

Participants transcend familial and national origins but share some common features of their origin.

ADVENTURE: "I kind of grew up very multi-culturally and I think that it's probably having to do with me wanting to experience another culture first hand... I have very similar temperament to my mom she's a very calm person... My family is, like I said, very accepting with different cultures and people who most people think as maybe outcasts and such I sort of grew up watching my parents take care of people who people take after."

BERLIN: "Well [country of origin – Southeast Asia] I live for twenty three years so a lot of constraints I would say because I'm [country of origin – Southeast Asia] Chinese. And [culture of origin – Southeast Asia] Chinese the population is only twenty five percent it is still declining anyway so I always felt constrained because of the government is [country of origin – Southeast Asia] government so too much constraining to do what you really want to do."

INTL ALI: "I kind of always felt that I don't belong really to everything to which is said, or believed around myself." [Discussing family and culture of origin].

MADAME: "Where I came from [country of origin – Western Europe] I spoke different languages which is quite rare in France [host country]. So that why I worked in quite international kind of jobs so it's international teams with people from all over the world. And I guess it made me aware that I wasn't French and that I really was which in the beginning I really was like quite opposed to it?"

***Theme 3: Relocation for Education, Work and Economics.*** The participants held

many factors and reasons for relocation but the prominent theme presented was for education, work as part of their occupation and economic reasons, such as following opportunity.

NL: "I suppose your job moving to another place and a job of that kind of doesn't give you much choice really."

ADVENTURE: "So we moved there in 2010 and I kind of moved not thinking kind of

brought me to study either by distance or at a university there that didn't materialize for me and Shanghai it was just too difficult to work.”

BAGUIOSTEVE: “Then my senior year at bible college I had this vision, right, where the lord clearly showed me that I was going to be a missionary... I had a roommate my fourth year in bible college. He's a missionary and his father was working in the Philippines. And I was talking to him one time and just expressing that I know I'm supposed to be a missionary but didn't know where I was supposed to go when he said well why don't you go work with my dad for a year because his dad had other interns... I wrote a letter to my roommate's father and he said “Sure, come on over.” And I think we only exchanged like maybe three letters before I actually went there, with a little bit of support from my home church.”

BERLIN: “So it was a cool finally you know new land for me a new start again but I don't really enjoy my work for the first two years in Singapore... I should have the next year I don't know where I will go maybe America or Asia for my post doc.”

MADAME: “We already bought an apartment here so we decided to leave everything behind and just go because even without work we just went and it turned out quite good we found a great apartment in France and not very close to Paris but quite enough and we started to work here.”

MARIA: “Then started working in the Netherlands.”

“From Toulouse, I did first an internship for my Master's degree.”

PATAGONIA: “My story I will say like if I had to resend like make a bridge should be like traveling getting to know a new cultures and doing something with business.”

#### ***Theme 4: Point of Entry to the Community and Point of Awareness of***

***International Identity.*** The participants share their path into the international community.

Each has a distinct story to their path and the point of awareness of their entrance to the community, beginning their membership.

MARIA: “I probably wouldn't have called it international at that time. But I think it was the moment where I was in this French school. And where I realized that that people that were so different in the way of thinking the way of figuring things were so different from mine and when I started realizing that people hadn't traveled people hadn't been places hadn't that maybe there furthest place they would have gone to was the closest main city they wouldn't have been anywhere further than that they would have a different way of viewing things. And I didn't call it international at that time. That was the first that I realized I was something different I was able to put things in a different perspective [at] sixteen, seventeen.”

BERLIN: "In Germany, it's really the entry point that I finally know okay just follow your mind you know don't push yourself too hard do whatever you want...I need to keep my own identity at the same time...I think that woke me up in a way and, yes, I think that that's the beginning. Maybe not the beginning because I was already traveling but that's what makes me think about you should go to like to other countries the more like extreme something you something you are not used to."

ADVENTURE: "We were quite happy with our jobs but we decided to move abroad because we weren't ready to settle down quite yet. We, kind of, had the idea to see a bit of the world while we, before we settled down and I wanted to continue my studies. It's very expensive to go so we were looking at some other options we had to do that sort of around the globe. So we took a look around at stuff and ended up getting an opportunity in Shanghai. I would say yeah, I'd say when we arrived in Shanghai, as much of a travel it gave me a taste of what it was like to be somewhere else live somewhere else and then being in an international school you know you've got a big part of the world your spending each day with and met some friends from the UK, the U.S., Guam, Central America all sorts of places."

INTL ALI: "I kind of always felt that I don't belong really to everything to which is said, or believed around myself. It started with high school I guess. And that's when I thought that if I wanted to connect with the world I'd have to learn another language. And that's when I started studying English, going to ethnic classes...That would be the easiest scenario because you don't know and you're at ease. But once you get to know that there are more options outside, and there are many other viewpoints outside, and especially if you have it in your character to be curious to know and you want to sort of get out of your comfort zone and see, probably it's not what you're doing, it's not probably the best way to do it. Then that's when you go for it, that's where basically it starts."

MADAME: "France it's always quite lovely. I was there holiday I felt at home but at the same time you're not there. You don't really live in France and it's a little bit different and so the romantic idea was enjoying the best parts of France and when you live somewhere and you're also get to discover the less cool things like the people work and the stress of getting your permission your work permit and all those things. And so it was quite a romantic idea and a little bit harsh at the same time in the beginning but I think when I started to work here I think that's why, when my international idea my community idea began to develop I guess. After a few years not directly."

PATAGONIA: "My first contact with like international beings will be because of my parents they love to travel."

VOLGA: "Somehow with the circumstances it happened I go to my first visit to America."

NL: "I suppose your job moving to another place and a job of that kind of doesn't give you much choice really. I felt that, see living here [host country] I feel very much, I feel

not particularly nationalistic. I feel, you know, there are a set of values, there are things that I care about things, they are broadly speaking they, you might call a set of smaller liberal values.”

BAGUIOSTEVE: “As far as a point where I became aware in my international identity, probably as soon as I was living in the Philippines. And I wouldn't even say necessarily when I was in Hong Kong, because when I was in Hong Kong I was there for about two months, and there was nothing. I mean that's longer than most vacations but it's not in any sense long term.”

## **Category 2: Process of Adaptation to International Lifestyle**

The participants described an array of strategies to ease adaptation to the international lifestyle, including preparation, cultural and linguistic acclimation, and awareness of challenges which increased the experience of stress.

Inclusion: Challenges and strategies to the process of adaptation in the international lifestyle.

Exclusion: Processes unrelated to adaptation in the international lifestyle.

***Theme 5: Preparation as a Solution to International Challenges.*** Some of the participants shared tools they utilized to prepare for the international lifestyle, including planning, formal cultural adaptation training and taking the initiative on the life choices of their relocation.

BAGUIOSTEVE: “People that have had any kind of training before they come over here, come with this phrase in their head “It's not wrong it's just different.”...I know when I did my internship, in 1989, I was a missions major so I did it in Hong Kong, and that was something that we learned in our pre-field orientation, “It's not wrong it's different.” And we really tried to have that attitude in Hong Kong. And I've always remembered that phrase and I think it's helped me. And I think it would help anybody too but you can't just you could say like a mantra, but you really have to believe it in order for it to help.”

MARIA: “For example, I had a cultural, cultural training. When I arrived and actually it was very useful because they explain to you the kind of peaks and going how do you say that? Yeah. the peaks and valleys and how that can how that can work. Well, that's generally after in the beginning of everything as well and when you dealing with all kinds of things so you don't really have time to think and then suddenly you can have that really go into that valley and then you'll climb up again then you can have a lot of others.

But it was just good because every time I'm in one of them I just realize okay this is normal."

"I had made a choice. I looked up, I wrote the letter to the director asking whether I could be enrolled in that school. So it was at that time maybe not a very conscious decision it was a forced decision because my French school would end they only had nine pupils."

***Theme 6: Expectation and Adjustment as a Solution to International***

**Challenges.** The participants offer their expectations and thoughts on adjustment options to overcome the common challenges of the lifestyle.

ADVENTURE: "Being able to stick with that and change things very gradually."

NL: "We were quite sure that we needed you know and had some certainty about that sort of stuff."

"Well that was kind of an issue, a bit frustrating, then eventually you gotta sort of change, well you then you're going to adapt."

INTL ALI: "If they see any truth in that for themselves, from their old perspective, they're willing to adopt that and learn from that."

MADAME: "I guess [adjustment] would be culture predicted. Yeah, it can be overwhelming to see I everything has been done. Why should I do anything more being overwhelmed like I guess that the thing."

MARIA: "Yeah, always meeting great people and having interesting experiences not always easy but always learning something from it."

BAGUIOSTEVE: "This really is the way it's done in the Philippines, these are not [people from the country of origin] and it's unreasonable for me to expect them to behave like [people from the country of origin], this is not [country of origin – North America] and it's unreasonable to expect the Philippines to be organized and run and managed like [country of origin – North America] is organized, run, and managed."

***Theme 7: Overcoming Cultural and Language Differences.*** The participants

shared experiences and ways of overcoming cultural and language differences in order to better facilitate ease of adjustment.

MARIA: "Just because maybe because I was using those words with her in her language. Then you get a bit of the connection even though it's just office but still a connection."

VOLGA: “Absolutely, so when you okay the first probably the closest experience was when I start to learn English and so I went to evening school in [America] and met what maybe ten different nationalities. Going to evening classes, yes. It was like two times a week I believe for a couple of years. It’s completely free. And they you know the people who is, you know, just integrated you know or whatever. A little yes (laughter) big struggle to speak English. Sometimes it’s really tough.”

PATAGONIA: “And then when I move here I have like the first few months I was thinking like what did I do, it’s so different, like different from what I’m used to. That you have to be strong and like mentally.”

INTL ALI: “In terms of differences, I would say that the local cities difference, well obviously the difference is not that significant.”

ADVENTURE: “That was a tough start and, you know, culture shock a little bit. But within the first year we got to know other people we felt more comfortable and we talk about it how we lived in [country of origin - Oceania] where we had a sort of had a group of friends we sort of spent time with we were working hard but we were also really enjoying our time traveling and having the opportunity to do a long trip to Europe in the summer holidays. . . Even when we were finding it a bit tough in the back of our minds it was already the idea that you know give it a bit give settled in find a place that you really enjoy living.”

BERLIN: “So every time that there’s a gathering a meet up we just try to observe if someone is really you know worth your attention worth your care or something. So I would say yes, after two years in Berlin. I found one or two so they can really share your problems always hangout together there won’t betray you or no matter how far away maybe they’re not in Berlin anymore but you can still keep a friendship.”

MADAME: “Even though I’m not even though I know I’m not living the same life but I guess even though I don’t really have a problem in the beginning it was in the beginning it was rough because I didn’t speak French very well. And I realized that I miss out on conversations and but it was the solution came automatically because I decided to speak French.”

***Theme 8: Resources to Promote Health and Wellbeing.*** Participants cited use of technology, seeking social support by creating a new network, use of health services and remaining active as means to create balance in their lifestyle.

MARIA: You’re not going crazy and after tomorrow after a night of stress you will be fine again and that’s how it goes. And then I have a friend colleague at work, her boyfriend is in Nigeria. So every time she is leaving to see her boyfriend for a weekend we hug each other and say “Oh enjoy” and there’s this kind of understanding she knows what I’m going through and when I know she is going to see her boyfriend she is really

very happy.”

“So it could have been more resources. I could have spent more time on trying to meet other people. That would have been a possibility.”

NL: “You know, even when, relatively new, relatively larger amounts of resources are available, It's a nightmare...I felt quite lucky that I've found him... So then, that was really feeling fortunate because I just knew somebody who knew somebody and I could do that and I could see. Otherwise, it would be very difficult find with absence of the network...So my initial contact was my neighbor who's English but happens to know these things, and happens to self, to be connected with those other, those other groups, you know, and that's, then was able to sort of point me in the right direction.”

ADVENTURE: “So that made it a bit tough and stepping in was going to let me have time to make new friends and sort of get into that same groove. But interestingly that experience when we were in Shanghai we sort of had a bunch for the second year as well because it helped me to get rid of some of the anxiety that comes along with that.”

BERLIN: “And asked me to open up my heart and talk to the psychologist. So I did that for three months. And finally, I found finally someone professional to really sort out my problems.”

INTL ALI: “If you ask me personally I would say that being international is not really, very much rel [Pause] It's not very much related to the health in any ways. Meaning that you could be quite an international person in my definition and you could suffer from depression. Or you could be quite a cheerful person and be an international identity. I guess that would help a lot to be a balanced person in terms of when you identify yourself as an international person, and when you follow the principles, probably mentally, you would be much more balanced than a person who's confined within some strict ideas, or some, I mean within the boundaries of a small community. But then again, I mean it's really a vast area. I'm thinking that someone can be quite balanced with very conservative ideas.”

MADAME: “Yeah, well for myself I don't really feel abandoned or [pause] I really have a comfortable life here. I have friends here, family come over well very often, friends as well.”

NL: “I did a sleep study. And they observed my sleep, so yeah. They got kind of, you know, a process to keep the data that people can go through, and that's usually positive. And that's helped me to sort of have more, more energy because that's the thing I was suffering from...So, other thing I thing I've been more positive since, which obviously is good. Still you know, not 100%, but I really feel more optimistic about things than I have for a long time.”

VOLGA: “It's a different side of that but that's reason that's part of how you can handle your problem. Connected to the [culture of origin – Eastern European] point of view



point, or whatever [country of origin - Eastern European] mind, in America it's found different so because this in time I get some very close friends. I can call today and talk even without vodka (laughter). It's, you need to talk with someone else."

"Yes, circle yeah and I'm I love to be socialize a lot be with people as I try to not substitute I try to do I start alone dance. I did some activities. I didn't see any [pause] I wasn't sitting at home crying, no. Sometimes it's really kind of you need everything you take a bus and go to Greenwich you know and just spend over night to drink with your friends."

BAGUIOSTEVE: "There are places where you can go and you can have personality tests done and things like that, sometimes those are required for, like we had to go to a place and get a psychological testing work up done to get our license to adopt or to apply to be registered to adopt and be foster parents. So formally not very much, but informally I think there's quite a lot in the international community and maybe that's partly why foreigners tend to gravitate toward that international community because we tend to do that for ourselves, we tend to do that for each other. So like if somebody is having an issue, if somebody is having a problem, then I've seen the missionary community really just gather around people and help them like family"

### **Category 3: Significance of Language and Culture in International Experiences.**

The participants described linguistic and cultural experiences as playing a significant role in the experience of the international lifestyle. The participants described these factors as critical to the international experience.

Inclusion: International experiences related to language and/or culture.

Exclusion: International experiences unrelated to language and/or culture.

***Theme 9: Necessity of Language Acquisition for Cultural Integration.*** The participants discussed the merits of language acquisition in the process of cultural integration, along with noting its patterns of blending language. Many of the participants are multilingual.

BAGUIOSTEVE: "So I think in other countries where the country is not an English speaking country I think it's it would be essential but you think after lived in a country like that so I can say I'm not fluent."

INTL ALI: "I studied English Literature for my undergraduate. And then I studied linguistics for my Master's degree. And one of the main reasons I did that [was] because

I was fascinated by language by itself per say, how it works, and especially how it's related to our thinking...So still, I'm not confused, but still that's a big question for me, the relationship between language, the lexicon, all the words and the grammar and the syntax we use, and the way our thinking."

MARIA: "A different situation, different experience so I came back and I had a contract for one and a half years I thought well now I'm going to learn the language. So I invested in it from day one, when I arrived. I think I had three hours of lessons a week and three hours on homework a week. In one year I could speak Dutch. The ability of learning language helps."

*Subtheme 1: Patterns of blending languages, also known as code-switching.*

Participants noted a common adaptation of blending languages for clearer communication and understanding, including the phenomenon known as code-switching. However, some participants found this adaptation challenging.

MARIA: "So that's was a part of it. I didn't learn the language at that I time. I found it quite difficult to be in a place where as much as we the students here would be able to speak the language with some of the employees. They would some of my colleagues at the time the permanent colleagues would switch back to Dutch. When they were talking, for example for grab a cup of tea would go to the coffee corner then they would switch back to Dutch and I found that quite difficult. I was feeling excluded because up to now I'm almost always in an environment where I wouldn't speak the language."

BERLIN: "It's I have to that well because okay my boyfriend is German. We always have to find a way you know to really talk about our own problems. It well uh we speak in English and some German a mixture of German and Asian at the same time but come on it's the only way we feel really comfortable is when we share problems like that."

BAGUIOSTEVE: "I'm teaching Filipinos, and I'm working with Filipinos and I'm interacting with Filipinos all day. I have to filter everything that I say for who...these cultural filters, so first of all at a very basic level I have to make sure that those words I'm speaking English have to be sure the words I'm using are vocabulary is particular Filipinos can understand." "I have to adjust the words that I use for the person I'm speaking to and also I have to consider the content of what I was saying and say it in a way that doesn't offend this person. Because [culture of origin – North American] have certain ways of speaking and behaving that are you know apparently offensive to the Filipinos and just by being a normal immigrant you speak Filipino so you're living in the Filipino community, interacting constantly in that community you're always filtering everything you say everything you do even your interactions."

*Subtheme 2: Benefits of language acquisition.* The participants all shared the benefits they reaped from language acquisition to adjust, acculturate and most importantly connect.

BAGUIOSTEVE: “I’m sure if you talked to people from those countries they would say learning the how to speak English is a huge part of you know being able to live internationally.”

MARIA: “The ability of learning language helps.”

“Because I’m only here for nine months, I’m not putting the effort of really learning a language local language but I’ve learned a few words. Just like I can say ‘Hi,’ I can say ‘Thank you’, ‘How are you?’ I have for example a cleaning lady when she comes to the office we both exchange those words and it just makes it the now when I was away to South East Asia for a couple weeks and when I came back this week she came to me she saw me “Oh I haven’t seen you for a while. ‘How are you doing?’ I found that very personal. Just because maybe because I was using those words with her in her language. Then you get a bit of the connection even though it’s just office but still a connection.”

“I feel comfortable there. Maybe if I went to China, nowadays, I would feel comfortable there as well. But there language was a bit of a barrier I think if you can communicate it’s much easier to adapt.”

NL: “So they pick that [language] up as well, so it's different. So it that sense, we haven't got as close to that. I haven't sort of given up on that yet, but I'm still quite determined. I like to do that. [Be]cause I suppose this is in terms of what you're, you know, what people you belong to, identity and things like that.”

### ***Theme 10: Cultural Misunderstandings, Language Adjustment and Language***

***Barriers.*** A common experience with language in the community is cultural misunderstanding and language challenges. The participants discuss language adjustment and experiences with language challenges.

BERLIN: “Or something I just want to have something to do every day for the first two years in Germany so I always hangout with different group of people who speak English.”

INTL ALI: “I feel it, I mean especially times at the times of being emotional, really emotional, and you want to express yourself emotionally... Make a difference, I mean, knowing that I learned this or I came to this point the hard way, it's not been easy.

Sometimes I feel that I could share a lot more to the other people, or if I had like the tools.”

ADVENTURE: “I remember that first night we went out to get a meal and we couldn't even figure out how to order water. And eventually when we did get it came out it came out as boiling water in a cup. And we were very confused to why the water was boiling...I remember that night we just we tried to order food and what we ate wasn't very nice. And then we were going on, my wife and I quite a bit so me again it was kind of a shock, like ‘Jeez, what are we doing here!’ that first night and we hadn't actually met anyone from work so we were just on our own in a big strange world”

BAGUIOSTEVE: “When I was first teaching in the bible college I would come off of campus and it would go on campus teach my classes and then leave. And I found out later years after I got to know the students better that they always found me really rude and offensive because when I walked on to campus I wouldn't greet them. I would just be distracted. I'd be thinking about what I was going to teach or maybe in conversation I didn't want to interrupt them or whatever. And same thing when I left but what I learned was that you walk on to campus and you greet everyone even if it's just, you know, make eye contact at break and your eye brows or wave across campus later on in the building or across campus. I told everybody who actually you know was good morning, you say good morning to everybody you say goodbye to everybody...They called it ‘snobby’ I think they mean snubbing but they say ‘snobbing’ which is a combination.”

NL: “It's all in the sense, it's all common sense, it's when you start talking about it, it's all the common sense, it's what our, you know, you don't include jokes that of, that refer to things that other people won't know, or references to things, not until you get to know them. If you get to know them a little bit you can explain to them. Some of the Russian girls we work with, you know, but how are all these Russian people wanting to be, to be spies and you know... And talk, talking in coded and we talk about movies from the 1960's.”

“You know, it comes at a, it comes at a cost. I think since we've been here it's been more of a case of where you know, where we come across some of the more difficult aspects of it. I mean, you know, trying to get mental health support in a place where not everybody has got your, the same language.”

VOLGA: “It's a real big, kind of, before I didn't have languages it was really tough. It was tough, as a matter of fact, I start to work six months in a bar. I didn't barely speak English and people ask me ‘Why do you work bartender if you do not speak English?’ and I said you don't have to be a good speaker you have to be a good listener (laughter).”

MARIA: “I was feeling excluded because up to now I'm almost always in an environment where I would speak the language.”

#### **Category 4: Influence of Challenges on International Experiences.**

The participants described the experience of adjustment and mental health as being moderated by the stressors present in the lifestyle of living in third-space and the adjustment of family members, including partners and children. The participants described these adjustment challenges juxtaposed to their ease in adjustment to other areas of international experience.

Inclusion: Self impacting experiences of lifestyle stressors and challenges of joining family members and/or partners.

Exclusion: Experiences of lifestyle stressors and challenges of joining family members and/or partners unrelated to the participant or unrelated to mental health or wellbeing.

***Theme 11: Stress Resulting from the International Lifestyle Influencing Mental Health.*** All participants indicated lifestyle factors producing stress and affecting mental health. Isolation, poor support resources, difficulty accessing support services, impact of chronic uncertainty and the temporary placement of the lifestyle, endless transitions and constant adjustment, including difficulties with finances, circumstances and the governments they have resided.

ADVENTURE: “I mean we think there times we don't think about it but at times it was pretty depressing.”

“Hong Kong we needed help in the first four weeks because it's hard to get work.”

INTL ALI: “There's always a challenge because obviously people around you are different. You find fewer people you can share your ideas with or your thoughts. The smaller the community is, the harder it gets because if you're living in a very big city cosmopolitan so there are different places you can go and find the like-minded people. If it's a smaller community, especially a religious one, it gets more difficult... So in my own interpretation, it's been all the history like that. If there is some truth in something, it would come out into the world, then it grows and sometimes it gets exaggerated. And

because of getting out of the normal balance there are other groups counterattacking this and totally denying that and wiping out that... And then when it gets again out of the balance and is eliminated, another group comes and tries to kind of lift it up and re-live it, whatever into the world."

PATAGONIA: "And then when I move here I have like the first few months I was thinking like what did I say like do. It's so different like different from what I'm used to that you have to be strong and like mentally. I don't know but I think you have to be like really healthy mentally because it's too different and if you are a bit depressed or something you can go really deep here."

"But at the end makes a real difference. So yes its going back to like mentally thing I think like you have to be really strong and it's not and the period here should not be longer than 6 months. It's just an offer like you've got your experience and then you go back like for sun for hugs for more contact." "You have to be emotionally strong, like it's not easy but and you have to be sociable because you have to be able to find people in the new places so you kind of get la way to escape or something like, I don't know, go on party or something you cannot be on your own like the whole time." "[International lifestyle] It gives you a lot of like soft abilities, you know tough skills."

NL: "It's been a very difficult time in many ways for us since we've been here. So you know life, a lot of things are quite difficult."

"And sometimes these are very subtle things you're trying to, trying to get across to people. And they're good people there but they so that, those are the kind of things that, which make that international lifestyle less fun And much more difficult."

BAGUIOSTEVE: ""As far as recourses I wouldn't say there's a lot, well in a sense, there's very little that's formal [host city] if I have had a mental health issue in [host city]. I suppose in the last couple of years I would have turned to the guy at the city who was one of very few licensed councilors in the Philippines. I think I read somewhere that there are only like twelve registered clinical psychologist in the whole country."

*Subtheme 3: Isolation and lacking support/access to support.* The participants

discuss isolation as a significant factor to mental health. They share experiences

of lacking support and seeking access to support, often creating their own systems

of support in the absence of structured support in their host country.

MARIA: "Then the difficult thing is how do you find help? The good thing about me is that I'm talkative. So I'd go and find friends I'd talk about it I'd talk to my colleagues. They would come and ask me how I was doing. And then I mean yeah your friends replace the network of your family would provide you. You would have good friends and good colleagues at work, I think. Those were the difficult

times. As well, when I split with my partner, then again I was happy I had my friends around and then you realize who are the good the really good friends. Yeah and then coming here to South Africa I thought well I've moved so often I know what it is to be in a different place and I know what I need to do if I want to meet new people. But I yeah but having my boyfriend in the Netherlands it just tougher than what...I start getting emotional now."

"It's tougher than what I had predicted. I just miss him very, very much. Yeah, even though there is Skype, even though there is Facebook, even though there is What's App. It's just still not the same. So I am here even though I miss my friends. Even though I miss my boyfriend. I think that's part of life and being away just accelerates it."

MARIA: "So you had some people, other students with whom you could talk to and they were feeling the same thing so you could share your thoughts uh well I think it was also very difficult for my mom. How I noticed that was all the other students were getting phone calls from their parents and I wouldn't get any. I would have to make the phone call myself. Then I found out that the reason why my mom wasn't calling me was because it was too difficult for her to call me."

NL: "Yeah, with absence of the network, and that's part of being the international, but about being in the international community."

BERLIN: "I just want I don't want to feel lonely."

"But still there's not a lot of satisfaction that you really want you need some moral support from family you need to talk to friends but you cannot. So but how to find the balance points I really have no idea I actually survive that two years maybe by completing my studies. That's something you know okay I have a target no matter how hard it's survive I just need to do it just do it. So but it was stressful because if you're forcing yourself to concentrate on this end."

"So all she can do she can do like she can suggest what I can do to make myself happy in Germany but she cannot see what I'm actually lacking inside. I show her I felt, kind of, lost but actually I'm not lost. I'm I know what I want but I know, you know, I'm just so lonely all the way and I said 'Yeah, maybe you can do some sports, yeah actually I do sports everyday but still I feel I lost something.' I know how to tell say. Well, if you cannot tell me then I cannot help you but I do not know how to tell the point so after three months I find a different thought because yes I have someone to listen to me still it's not helping lots, so fine forget it. So but it doesn't happen and I cannot reach anyone so at that moment just depression. And now I felt like it in myself but after that, I found myself stupid because I'm one of them. I can just write an email just blah, blah, blah (sigh) if not tell everyone, tell just tell why email it's fine go to sleep and then see what happens. But at that moment I know it's like that but then the next morning I'm like that was so stupid."

BAGUIOSTEVE: "I can understand this because we did this in Baguio too. There when new people come you tend to keep your distance in general, you don't always, but in general you keep your distance because you've said goodbye to so many people, and, and it's harder to say goodbye to people that you really cared about."

*Subtheme 4: Uncertainty and temporary nature of lifestyle.* Trends of uncertainty and coping with the temporary nature of the lifestyle highlight important features of the lifestyle influencing the individual.

BERLIN: "I should have the next year I don't know where I will go maybe America or Asia for my post doc."

"Never, so every time I say okay I like first I'm like oh I love Singapore I want to live here but that's another piece of something not really you know maybe you will find another place so and this always happen eventually so. I even now I can tell you that I don't want to live In Germany for sure but I don't know where a far place a really far place to feel comfortable and happy I can tell you now I want to live here. So I don't want to tie down to someone or somewhere and I always want to move on to different places but with career no career is sure what I want to do but places no living place no not yet so I'm still looking."

MADAME: "We are quite waiting. We have our lives a little bit on standby because we don't know when we might leave or if we leave if we leave in ten years or in three months so."

"We have an idea we wanna go to we already wanted to go to Southern France ten years ago. We came to France but so we know that we might go to the South of France but we are not sure yet so."

*Subtheme 5: Transitions and constant adjustment.* Participants share the influence of the stressors of transitions and constant adjustment including moving, culture, country, weather, work and social situations.

BERLIN: "Germany is new and language and I don't know the people and no friends no relatives okay fine it doesn't matter just try so I spent all my money for two years in Germany. The first three years in Germany and now it's my fourth in Germany doing a Ph.D. so I have money then yeah everything seems to be cool so I'm looking forward to the fifth twisting point."

PATAGONIA: "[Friends and family] thought that I was like crazy about coming to Russia in winter [be]cause it's so extreme and we are in the opposite



atmosphere. So in that time it was winter there. So I was moving to another winter and the previous year I had also been in two winters so up to now I have been in four continental winters.”

*Subtheme 6: Finances and circumstances.* Participants reported financial and circumstantial stressors that influence their choices and lifestyle.

BERLIN: “The reason why I didn't come home because you know tickets [are] really expensive. So I was okay fine so I have some money extra money maybe I can do something I like travel all around the world to Europe.”

MARIA: “And in order to do the last two years, there were only two pupils who wanted to do the science class so they couldn't have teachers coming for only two students. So they said okay we cannot provide the last years you have to find another solution. At that point I could have chosen to go to the [country of origin – Western Europe] school which had been open meanwhile or I could have gone to [country of origin – Western Europe] but I just thought you know what I'm in the French system I just want to finish in the French system, I'll just go to France.”

NL: “It's a nice lifestyle when you have money.”

“My status at [employer] has changed a bit, in the long run these are the better deals. They moved a lot of people of them to more like local terms. Which is okay.”

“People working for companies that aren't sure if they're going to be in, the companies going to be there next week.”

MADAME: “Everything went quite well, I mean, we always had some kind of financial problems at the time which were quite stressful.”

*Subtheme 7: Governance.* The participants discussed ways in which governments and bureaucracy have been a source of uncertainty and stress.

NL: “So they agreed so you can move to Nigeria which I did. But they said if you want your wife to come if you want your partner to come she has to be your wife. You can't cope with, they can't cope with sort of you know not married. Just its interesting since then it's a little easier but its foreign went with the rules rather than chat with...I try not to do it trying to take sort of you know civil partnerships and signs or sort of agreements like that they accept.”

“You know, and I wouldn't stand up for, I don't know, you know, those things which I find by contrast horrific. Like why the [country of origin – Western Europe] still want to have nuclear weapons there.”

MADAME: “I guess you have to really want living somewhere else, like where you are living as well. It makes it easier to really want and to stay strong and to believe that you can find a solution for work permits or all the paper work that you need to have done or to find an apartment or a place where you can live.”

BERLIN: “And so we got permanent residency from Singapore because we felt appreciated by the government and well because of our profession. So the government always offer[s] you a citizenship but you know I don't want to give up my citizenship maybe a permanent residency will do.”

“Well [country of origin – Southeast Asia] I live for twenty three years so a lot of constraints I would say because I'm [country of origin – Southeast Asia] Chinese. And [culture of origin – Southeast Asia] Chinese the population is only twenty five percent it is still declining anyway so I always felt constrained because of the government is [country of origin – Southeast Asia] government so too much constraining to do what you really want to do.”

MARIA: “Then the conditions there were a country that had just got out of the war so we didn't notice just still the same thing but we didn't have electricity constantly, we didn't have water constantly. So sometimes we had to carry water four levels upstairs, using the stairs. Studying with candle light.”

VOLGA: “When I start to try to grow up in America so I didn't have a language, I didn't have papers.”

PATAGONIA: “The thing with the Visa, it was the first time I got some kind of problem with it all my life. I had like never had any type of problem. It was not something cool, actually I was really angry with the people here who give me job because they didn't take care of it. And never in my life I had travel with like police or something and it was not in the mood to have some kind of issues because I was working for them and it was not my fault. So it was there fault and it was like I was thinking what had had any problem like my papers will get like wrong and they didn't care about it. And it was not a cool feeling but after that I decide like come on it's a new opportunity I will do this travel even if it was not expected...So that's how everything ends. At the end, I like it was good but it was something unnecessary to pass through because it was not my fault and I had I always tried not to get like problems with police and prison because it's not my way of traveling. I prefer to do everything certain and without problem.”

INTL ALI: “But the world is sometimes really unfair, I have to say. Because like something which really bothers me, and relating to all that discuss, is that when somebody asked me where you are from, and I wonder where I am from, in that context. And when you are doing that in the formal context, where are you from? I'm from [country of origin – Middle East]. And I'm boxed into the [culture of origin – Middle Eastern] category, so I cannot apply to go to many countries I

want to because the visa is denied, rejected. I cannot go to the States, because of the same story. And I'm staying in the UAE for [nationality of origin – Middle East] nationals, and working is a big problem.”

***Theme 12: Challenges for the Family System.*** The participants shared that common stains on the family system, like health problems and death, are exaggerated and accelerated by the international lifestyle and distance from familial support.

MADAME: “Everything came in at the same time and as he was American he lost quite a lot of um family members and friends form of friends from work as well...it was quite mixed feeling time because we were feeling very close to what was happening in the U.S, and at the same time having quite a lot of problems health problems, and work related, because when you are ill you have deal with work problems as well it was quite intense.”

MARIA: “I think the moments where it’s most difficult is when something happens to your family and you’re not there.”

“So I have been living that all my life I think the moment where that was all worse was when I was in the Netherlands where in the space of four years, sorry in the space of two years, four of my family members passed away...So the first year there was three of them. When the third came the third person passed away, I just didn’t even you know, didn’t even, it just didn’t do anything to me and I was aware that okay this isn’t doing anything to me I’m kind of numbed.”

NL: “My wife's health is quite poor, She's had gotten arthritis in both knees...And if you've got this you can't, you can't get out very much, you can't move. So you can't see people, and you're in pain all the time. So it's not a wonderful recipe for you know, good anything...She eventually got a double knee replacement. It's been two and a half years since then. But that has put huge strain on you know, us as a family.”

“And I think my wife being so isolated due to her, sort of her illness and lack of mobility that has struck her. I think she doesn't have, I think she finds it harder to stay positive because she hasn't had, you know, that set in directions that you'd otherwise like to.”

VOLGA: “It’s a matter of deciding to do something. Sometime you push yourself. Sometimes you feel uncomfortable, sometimes crying, sometimes you know yelling at yourself and sometimes feel absolutely depressed. And don’t forget my son was in [my country of origin]... I think it was the worst experience in my life because after three years when I met my son in an airport and when I saw how he grow up and he was so distant because he’s a teenager. I am crying still when I see the picture... Yeah, I think that was the toughest. But it was the happiest when I bring him (laughter) because it is kind of mission

accomplished...I have my son to create a new life you know in America I mean absolutely happy and proud of myself.”

**Category 5: Social Aspects of International Experiences.**

The participants described their social experience throughout the international lifestyle. The participants described social aspects of international experience in comparison to social experience from their country and culture of origin, the transformative aspects of some of the social experiences, their coping tools for social adjustment and the influence of their lifestyle and experiences on their relationships.

Inclusion: Social experience during the international lifestyle.

Exclusion: Social experience unique to country of origin.

***Theme 13: Tools for Social Adaptation in the International Community.*** The participants discussed social adaptations of diplomacy, mediating stressors and conflict with various strategies and use of tools to facilitate social connection.

MARIA: “But I’m still able to communicate with my team even though they are miles away. And maybe I’m not always spot on but when there are things I don’t understand I just realize okay maybe there are some incapability here, some cultural difference. And I just ask questions and ask questions. And if I get the same answer to something I didn’t understand previously I just ask the question differently until I until I get to it.”

PATAGONIA: “My international way of living it’s all about sharing different cultures like I’m from a country that is far away from Europe. Usually not many people know about it. The possibility of being here or in some other country I’m going to bring to them some features about [my country of origin]. How it is, what do we have and just sharing things. Information is quite...you feel like good about it. You are in a way ambassador of your country you want to share with them like all the amazing things [it] has. But at the same times when you are in a new country you can also learn about that country and make it comparison between your country and the other. So my experience will be totally like cultural exchange and transferring information.”

*Subtheme 8: Internet technology as a means to maintain contact and seek*

*support.* The participants reported using internet technology to create support networks and to remain in touch with current support networks.

ADVENTURE: "I think the cool thing is when you talk to others that have never done this sort of thing when you tell them about your experiences and they sort of check out what you're doing on Facebook or whatever there's always admiration from them and like wow how exciting you always learn something new in a new place and they admire that."

"And we remain close friends with our close friends because you kind of have to but as much as you can keep up with people over the internet with Skype or whatever. It's not the same."

BERLIN: "But it doesn't happen and I cannot reach anyone so at that moment just depression and now I felt like it in myself but after that I found myself stupid because I'm one of them. I can just write an email just blah blah blah (sigh) if not tell everyone tell just tell why, email it's fine, go to sleep and then see what happens but at that moment I know it's like that. But then the next morning I'm like that was so stupid... But since technology now open always was always you know texting people and so that's the way now I text a lot."

MADAME: "I started blogging."

MARIA: "Yeah even though there is Skype, even though there is Facebook, even though there is What's App. It's just still not the same."

"But I see that it with all those moves you end up losing people. Some people are just you just lose the contact with them and I see that with very good friends either with Skype. I don't know maybe even if it's just twice a year and that's enough. To have to keep it going."

NL: "UK has a[n] online counseling service which is sort of like a computer based thing. Called , 'Beating the Blues.'...But that is the kind of you, people sign up, it's available online, sometimes you have to pay for it, sometime you pay on the national health service... I suppose it to be a sort of cognitive based therapy idea."

BAGUIOSTEVE: "The resources don't necessarily have to be right here, I mean I'm sure there's research that has been on the efficiency of what counseling by correspondence but like a counseling through a Skype call rather than face to face. It would be better than nothing for sure. I don't know if they feel like one is better than the other, but when the alternative is nothing at all, then a Skype call to somebody would be great."

*Subtheme 9: Flexibility of interests to adapt to changing social environment.*

Participants discuss the adaptation technique of fostering flexibility in the social

interactions by showing a wide range of interests, adapted to the circumstances and context.

BERLIN: “You know, and then maybe after sometime so these Korean colleagues went back to their country and then come in American colleagues. So I was like ‘Okay no!’ I want to get more interesting friends. Okay, lets go with the Americans and see what is going on and well they were interested in my lifestyle you know as an Asian in Asian countries something like that. But I think I showed more interest in their lifestyle you know like I want to follow what to do every day you know I kind of forgot about my own identity I just want to get friends I don't care but the second year in Singapore. I start to feel the need to keep my old lifestyle at the same time. So I kind of stick to balance between two so I want to be myself but at the same time I want to meet more international friends but it's periodic so for the first six months I had a lot of friends from Korea or Japan but after that they just fly back after project and then I have to start a new bunch of friends. So it was I still have some real friends close friends close friends back in Singapore but they were all Singapore or [culture of origin – Southeast Asian] so they were a bunch of friends that never change but work or stuff that always change friends you know I have a group of friends something like that. Even in Germany as well.”

MADAME: “It's so much easier because you share something come from somewhere else and you get to live in France and you experience the same things which is quite bonding...I became really good friends with quite a lot of people that are not French because we share this thing coming from a different country in France we share that and with some people I really got along very well so we stayed in contact in and stayed close friends became friends.”

MARIA: “And I also met people who local people who were much more open to the rest of the world. And actually I bonded more with those people because they also couldn't really bond with the rest of the local people because they were more open they would travel a half an hour to go to the closest theater to watch to see a theater piece or...”

***Theme 14: Transformative Social Experience of Re-entry to Country of Origin.***

The participants shared that their experiences of re-entry, returning to their country or culture of origin, played a crucial role in their international identity. Participants vary in their level of interest in returning to their country of origin, temporarily or permanently in the future.

ADVENTURE: “It was a bit of an object that I labeled as home. So I labeled it as home. I went back home over summer stuff like that. When we got there it was like so your

visiting and then you going back home so then all of the sudden you are catching up with friends and sort of the stuff you used to do. But all of the sudden you're not part of the same with your sort of just stopping in and people are getting on with their lives but yeah you see the difference there's a different element in that sort of environment."

"And for me when you are taking that approach and changes your attitude to everything else. And I like when you do take that approach and do move back because of family or that sort of thing with their family. But then you're yearning to move to go some other place in the world again and that's because their approach has been sort of try things a way the way the people who live there try them."

BAGUIOSTEVE: "So after years of filtering everything that you do and say was filtered so you're not offensive so you are understood you need a break. And that what is more important part of their life. Move back to [country of origin – North American] where I don't have to think about the way I'm behaving even now after living half my life. And looking I still behave like a guy from [there] did and when I went back [there] I feel like I fit in. Less so now, then the first then you know when I first came but still I don't feel like the need to filter everything that I say."

"I would say that that there's a barrier just of understanding so like when I'm in [country of origin – North America] and I'm talking to people that have never lived internationally there's just that sense in which I know that that they really, at a very basic level, can't understand me. And that just puts a distance between you. If there's somebody who can't understand something that's so much a basic part of who I am how can I really have a close relationship with that person. I can be acquaintances I can do a lot of things together but that person and I suppose if I move back into [country of origin – North America] a person like that could end up being a close friend. But at this point, I'm not sure that they could as far as I can with like other missionaries and other foreigners living internationally."

MADAME: "I guess I'm most aware that I'm not really [culture of origin – Western European] or French just is when I meet friends from very long time ago stayed in Holland in the same village and they think 'Whoa! you live in France it's extraordinary' and I'm like well 'I'm just like you I just moved to a different city that's not in [country of origin – Western Europe] it's in France but it's not very different.'"

PATAGONIA: "I have to go back to [country of origin – South America] but I'm not planning to stay there longer."

VOLGA: "Never, I never feel I want to go back. I [have] been one time about three weeks ago like twelve years ago."

### ***Theme 15: Social Experience of Partner Selection and Raising Children***

***Abroad.*** Participants with children or planning for children expressed their concerns

about the international lifestyle and its impact on their children, positive and negative.

The participants also shared how the international lifestyle influenced their partner selection.

ADVENTURE: “As much as you love the international lifestyle my family's mostly on my back, you know, ‘When you're going to come home?.’ ... We kind of see ourselves doing that [possibly raising children] away from my family which is toughest things for us especially for me but I really do like the international lifestyle... We fluctuate, we really do because all of the families abroad and I seeing how good it is for the kids, sort of experience that with different languages and transfer cultures. But I think for now the plans are to keep them but it's a real tough decision. No, I think we've got so much of our family in [country of origin - Oceania].”

NL: “You're faced with, there are some sort of isolation, you may be lucky to get, to get sort of resources to help you. Certainly here, there are, you know, sort of, child development psychological services are quite difficult to get into... And we, you know, we sort of got some places which were well recommended, and shit there was like a two year waiting list. And it's really problems going to be over by the time we eventually did sort of connect to some [local] services. But it was very, it was quite frustrating when you see some person and they made a few noises but they just didn't do anything, or couldn't do anything. So we did spend a lot of time trying to go around and around in circles.”

VOLGA: “He's French. He was working in New York by contract and actually that's the reason why we relocated into London because the company transfer[red] him and I'm like a follow[ing] spouse now (laughter).”

MADAME: “I guess it's quite significant because he was an Air Force baby... My husband, because he had been traveling quite a lot and he lacked real family life so my parents really adopted him as his as there almost as their child well not really there child but there became very close.”

MARIA: “So there I had um a room I was renting a room and in the house of an old lady and I was a trainee at the company so I actually um ended up, well, meeting other trainees. So where you have your first work experience and at the same time you meet a whole bunch of other students and other young people so it was quite from that perspective it was quite good with you know um going out on evenings and uh weekends going and visiting Holland together. I also met a boyfriend so that was also became my partner for the next seven years.”

BAGUIOSTEVE: “So my kids have never spent any significant time in [Country of Origin – North America] either, we're a little bit concerned about that as they get ready to, [EDIT go off] to college. She's never lived in [country of origin – North America], and other missionary kids have done that, and there are programs here to help her do that



but, yeah, we're, we're all a little bit anxious about that.

"Our youngest [child] is adopted and we're wondering how that will go because she's only been to [country of origin (Parent) –North America] once, and maybe we'll be there once more, no probably two or three times more before she graduates high school. But we're not sure, she'll be an [nationality of origin – North American] citizen by then, but, not sure at all how she's going to do, or, or if she even will, she may opt to go to college in the Philippine and just stay here with us, we're really not sure."

### **Category 6: Defining International Community and International Cultural Identity.**

The participants described the experience of struggling to define the international community and international identity. The participants describe a dynamic process of cultural integration in a cultural environment that sometimes eludes concise definition and a community definition based on ideals of its members. Participants articulate the process of their own international identity formation, establish collective traits either found in or desirable for successful community membership and clarify the roles and structure of types of internationals in the community.

Inclusion: Self-identified explanation of the international community and identity.

Exclusion: Explanation of the international community and identity, not identified by the participant.

#### ***Theme 16: Creating International Identity, a Struggle for Cohesive Definition.***

Participant's struggled when grappling with the definition of their international identity. The participants responses ranged from descriptive features to concrete beliefs or actions. All participant elaborated on the significance of this change in their identity and strong desire to explore it further. Another focus is a sense or feeling of not fitting into the predetermined categories of culture, nationality, concept of home, concept of origin and self.

INTL ALI: “If you are an international identity, meaning that you have reached a certain maturity in your interpreting other peoples' ideologies, and coexistence, to the point that you can easily talk to other people and respect others. Well, I think for me it has happened to some extent. The first effect would be, you are more relaxed. I mean you don't always have the hassle of always thinking that somebody is going to hijack your country, your ideology, your religion or whatever. You are, I mean, calm and you get to a serenity that, this is life and this is the natural flow of life. And if there is a way to coexistence and being a better person, it's not for sure fighting and like anything wild that's happened. Nobody's is here to kind of prove anything right and wrong... Eventually, it becomes sort of a passion to you because it's very close to your heart, well by the end of the day you have chosen to shape your life this way, and you have come through a lot to get here.”

MADAME: “An international identity is, I guess, some kind of feeling that you kind of live anywhere. That you are very open to other places in the world. You know what's going on in like the U.S or in Asia or in Africa or that you are open to it. And that you pick things which happen somewhere and to incorporate in your own life, instead of just having very local view of your life and that kind of mix you of course can have a very local life. But when you're not very open to what what's going on outside you're not very international so....for me it fits in when I see things from a broader perspective.”

PATAGONIA: “I would love to have some country or some somewhere I can represent like properly. But now I'm not and I have a trouble with just kind of lack of identity...And I think that being an international it gives you the opportunity to create a different culture that surrounds you. That you will be passing to others in each time you meet somebody new like you will have come to them it changes. And that's what makes you like international. I don't know. It's all about sharing experiences. It is difficult to be an international like change your cultural behavior...It's all about changing your point of view. At the same time like I know that my point of view its bias in a way, by the country where I was born, like the culture of [country of origin] has been something in my culture like my own culture I will try to share with other people. But at the same time, I try to get from them a lot from their own culture. And at the end I think I will become like I will generate a new culture around me like I'm not the same as a [culture of origin – South American] person because I have traveled a lot.”

MARIA: “Sometimes I find myself by having a lack of identity because I don't have the feeling that I can put a label on myself. There [are] just too many labels so it just doesn't fit in one bucket. It's fits into different buckets if it makes sense.” “I feel at home everywhere I go.”

ADVENTURE: “I have true international identity... Taking that on and trying it and sort of living harmonious to your way and that's to me definitely what international identity is its actually moving in a place for the purpose of actually living there... I admire what you are doing because there's nothing to define because there's so much identity amongst the groups and their there for all different reasons. So I think actually being away on a holiday from our new home made us realize that this is our new home that we just kind of

picked up the international community side so to speak.”

BERLIN: “How do identify myself, I don't know, that's a difficult, I like to say different. I think we have to reflect enough to adapt.”

NL: “I suppose it's, it's where you, I haven't really thought about that, perhaps it's to do with how you see yourself with respect to the world. Do you see yourself primarily as the citizen of one country and that country engages in the world? Whether you feel you have a connection with the rest of the sensible people in the rest of the world. I think it's part of the second of those two. I feel like there are like-minded people in lots of places that I go and those are the people I feel, you know I feel, infinity with. I feel that I'm with them far more than just the people who happen to be, happen to be British. I think it's something that we can't, I think we have to learn that, I suspect it's something that we're going to want lots of people in the world to have in order to, you know, have a good peaceful world.”

VOLGA: “For some reason I want to say I am a traveler.”

BAGUIOSTEVE: “So in fact I realized when I came here I was 23, and I'm 46 years old now so I've spent half of my life here. And like I said all of my adult life but I mean now there are hundreds and dozens and dozens of books hundreds of articles all kind of information websites for TCK's they are third-culture kids and missionary kids but I don't know I've never heard a able for what I am. TCK's would be indignant if I called myself a TCK but I wouldn't because I'm not. But you know what am, I am nothing. I am someone who spend my whole life overseas but I didn't grow up like my wife is a TCK.”

*Subtheme 10: Identity formation.* Blending of culture built on experience in the international community is a common thread. The research emphasized is the point of awareness of international identity and the prominence of this identity for the individuals growing out of this awareness.

BERLIN: “I don't know how to explain I just do it. How do I identify that maybe from my okay now if seventy five of my friends they already got married and settled down with kids and family, husband, career but for me no. You know I don't own a house I don't own a car and I'm still looking all the time. I think that's how I found out that actually I do not belong to anywhere, anyone yet. ... Sometimes I instead of building myself as national as kind of don't know my identity anymore.”

MADAME: “I guess it was I think it went quite natural. I didn't really fell international immediately when I came to France. I guess it was developed with

interacting with colleagues, French colleagues but also a lot of foreign colleagues. Because I had international background where I came from [country of origin – Western Europe], I spoke different languages which is quite rare in France, so that's why I worked in quite international kind of jobs. So it's international teams with people from all over the world and I guess it made me aware."

"It was my one of my first jobs, I guess, my second job in France I was working in a team of ten people which came which were people from Italy, from Germany, quite European, South America as well. And they started we started talking and we had all different views. Still I thought nothing in common. I think that's really when I became aware that I wasn't French and they were not French as well and we got along very well at the same time so I thought well we are quite an international bunch here and we get along quite well. So there well I guess it was the first time I thought well I'm not French yet (Laughter) but I'm and I have this [culture of origin – Western European] background but I guess it was it was that particular time that I realized that I was global."

MARIA: "So I mean I'm not conscious about being international all the time actually I've only started thinking about this with this research and two years ago and I was thinking about how and what it meant to me. These have been set maybe couple of weeks it's in my thirty-three years of life it's defiantly not being the thing I'm constantly thinking about I'm international hence blah, blah, blah or no actually I never think about it. But I think that those sets of experiences have made who I am today. So if I have to think about it I'd say yes that's great too."

NL: "And I think that was part of a long period of time where I felt that I didn't like what was happening in [country of origin – Western Europe]. These things matter and we have to provide leadership. We have to provide you know a sensible track forward through history. And it's not, so I feel, you know in terms of sort of emotionally and intellectually, I felt like since I've been here, I've felt part, part of a more international thing... I suppose, probably, I started having those thoughts. Perhaps maybe since 2003... I think, that's actually quite good actually, because I was saying I felt like I kind of, was maybe you know. It was around the time I started here, I started feeling like I have an identity that's different."

PATAGONIA: "After living in France with people from around the world I like kind of discovered new cultures that have never heard about them in my life that's why I get the desire to get to know the world. I think that woke me up in a way and, yes, I think that that's the beginning, maybe not the beginning because I was already traveling but that's what makes me think about you should go to like to other countries the more like extreme, something you are not used to..."

VOLGA: "I really kind of came up with some spirit or something kind of idea to change my life... I feel, I don't know, it's really kind of now I am thinking about sometimes... I really don't think I have [culture of origin – Eastern European]

mind anymore... When I travel then more it's not a hobby, it's kind of hungriness you are on, so using it to just go anywhere."

BAGUIOSTEVE: "Having an international identity, I think everybody has an international identity that operates whenever you're interacting with somebody internationally, but having maybe a well formed, understood, defined international identity. I think would come when you first set foot in a country and you realize, this is where I live now... Like someone in the [country of origin – North America] their international identity is only going to manifest itself when they interact with somebody else who is international. But I mean you're living abroad, you're always interacting internationally, and, but I think your international identity would, like I have a, I have a obviously a very strong international identity that's very well developed because um, because I've lived in the Philippines all this time. But if you picked me up and dropped me in another country I would have to develop, my international identity would change quite a lot so, in other words I think that I have a strong international identity... I would have to make a lot of adjustments to my, to the way I relate to other people, and I would have to learn, I think living overseas gives you the ability to adapt quickly to other cultures..." I think through trial and error, well through mentoring and through trial and error maybe."

*Subtheme 11: Integration of Culture.* Participants share the process and impact of integration of culture, defying expectations and stereotypes. They describe the process by which they navigate the blend of other cultures, contextually.

INTL ALI: "There is some truth in what I believe in as well. But if it gets to the point that we take it to a level which is beyond the balance point, then it starts making conflicts and probably people want to attack you with their own ideas and stuff. So as long as we keep those beliefs or whatever we believe, which is the truth for us to ourselves and respect the truth of others, that would be the key to coexistence and being an international identity."

"So, I know there is a reason, there are reasons for all of this. But for a person who doesn't identify himself as a typical [cultural/national origin – Middle Eastern], it's really hard to be like put in the box in the formal context, so yeah. I wish I could be born again and I choose, I don't know. Not that I'm not proud of being [cultural/national origin – Middle Eastern], I mean I'm proud of being [cultural/national origin – Middle Eastern], I love the people, I love the culture, everything. But this unfair treatment of a person based on where you come from and, well this really gets into my nerves because it kind of restricts me from what I want to do."

PATAGONIA: "I don't know how to answer that. My culture should be like the [culture of origin – South American] culture but if I don't know, I'm not one

hundredth representative of [culture of origin – South American] culture. I'm more of like open, more racy in a way like with this wonder of getting to know the whole world. So if I had to describe my culture will be like positive, looking always for new like experiences, new countries to know new people."

"At the same time like I know that my point of view it's bias in a way by the country where I was born like the culture of [origin] has been something in my culture, like my own."

ADVENTURE: "I think it's a great thing to be able to change a culture for the better. Whether it's a culture within a school or you know a community around. Just kind of do that in a wise and tasteful way I think that's very helpful. I think an open mind next as well, I think you wanted to try new things find a healthy balance on your own culture and everyone else's too."

"I don't cling to my view on [country of origin – Oceania] in a way. I'm [culture of origin – Oceanian] and that's my culture but I kind of liked the cultures I pick and choose a little... as much as I can I sort of do try to have a lot of cultures and experience what they do and sort of healthy and useful approaches they have."

MADAME: "Some kind of feeling that you kind of live anywhere that you are very open to other places in the world. You know what's going on in like the U.S or in Asia or in Africa or that you are open to it. And that you pick things which happen somewhere and to incorporate in your own life instead of just having very local view of your life and that kind of mix you of course can have a very local life but when you're not very open to what what's going on outside you're not very international."

BERLIN: "Normally when people ask about this, you know, I was just like fifty percent I am still an Asian. I retain my Asian culture. I'm always proud of my Asian culture. But at the same time I don't really speak Asian so you know like another fifty percent is a mixture of different kind of it could be a little bit American, a little bit Germany, a little bit European, a little bit Indian even because I'm a Buddhist. So and for my culture I have my personal culture I cannot represent anyone in Asia or everyone else in the rest of the world that I have come in contact."

VOLGA: "I feel more comfortable and to say yes I'm [culture of origin – Eastern European] and I'm absolutely I became proud to be [culture of origin – Eastern European]."

***Theme 17: Community Based on Connection through Common Interest and***

***Experiences.*** Participant's describe a community not defined by location or identifiable in a tangible sense but rather a community based on connection to those who have an

interest in the global community and who live and interact in third-space. They describe a community identity that transcends familial, cultural and national loyalty.

NL: “Well I suppose I've got an enduring interest in, in what happens in different parts of the world. And not everybody does, you know, and that maybe may be an obsession. But you know, I think it matters I think you should try to understand what's happening elsewhere in the world.”

MADAME: “I became really good friends with quite a lot of people that are not French because we share this thing coming from a different country in France. We share that. And with some people I really got along very well so we stayed in contact in and stayed close friends became friends.”

“When you live somewhere and you're also get to discover the less cool things like the people, work, and the stress of getting your permission your work permit and all those things. And so it was quite a romantic idea and a little bit harsh at the same time in the beginning but I think when I started to work here I think that's why when my international idea my community idea began to develop, I guess. Yeah, after a few years not directly. French people, very local people I started to blog about people from my region also from my cities and are very local to get to know more people from around where I live not only in Paris but also where I live well I guess that's it. Well I know most people most people I know from another countries live in Paris. I really like international interconnecting with French people as well. It's so much easier because you share something come from somewhere else and you get to live in France and you experience the same things which is quite bonding so I don't know if there is really community idea. I think it was the feeling that I belonged even though I didn't belong to a particular community because but know that I had something in common. But different people with other even people from a really different country. I guess it was I belonged to a group or even if it was a fitted group.”

INTL ALI: “Connectiveness could be with the people from the same community or it could be with people from the outside...People who have respect for everyone living on the earth, no matter from what background they come from. They would respect anything, even if it's completely against what they believe.”

*Subtheme 12: Roles of Internationals.* Participants shared the roles and expectations they have come to have for internationals, from daily social behaviors and morays to community leadership and engagement.

INTL ALI: “And well, obviously it comes with responsibility. I mean it's not like they have to do, but they sort of automatically do it by themselves, because they believe that this is what they have acquired through time and hard work, so

obviously when they sit anywhere with people, and they see the grounds and the openness of the people to hear them... They will definitely share it. So if you call this responsibility in this sense, yeah, it's a kind of inner urge for them to share that enlightenment with the people around them, that this is, the world is not really what you really see. There is always something to learn. So if I go back home and I have these people who are so, so sure of their ideas and they practice their whatever beliefs they have, and they some of them they even teach of theirs. So I would love to go and sit and listen to them, and try to find what part I can take, and sometimes I would stop them and say, alright do you think that this could be the other way around or another way to that? Even if they don't listen, probably, I have done my part... Make a difference, I mean, knowing that I learned this or I came to this point the hard way, it's not been easy. Sometimes I feel that I could share a lot more to the other people, or if I had like the tools and means and like an organization. Eventually it becomes sort of a passion to you because it's very close to your heart, well by the end of the day you have chosen to shape your life this way, and you have come through a lot to get here. I'm doing what I can do within the resources that I have here, but I would love to do something bigger."

ADVENTURE: "I think you do feel kind of duty for each other because of when you arrive, especially if you don't know anyone. You kind of feel like you need to get to know someone and you need to get to know yourself and because of that you realize other people are in the same situation as you. And you also want to make it better for others... So as you as you get used to a place after your first year for example when I arrived you know what you go through others arrived too so I tried to make things smooth for them, help them settle in. So that's one of the biggest things, introducing others to this life because you've already been there. And then it also within the community you kind of take what you know and introduce it to them as well because while you're out trying to experience this new community, there's also parts of your old culture you also bring with you."

NL: "Somehow you got to be able to reinforce the right behaviors in communities."

BAGUIOSTEVE: "I'm part of the international community and I relate to the other people in the international community, but as an [Culture of Origin – North American] living in the Philippines I feel I have a responsibility to be respectful of Philippine culture, their nation, and people, um, and a responsibility to, I don't know, to not be a jerk. Which is how I generally see those [Culture of Origin – North American] that come over and are complaining about the Philippine culture and telling Philippines how they should do it like we do it in [Country of Origin – North America]."



**Theme 18: Traits of Internationals.** Participants shared traits of internationals, including but not limited to: tolerance, strength, determination, optimism, open-mindedness, language skills, interest in learning, flexibility, diplomacy, curiosity, cultural attunement, coping skills, awareness of international identity, activism or community engagement, spontaneity, independence, questioning, and cultural understanding.

ADVENTURE: “What I do see in this group is willingness and whatever you came for it. It’s really nice to and great to move out of your comfort zone. I identify with people who they are encouraged to try that and, I guess, have a lot of independence and curiosity that the vast majority of others maybe don’t have. It is in that sense so when I think of internationals I think that that’s sort of what I immediately think of the people who move or keep going through a world experience so I identify with that part of the group in that regards.”

“It is very helpful being curious too, as well applies that more about where you are more that sort of thing. It’s been a expat thing they’ve taught themselves to sort of stay in there in their own bubble even though there in this sort of new culture kind, eat their food and do the same thing you know go to expat bars, you know watch the same sports.”

“I think it is being able to take things and not let them overwhelm too much.”

INTL ALI: “A typical trait of being international is being open to learn.”

“[Internationals] are normally very respectable people, by everyone... They have friends who are completely from different backgrounds. They don’t agree if they sit and discuss certain things, probably there are very different beliefs. But they don’t see a point to discuss those points together, but still you see that they get a lot of respect from that same person... the trait would be very respectable people... very calm and serene. They talk, they are open to criticism. They have a very good attitude of learning. If they see something’s worth learning, they wouldn’t hesitate to do that. If they speak to someone coming from the totally opposite viewpoint, they would listen, they wouldn’t judge. If they see any truth in that for themselves, from their old perspective, they’re willing to adopt that and learn from that. It’s not like they totally close their uh, mind and the thoughts and they say that alright, whatever comes from this person should be kind of ignored. No, they would just open up, listen. And if there’s something that they find interesting, or they find good, they would accept it and learn. So Just a learning attitude. I guess you could say that this includes most of the traits that other people find in a pleasant personality. Someone they can interact and socialize with. People sort of just do not judge each other based on their background or whatever.”

BERLIN: “But from time to time I realize actually if you really want to you’ll be happy in this international community don’t take things too seriously....never ever take things too

personally as well...And be flexible enough to talk about any criteria that you particular and you could like fall in love with your country or your own citizenship or your own culture but they're a bit more flexible...not being too proud...Be flexible, not too rigid with who you are and where you are from."

MADAME: "I was always drawn to other people I always I don't know. I really like discovering other people."

"You really have to believe that you can do it...stay strong be courageous...You have to stay focused on what you want and stay strong, stay convinced that you really want it all. Also really know that you want it because if you're just too convinced and it isn't really what you want in that time of your life well you have to let go but I guess that's it."

"I'm very curious sometimes more curious than normal people sometimes a little bit too curious."

VOLGA: "I'm open...so internationals seek out more open minded people."

"Curiosity, I love to meet new people."

PATAGONIA: "I think we must be international or must have an international identity because you become more tolerant to differences I don't know if it makes you a better person but at the end when you get to how people live in some countries or what is rude to them."

"I love to get to know different cultures and different countries."

"Always trying to see the positive things of life and trying to get all the opportunities. I have like all the opportunities that cross in front of me and trying to take them because I am thinking that there only like one in your life. You cannot think about it like twice it's not an opportunity that pops in front of you. I don't know, just take it and then I guess you continue the consequences because I usually take them without thinking like too much about it but at the end its always the best option and its always the right decision for me so that's how I will define myself."

MARIA: "You see the opportunities passing by and you just jump on those opportunities. There is more jumping on the opportunities...Language and how you deal with the distance to family or friends...So I always climb out of the difficult situations and I'm very adaptable. Well, I think maybe I'm more adaptable then, well how can you compare that, I tend to very easily also sense the cultural nuances."

"I think it's being resilient, the kind of person that something goes wrong I'm not saying I'm never down but I can climb up again."

BAGUIOSTEVE: "I'm a curious person in general but I wanted to learn."

"I think you need to be flexible...The type A, time oriented, anal in the extreme way personality really tends not to not do very well here. The ones that really seem to do well are the ones that are more relaxed about time issues, more tolerant of ambiguity and

schedules and, just getting things done. So like we had a recent experience trying to get my adopted daughter's Philippine passport. Where we went and there are only three steps and it took us almost five hours to get through the first, actually like, step two only took about twenty seconds so the first step took almost five hours, and then step three was going to take two and a half hours more and we didn't have the time to waste. Actually had to go back and it was a long drive. I think it took us about an hour to drive down to where we needed to do that. It was just a pain, but I know other missionaries that would have been really incensed or indignant or frustrated or frustrated mainly. So hard to get things done here, whatever, but the ones that really tend to do well are the ones that can take that stride and say, "You know what? This is the way it is, there is nothing that I can do about it," Getting upset is just going to affect me and ruin my day and my daughter did break down crying in the car on the way home just having, spent a whole day there. She was fine while we were there but on the way home she kind of cried and fell asleep in the car just because it is stressful. And frustrating, but if you allow that to surface it only hurts yourself. So I think you need to be able to take things as they come and just say, this is the way it is, there's nothing I can do about it.

"You have to kind of roll with the punches."

***Theme 19: Types of Internationals and Organization within the Community.***

Participants differentiate the different types of internationals, for example differentiating expatriates that only interact with other expatriates versus. Participants vary in the conceptualization of the organization of types of internationals in the community, ranging from hierarchical to a spectrum based primarily in their engagement with each other, locals and other global cultures.

MADAME: "There are two groups, I think. When you [Edit] have this international global perspective it's very different than your local perspective from this national group. I think because they kind of reinforce their roots this this particular case where I talk about this these [culture of origin – Western European] people meeting every month in Paris, they reinforce their ideas about [country of origin – Western European]. So they eat the typical food people eat in [country of origin – Western European], they share these particular [culture of origin – Western European] ideas and it's almost exaggerated. They exaggerate their [culture of origin – Western European] values in those groups. Where people, international or that I see as international, have a more, they're more open, They see different things and there okay with seeing different things. They see different things from all over the world or also from their local village they think things from everywhere. Instead those people would just take things from there from their former country...I guess they are quite different but, of course, in this [culture of origin – Western European] group, there are also people which have this international identity which just

like to dive in this [culture of origin – Western European] environment and just really like it there and it's comfortable. But, I guess of course, there are people that have a globe more global view but there are quite a lot of people which don't switch from group to group are in this [culture of origin – Western European] community and don't go to the global international community. Well though, I don't see them as a group thing there international."

"I guess people which are in that have this international identity have this sometimes it can be a little bit blasé or a little bit I've been there done that because they've seen so much or at least they think they've seen so much. But at the same time they have stories from everywhere and I guess the stories are coming from different parts of the world are almost the same as stories from people that live, that have been living in the same place all their lives. So, I guess, it's for me it's really normal or I think they are not very different from other people....They connect with different people and they connect with each other but also with different people which aren't very international and I don't think they look for each other and to make a group and to form a group and to do things together or share ideas. I think people which are from a particular country do form these communities and/or at least I see they form those communities in Paris. There's this [culture of origin – Western European] community as well. I don't take part in it but you can join this community."

MARIA: "I still see two sets of international people. I see the expats and I see the international people that tend to really bond with the locals. I remember also when I was in Angola the French school and I remember being shocked by, I didn't understand, how it was possible that some people would come with their families for three or four or five years so a country and they wouldn't bother learning the language. I couldn't understand that. I mean if I could put myself in their shoes maybe I can understand it's difficult you need to invest time in learning the language. But I think that benefits of learning a language outweigh the difficulties that you would have to go through. I remember seeing some of them really living in one building they would have to shop underneath and they would go from there building, there apartment to shop and take the bus to school back to the bus back to the building go to the shop having their sports center in that building. What are you seeing of Angola? You are seeing nothing of Angola. You're just seeing that building. That's your life that's that building and there were other people and they were just uh mingle among themselves maybe some other expats living in similar buildings and there were other who would go you know what? I'm in Angola. Okay, it's a dangerous place but if I pay attention I can see other things and then we will go to the market...I also knew that at that point in time I also felt that some of those in those expats they were very arrogant. If as almost as if they were superior? I'm not sure what I'm whether that's true or not...the kids would also have this similar type of behavior...I remember that because I was sometimes being excluded of those groups...I think you're probably one or the other. From what I see because there's the there's the expats who will only mix with expats and will not try and mix with the local culture. And then there are the expats who will do it who will try and mix with the local culture. And well, maybe not completely. If I would think about myself, I wouldn't put myself in the first group of expats I would put myself in the other group of people to try to connect with others. But

then sometimes I wonder am I then I would say if international entailed earlier to the first group of expats. And I don't know if I'm part of this international identity. I try and mix with a local, well I defiantly don't feel like an expat. Maybe that's the difference, I defiantly don't feel like an expat. I feel yes international but not an expat and I didn't call it international at that time...Actually indeed those two groups, I see groups of more the expats then sometimes almost feel that they are a bit arrogant. Indeed, living a very awesome experience but in my opinion then being a bit judgmental not living the most out of it because they are not really learning about the local culture they are only they are indeed meeting a whole bunch of amazing people, all expats but they are not meeting the local people. And these are the other people that actually really try and bond with the locals and understand the culture and go and experience things with the local culture."

ADVENTURE: "You get people who you think there like us and want to see the world or happy back home or headed to see but then we are also another kind of people who think for one reason or another doesn't really fit in back home. So I think moving for them is more permanent. Let's see if we can fit in another part of the world, so like kind of start over. And now there's some people you might recognize a bit more centric people that we've met along the way and seeing interesting people and hearing their stories as well yeah probably like a third of them get along with their friends and family back home. I've heard others stories about their home and kind of get why they want to get out of there."

INTL ALI: "Well obviously, if I see some people whom I can find the qualities I just described as being international, well those are the people I could just, immediately connect with. I would love to have, to see their attitude, to listen to them, to learn more from them."

NL: "But um, I think in that sense, we sort of live, really live here. In the way that some other people don't and those people don't really have no desire to step outside the English speaking bubble."

"There are people I think, I mean, sort of a little bit nasty, but whose kids go to the [culture of origin – Western European] school but you don't feel like they're living here, they're camping here. Come summer holidays they leave in their cars and they drive off back to the [country of origin – Western Europe]."

VOLGA: "Pretty much its spectrum because it's not experience. Okay, international is like real in or international means you in some way deep you know village...I do have all kinds of connections or a relation with all [people on this] spectrum."

### **Category 7: Influence of Developmental Stages on the Experience of International Lifestyle.**

The participants described differing experiences of the international lifestyle based on age and developmental life stage of the point of entry and in consideration to their experiences in the community. Some participants describe pros and cons of the experiences of the international lifestyle at differing life stages.

Inclusion: Experiences of the international lifestyle correlated to a distinct developmental stage.

Exclusion: Experiences of the international lifestyle uncorrelated to a distinct developmental stage.

#### ***Theme 20: Pros and Cons of Exposure to International Lifestyle in Childhood.***

Participants shared early experiences of being different from others in their culture of origin, travel and relocation based on family decisions and circumstances, lack of connection with their country of origin, and early interest in exploring the world.

INTL ALI: “Well it, I guess it again, it comes from the way I was brought up by myself. So, as a kid I remember always that I would question each and everything around me. And when people said, I mean things about religion, about relationship, whatever it was. From the early age, I used to just reflect on them and question them and sort of come up my own answers. Not necessarily the answers that everybody would agree within my surrounding community. So, I kind of always felt that I don't belong really to everything to which is said, or believed around myself.”

ADVENTURE: “I kind of grew up very multi-culturally and I think that it's probably having to do with me wanting to experience another culture first hand.”

MARIA: “When I was three years old I didn't have much to say about it (laughter) it was just my mom.” [Moved back to mother's country of origin]. And so that's from the age of four, I started meeting other international people and then coming I would stay in the same school until the age of 16. But most of them would come for three to five years maybe, with their parents and then go again then go away again. So I got used to just seeing those people for a few years and then seeing them move on.”

PATAGONIA: “I have been traveling since I was four with my parents so I think they give me this like desire to get to know the world...I was living, well I was born in [country of origin – South America]. I was living in [country of origin – South America] that’s my, I don’t know, home country. It’s just for my childhood, that’s the only way I will describe it.”

***Theme 21: Pros and Cons of Exposure to International Lifestyle in***

***Adolescents.*** Participants shared the influence of their exposure to the international community during adolescents, including early exposure, independent travel, development of a worldly perspective, a curiosity and drive to seek out new and different experiences with other countries and cultures.

MARIA: “That was the first time that I realized I was something different. I was able to put things in a different perspective. [I was] sixteen, seventeen...I’ve been experiencing quite a lot of different cultures and taking decisions from quite a young age. At 16 that’s when I decided ‘Okay, when my school stops, I’ll go to France.’ Yeah, always meeting great people and having interesting experiences not always easy but always learning something from it.”

PATAGONIA: “I have been traveling since I was like 18 or 17.”

MADAME: “We had quite a lot of trips to other countries, work exchange programs, just trips at school for ten or fourteen days, which I really liked because I met quite a lot of people. Which was very, very different from what I knew and it was something I was really interested in.”

ADVENTURE: “I definitely I my first major curiosity was in my second to last year of high school I did French in high school and I did a three week trip to France. We sort of kept track there and I stayed with a family for a week and saw a bit of France and I loved it. I think then I wanted to see the world. So again when I was nineteen, I took a year off of doing school [edit] and sort of worked hard make a bit of money. And then I did a bigger trip around Europe for about six weeks. I really enjoyed that this and decided that I did want to live abroad so I had that sort of ideas fairly early on...Especially the second trip that’s the favorite trip of mine. I grew up all over and I think I just realized it that once you get out and travel its a lot of a lot of you sort of expect to would have seriously considered. And you realize the world’s a lot bigger than your little city at home.”

INTL ALI: “It started with high school I guess. And that’s when I thought that if I wanted to connect with the world I’d have to learn another language. And that’s when I started studying English, going to ethnic classes. We don’t get a lot of tourists in [country of origin – Middle East] so I had to ethnic classes and yeah, that’s when it started. Probably during high school. Well, I mean when you’re thinking out of the box. If you might say

that. There's always a challenge because obviously people around you are different. So, you find fewer people you can share your ideas with or your thoughts. And the smaller the community is, the harder it gets because if you're living in a very big city cosmopolitan so there are different places you can go and find the like-minded people.”

***Theme 22: Pros and Cons of Exposure to International Lifestyle in Adulthood.***

Participants shared how adulthood, particularly the transition from early adulthood into adulthood factored into their international lifestyle. Topics shared included friendship, dating, independence, and growing up. Not all participants expressed adulthood as a significant factor in their international experiences, rather attributing this to circumstances or the life stage of adulthood in itself.

BAGUIOSTEVE: “I lived in [host city] for 22 years and really all of my adult life. I was 23 when I came to the Philippines and at you know 20, 21, 22, 23 you really feel like you're an adult but when you're 26 looking back at 23 you realize that that that's really like post adolescence, at best, so I feel like I did my formative growing up, not my adolescent growing up, I would never call myself a Third-culture kid but I've never found a category of other people that fit in my category: people who didn't grow up overseas but have spent their whole life overseas.”

VOLGA: “I was really kind of encouraged with some spirit or something kind of idea to change my life and [at] thirty five years old...that problem was crucial, crucial time for me but it's not related to international community so it was probably once again circumstances.”

BERLIN: “That was like twisting points in my life... When I was in twenty-three years old in Singapore and [country of origin – Southeast Asia]. So Singapore is pretty international and that's when I finally felt that I could be independent from a point of like economically or whatever so I'm not living for family anymore. I'm always living for friends or alone and I think that's essential that I have the ability to do it. I was still in yeah I think I think it was and it was the first time I was we left the country you know my home country for some reason and everything should be kind of new and exciting changing and you have no idea how to do it but you want to do it.”

MADAME: “I think I developed. Now I'm quite comfortable. I'm okay with it. I really am [culture of origin – Western European], I have a [culture of origin – Western European] background I grew up there I have the habits from [country of origin – Western Europe] but also I also have a lot of habits from France because I actually I grew up in France as well. Because twenty-two is quite young and I'm thirty-two years old now. So it's ten years which is quite a big period of time so I'm really not in the middle anymore but I'm on two feet I guess. One foot in [country of origin – Western Europe],



one feet in France but maybe two feet in France.”

MARIA: “I actually ended up, well, meeting other trainees. So where you have your first work experience and at the same time you meet a whole bunch of other students and other young people so it was quite, from that perspective it was quite good, with going out on evenings and weekends going and visiting Holland together. I also met a boyfriend so that was also became my partner for the next seven years.”

PATAGONIA: “When I was 18 I start[ed] traveling by myself.”

***Theme 23: Pros and Cons of Exposure to International Lifestyle in Older***

***Adulthood.*** The older adult participant shared that there was relatively little significance of age in his older adult experiences of the international community, largely since he has spent a good part of his adult life abroad.

NL: “I don't have a strong feeling of age. I lost my hair when I was quite young. When I was 25 I looked about 35. And I really haven't changed since. I mean obviously I'm older but I don't feel like I have actually have anything different.”

**Category 8: Self Evaluation of Worldview and the Worldview of Non-Internationals.**

The participants described differing worldview, distinct of non-internationals. The participants describe transcendence from traditional world citizenship, nationalism, and other traits the participants ascribe to strengths in international identity.

Inclusion: Topics encompassing features of worldview, including definitions, roles, values and philosophies.

Exclusion: Topics outside of the scope of worldview.

***Theme 24: Participant's Worldview Transcends Traditional World Citizenship***

***and Nationalistic Traits.*** Participants offer their thoughts on their worldview and perspective, in relation to how world citizenship reinforces an international worldview and their own perspectives on their national country of origin.

ADVENTURE: "Taking that on and trying it and sort of living harmonious to your way and that's, to me, definitely what international identity is. It's actually moving in a place for the purpose of actually living there and not being like 'God, I'm going to be HERE for a few years.'"

BERLIN: "I grew up in an Asian community so it's something like the children always have to listen to the parents and they have to follow like the parents or your teachers set the target for your life so you have to achieve it no matter how... I think I do not belong to these countries. I need to go somewhere else somewhere and from time to time I always think that I'm still not happy so think the attitude belongs to something that basically come[s] from Asia it come from my general sadness so you know... I can find my happiness in my Asian community but still I can find some happiness in the like now in the Europe community or I have a family in the States as well so I always hear different story about their life or something like that so it's pretty different from what I have back in Asia. So I'm kind of looking forward to that, you know. I want to live the culture and this culture is something I like so they make me feel like I do not belong to any particular culture community by myself you know like stand-alone all the time maybe that's the reason why I feel like I belong to this international community."

MADAME: "I like seeing what's going on very close to my place as well....What I'm realizing now people are not very different from where I live at this moment then live in New York or live where ever so but, I guess, I, myself, I have this I hope a quite global view so and watching that with that global view to my own community my very direct community I guess it's might be interesting I guess so I hope or place I start to discover and meet new people so um so that's where it comes in."

MARIA: "Well, when I think about myself I sometimes describe myself as being a citizen of the world...I'm a human being. I'm part of this world I have emotions like any other person has...I think the fact of being international just maybe brings you to another level where you realize that there is not only your place, there are other places. There are other ways of doing things there are other languages, there's other cultures, even though I probably won't be able to define them and that things are done differently in other places. And I'm just now realizing that you are more open and more able to communicate with others and more able to relate to others even if there is a different place you do quite some projects that are international...My view of the world is kind of okay well trees you in your mountains but I see the mountains, I see the sea, I see the other continents. Just a different perspective."

"And where I realized that that people that were so different in the way of thinking the way of figuring things were so different from mine. And when I started realizing that people hadn't traveled people, hadn't been places, that maybe there furthest place they would have gone to was the closest main city. They wouldn't have been anywhere further than that, they would have a different way of viewing things...That was the first that I realized I was something different I was able to put things in a different perspective."

NL: "I felt that, see living here I feel very much, I feel like, not particularly nationalistic."

I feel, you know, there are a set of values, there are things that I care about... Things, they are broadly speaking they, you might call a set of smaller liberal values... These things matter, and, and you know, we have to provide leadership, we have to provide you know a sensible track forward through history. And it's not, so I feel, you know in terms of sort of emotionally and intellectually, I felt like since I've been here, I've felt part, part of a more international thing. There's other things, other things that produce, you know, more practical sort of human rights and base stuff and again from all the faults it has.... I'm not just a [culture of origin – Western Europe] exported person. I feel like, if I belong, what do I belong to the setting of central values, that's what I, that's what I feel, and that's, and I think you can have that with or without, the, without, with or without the sort of expatriate life you know... Those are the kind of things that's to be positive, to be generous, to want to be a good neighbor, you know those things and the maybe a bit right but that's actually what works and what I've never found. I found very few situations where that didn't, kind of, given me other people I could deal with who were very similar... Be this way, that's what happens. So it's, I think you gotta take that kind of, goes around comes around, view of things... Even though I think that's very important, I think it's about if you want seek, try, seek to understand people and know where they're coming from. You know, being affective. In that role, and that's something else that I can, gives me another, another perspective on, on the world, because I'm often hearing different, from around the world in different countries... I think international people have a sort of, a perspective on the world, they understand the interconnectiveness of all things. Because that's what keeps everybody, you know, it supports everybody.

PATAGONIA: “You have to be open like to hear everything about your country but also open in your way to receive information and you have to be positive, like in life. I think you must have this desire of like conquer the world or something like always getting new experiences going to some places you have never even thought about it. ...It's all about changing your point of view.

VOLGA: ‘I’m going to a country I’ve been in, Germany, and an event [in] Amsterdam so I am immediately, I’m transformed, my mind open, my mind for different culture and excepting that.’

INTL ALI: “But for me I would think that, ‘Oh my God, there are hundreds of millions of people living right now with that belief, and there could be some truth in that.’ I don't necessarily have to that lifestyle, but the fact that I can mentally accept that idea or whatever lifestyle it is enough for me... I guess this is kind of understanding, or enlightenment... there is truth in everything.”

### ***Theme 25: Impressions of Difference from Non-Internationals in Worldview.***

The participants clarify the nature of their relationships and interactions with non-internationals, particularly differences in perspective. Their responses differentiate

international and non-internationals by creating distinction between similarities and differences.

BAUGIOSTEVE: “I would say that that there’s a barrier just of understanding so like when I’m in [country of origin – North America] and I’m talking to people that that have never lived internationally there’s just that sense in which I know that that they really, at a very basic level, can’t understand me and that just puts a distance between you. If there’s somebody who can’t understand something that’s so much a basic part of who I am, you know, how can I really have a close relationship with that person. I can be acquaintances, I can do a lot of things together but that person...I suppose if I move back into [country of origin – North America] a person like that could end up being a close friend but at this point I’m not sure that they could as far as they can with like other missionaries and other foreigners living internationally in the Philippines.”

BERLIN: “I like to see people be proud of their own country of their own food or culture but not too proud of it. Being proud is something like you like to share and like you show people. People think maybe we try something special from like a hometown or something but being too proud is something you know a hometown is the best in the world.”

INTL ALI: “I just try to facilitate the meetings, and I see that I have to drop the meeting at some points because if it is getting out of that peaceful talk, I have to step in at some points because not all the members are at the same level. I just, kind of, feel sorry for those people who are so rigid...I would call them, I mean in my mind, narrow minded people...I wouldn’t blame them because I know that it takes time probably for them to grow to a higher level. But at that point there’s not a quick fix for them to just try to inject something into them, that this is the truth, or whatever it is, not the truth, this is what is the reality. And, probably the best thing is just to stop the conflict at that moment...I have no issue with them, probably I have many of my friend are from those group of people, because as I told you, probably a typical viewpoint, I mean, a typical trait of being international is being open to learn.”

MADAME: “I think we have a mutual curiosity about each other.”

MARIA: “So it was very difficult to find, to click or, how do you say that, to find common ground with the people...And I also met people who, local people who were much more open to the rest of the world...I try and identify with them. I try and communicate on that particular level or when it really becomes more interesting is when they also they realize that I have a total different set of experience and they are very curious about that.”

NL: “There are plenty of people like that but I think there only a limited way in which one can connect with them...You know, there are certain connections that you can make but they will tend to be sort of, very localized in a particular class context. And there’s other things you can’t necessarily move to so it tends to be more strict, it isn’t necessarily bad or unhelpful...There will always be people who have a, you know, narrower and

wider views on the way things work, or should work...I think it's perfectly true that you can be broad minded, even if you don't travel much, and you can travel a great deal and still be narrow minded so it's tough...I don't ascribe to this, you have to have traveled greatly in order to understand the world and that's not necessarily the case, not now anyway.”

PATAGONIA: “For me it’s not a problem. I when I see somebody who is really like national, or patriotic, or ethnic...I cannot define myself as national so that's why I find and like some things unique. I would love to have some country or some somewhere I can represent...So when I see people who love their country and they have traditions still I'm really like impressed and I love to get to know them because I don't know. I think it's unique and you should preserve that.”

VOLGA: “[It] depends if they have what I call mental mind that’s mental internationality. So if they closed themselves instead to except something new, something different, people different, personality from different culture. I’m not interested [to] communicate...I think I try to limit my relationship is people who [are] thinking nationally...I don’t see the clear road between national and international.”

### **Emerging Trends**

In addition to themes listed above in which arose through exploration of their identity and international experiences, several noteworthy trends emerged from the data that warrant further exploration and consideration. These trends included the significance of sharing their story and value expressed in the process of articulating their identity. These trends coincide with the data but formed overarching significance in several of the themes or subthemes related to the studied phenomenon. Therefore, consideration and study of the influence of this expression is paramount in expanding the study of the phenomenon, to examine to what extent the study process in itself influences identity development and promotes positive mental health.

### **Developmental Aspects of Cultural Identity Findings**

Consideration was made for the emerging data from themes offering developmental trajectory of development of identity. The data collected coincides with the research on life stage development and identity development research (Erikson,

1959); however, the data collected marginally yielded significant results within the themes for childhood, adolescents, and older adulthood. Future studies that focus on developmental significance of identity development with focus on each stage separately may yield results with the richness and depth needed to provide results which highlight therapeutic considerations with specificity to be useful for mental health providers.

## Chapter IV

### **Discussion**

The Discussion chapter provides reasons for the significance of the emerging themes relevant to research on international identity and international adjustment literature. The Discussion chapter addresses such issues identity development and lifestyle challenges, factors that impact resiliency, and mental health in international population. This chapter also applies the findings to clinical practice in the clinical implications section along with a review of limitations for the study and suggestions for further research.

### **Interpretation of Results**

This study provided a brief description of the impact of the international lifestyle on identity development and mental health. The participants' accounts elaborated the way in which their international experiences impacted their sense of self and a context of the self within various cultural contexts, including the Third-Space of the international community. This contextual self was based on a changing international context and the ways in which the acculturation process challenged the participants and their family system. The present study uncovered 25 themes specific to the experience of the participants studied. The themes are relevant to research on both international identity and acculturation adjustment literature. It addresses such issues as defining identity in multiple and changing contexts, mental health challenges especially as a result of lifestyle

stressors, resiliency and trait factors for a successful international lifestyle, and developmental significance of the point of entry into the community.

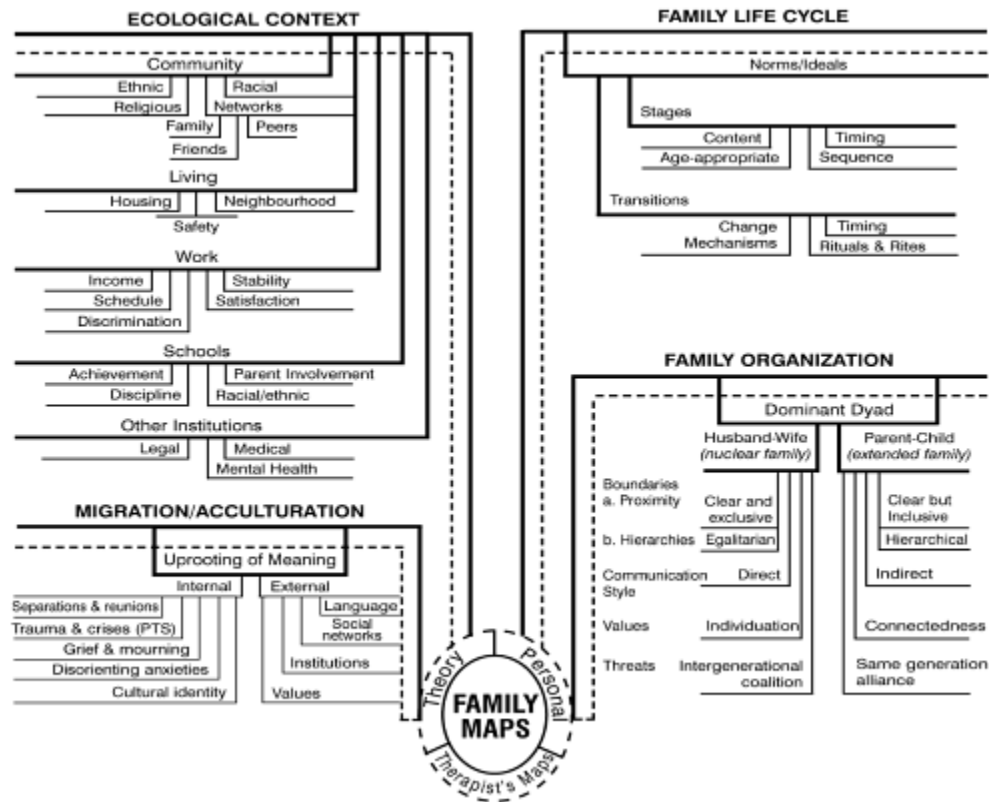
In the Multidimensional Ecosystemic Comparative Approach (MECA) perspective presented by Falicov (1998), complex cultural identity is contextual and multilayered. Each individual grades the significance and importance of various diversity features relevant to their experiences and concept of the self. The importance of context has significantly affected the life of the participants' in their identity definition. While some diversity features remain the same in different contexts, the participants' experience reflect a desire to navigate their own self-definition, role, and place to reinvent who they are in specific contexts. The participants' identity as an international reflects a context dependent identity, differentiated robustly by multiple factors. The individual weight of factors is unique not only to the individual but to the context. The participants' cultural lens represents the value and weight of these factors. Similarly the cultural lens and background of the researcher factors into the interpretation of these values. According to Falicov (1998), it is critical for mental health practitioners to understand the dynamic process of development of a multidimensional identity, such as international identity and the role of the practitioner's awareness to the client's dynamic identity as well as their own identity. This study calls into question whether, in the case of international identity, if the mediating factors of the MECA model: migration, ecological context, family organization, and family life cycle are the factors most pertinent to the international population.

Within the current study, the participants are complex and multifaceted, much like the community they represent. Participants' often defied common stereotypes of



expatriates and on many occasions distinctly challenged these terms. Many participants noted the prominent role of a changing international community culture, influences of post-post modernist zeitgeist and global economic context influencing their adaptation of identity formation. These macro influences appear to be moderated by prior influences, adaptations, language, social experiences and developmental stage of each individual to create a spectrum of international identity reflective of its diversity yet unifying in its elements of shared experiences, connection and collaboration of various values to create a collective aspirational worldview.

Figure 4 *Diagrammatic illustration Falicov's (1998) Multidimensional Ecosystemic Comparative Approach (MECA)*



The Category 1, Influences facilitating joining international lifestyle and community, includes 4 themes, which stress the importance of contributing factors to joining the community, at least initially. Factors contributing to joining were broad. The participants endorsed both internal and external factors for engaging in the lifestyle. The influence range from personal views or traits, to cultural views and traits, to practical adaptation to external influence of the global marketplace juxtaposed to the occupational opportunities in the country of origin. According to the United Nations statistics, the participants' openness to mobility is part of a broader global trend of populations of foreign-born people living in countries other than their country of origin. This population has increased 36% from 1999-2010 (UN, 2008; UN, 2009).

In Category 2, Process of adaptation to lifestyle; Category 3, Significance of language experiences; Category 4, Influence of challenges on experiences; Category 5, Social aspects of experiences includes 11 themes and 11 subthemes, which highlight the known process of acculturation. Based on Berry's Acculturation Model, acculturation is seen as varieties of adaptations of individuals who live or interact with a culture not of their origin (Berry, 1980; Ataca & Berry, 2003). Research shows, acculturative stress is the stress resulting from this interaction and engagement (Berry, 1998). Cultural factors can serve as mediators in stress increasing or relieving the experience of stress (Berry & Ataca, 2007). The participants' experience of stress not only expressed individually, but as part of a family system is correlated to their own cultural factors playing out in the immigration process (Berry, 1997). Immigration literature show acculturative stress is not only different based on gender but also helping factors are moderated by the individual's belief system, values, action, education, skills, self-care, support relationships, community resources, work environment, and contextual difficulties (Koert, Borgen, & Amundson, 2011). Koert, Borgen, and Amundson (2011) posit that individuals such as the participants who have strengths in many of these categories will report less acculturative stress while accounts participants who have more challenges or relative weaknesses in many of these categories will report more acculturative stress based on having less of these helping factors. It should be noted that within the acculturation research, there has been a concentration on the distinction between psychological and sociocultural adjustment (Ataca & Berry, 2002). This trend coincides in the emergence of distinct themes for mental health, lifestyle influences, and social aspects of experiences in

Categories 4 and 5. Psychoeducation on the significance of these factors in healthy adaptation would be an added resource within this population.

The Category 6, Defining community and identity the participants identified several pertinent themes. In Theme 16, Creating identity, a struggle for cohesive definition the participants voice a lack of definition and evolution of terms to articulate membership in this community. Similar to research in third-culture children, many participants expressed identity through connection to others with experience in the international community. This finding suggests that identity development in the third-space may play a significant role for all members interacting in this community, not limited to third-culture children raised within it. As previously highlighted, further exploration of life stage specific segments of the population may foster greater data to expand on how much and to what extent developmental stage of entry to the international community plays a role in the development of international identity.

In Category 8, Self-evaluation of worldview and the worldview of non-internationals, the significance of differentiation from those with an absence of international experience are prominent. The strength of differentiation appears moderated by association with themes of isolation and not belonging, in Categories 4, 5 and 6. Experiences of isolation, rejection or not belonging as an experience, particularly in relation to the country, culture or family of origin, is crucial in reinforcing the emergence of the identification and connection with the international community which offers validation of these shared experiences and the impact it has on the individuals identity and worldview. Differentiation from non-international appears to not be a singular pattern defining what it is to be international nor is it a catalyst for view life and the world as an

international emerge. Several participants suggested that the relationships and differences to non-internationals bar little if any significance in their own identity formation, community membership or worldview.

Social identity research highlights that coping and adaptation play a prominent role in the development of social identity (Amit, Terry, Wirawan, & Grice, 2010). Within the international community, not only does the context change but also the self is changed as its own context. The Category 7, Influence of developmental stages on experience begins to illustrate the start of evaluation of the impact of development age on the developmental process of international identity. The participants expressed that their early life influences and experiences in the international lifestyle prepared them for later acceptance of international experiences and promoted continuation of the lifestyle for themselves and their family, when applicable. However, some participants who do not currently have a partner or who have not started a family noted grappling with the pros and cons of continuation of the lifestyle. This questioning was most prominent in participants who have entered the international community more recently relative to the other participants. While the participants also offered observed experiences of others in the community, further research is needed to expand beyond adult stage described in depth with the current study participants. However, this category offered a glimpse into how family dynamics in this population are sensitive to the developmental stages and needs of its members.

What the emerging categories reveal is that personal traits, adaptation style, language, social adaptation and status in the community, development and experiential roots become mediating factors in the engagement of the international community and

eventually the international lifestyle. Acculturation and the process of living in the community creates challenges which stimulate personal growth through adaptive stress, self-definition is marked by complexity and nuance of ambiguity in a multiplicity of contexts, and life stages play a role in one's experience and ability to navigate the context both in the development of skills for adaptation and development of identity.

### **Proposed International Cultural Identity Theory (ICIT)**

International Cultural Identity Theory (ICIT) integrates identity features of internationals including an elusive searching for home, confronting ambiguity when establishing where are you from, rethinking the global citizen beyond the stereotypes, and fostering connection and belonging in the ever changing localities and cultural contexts. Influences of globalization directly correspond to the participants adaptation toward international cultural identity formation is moderated by factors of the spectrum of responses to experiences of joining influences when joining the international community, process of adaptation to lifestyle, significant language experiences, social aspects of experiences, and the developmental life stage of the individual. Their worldview; however, is influenced significantly by population patterns of post-post modern thought. International cultural identity is not only a worldview approach, it is a manifestation of experiences and adaptations to third-space in the international community which leads to a cultural transcendence of national, cultural and social origins. The experiences of sustained lifestyle and chronic adjustment and adaptation in the international community results in an embodiment of this culture in the identity of the international identified individual which distinguish them as a group. To better understand and serve this population therapeutically modification and expansion to acculturation, identity

development, intercultural adaptation, and Ecosystemic models is presented as a means to highlight significant features of this population for support of mental health for this community.

Being International is to be an internationally identified individual culturally develops as hyper-fluidity between and among many of the social, cultural and theory-based categories of culture and identity due to sustained exposure and integration of experiences in the global community. The studied population showed that with exploration and understanding of self and others in various contexts, simultaneously, with a constant evolving and changing process of cultural integration and self-exploration/cultural adaptation was directly in response to global mobility and personal identity development.

Demographic similarities of internationals may provide a tool to aiding in identification of lifestyle risk factors and exploration of identity to foster health, balance and wellbeing of those in the international community. Expanding on tools for general intake and therapeutic exploration the international population can articulate features of their identity with the right line of inquiry, including modification of models such as Multidimensional Ecosystemic Comparative Approach (MECA) , Wilber's Integral (AQAL) Model of Moral Development, Bennett's Development of Intercultural Sensitivity Model (DMIS), and Berry's Acculturation Model to foster conceptualization with contextually relevant lines of inquiry for mental health providers. The proposed ICIT models expanding current theory for conceptualization of internationals and international cultural identity development built upon modifications, clarifications and points of emphasis of established models for specific application with the international

community. Although some theory differences remain the utility of expanding these models will offer new means for culturally informed care for this population. ICIT is distinct in the differentiation that worldview is only one factor in international identity. Identity is distinct from worldview. The experience of the international lifestyle is a critical part of international cultural identity development, whereas current models such as Bennett's Development of Intercultural Sensitivity Model (DMIS) focuses primarily on development of worldview. ICIT applies understanding of the rapid adaptation potential and expressed cultural integration of this population to bridge the divide of research between development of worldview and cultural identity development for this population.

The goal for applying these tools to the international population remains to broaden communication and enhance both individual and mutual understanding. Establishing the path to the international lifestyle, experience of the lifestyle, personal challenges and for family system and the reason(s) for relocation aid deeper understanding of the experiences of the client (McDonald, 2009). Sociopolitical factors and global economic influences should be explored are critical rule out factors on the experience of the international lifestyle, including experiences with governance. Questions into the nature, frequency and total number of relocations also provide helpful information. An emphasis on the client's experience of these transitions is crucial for gaining understanding.

Broach exploring mental health challenges with a similar line of inquiry. Start with familiarizing yourself with common issues within the population of those with a hypermobile lifestyle. The range of mental health needs expressed in the current study



population revealed a desire for addressing adjustment, isolation, depression, sleep disturbance, developmental disorders, lack of support, social anxiety and generalized anxiety, along with seeking validation and support for self exploration and cultural identity development. Although the majority of participants did not report any current disturbance, diagnosis or symptoms this may be related to perceptions of stigma and should be interpreted with caution, as it may not always reflect absence of challenges or symptoms. Family histories of mental health issues, especially depression may require further research and advocacy to inform the community of the lifestyle risk factors that can exacerbate depression, including isolation, lack of support, poor access to services and stigma in host culture. Furthermore, approaches of positive psychology may be applied to address the proactive tools internationals can focus on to enrich their lives abroad and provide balance through their lifestyle, despite constant transition and adjustment. A strength-based skills reinforcing approach is recommended to achieve the immediate goal of bolstering coping skills and identifying areas of need and support resources. To achieve this, practitioners may need to become abreast to international and local resources to meet the needs of their international clients. Participants reported a wide-range of treatments they used to address their mental health needs, including formal individual short-term therapy, informal support from work, colleagues, family and friends, self-help such as personal narrative therapy, social engagement and exercise, and medication. Much of the needs of the participants are expressed as short-term in nature, generally around three months, which may be significantly influenced by the rapidly evolving and short-term nature of residency in the current host country. Similarly, all

participants reported treatment to be outpatient, due to lifestyle. Research suggests greater family therapy support resources are needed.

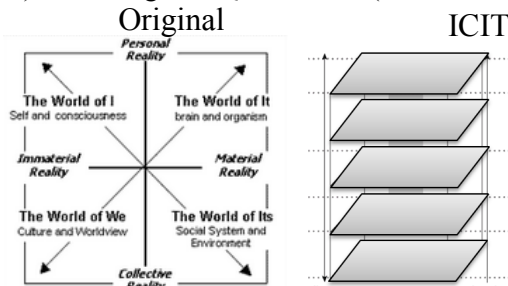
Study participants report a range of outcome from the treatment received from somewhat helpful to very helpful. Clinical considerations elaborate ways to improve the efficacy of treatment with this population and treatment modality considerations.

### Proposed Model

Figure 5 Diagrammatic illustration Proposed Model for Developmental International Cultural Identity.

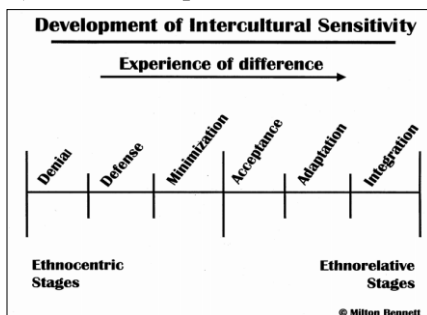
This illustration depicts ways of modifying current models with use of ICIT.

A) Integral AQAL Model (Wilber, 2000)



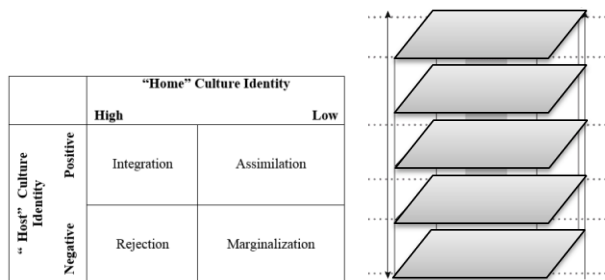
The ICIT modification of this model acknowledges that the factors of I, We, It, Its are fluid to the international. The layered model more accurately depicts the AQAL model for internationals as multilayered, whereby the international transitions between and among dependent on place and cultural context. It may be time dependent or simultaneous.

B) Development of Intercultural Sensitivity Model (DMIS) (Bennett, 1993b)



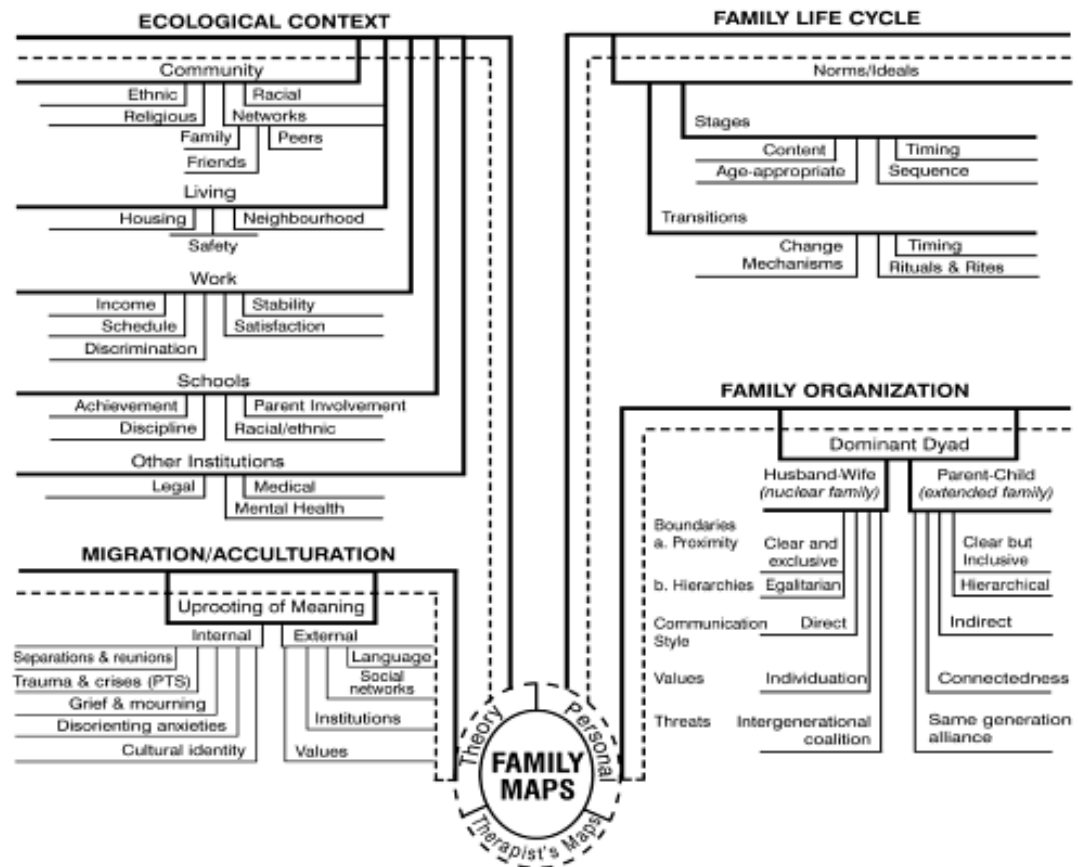
The ICIT modification of this model is primarily theoretical. The original model applied this phenomenon of intercultural sensitivity to worldview; however, for the purpose of ICIT the process may also apply to international identity development.

C) Acculturation Model (Berry, 1980)



The ICIT modification of this model demonstrates the hyperfluidity of acculturation process for internationals. The categorical labels are likely overlapped or simultaneous dependent on each of the many culture the individual interacts. A multilayered approach allows for variance in the level of acculturation in each relevant context for the client.

## D) Multidimensional Ecosystemic Comparative Approach (MECA) (Falicov, 1998)



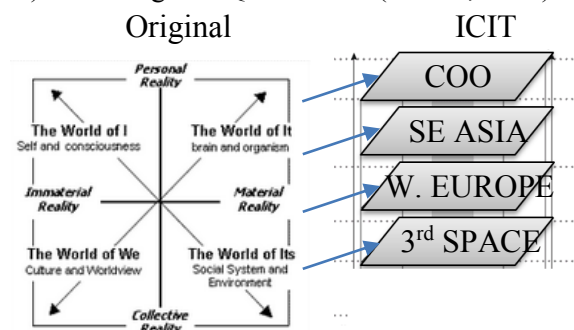
The ICIT clarification of this model is that the Ecological Context section should be completed for each culture/country of significance to the client, similarly to the multilayered approach discussed above. Sociopolitical, status/status shift and access factors are prominent. Migration and Acculturation should expand to emphasize positive and adaptive features of adjustment with a strength-based line of inquiry. Additionally, open-ended responses should be encouraged to bring depth to responses.

### Application of Proposed Model

Figure 6 *Diagrammatic illustration Application of Proposed Model for Developmental International Cultural Identity based on current study population.*

This illustration depicts ways of modifying current models with use of ICIT with the study participants as examples.

A) Integral AQAL Model (Wilber, 2000)



Example: Berlin's third space experience expands and nuances her individual, social and cultural identity. These facets of her identity exist simultaneously but a frequently are expressed in situational context. I in COO: She expresses a feeling of self based on otherness, distinct from her culture of origin.

We in Host Culture (Western Europe): She expressed feeling a pull for culturally representing simultaneously her culture of origin and the distinct features of her world of the self.

Its in Host Culture (SE Asia): She experienced aspects of privilege and status based on occupation, while also moments of cultural prejudice due to her culture of origin.

Much of the data revealed from this study indicate significant modifying factors in Wilber's quadrant of *I*. This phenomenon is partially explained by the study's line on inquiry focusing on the individual experience of the participants. Moreover, with the use of the Voice-Centered

Listening Guide developed by Brown and Gillian (1992) participants sense of self and consciousness is also highlighted given the "I, me my" focus of the self through attention to listening for these features of the self.

The *We* and *Its* quadrants were also represented to a lesser degree. However, themes Theme 12: Challenges to the Family System and Theme 15: Social Experience of Partner Selection and Raising Children indicate that this experience is not only personal but also interpersonal and social in nature; specifically, the impact of the family unit. While research on expatriates and third-culture children indicate that the experience of third-space has a significant

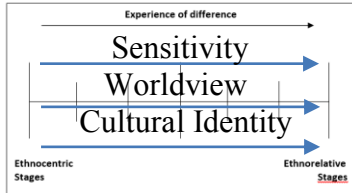
role in the family dynamics and the physical and mental health of the family members (Hudspeth, 2009), the current research highlights the need for further research on the ways in which internationals as a family unit function in third-space.

One of the prominent features of the participants in relations to *We* and *Its* quadrants is the issue of belonging. Despite the world citizen concept of an individual seemingly belonging everywhere, this study reveals that not belonging or belonging in gradations to various cultures is a pattern. Rather, there are gradations to belonging to the COO and third-space of the various host cultures. Similarly, the way these individuals experience being viewed by these cultures is impacted by their international cultural identity. Third-space culture and worldview appear to be strong areas of importance for this group. Social systems of the *Its* quadrant pose particular difficulty for the participants. In some cases governance restrict their mobility despite their global identity, while in other instances national labels prove to misrepresent the individual both in personal experiences and bureaucratic practice.

Given the limitation of the structure of this study no data was given to expand on the differences that participants have on a neurological or biological level in these different spaces. Current research in the area of cultural neuroscience suggest that these difference may exist and warrant further exploration (Baumeister & Finkel, 2010). The biological process of code-switching and social adaptation in processed such as *cultural frame switching (CFS)* suggest that the medial prefrontal cortex (MPFC) area of the brain may be connected to these processes of the brain (Cheng, Lee, and Benet-Martinez, 2006; Baumeister & Finkel, 2010; Criak et al., 1999; Kelley et al., 2002). MPFC is linked to the concept we know as the self, including social and cultural identity. Research has established that features of social adaptation can be identified and indicated in fMRI scans of MPFC, particularly in response to stimuli of previously unknown social/cultural settings. Potentially, those with international identity may have greater activity in this area. Without biological markers, neurological or neuropsychological data in the various domains and settings of internationals no conclusions can be made. The absence of this data in

this study does not preclude the possibility of adaptation of Wilber's *It* category for ICIT. Further research in this area is needed to do such exploration of appropriate modifications.

B) Development of Intercultural Sensitivity Model (DMIS) (Bennett, 1993b)



The ICIT modification of this model takes the evolution of social sensitivity through experience and draws on this same process as a pattern for the developmental model of international worldview and international identity development. As the individual has more experiences of difference, through lifestyle in the

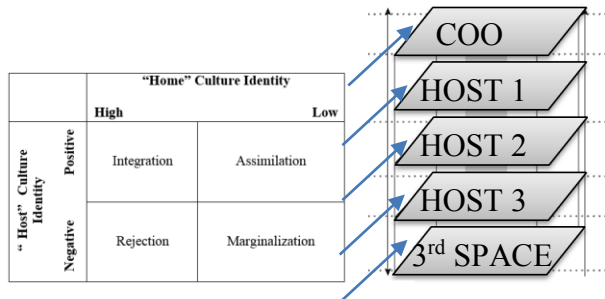
Example: International Ali

This model similarly depicts the personal evolution of worldview and identity for internationals. International Ali moved away from the ethnocentric values and cultural self of his COO to an ethnorelative, culturally-international self. Although he had feelings of cultural distinctiveness from his culture of origin this only developed through experience of difference within his international experiences. Notably, this includes a value and respect for his culture of origin but weighted in the experiences he has had in other host cultures. His interview data reflected a measured and mindful self exploration into what values he embodies, what he does not and why. This cultural self is nuanced and hyperfluid, meaning it continues to evolve. This is the nature of the ethnorelative stage for internationals. In this regard, it is less an ends and more of a continued aspirational practice towards an enlightened international identity. International Ali expressed a strive to continue this development not only for his own growth but for a greater contributions to the local and global communities he belongs.

third-space the individuals perspective and identity shift from the nationalistic and ethnocentric perspectives of self and worldview. As the individual continues to identify more and more to this ethnorelative perspective so too grows their concept of self as an international. The study participants ranged in their stages of development of worldview and their cultural development of the self. The interviews reflect a process of differentiation that some subjects experienced. In this process, they distanced themselves from the those in ethnocentric stages. Others found fascination with those with the differing identity. International Ali expressed a strong sense of personal responsibility to foster within himself and the international community a tolerance for such

differences epitomized in internationally identified individuals. For him, living these values strengthen his international identity.

C) Acculturation Model (Berry, 1980)



Example: Maria

For Maria the Acculturation Model would be applied based on location and time. Her level of acculturation in her COO, host countries and third-space all offer different insights into her acculturation stage. Also, perspectives of her acculturation level of COO and Culture of Origin through time provide insights into the influences of her cultural identity as she develops, including the significance and meaning of "belonging."

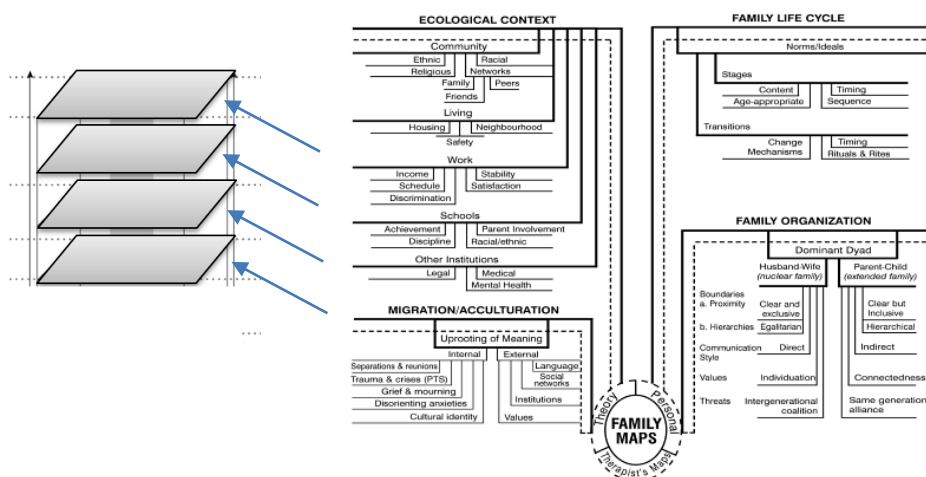
The ICIT modification of this model

demonstrates the significant space and time have on the individual acculturation process for

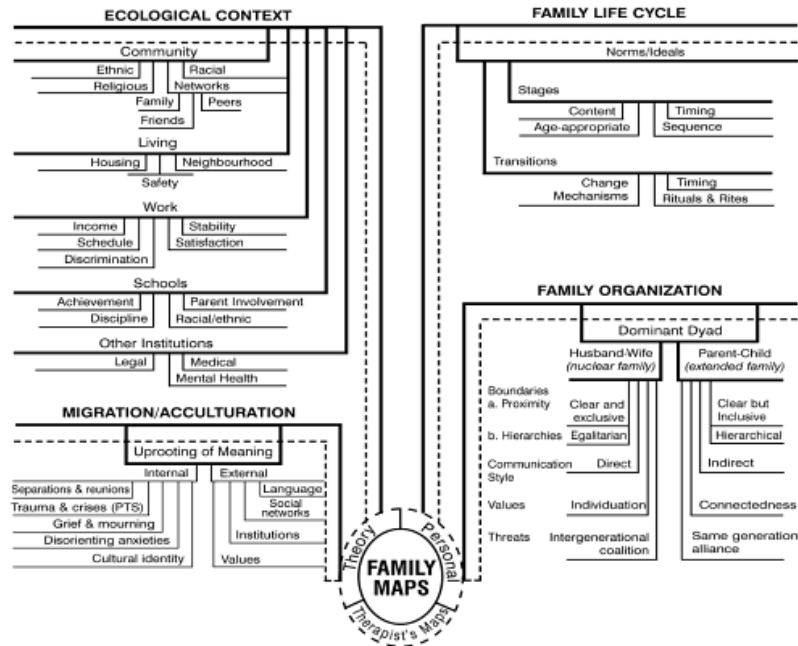
internationals. This modification is of

significance because it also aids in capturing the socioeconomic and sociopolitical factors of the individuals in each setting. A perspective on each locality the individual has been, over time, offers a developmental course for the level of acculturation unique to this individual. This tool is particularly helpful to differentiate the experiences of the diverse group of internationals. Each participant of this study would have a distinct acculturation experience.

D) Multidimensional Ecosystemic Comparative Approach (MECA) (Falicov, 1998)







### Example: Volga

The use of Volga as an example offers a glimpse into the potential of this systemic view of the individual. The Ecological Context section is quite varied from her COO, host countries and third-space. From her social standing to occupation, an evaluation of each place with respect for their contribution to the development of the contextual cultural self provide a more thorough perspective on the individual. Additionally, for Migration and Acculturation a strength-based line of inquiry would reveal a positive meaning for her relocations and skilled flexibility for adaptation that benefit her interactions with host cultures, her COO and others in the international community. Her family organization and family life cycle were greatly impacted by her participation in the international community. Durations in time away from family members, including her son are significant in the understanding of her family system and relationships.

The ICIT modification of the MECA aids to look at the systemic factors of the internationally identified individual. This study reveals that each of the participants would not be captured in the detail reflective of their complexity as an individual unless this was evaluated with the individual for each place they have had life experiences. In essence, without this exploration the therapist would stand to lose chapters of the individual's history in their conceptualization without this modification.

### **Clinical Implications**

This study corroborates some of the TCK and transcultural research approaches and expands the scope of people in the international community of people influenced by third-space beyond these two groups. Thus, several of the recommendations for treatment considerations are applicable. McDonald (2009) demonstrated, in the study of transcultural people, that therapists serve this population best when consideration and exploration of the specific context and factors of each international are understood. Results of this line of research suggests the strategies recommended for the transcultural population of McDonald (2009) is likely to be beneficial to those with international cultural identity, despite nuanced differences in how the population is defined. Recommendations include use of open-ended inquiry to provide flexibility in responses regarding their experiences by not reinforcing categorical forms of answers. Similarly, the current data suggests that an approach with encouragement for “both/and” language versus “either/or” creates an environment for exploring the fluid nature of their cultural experiences and identity.

Afford the space to define the plural self as part of introduction to therapy, discovery, and articulation of values. Based on biracial and multi-racial identity research, this process may need to be modeled to clients to encourage a plural definition (Moss & Davis, 2008). Biracial self-identification research also shows that without processing and empowerment of plural self or cultural identity a negative impact results in trait anxiety, social anxiety, and depression (Coleman, 2007). In particular, it is advantageous to explore the distinct identity from those in their family or culture of origin to support positive self-identification articulated by the individuals (Uma, 2004). To achieve this in

therapy the therapist must encourage flexibility in piece and parceling individual cultural features and variation of their origin or experiences for incorporation to their international cultural identity. Therapy interventions recommend approaches encouraging empowerment and discovery of the features of the client's international cultural identity (Moss & Davis, 2008, Smart, 2010).

This creates a therapeutic context where internationals can explore the factors of their cultural identity, beyond biracial frameworks of duality by acknowledging the multiplicity of many expressed experiences shared in this study. To facilitate culturally sensitive treatment of internationals, consideration of intake form language should also be considered to reflect open-ended responses by providing space for filling in or elaborating cultural background and notable experiences, such as number of relocations, nature of relocations, cultural influences, and lifestyle factors leading to challenges or adaptations. An empowerment approach, as demonstrated in biracial identity (Moss & Davis, 2008) and Feminist theory (Smart, 2010), should be utilized to identify strengths of international identified people in treatment. Family approaches identify ways international identified individuals and family systems can foster cultural discovery for the client(s) with use of Cultural Interpersonal Therapy (Rollins & Hunter, 2013). Important when treating international families the developmental life stage and level of integration of international cultural identity should be evaluated. For example, children and adolescents may need familial modeling of acceptance of fluid and evolving cultural identity, along with coping with lifestyle challenges (Rollins & Hunter, 2013).

The study shows an array of observed and experienced coping skills, adaptation strategies, social and cultural acculturation, and personal attributes used by international

culturally identified individuals to achieve balance and overall wellness. Identify areas of strength particularly adaptation skills, encourage exploration of self and adjustment process with narrative therapy techniques as shared by several participants (Smart, 2010), consider review of Ecosystemic variables of the internationals lifestyle to inform scope of resources is beneficial to provide client-focused care to international identified clients. The proposed modification of current models provides an initial attempt to expand on the information these tools provide to achieve quality care for this population.

Special consideration for treatment modality is often necessary given the hypermobility and isolation risk factors of this population. Participants of this study suggest that internet-based support and facilitation of access to mental health services within their local or international community are strongly desired resources. Outreach and community education on these issues are paramount to establishing treatment modalities that encourage continuity of care.

### **Implications for the International Community Globally**

The results of this study suggest that the experience of third-space is not limited to TCK's nor its impact on the identity development of the individual. There remains a significant portion of the international community population that is unrepresented in the current literature. Post post-modern thought is breaking down previously held notions of nationality and culture. Blending and adaptation of culture is a byproduct of globalization; however, research has yet to catch up with this trend. Some research even addresses the challenge of identity integration due to globalization (Arnett, 2002). Emerging research suggests that despite lifestyle challenges distinct to this community its members demonstrate the ability to find health and wellbeing (McDonald, 2009).

The current study identifies and elaborates on the current gaps to mental health services in the international community, deficiencies in outreach and education on this population, and limits to previous models of acculturation, adjustment, and cultural identity development for internationals. With rising numbers of potential members to this community, thoughtful consideration must be made to meet the mental health needs of this population, with informed care led by an understanding of the lifestyle, its potential challenges, its benefits, and its impact on the individual, family and community.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study is limited in several ways. First, this study utilizes a predetermined range in the number of participants. This approach may not reach saturation and may not capture the nuance of the phenomenon. Secondly, participants may defer to the perceived expectations of the researcher (Leong & Austin, 2006). Thirdly, due to the limitation of resources, and in an attempt to gain rich data, the research was conducted in English. While research shows a wide range of non-Westerners who speak English to a proficient degree to participate in this study, the researcher understands the linguistic sociopolitics limiting this study (Huntington, 1996). For this reason, the recruitment was purposive to gain insight into the array of experiences in the studied phenomenon (Maykut & Moorehouse, 1994). In this study, the researcher attempted to obtain participants from a variety of countries, socioeconomic statuses, ethnicities, and races to allow for a wide range of experiences. Research shows Whites are more likely to participate so purposive recruiting, thus this study aimed to expand the diversity of participants (Karney, Kreitz, & Sweeney, 2010). Similarly, socioeconomic status may warrant diversity through purposive recruiting (Ataca & Berry, 2002). Sensitivity toward attaining participant diversity in a

wide breadth of personal factors provided a better means for identifying themes on the broader phenomenon.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

This study reinforces the need for further developmental research along these lines to clarify and expand on the identity and mental health impact of lifestyle in the international community for people entering the community at different life stages and continuing to live in this third-space through subsequent life stages. Additionally, the data of this study suggest further research is needed for clarification and definition of terminology for international cultural identity. This study used the terms for the sake of establishing a baseline of information; however, discrepancies in terms suggest more clarify is needed. While the term *transcultural* appears to encapsulate the study populations' described experience of cultural identity, its current use is exclusionary to many of the participants of this study.

### **Conclusions**

This study presented the cultural identification, identity development, and mental health and wellness features of the international culturally identified population. Internationals cultural identification was found to be distinct from a globalized worldview. These results are consistent with the limited existing research of identity development, acculturation and adjustment. The results of this study suggest that international cultural identity is strongly influenced by experience of sustained lifestyle in the international community, also known as third-space. The purpose of this study is to encourage other mental health providers to conduct research with this population. With the rise of globalization, increased population mobility, the rapid rise of individuals

exposed to the international lifestyle and community the potential for the mental health challenges from this lifestyle, as well as incorporation of and integration to international cultural identity, is potentially also on the rise. In an increasingly globalized world, interactions with internationally identified individuals and those exposed to the international lifestyle is an eventuality for mental health providers and the general population. Internationals play an increasingly vital role in the global scenery and the impact of this lifestyle on the individual remains largely undiscovered, particularly its impact on identity development. A great potential for gaining understanding of this population lies with further research and along with it comes tools for providing higher-quality and culturally-informed care.

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## **Appendices**

**APPENDIX A****Informed Consent Agreement****Alliant International University, San Diego Campus****Institutional Review Board****10455 Pomerado Road****San Diego, CA 92131**

Identity Development of Internationals

Before you consent to participate in this study, please read the following. Feel free to ask questions regarding your consent to volunteer.

**Investigator:**

Brandi Eijsermans, M.A., M.Ed.

Marina Dorian, Ph.D.

**Purpose of the Research:**

This dissertation will qualitatively examine the unique experience of international identity development, the international lifestyle experience, and the mental health of those who identify as international.

**Duration of Participation in the Research:**

You will be asked to participate in an interview lasting approximately two hours, and to fill out questionnaires lasting approximately one hour.

**Procedure to be followed during the Research:**

If you agree to participate in this research, you will first be given an explanation of all the procedures. You will be asked to fill out questionnaires on background information, intercultural identity, identity, worldview, and mental health survey.

If you agree, the interview will be audio taped and videotaped. The interview will be loosely structured and will address your experiences as an international. We will also discuss the experience of international lifestyle, identity development and mental health experiences. You will be informed of any significant new findings developed during the course of the research.

**Potential Risks:**

There are minimal risks to participating in this study. Some of the questions may evoke emotional distress. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

**Benefits of the Research:**

Participation in this study will give you an opportunity to reflect upon your experience as an international, exploring both the challenges and advantages of your unique situation. In addition, your story may provide further understanding of the unique experiences of internationals, international lifestyles and mental health needs of those living internationally.

**Alternatives to the Research:**

You may withdraw from the study at any time.

**Confidentiality:**

You have a right to privacy, and all information identifying you will remain confidential, unless otherwise required by law. The results of this study, as well as transcribed information, may be published in scientific journals or be presented at medical meetings as long as you are not identified and cannot reasonably be identified from them.

However, it is possible that under certain circumstances data could be subpoenaed by court order. It is also not guaranteed that efforts to disguise identifying information with



regard to case studies will keep your identity anonymous. The audio taped and videotaped interview will NOT be tied to your name and will be destroyed within six months of the dissertation project. Transcriptions of the interview will also not include your name and will be destroyed within seven years of the completed dissertation project.

**Questions about the Research:**

If you have any questions or concerns about the study please contact Brandi Eijsermans, M.Ed. at 206-696-6912 or Marina Dorian, Ph.D., at 858-645-4630 during normal business hours PST.

**Mandatory Reporting of Child or Elder Abuse:**

California law mandates the filing and reporting of reasonable suspicions of child or elder abuse. Additionally, the law requires reporting an individual's intention to seriously harm him/herself or another person. Participation in this research could result in the investigator being required to report child abuse or intended serious harm to other or self, and/or elder abuse. Reporting mandates for locations outside of California and the United States will be followed in accordance of the state, regional, and country mandates of the space interviews are conducted, unless such mandates endanger the safety or human rights of the participants.

**Subject Compensation for Participation:**

For your participation in this study, you will receive a \$25.00 gift card or local currency equivalent.

**Subject Rights and Research Withdrawal:**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw once the study has started. You will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled nor will you be penalized.

**Signature and Acknowledgement:**

My signature below indicates that I have read the above information and I have had a chance to ask questions to help me understand what my participation will involve. I agree to participate in the study until I decide otherwise. I acknowledge having received a copy of this agreement. I have been told that by signing this consent form I am not giving up any of my legal rights.

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**Signature of Research Participant**

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**Date**

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**Signature of Researcher**

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**Date**

---

**Signature of Chair**

---

**Date**

**APPENDIX B****Consent for Audio and Video Recording**

I agree to participate in the study Identity Development of Internationals. I hereby allow Brandi Eijsermans, M.Ed. to audiotape and videotape my interview with the full understanding that the tapes will be transcribed and used for the purposes of this dissertation. I understand that only the researcher and dissertation committees will have access to the recordings and notes, and the written documentation will not include names or identifying information. I also understand the recordings and notes will be destroyed following the completion of the study. My signature below indicates that I have read the above and agree to be audiotaped and videotaped.

**Participant:** \_\_\_\_\_**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_**Parent/Guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Eligibility Screening Questionnaire**

Hello, my name is Brandi Eijsermans. I am a researcher conducting a qualitative study on international identity. The study is designed to get a better understanding of the experience of international identity development, the international lifestyle experience and mental health of those who identify as international. There are some brief surveys to be filled out online before the interview. These surveys should take about 45 minutes to an hour to fill out. If you agree to participate, the interview will last between 1 and 2 hours in-person or via Skype. If you agree, the interview will be digitally recorded and transcribed. Your identifying information will be kept private. The only time confidentiality will be broken is if you threaten to harm yourself or another person, or if child or elder abuse is reported or suspected. For your time you will receive a 25 dollar gift card or equivalent in your local currency. You can withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason without consequence. Given this information, are you be willing to participate in the study?

If person expresses verbal agreement: Thank you for your interest in participating in this study. I will ask you a series of questions to see if you are eligible to participate.

If person declines to participate: Thank you for your interest in this study. If you know someone that may qualify for the study, or you change your mind and would like to participate, please give me a call.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Have you lived daily life in at least one country other than your country of birth or citizenship for at least six months?

Are you available interview live or via online video conferencing?

Are you English proficient?

Do you identify with the international lifestyle and/or community?

- a. Do you identify primarily as transnational, a member of the international community not a cross-cultural participant?
- b. Unlike the rest of the Diaspora of international living individuals, you do not identify as the primarily visible members of the international community; i.e. diplomats, expats, and TCKs? However, you may meet these definitions.
- c. Have experienced a change in the lens of your identity to view yourself as citizens of the world, but not negating nationalistic membership but making this membership secondary?
- d. Do you attribute the change in your shift around national identity, global society and borders through your experiences living abroad?

Are you able to provide informed consent?

Have you been determined to have diminished mental capacity?

Do you have a severe mental illness, including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder or borderline personality disorder?

**APPENDIX D****Demographic Questionnaire**

Sex: Male/Female/Transgender/Intersex

Age:

What is your country of origin? Please explain your definition of country of origin

What is your native language?

What other language(s) do you speak, understand, read, or write? Please indicate level of proficiency: Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, or Fluent

With what sexual orientation do you most identify?

Is your social identity: independent, collectivist, combination, other: Please describe

Please indicate your household income:

\$20,000 or under

\$21,000- \$40,000

\$41,000 to \$60,000

\$61,000 - \$80,000

\$81,000 - \$100,000

Over \$100,000

Please indicate your highest level on education:

Some high school

High school

Some college

College degree

Some graduate school

Graduate degree

What is your occupation?

What is your immigration status?

Have any of your international moves been due to sociopolitical forces or pressure?

What is your ethnic heritage?

How would you define your culture(s)?

What was your country of birth?

In what country/countries do you hold citizenship?

In what country/countries do you hold a passport?

What host country/countries have you lived in?

How long have you lived in each country that you mentioned?

How old were you when you entered and left each country?

How do you feel your cultural/social membership(s) impact your life or lifestyle in relation to other groups?

**APPENDIX E****Advertisement**

Seeking participants in a qualitative study on international identity. The study is designed to get a better understanding of the experience of international identity development, the international lifestyle experience and mental health of those who identify as international. There are some brief surveys to be filled out online before the interview. These surveys should take about 45 minutes to an hour to fill out. The interview would last between 1 and 2 hours in-person or via video conferencing. For your time you will be given a \$25 dollar gift card or equivalent in your local currency.



**APPENDIX F****Twenty Statement Test (TST)**

1. Who Am I? \_\_\_\_\_  
When? \_\_\_\_\_  
Where? \_\_\_\_\_  
How? \_\_\_\_\_
2. 20. (Repeat)

**APPENDIX G****Worldview Analysis Scale (WAS)**

**Directions:** Answer each question as honestly as you possibly can by circling the response that best reflects your agreement / disagreement to each item ["Strongly Disagree" (1), "Disagree"(2), "Slightly Disagree" (3), "Slightly Agree" (4), "Agree" (5), "Strongly Agree" (6)]. There is no right or wrong answer so please respond honestly. Provide only one response to each item.

I enjoy participating in family reunions	1	2	3	4	5	6
My cultural heritage is often misrepresented and/or ignored [internationally]	1	2	3	4	5	6
I do not feel like a spiritual person	1	2	3	4	5	6
Spiritually blessed objects can protect a person from harm	1	2	3	4	5	6
I existed spiritually before I was born	1	2	3	4	5	6
Knowledge is restricted to the limitations of our 5 senses	1	2	3	4	5	6
Everything in the universe is joined together by spiritual forces	1	2	3	4	5	6
Being involved in a community is very important to me	1	2	3	4	5	6
There are visible and invisible dimensions of the universe	1	2	3	4	5	6
Spiritual phenomena are not really real	1	2	3	4	5	6
Learning about my cultural history improves my mental health	1	2	3	4	5	6
Things that cannot be measured do not exist	1	2	3	4	5	6
The Big Bang marks the creation of the universe	1	2	3	4	5	6
The universe can be reduced into a specific number of independent particles.						

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Spiritual and physical health affect one another	1	2	3	4	5	6
Scientific explanations of the universe are much more advanced than spiritual explanations	1	2	3	4	5	6
Death marks the beginning of a new cycle of life	1	2	3	4	5	6
A person's value should be based on his/her contribution to their society	1	2	3	4	5	6
My soul will continue to be alive even after my physical body ceases to exist	1	2	3	4	5	6
Spirit does not influence my reality	1	2	3	4	5	6
Knowledge of my cultural history is very important to me	1	2	3	4	5	6
The Supreme Being is responsible for the creation of the universe	1	2	3	4	5	6
Reality can only be based on what my 5 senses experience	1	2	3	4	5	6
Spirit is the fundamental connection between all things	1	2	3	4	5	6
The nature of reality can be understood through careful meditation	1	2	3	4	5	6
Moons, planets, and stars can influence people's moods	1	2	3	4	5	6
The truth about my cultural history is represented [internationally]	1	2	3	4	5	6
The achievement of my community is more important than my personal achievement	1	2	3	4	5	6
Being involved in cultural activities is good for my mental health	1	2	3	4	5	6

A rock, a river, and my body are all compositions of spiritual energy that are derived

from the Supreme Being 1 2 3 4 5 6

There are people in my neighborhood that I treat like family 1 2 3 4 5 6

Only things we can measure should be used to construct reality 1 2 3 4 5 6

My ultimate purpose is to reach spiritual perfection 1 2 3 4 5 6

Scientific explanations of the universe are superior to spiritual explanations of the

universe 1 2 3 4 5 6

The Supreme Being sent me to this world with a destiny 1 2 3 4 5 6

It is possible for some people to learn from spiritual entities 1 2 3 4 5 6

My ultimate goal is to improve my community's current condition

1 2 3 4 5 6

Modern science is the best tool for connecting knowledge with reality

1 2 3 4 5 6

My humanity is partially defined by my contribution and involvement in a society

1 2 3 4 5 6

I feel spiritually connected to my ancestors who have paved the way for me

1 2 3 4 5 6

Some people can cure diseases with words uttered from their mouth

1 2 3 4 5 6

Elements of the universe can be purely isolated for scientific analysis

1 2 3 4 5 6

Children represent a strong connection between the living and the dead

1 2 3 4 5 6

It is possible for some people to learn about the past, or the future, through their dreams

1 2 3 4 5 6

There is no life after physical death

1 2 3 4 5 6

I try to learn about my inner self in order to increase my level of wisdom

1 2 3 4 5 6

Spiritual phenomenon are real even if they may not be observed by our 5 senses

1 2 3 4 5 6

Spiritual forces do not exist in this universe

1 2 3 4 5 6

My soul is eternally connected with the Supreme Being

1 2 3 4 5 6

Discovery of cultural information does not impact mental health

1 2 3 4 5 6

My behavior is not influenced by the opinions of those around me

1 2 3 4 5 6

There is no such thing as a soul that lives beyond a person's physical lifetime

1 2 3 4 5 6

Science should only be applied to physical objects

1 2 3 4 5 6

It is not important for me to master my inner self

1 2 3 4 5 6

Once a person dies, they will no longer exist in any form

1 2 3 4 5 6

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## **APPENDIX H**

### **Semi-Structured Interview Guide**

#### **International Identity Development and Mental Health in the International Identified Community**

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study on international identity development. This interview is designed to get a better understanding of your experience of international identity development, the international lifestyle experience and mental health. Given the personal nature of this study, your identifying information will not be recorded on audio or transcript. Information shared in this interview is confidential. Please respond to these questions open and honestly. Remember that you do not have to answer any questions you are uncomfortable responding to. In this interview, you are encouraged to share as much as you are comfortable with on the given topic. Please expand on each question as much as you like.

“In your own words, please tell me your life story, whatever you feel is significant.”  
(Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009, p. 760)

Explain why and how you entered the international community?

Describe the different places you have lived?

Tell me about your experience with international lifestyles?

Tell me about your personal experience with mental health and mental health resources internationally?

What personal traits do you find most successful in the international lifestyle?

“When people ask you, ‘Where are you from?’ what do you usually say?” (Bélanger & Verkuyten, 2010).

How do you define home?

How do you define your culture(s)?

How easy or difficult is it for you to say where you are from?

To what extent do you identify as international?

Describe how you identify yourself?

What are the similarities and differences between your identity and your family of origin?

How would you define international identity?

Tell me about your thoughts on international identity?

To what extent do you consider yourself to have or not have an international identity?

At what point did you become aware of your international identity and how it came to be?

Tell me about your perception of people who identify as international?

From your perspective, how do people arrive at a point where they identify as international?

Tell me about your relationship with those who identify primarily through their ethnic, native or national identity?

What else you would like to share about your experience?