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“I am a Multinational Soul on a Multicultural Globe”

Multi-Cultural Identity (Re) Construction among International Degree  
Student Sojourners through Socialization in Intercultural  
Settings

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**ABSTRACT:**

Globalization has speeded up the process of migration considerably in recent decades. Internationalization of universities has caused a rush of international students into foreign universities, and the spread of English globally has made international gatherings and communication between cultures possible. As this happens, the inevitable is at hand—multicultural identity negotiation occurs within the context of intercultural communication.

The aim of this research is to show how multicultural identity is renegotiated among international student sojourners in intercultural settings. Multicultural identity means accumulation of different cultural elements, along with reshaping of national identity. This can only be accomplished through socialization in intercultural settings as well as through previous travel experience. These factors contribute to the formation of a multicultural identity or of a multicultural person in international student sojourners.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 13 international students to find out how their cultural identity was changed through contact with other cultures' representatives. Five interviews are presented as cases and analyzed along with the metaphors of identity. The results showed that international student sojourners became "multiculturalized" in an intercultural context.

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**KEY WORDS:** Student sojourner, multicultural identity, globalization,  
internationalization of universities, intercultural communication



## 1 INTRODUCTION

According to Petkova (2005), the present characteristics of the post-modern society are multiculturalism, pluralism, migration, internationalization, globalization, individualization, and identity crisis. Identity in particular has been given pivotal attention in the past decades. Identity as such is fluid and is constantly changing (O'Brien 2002: 33). Several processes have accelerated the process of identity transformation considerably. Those are modernization, urbanization, standardization and finally the process of globalization. "In this context of cultural pluralism existing cultural identities do not disappear and fade away but quite the opposite—they are most often given new emphasis." (Petkova 2005: 7.) The multi-cultural context is formed as nations come together and as a result shifts in identity occur.

Since globalization became of huge concern over the past few decades, the identity issue became of great relevance as well. One of globalization's assets is that it accelerated multiculturalism. Few would declare that any nation-state is still homogeneous. Because the world is changing on a global scale, people find themselves in need to "redefine" themselves. Inevitably when one gets into a new inter-cultural environment, one "redefines" him/herself. It is crucial to raise the awareness of this emerging phenomenon because globalization is intensifying and changes in global dimensions will follow. One change produces another, like a chain reaction. Therefore, globalization means identity renegotiation. It has speeded up the process of migration; migration has led to the cultural blending of peoples, a process known as multiculturalism, which in turn has affected people's perceptions about themselves and defining who they are. With the rise of multiculturalism identity became an important discussion subject in an academic world.

A few decades ago travel was still reserved for governmental officials, diplomats, and missionaries. Now it has taken global dimensions visible in massive migration. Many cross

the boundaries of their homelands and have an opportunity of going and living abroad for a period of time. Cross-cultural scientists for decades were concerned with the issue of bi-cultural identity, where one's identity shifts and becomes "hyphenated," when one goes to a foreign country and goes through a cultural and psychological change—acculturation process. Culture explorers become culture learners. Now, however, the dilemma is much wider and bigger. Today's identity has gotten into a state of fragmentation where it consists of many parts—multi-cultural. The concern these days is called not so much about double-ness or the bi-cultural self but about multi-ness or the multi-cultural self. Therefore, now the attention is shifting to exploring a wider and more complex phenomenon, that of *multicultural identity*.

Since globalization created multiculturalism, the global and local elements of cultures have become synthesized, which shape so-called *glocal* identity. Multi-cultural identity evolves from mono-cultural identity in plural cultural environments that are the by-product of globalization. Multi-cultural identity implies weak national identities. Belonging also becomes an issue since multiculturalists feel themselves as strangers. The signs of a crisis of identity are when an individual constantly asks him/herself who he/she is, has no sense of home and can be anyone as the situation requires. (Segers 2004: 78.)

One of the examples of this phenomenon can be found in the American traveler and journalist Pico Iyer (1998: 147--153), who describes himself in the following manner:

I am a member of [...] an intercontinental tribe of wanderers that is multiplying as fast as international phone lines [...] permanent residents of nowhere. Nothing is strange for us, and nowhere is foreign [...] I am a multinational soul on a multicultural globe [...] This kind of life, of course, offers an unprecedented sense of freedom and mobility [...] we don't have a home we have a hundred homes. And we can mix and match as the situation demands [...] Instantly, I felt a shock of recognition: I have a wardrobe of selves from which to choose? [...] but what is the price we pay for all of this?

The above quotation illustrates how the American traveler and journalist Pico Iyer (1998) reacts to traveling and what impact it had on him. It is obvious that traveling is something

that is so common to him. Wherever he goes is not foreign to him and this nomadic existence is something that he is attracted to because it provides him with “an unprecedented sense of freedom and mobility.” He refers to himself as a “member of an intercontinental tribe of wanderers,” “permanent resident of nowhere,” “multinational soul.” Finally, the recognition comes that he in fact he is not “one” but “multiple,” when he talks about having “a wardrobe of selves” and he is clearly having difficulties choosing between them. The sentence in the middle of the quote “I am a multinational soul on a multicultural globe” is used as the main title of the thesis. It reflects the idea that a “multicultural globe” has an impact on travelers’ multinational identities or their “multinational souls.” This quotation illustrates the state of mind of a multicultural individual.

Social scientists have shown interest in identity as a socio-cultural phenomenon. Considerable contributions come from social psychology, cross-cultural and cultural psychology in particular, as well as philosophy. Philosophers addressed the issue of identity in an existential way but it has relevance and intersects with what psychologists, and social scientists say. According to the 17<sup>th</sup> century philosopher John Locke, a human being comes to this world with a completely blank mind or blank slate called *tabula rasa* and the experiences of life write their script there (Wikipedia 2009b). Experiences mean socializing in the cultural world, therefore the sense of self is formed through socializing. A great clergyman and a poet John Donne in his well-known saying “no man is an island” expressed the notion that people are inter-connected and influence each other (Wikipedia 2009a). No one is created in a vacuum or isolation.

In an article by Peter Adler called “Beyond Cultural Identity: Reflections on Multiculturalism” (1977), he speaks and defines a new kind of person—the multicultural person. He describes multicultural person as “a person who is always in the process of becoming a part of and part from a given cultural context.” (Adler 1977: 229). This was the starting point for my thesis and guided my further research. In addition to that, it was



helpful to look at Adler's article critically, and Lise Sparrow's paper "Beyond Multicultural Man: Complexities of Identity" (2000) helps fill in some gaps which Adler overlooked or simply because the question of identity is so hard to explain it takes research after research to arrive at new understanding of it. She talks about factors that are important to focus on in order to look at the complexity of identity. Those were the perceptions of identity by multiculturals who come either from collectivistic or individualistic cultures, gender (you cannot separate gender and identity), or race/ethnicity (for some it is at the core of their cultural identity).

Another influential figure to shape the quest on the topic of multi-cultural identity was Diana Petkova, who in her article "Cultural Identity in a Pluralistic World" (2005) talks about the complexity of the cultural phenomenon known as *identity* and makes a proposition to divide cultural identity into individual/personal cultural identity and social/collective cultural identity. Since I concentrate mostly on Adler (1977), I borrow his idea that changes happen in an individual consciousness, I will narrow the research of cultural identity down to individual cultural identity.

Further, Seth J. Schwartz, Byron L. Zamboanga and Robert S. Weissirch (2008) suggested that personal and cultural identity should be integrated. Adler suggests that a multicultural person constantly undergoes personal transitions which means that changes occur in his or her personal identity. Adler's point suggests that personal and cultural identities go together (1977: 234). These four studies by Adler (1977), Petkova (2005), and others make a fragmented picture into a whole, each filling in the gaps that were overlooked.

My hypothesis suggests that intercultural encounters and gatherings during which intercultural learning takes place play a major role and create changes in an international student sojourner. *Sojourner* is a term that Berry introduced and I am going to use it in my thesis (Berry et al 1992: 339). International student sojourners move from a mono-cultural self to a multi-cultural self-shaping that consists of two important identity elements, that of

personal and cultural identity. I will focus on how through former travel experience and socialization in international gatherings at the university, both formal and informal, have a decisive role in the changes in identity.

Limitations of the study come from: To what extent are changes in cultural identity the effect of culture or just personal changes that happen when an individual matures? How does one know for sure that the changes that occurred in an individual are the by-product of other cultural influences? Another limitation is that identity has been defined among Western scientists and to what extent can their theories and their models be applied in a Non-Western context? However, my claim is that globalization is changing the local culture and the way Non-Westerners perceive themselves is changing as well. Their self-identity is being shaped by individualism, which suggests that at some point they will question who they are and who they are not. I believe that future research will be carried out among non-Western scientists too. This has already started happening, research is done by scientists like Ziauddin Sardar (Wikipedia 2009c); he has done research on the development of identity and multiculturalism.

Questions that will be posed and answered throughout this thesis are: What is cultural identity? What is the relationship between personal and cultural identities and why should they be integrated? What is multi-cultural identity? How do culture travelers negotiate multiple cultural identities? How is the identity of international students constructed and re-constructed through socialization in inter-cultural settings? How does participation in inter-cultural environment transform the mind? What is the influence of culture and cultural differences in interactions?

The methods used will be interviews. The target group in the study is international students who are in their young adulthood (ages 18-40), during which their identity is undergoing some major changes. The emphasis will be made on international degree students, because of the length of their stay, which is one important factor in seeing the change and get more

accurate results, rather than concentrating on exchange students who come only for a short period of time. The length of the stay is an important factor to consider because the acculturation process occurs after a certain period of time. It is important to see the emotional side of this process because cultural identity, as already mentioned, is an „emotional construct“, according to Taifel (Petkova 2005: 15). Students discover who they are and how they have changed by going through a reverse culture shock when they go back to their home environment and see whether they fit there or not. 13 international students will be interviewed at the following universities: University of Vaasa, Finland, and LCC International University in Klaipeda, Lithuania (my home university) that will help in the course of the study to draw conclusions about the construction of identity that will confirm the hypothesis. Interviews will be conducted to make more in-depth observations and conclusions.

In addition to questions, students will also be asked to describe themselves by using metaphors of identity. Metaphors will be analyzed to see how students see themselves and feel about their new identities. Why are metaphors an appropriate tool to use in assessing one's identity? „Because they offer dynamic, rather than static, labels of identity“ (Seelye 1996: 197). According to Fitzgerald, cited in Seelye, metaphors can link multifaceted domains of human experience, providing quick visual images of those realities“ (ibid. 199). Metaphors, in other words, reflect the inner world of the person and are able to provide the outside reader with more in-depth information on an emotional level. This data will show how students have changed in the process of their stay abroad in the foreign country while spending a considerable amount of time in an international university environment.

The thesis is divided into 6 chapters. Chapter 1 will be introduction where I will introduce the problem and hypothesis, discuss about my study material and what my practical part will consist of. Chapter 2 will cover the phenomenon of globalization, migration, internationalization of universities and student flows, and identity. Chapter 3 will cover the theoretical framework that of cultural identity. The focus is made on personal cultural

identity, one of cultural identity's subdivisions, and will lead on to a discussion of multicultural identity. Chapter 4 will address the intercultural communication and its role in culture learning and identity change. Chapter 5 will be an analysis part where interviews of 13 international degree students are analyzed. Interviews will be recorded and later on transcribed and cited. Chapter 6 will be the last chapter of the thesis and will sum up the important points addressed in the paper.

## 2 GLOBALIZATION AND ITS EFFECTS

### 2.1 Globalization and Student Flows

Globalization is not a new process. However, many tend to view it as something new because the term has not been used before. The term *globalization* was invented and the study of it was launched in the 1990s (Sevänen 2004: 15). The starting date of globalization is debatable though. Arjun Appradurai (1999: 221) suggests that the current wave of globalization is multifaceted and has five stages: the flow of people, the flow of machinery and corporations, the flow of money and currencies, the flow of images and information, the flow of ideologies and ideological images. He further explores the question of globalization, saying that the Westernization and Americanization of the world is an important facet of the current stage of the globalization process.

Roland Robertson (1992: 101) emphasizes that today's globalization has produced so-called *glocalization*, when global and local came together. He argues that people's local identities are replaced and blended in with global identity and consciousness: "The concept of glocal identity refers to a state of mind in which a person's consciousness of the rest of the world genuinely shapes his or her old local identity and gives to it new qualitative ingredients." In short, people associate themselves with the world and are its members rather than just members of their own nation-states. A vivid example could be the EU countries, where, after having entered the union and their borders becoming "invisible," people's national identities were affected and ascription towards European identity emerged (Petkova 2005: 36). Gürüz (2008: 127) notes: "There are no more Frenchmen, Germans, Spaniards, even Englishmen, nowadays, regardless of what people may say; there are only Europeans. All have the same tastes, the same passions, the same morals, because none has been given a national form by a distinctive institution." This idea of emerging European identity rings true in the light of today's globalization. Because of the EU, Europeans have a tendency to identify themselves as Europeans because the borders are "melting away" and

other European countries are becoming accessible. However, this above-mentioned quote negates the notion of national identity which is not true yet. However, the tendency for European identity is rising. Having discussed the effect of globalization and merging of the borders, student mobility is the next salient step to be looked at.

Looking back in history, it is obvious that migration has been an ongoing process. Even though migration and immigration have always been important issues, globalization has speeded up the process considerably. The International Organization of Migration/(IOM) (2008) provides a fresh data on how migration has risen within past few decades. According to IOM migration has become the 21<sup>st</sup> century's issue because it has gained full speed these days more than at any point in human history. 3% of the world's population about 192 million people live outside their place of birth. The reasons for migration are various. The common ones are happening in hope of employment opportunities, escaping poverty, and political instability.

In recent decades there has been a new trend arising like *temporarity*, term used by Teräs (2007: 7), which means people are going abroad for some fixed period of time, for example for reasons of educational purposes. The character of international migration has changed and people have started moving from one place to another more rapidly; the flow of people became more diverse. Mostly migration happens to developed countries that give better opportunities. The International Organization for Migration (2008) gives statistical information on the migration of international migrants between the period of 1970—2000 and the figures are these: every 35<sup>th</sup> person was an international migrant (Teräs 2007: 6).

Until recently “academic mobility” has essentially involved the movement of personnel and to a much smaller extent institutions across borders. The transnational movement of institutions is not a new occurrence. It has its roots in the same when the universities were transplanted to other continents centuries ago and more recently to the classical branch campuses. The international mobility of students and scholars is an even older phenomenon. It dates back to the origins of the medieval European university when it was

difficult to distinguish students from teachers. What have changed in the second half of the last century are the numbers involved and modes of delivery in the development of information and communication technologies. (Gürüz 2008: 16.)

As a result of migration, intercultural encounters happen all over the world. Every university accepts more and more international students who are going abroad for educational purposes and intercultural experience. According to UNESCO's definition, quoted in Gürüz (2008: 161), a foreign student: "is a person enrolled at an institution of higher education in a country or a territory of which he is not a permanent resident." The reason behind a huge wave of international students going abroad every year is because of globalization's outcome, migration, which leads to another section of the discussion—internationalization of universities.

## 2.2 International Education: Historical Overview and Ideologies

The practice of students going to study abroad is not any novel thing. During the Middle Ages in Europe, foreigners exceeded 10% of the student enrollment at universities. This figure is higher than the share of overseas students in higher education admission around the world, which is today about 2%. However, the number of students today is 2.5 million globally compared with to a few hundred in Europe in the Middle Ages. The situation in the Middle Ages was that there were no institutions where students lived, so they were forced to travel. Today institutions are full in numbers but the logic behind it is different today. Globalization forces students to cross the borders of their homelands. It is estimated that there are about 17 000 institutions of higher education today in 184 countries worldwide. That is why today's student body is so significant. (Gürüz 2008: 2.)

Before technology developed separately from scientific involvement, however, in 19<sup>th</sup> century, it changed and technological developments preceded scientific developments. In

the days of the Industrial Revolution universities showed little involvement and made little contribution in that sphere (ibid. 3). Industrial society was becoming technological society with the development of research in the period of 18<sup>th</sup>--20<sup>th</sup> centuries. (ibid. 4.)

Today China, the US, India are the leading R&D countries. The following countries are Japan, UK, Russia, France, and Germany. (ibid. 14.) China and India started emerging as countries where foreign students originated from in past few decades. Other major countries of foreign student origin are Korea, Turkey, Morocco, Greece, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, and Mexico. (ibid. 7.) It is estimated or predicted that the number of students will rise significantly within a few years. In 2010 there will be 2.7 million students studying abroad. By 2020 it will be about 5.8 million foreign students and by 2025 the number could rise to 8 million students (ibid. 162). By looking at numbers one can clearly see that the numbers of international students going abroad are rising.

The curricula and model of higher education in the US were influenced greatly by German universities, since from the 18<sup>th</sup> century American students started to go to Germany for academic purposes. The first of those sojourners was Benjamin Franklin who visited a German university in Göttingen in 1766. Until 1914 the migration of American students was intense. The American university was also influenced by the British educational system; however those influences started to diminish and following the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the German research university model was implemented. (ibid. 132.) German and British educational systems played a great role in the formation of a quality higher education in the US. The American educational system has had a great impact on educational systems worldwide today. As already mentioned before, Appadurai (1999) argues that globalization can be likened to Westernization and Americanization and his point is logical. Hence, since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century American universities adapted German research university model, and its major task was to build the best education in the world. The innovations that were incorporated were as follows: graduate school and departments were established, the PhD degree was introduced, community service launched, student services and admission offices were set up, universities started to



build their own libraries and museums, and undergraduate and graduate degrees were also realized. (Gürüz 2008: 133.)

After World War I the Institute of International Education was launched. After World War II utilizing academic exchanges as foreign policy instruments started to accelerate. Programs were established along with scholarships by organizations like NATO, and the former EEC (current EU) and governments. The UK and France emerged as scholarship-giving countries for the countries that were their former colonies. Countries of the Soviet Bloc established exchange programs too. Academic cooperation was developed in Europe at the institutional level between 1955 and 1975. Joint study programs and the Institute of Education of the European Cultural Foundation in Paris reshaped academic exchange into academic mobility. Eventually the establishment of the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of the University Students (ERASMUS) program came into existence. The Fulbright program was launched in 1946. (ibid. 135.)

The above information has been an overview of student migration abroad as well as the implementation of educational system and how it has been growing and intensified because of today's globalization. Having discussed the development of student exchange programs, the internationalization of universities and their ideologies has to be addressed in order to understand the full evolution of today's internationalization of education. It is obvious that internationalization of universities is nothing new, but it has reached a new stage in the 21<sup>st</sup> century's wave of globalization and has its distinct ideologies.

Internationalization of higher education has certain ideologies that it projects. Kemal Gürüz (2008: 16) introduces the following definition and important elements of international education:

It includes elements that pertain to curricula such as teaching of foreign languages and cultures, as well as those that have to do with scientists and scholars carrying out research and teaching in other countries and students studying abroad for a full degree or as part of their degree requirements back home. Thus, internationalization of higher

education in today's global knowledge economy includes in addition to increased international context in curricula, movement of students, scholars, programs, and institutions across borders.

International education contains in itself many aspects which were mentioned in Gürüz's (2008) definition of international education: international curricula, student and teacher mobility, and different institutions across the globe with an international agenda. Education today is of distinct character and unusual in many ways. Globalization has produced modifications in agendas of universities all over the world. The EU emphasizes the mutual exchange of "knowhow" where competences are used to develop higher education so that it serves society and guarantees life quality for all people. (Stier 2006.) In a way what EU is trying to do looks utopian, however it reflects the ideology behind it that Stier is addressing. Jonas Stier (2006), who specializes in identity and internationalization of education, has discussed and criticized the ideologies of international higher education. International education is being designed to prepare the individual to function in a multicultural world which requires multiple intricate skills and knowledge from people. This primary goal seems utopian and unreasonable. According to Stier (2006), it is not yet fully equipped to accommodate the needs of late modernity.

Stier (2006) states that post-modern international education has three goals and ideologies that are visible in those goals. Those ideologies are idealism, instrumentalism, and educationalism. Idealistic ideology views internationalization as a good thing that benefits everyone. It guarantees every person a good standard of living through global source distribution. Tolerance and respect are rooted in the students. In one word, the idealistic approach strives for an ideal and equal world. It contains, however, ethnocentric elements because it imposes the one-way flow that suggests "you have a lot to learn from us and we do not." It parallels imperialism, which establishes its hegemony over "uncivilized barbarians." The instrumentalism approach sees internationalization as a way to profit and economic growth. A multicultural workforce contributes to this process greatly by offering diverse knowledge and ways of doing things. To guarantee this process, one has to become

a lifelong learner. However, it imposes a Western lifestyle on others and establishes supranational identities by eradicating national ones. Finally, educationalism suggests that education is practical for everyone and that knowledge is valuable.

Finally, Stier (2006) comments that encountering new cultures and learning their cultural code leads to intercultural competence and tolerance. Even though the values of learning are important, education should not be seen as something miraculous that solves the global problems of the world like poverty, inequality and exploitation. All three ideologies, however, recognize the importance of intercultural competence and assistance of development of such skills. There are both positive and negative sides in ideologies of international education. Intercultural competence is one of the positive sides and has its effects changes that happen on an individual's mental level and they start to negotiate their identity. Thus, next chapter addresses the issue of identity which is reshaped in the light of multiculturalism.

### 3 IDENTITY

#### 3.1 Self/Identity

Identity is deep-seated in any individual. In the context of globalization, the importance of the awareness of self is rising. An individual seeks to define him or herself because individualization became a crucial aspect of globalization. The need to define yourself is correlated to a great extent with self-esteem. Self-esteem contains in itself an evaluative part of self-concept that people have internalized (Hayes 1993: 16). “The self is the center of the person’s psychological universe and is the lens through which other aspects of the world are perceived” (Carver 2004: 538). William Bloom, cited in Sevänen (2004: 64), states why identification is important:

[...] identification is an inherent and unconscious behavioral imperative in all individuals. Individuals actively seek to identify in order to achieve psychological security, and they actively see to maintain, protect and bolster identity in order to maintain and enhance this psychological security which is a sine qua non of personality stability and emotional wellbeing [...]

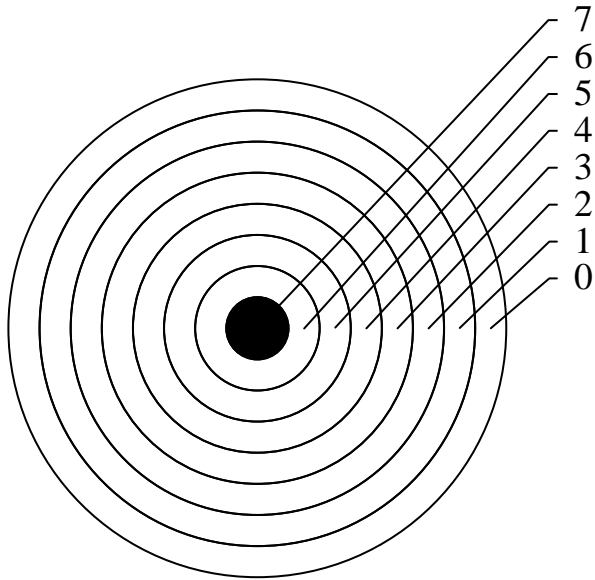
Before further moving on with the discussion on identity, it is important to define the distinction between *identity* and *identical* which can sometimes be confused. *Identity* is some attributes or characteristics that differentiate one person from another, and *identical* means basically “the same.” These similar-looking words are dissimilar in their connotation. (Seelye 1996: 55.)

The 17<sup>th</sup> century was a time when the self-concept theme started to emerge, which can be seen in the works of Descartes, Locke, and Hume, all of whom stressed that “self” is the pivotal part of consciousness. In 1902 Cooley continued the idea of *self* and that it is affected by feedback from other people. Mead continued the idea similar to Cooley’s that

social interactions shape the self-concept. (cited in Hayes 1993:16.) Basically all of the above-mentioned argue that environment plays a great part in how we define ourselves.

Psychology and sociology address the self-awareness issue whose roots lie deep from the time of William James and sociological school of thought—*interactionism*. In his view the self contains *reflexivity*—the ability to somehow turn around and take itself as the object of its own view. Thus the self has both a process aspect—the self as the knower of things and a content aspect—the self as that which is known. Moreover, James wrote about what happens in people when they come to an awareness of themselves. He maintained that self-esteem is crucial which is why people are striving to know themselves. (cited in Carver 2004: 179, 180.) This interactionist view echoes with what John Locke said about *tabula rasa*, where self cannot be formed in isolation and separation from external influences but rather through socialization.

Carver (2004: 188, 189) continues discussing Wylie and James who put the self into two categories: private self and public self. *Private self* is conscious of personal and hidden aspects of the self. *The public self*, on the other hand, is the opposite: it is viewing oneself overtly as a social entity. According to Trapnell and Campbell, whose works Carver (2004) discusses, state that private self-consciousness contains reflective and ruminative facets that have to be distinguished. They explain that “ruminative items all incorporate language about thinking back, rethinking, being unable to put something behind oneself. Reflection items all incorporate language about being fascinated, meditative, philosophical, and inquisitive.” The following diagram illustrates the model of self in cultural context.



**Figure 1.** Hsu's Model of Self in Cultural Context (1985) (Hayes 1993: 21)

- 0=outer world
- 1=wider society and culture
- 2=operative society and culture
- 3=intimate society and culture
- 4=expressible conscious
- 5=unexpressible conscious
- 6=pre-conscious (Freudian)
- 7=unconscious (Freudian)

This onion-like diagram depicts a model of self that has three major layers: personal, social and cultural. The personal self is at the very center, which is the core of every individual. The cultural sense of self is important as it is part of one's self-awareness. The social sense of self comes from the participation in social groups. Hsus' model has parallels with the Hindu concept of *maya* even though it offers the Western model of self. Conscious interaction with other people known as *samsara* is one of the aspects of self-awareness (ibid. 19). This onion diagram basically represents an individual's identity that contains

personal, social and cultural aspects. All of those are influential in affecting one's identity, however the center or the core of an individual's identity is at the very heart of every individual and is the most significant because of its personal character. However, depending which society one comes from, either individualistic or collectivistic, that personal self is constructed.

### 3.1.1. Individualistic and Collectivistic Dimension: View of the Self

There are primarily two distinct ways of how people define themselves depending on which society they come from: individualistic or collectivistic. Hofstede (1991: 51) divides societies according to individualism and collectivism, which are two opposite dichotomies:

Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.

Carver (2004: 536) mentions Cooley, Mead and Goffman who emphasize the cognitive side of identity, however now the question of identity is looked upon through the cultural prism. The realization came after observation that self-definition depends on a cultural context, that is, whether one comes from a collectivistic or individualistic culture. This is important to consider because identity perceptions and definitions of self are different in Western and non-Western societies.

Psychological research makes assumptions about the nature of individuality that are not very welcome and considered ethnocentric because the assumption rests on "what is true for the middle-class Anglo/American culture is true of the whole world" (Hayes 1993: 17). According to this view, a consolidated sense of personal identity helps to promote positive well-being. Consolidation of identity is important and gains a lot of support in Western cultural settings where individual preferences are prioritized over the preferences of family or community. In non-western cultural contexts the pattern is opposite—obligations are

given first place and autonomous self is trivialized. Thus personal identity functions in a different manner in collectivistic societies (Schwartz, Zamboanga & Weissirch 2008: 639, 641). Agency is critical for the development of personal identity in Western cultures because young people are for the most part responsible for developing their own life paths.

Furthermore, Schwartz, Zamboanga & Weissirch (2008: 645) discuss the problem with this issue of perception is that current research cannot be applied to these two diverse populations equally. Cultural contexts determine the relationship between personal and cultural identity. The area of personal identity in collectivist cultures needs to be approached and studied further. However, in one or two decades globalization may increase the need for individual choice and self-development, and obligations to groups will not be as strong. Commitment will grow weaker because of individualization.

According to Cross and Gore (2005: 541), in individualistic and Western societies such as the US an autonomous individual is viewed separately from society. This is even reflected in linguistic practices that reveal culture. In Japanese culture the individual is usually not an agent who does something and acts. If compared with English, the Japanese language does not have a translation of the personal pronouns that English languages has like “I”, “me” and “mine.” In Japanese the idea of that the person is behind the action is understood in terms of meaningful contexts and relationships. The speaker or the agent is therefore reduced and is left on the periphery, whereas in the English language the speaker is the central figure. The English language reflects the culture that is permeated with an individualistic overtone as well since the personal pronouns signify that the speaker is the one who is important. Hayes (1993: 20) states that self in the Japanese traditional culture is tied to social dealings and social relations. That mentality is integrated into an individual from a very early age with the emphasis on actions that have an impact on others.

In some Confucian cultures the personal self is the *small self* and the attachment to the social circle like nation is the *greater self*. The personal self is restricted in some East Asian cultures and it is reflected in the attitudes towards choice. For example, the host who offers



the Japanese guest too many choices, puts him in an uncomfortable position where he or she violate his or her *enryo*. In the traditional Japanese culture the concept of *wa* has to do with the harmonious oneness within groups. In the traditional Chinese culture the term *he* means harmony, unity, and peace with others. This unwillingness to voice one's choices is done because it has to serve *the big self*. In the United States, for example, to offer one's guest a variety of choices suggests the recognition of their individuality and uniqueness. The Hindu concept of self is different in a very unique way. Social context and the community are not given any large emphasis, but Hindu mindset views selfhood as central, however not in the way Westerners emphasize the centrality of self (Cross & Gore 2005: 546, 545).

The role of an individual in East Asian cultures is peripheral. The holistic worldview is reflected in the models of self where one is just a piece of a larger whole. Markus and Kitayama state that what defines the non-Western person is his or her social membership and relationships. The personal features of a person are outside and that is what it means for them to have their personal identity that is dependent on others. Markus and Kitayama define it as *independent self-construal* (cited in Cross & Gore 2005: 543). Western psychologists seem to be much more apprehensive about identity than psychologists from Eastern traditions (ibid. 543). In modern Western societies identity is a personal and individual construction (ibid. 544).

Western researchers state that the African self-concept correlates with the exploitation of material wealth under the conditions of colonialism. Western thinking and African thinking are two opposite poles with differences grounded in the assumptions that they hold about the nature of the world. "Survival of the fittest" and "control over nature" best describes the Western mentality and is reflected in the way of life. The African mental framework is described in such principles as 'survival of the tribe' and 'one with nature.' (Hayes 1993: 19).

In some homogeneous Eastern cultures age, gender, status are part of one's identity. A sense of belonging is found in social networks. Thus, the need to construct one's sense of inner identity is not required. People are not motivated by personal choice in Eastern cultures whereas Westerners are provided with myriads of choices. They are also encouraged to maintain positive views about themselves. (Cross 2005: 544.) Self-esteem is lower in collectivistic societies and higher in individualistic, according to culture researchers. Self-criticism and low unrealistic optimism is high among Eastern Asians than Westerners (ibid. 549). East Asians have a notion of so-called *face* where their image is perceived by others. They give or receive the 'face.' In Western mentality reputation matters as well but it is not as expressed as in East Asian cultures (ibid. 552).

Cross and Gore (2005: 552) also states that gender differences are important factor to consider in the understanding of self in Western cultures. Women in Western societies are looked upon having a role of a link that connects people and are interdependent. Men on the other hand are more independent, autonomous and detachment from others. Perceptions of self affect behavior. If one wants to understand and interpret certain behavior, self conceptualization has to be taken into an account.

The notions of individualism and collectivism are discussed in the above section to illustrate the differences between societies that have either individual or collectivist definitions of themselves. Individualism and collectivism is one of the important parameters to see in order how individuals define themselves in terms of their identity. One of the other very central aspects that plays a significant role in the formation of the self is ethnicity/race that is discussed in the next subsection.

### 3.1.2 Ethnicity and Race

One's ethnicity or race is important in building identity. According to Wade (1997: 13, 15) The meaning of race has been changing throughout centuries. The 20<sup>th</sup> century scientists have reached the consensus about understanding of race that is not based on biology, thus races do not exist even though genetic variation exists. All humans share same mental capacities, thus race is simply a social construction. It is an idea that comes from the colonial period and is associated with the European mentality where they had to make sense of a difference. Because race is just an idea, it is subject to change over time.

Wade (1997: 16) states that, concepts of *ethnicity* and *race* can be confused sometimes. They carry almost the same meaning with slight connotational differences. Ethnicity is the less poignant term than race. Race, on the other hand, carries in it an element of racism. *Ethnos* comes from a Greek word which means nation or people. Because of massive migrations and in an attempt to create new postcolonial nation the usage of the term ethnicity became more widespread. Ethnicity, thus, is social construct as well that signifies difference and sameness. Race and ethnicity are basically same concepts which meanings evolved in time and history.

### 3.1.3 Personal and Cultural Identities

Globalization has made it necessary to take a more careful look on the question of personal and cultural identity. A renowned scientist in the field of psychology Erik Erikson introduced the concept of the "crisis of identity." The Eriksonian view of identity states that personal identity incorporates in itself goals, values and beliefs which is the core of one's identity because those elements are personal issues. "In Erikson's scheme, a sense of identity is experienced pre-consciously, the expression of "crisis" and "commitment" being the mere outward manifestations of this internal, subjective state." (Sevänen 2004b: 45.) He views identity as a psychological phenomenon which undergoes development, crisis and

change (ibid. 53). Thus, for many individuals who are in search for their cultural identity it goes together with a crisis of identity.

According to Sevänen (2004a: 5, 7, 9), terms *identity*, *personal identity* and *cultural identity* came into being slowly after World War II. Personal and cultural identities share the common ground that they are socio-cultural phenomena. Thus, the difference between them is hard to describe. Identity contains a personal/individual dimension. The border between the personal and cultural identity is vague at times. Adler (1977: 230) defines cultural identity as “the symbol of one’s essential experience of oneself as it incorporates the worldview, value system, attitudes, and beliefs of a group with which such elements are shared.” According to Adler cultural identity involves basically everything that is important for an individual and that they have internalized. Moreover he states that “culture and personality are inextricably woven together in the gestalt of each person’s identity” (ibid. 230). Both Sevänen (2004b) and Adler (1977) make an important statement that personal and culture are interconnected, thus personal and cultural identities are integrated.

Sevänen (2004a: 6) argues that in order to define personal and cultural identity, it is important to distinguish between *self-images* and *self-definitions* of that person. This is simply because an individual can have a misconceived image of him/herself. A good example of that would be an individual suffering from Napoleon complex where he/she clearly overestimates his or her abilities and think they are someone they are not in reality. Therefore, self-definitions must also be supported by other people.

Sevänen (2004a: 10, 12) post-modernist and post-structuralist approach of identity is grounded on the idea that identity is not solid but rather fragmented, multiple and unstable. Brubaker and Cooper, cited in Sevänen (2004), suggest that “self-understanding,” “social location,” “identification,” and “connectedness” are better terms than personal and cultural identity. They argue that “self-understanding” does not presume that people’s images stay the same throughout the course of their lives. “Identification,” “social location,” and

“connectedness” do not have the implication of homogeneity between the group members, or that an individual identifies with those groups holistically. I would not suggest replacing those concepts by what they proposed since it would cause confusion, but the meaning behind them helps to understand what those terms mean.

According to Schwartz, Zamboanga and Weissirch (2008: 636) both personal and cultural identities have one thing in common: the importance of values. Both cultural values internalized from groups and the person values that guide one’s life choices are “part of the homological network of self and as such they must be related in some way.” Moreover, these two types of identity are interconnected, that is, individual/personal and cultural identities.

New knowledge and scripts for new behavior are developed when one gets into a new cultural environment, coming as sojourners to a foreign country, be it a student or worker. When those knowledge structures settle down in an individual, how does one construct his or her “self.” Four contributing factors play a role in the crisis of identity. These are: when the feedback that comes from a knowledgeable source, when it is supported by many people, when it has relevance in the dimension of one’s self-concept, and when it is different from one’s present self-concept. (Carver 2005: 553) Individuals develop knowledge patterns that they previously did not know of and that are different from their country of origin (ibid. 554). According to the research carried out on the subject of multicultural selves, when one comes to experience multiple cultures, one gains the ability to shift cultural belief systems where new cultural reality coexists with the old cultural self-representation that the individual hold in his or her memory which introduces another area of discussion—multicultural person.

### 3.2 New Kind of Person/ Multicultural Person

Peter Adler (1977) recognized the importance of identity and addressed it already at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when globalization became a popular topic of discussion. He familiarized one with the notion of multi-cultural man, who is psychologically and culturally different from a mono-cultural individual. “Yet the conditions of contemporary history are such that we may now be on a threshold of a new kind of person, a person who is socially and psychologically a product of the interweaving cultures in the twentieth century” (Adler 1977: 225). “Multiculturalism offers a potentially different sort of human being” (ibid. 234). However, he also states that such an individual is not a predominant character style of our time. Global society, is in real need of such people: they can serve as catalyst or mediators between cultures (ibid. 242).

Here is a definition of a multicultural person by Adler (1977: 228):

The identity of the multicultural person, far from being frozen in a social character, is more fluid and mobile, more susceptible to change, more open to variation. It is an identity based not on a “belongingness,” which implies either owning or being owned by culture, but on a style of self-consciousness that is capable of negotiating ever new formations of reality. In this sense, a multicultural person is a radical departure from the kinds of identities found in both traditional and mass societies. He or she is neither totally a part of nor a part from his or her culture; instead, he or she lives on the boundary.

According to Adler (1977: 228) such a kind of person contains in him/herself the universality of the human condition and the diversity of cultural forms. The multicultural person is a universal person in a way that he or she welcomes similarities among people and does not disregard their differences. His/her identity is fluid and mobile, open to change. The identity of this special person is not based on belongingness. The style of self-consciousness negotiates new reality. A multicultural person is both old and new, which means he/she embodies in him/herself both global and local elements. As Adler puts it this individual ‘lives on the boundary.’ Cultural identity needs to be looked at in order to

understand this kind of person. Terms of *multicultural person* or *multicultural identity* are interchangeably used in the thesis, which is Peter Adler's concept that I borrowed for this thesis.

According to Adler (1977: 240) there are three dimensions that indicate the multicultural person. First of all, he/she is psycho-culturally adaptive. His values and worldview are being restructured all the time as he encounters people from other cultural contexts. Secondly, he/she undergoes personal change, travels from identity to identity, learns and unlearns culture. Adler described it as "an ongoing process of psychic death and rebirth." Thirdly, boundaries of the self are indefinite. Identity is not fixed or permanent and always in a change mode. In short, Adler presents the new kind of person who adjusts his or her mentality and has fluid identity that undergoes continuous changes under the conditions of multiculturalism.

Kim (2001: 65) talks about "inter-cultural identity," which is a by-product of border-crossing. The status of the stranger is acquired and "self-shock" and "shake-up" follow where they feel disconnected with the original group and develop psychological ties with broader humankind. Such experience as "boundary ambiguity syndrome" happens within an individual and interculturalness increases. Kim's concept of *inter-cultural identity* intersects with what Adler introduced as *the multicultural person*.

Peter Adler's (1977) idea of multicultural personality and Kim's (2001) intercultural identity parallels with Elizabeth Murphy-Lejeune's (2002: 34) concept of the "international mind" which she describes as "a sort of ideal intercultural personality that is at home in another space capable of taking on an active role in it because she has acquired the competences which enable one to move from one world to another." Being able to understand oneself, the individual can understand others. A person with an "international mind" is a stranger and there are 4 dimensions that characterize them as such. The first one is space: a traveler is mobile and leads a nomadic way of life and has no sense of their own

territory. The second, is time: he or she are potential wanderers. Third, social position: a new level of socialization and rise of marginality. Fourth, fragmented identity: an individual experiences a crisis within him/herself on a personal and cultural level, and multiple identities are created. A person with international mind is characterized by space, time, social position, and fragmented identity.

Adler (1977) too discusses and presents the psychological conditions of a multicultural individual are as follows: Firstly, he/she is vulnerable and everything can be confusing. Secondly, he/she can become “multi-phrenic,” that is have a diffused identity that becomes shaped by different kinds of stimuli. Third, authenticity is lost and personality becomes fragmented. Fourthly, he/she avoids deeper responsibilities and involvements, gradually sinking into being a dilettante. Fifthly, he/she enters the state of negation or neurosis and question existential sensibleness. (ibid. 240). A multicultural individual is psychologically different from mono-cultural individuals which according to Adler (1977) shows in his or her reactions towards ambiguity, different stimuli, disintegrated personality, disregards responsibilities, and is dedicated to find answers to questions that are philosophical in nature.

O’Reagan and MacDonald (2008: 278) maintain that intercultural communication sets the context through which the “transcultural self” is shaped, that is the multicultural identity that goes beyond one’s national culture and is open-minded towards diversity or the “Other.” They continue: “At the risk of ruining a promising metaphor the discourse of intercultural communication is the thread which holds the helix together—it is no less than its intercultural *genome*” (ibid. 279). They refer to the intercultural speaker who becomes transcultured because he or she recognizes the differences in ideology but also internalizes it (ibid. 272). O’Reagan and MacDonald (2008) make an important statement that intercultural communication leads to the “transcultural self” what Adler calls multicultural identity, what Kim calls intercultural identity, and what Elizabeth Murphy-Lejeune (2002)



refers to as an international mind. All of the above mentioned theoreticians argue that in the context of intercultural interactions a new identity of multicultural character is born.

Seelye and Wasilewski (1993: 83) state that multiculturals are regarded in general by mono-culturals as marginal because they are breaking too many rules that are present in the mainstream society. They feel like outsiders because they are labeled as such, in order to prevent that their choosing to be in heterogeneous environments rather than homogenous, the mainstream one where they do not see themselves as fitting. Janet Bennet, quoted in Seelye and Wasilewski (1993), contributed to the issue by introducing two types of marginality—encapsulated and constructive. The constructive marginal is the one who never feels at home wherever he or she is and feels authentic. The negative drawback to being multicultural is that one does not fit into most people's pre-set categories.

According to Hong (2007: 331) there are three strategies as to how multiculturals negotiate identity: through integration, alternation, and synergy. In the stage of *integration* identities are blended into a consistent identity. Elements from multiple cultures form multicultural identity. Old and new identities are coexistent through the addition process. *Alternation* stage occurs when there is a shift between identities. And finally, *synergy* is the stage when new identities emerge and are not just the sum of their parts.

The section on a multicultural person discussed Peter Adler's (1977) idea of multicultural identity as well as other theoreticians whose voices reflected the same idea like Kim (2001), Murphy-Lejeune (2002), M. Bennett (1993), Seelye and Wasilewski (1996), O'Reagan and MacDonald (2008), and Hong (2007). According to Seelye and Wasilewski (1996: 17) the experience of being in an international environment gives the invaluable possibility of becoming multicultural, which is a great asset in a globalized world. In the next chapter the intercultural communication will be introduced and analyzed in which context identity becomes reshaped.

## 4 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

### 4.1 Intercultural Dialogism: Introduction

Intercultural communication is becoming of great significance and is open to public debate. Europe is becoming very multicultural because of spreading globalization and therefore it is becoming crucial to discuss the important issues connected with intercultural communication or dialogue between cultures. For that reason year 2008 was officially proclaimed the year of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID) by the EU. The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008) was established by the European Parliament and of the Council. Many events and debates were held. Among the important selected topics were the ones that have to do with migration, education, multilingualism.

In her interview with Jose Eustaquio Romao, who took part in the debates at the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008, Clarrisa Menezes Jordao (2008) asked whether he thinks that intercultural communication is possible and asked for definitions of *intercultural* and *dialogue*. Romao claimed that he would prefer using the term *dialogism* instead of *dialogue* in order to explain contacts between various cultures in a more civilized manner. The concept of dialogism is related to Bakhtinian thought and it means confrontation where language is at the center of conflict where meanings are created through conflict with other meanings. Through these meanings synthesis comes into existence (Menezes Jordao 2008: 291).

Communication is very important in the daily life of human beings. Through it people share information and express their deepest longings and desires and also communicate their culture. That is why, when students from different cultures meet, they represent their culture and dialogue happens between the different “Others,” in this case, other international students. Through the dialogue with the “Other” identity is re-constructed. When international students form a close international network as they socialize at the

university premises and during the informal gatherings their identity is re-shaped as they are facing the “Other.”

#### 4.2 Intercultural Communication

In order to understand what intercultural communication entails, communication and culture have to be defined. Verschueren (2008: 22, 23) suggests that intercultural communication should be looked at as a form of communication and culture should be viewed in a non-essentialistic manner. Variability, negotiability, adaptability are in action during the process of communication. Fundamental variability is present in communication where people use their own language and are involved interacting with one another in different ways. This variability is the same in intercultural communication. Through the act of negotiation meanings are continuously constructed or negotiated. Negotiability suggests that there is no set connection between linguistic forms and their functionality. Verschueren (2008: 24) continues on the subject of communication:

Communication is never absolute. In order to explain the fact that language can still achieve its communicative purpose with a significant degree of success in spite of the use of variable means that cannot be interpreted mechanically we rely on the concept of adaptability. Communicative means and their use can be continually retuned and adapted. That is why an intercultural context is not to be equated with the sum of two different contexts but essentially the creation of a new one.

According to Verschueren (2008: 25), intercultural communication is viewed through a pragmatic approach, and its aim is to examine how meanings are created through interaction. In order to accomplish this goal this has to be looked at from four angles. Firstly, context: any communicative event is a feature of the context. Structure is another element of intercultural dialogue: structure in the linguistic discourse can make a difference in producing the meaning. Thirdly, dynamics based on negotiability of the processes that are involved in the creation of interactive meaning. Lastly, these processes mentioned above take place in the human mind.

Verschueren (2008: 31) goes on by separating two types of reflexivity are important to consider when analyzing intercultural communication. Ideology is present in communication between different group members. It is impossible to separate communication from the ideas that the group or an individual has. Thus, communication is shaped and affected by ideology. Language ideologies play a role the norms of communication are also important. "If this is not duly taken into account and 'culture' is used in the ways argued against earlier, culture stops binding interaction and cognition; rather it creates the gap that prevents one from understanding what really happens in an intercultural exchange."

Verschueren (2008) makes several important points. In intercultural communication culture and communication are to be considered to understand the nature of intercultural communication. During the intercultural communication process a new cultural context is created through which learning takes place. Dimpleby (1998: 15, 19, 22, 25, 80) asserts that, one's culture is determined by how and what one communicates. Through communication others learn about us. Continuous exchange is happening in communication. It is not a passive process but rather an active one. Speakers exchange messages more than one at a time. Those messages have an overt and a covert structure. This means that what is communicated can have several meanings depending on the situation, context but also other listener's intentions and desires. Through the process of communication one changes himself or herself and changes the other. There are certain filters that block communication which are attitudes, beliefs and values. Both Verschueren (2008) and Dimpleby (1998) assert that communication is determined by one's culture. Communication is an important aspect of intercultural communication because cultural exchange happens when messages are exchanged; therefore, intercultural learning takes place which in turn affects one's self-concept and identity.

All in all, culture and communication are important aspects of intercultural learning. I believe that culture is present in communication because it is a socio-cultural phenomenon.

Dimbleby (1998) makes a point that during communication both parties that are involved in a conversation change one another. Therefore, change in an individual occurs when elements of culture are present. Without communication cultural exchange is not possible which leads to intercultural learning. Intercultural learning happens when communication happens which is both a social and cultural event. When one communicates those values, attitudes or beliefs are exchanged. Any type of human interaction is intercultural because attitudes, values and beliefs are present in communication. Communication carries not only a social function but cultural one as well. Intercultural learning is how cultures interact and learn from each other and become influenced by each other's culture. Intercultural learning does not occur in isolation but rather when cultures meet and exchange messages.

Another important aspect of intercultural communication is culture. There are myriad definitions of culture: however, Rahje's (2008: 260) view of culture is a departure from the traditional definition of what culture primarily is because it has to be viewed in the light of the present conditions of globalization and cultures coming together. Culture is not any more viewed as a coherent and one-sided phenomenon.

According to Verschueren (2008: 25), the traditional view of culture has been defined in essentialist terms, as something that a group of people share and something that is deep-rooted and ingrained in every individual. It has been viewed in terms of cultural roots, territoriality and nationalism. This kind of definition of culture does not allow that there are variations within culture, and it tries to homogenize culture, putting one under the same category. However, culture is something that is subject to change and develops continuously. It is easy to fall into the trap of categorizing cultures and not admitting the fact that variations exist within the same culture. He continues:

It is always recommended to view a culture in terms of continuity and change. Secondly, one should avoid the plural form cultures. There are cultural differences and contrasts but these do not amount to clusters of features that are identifiable let alone separable entities. Thirdly, we must regard the individual as the proper locus of cultural variability. Every individual occupies a unique position in a network of intersecting parameters of variation and hence an intersecting network of groups.

Fourthly, culture simply has to be given the race treatment, that is, just as the notion of race has been discredited as useless ever since biology has shown that biologically definable separate races do not exist, the notion of culture should also be discredited as analytically useless. (ibid. 26.)

Through intercultural interaction and communication “Otherness” is reduced. The idea of different languages and different cultures is taken into an account. Through the use of the global language, that is, of English, it serves as the unifying force to bring cultures together, thus minimizing the “Otherness.” This acknowledgement is known by the name of *tokenistic multiculturalism*. (East 2008: 160.) Glocalization builds the ground to function multiculturally because both local and global elements are combined (ibid. 165). Kawai (2008: 47) suggests that English is a powerful cultural force that reshapes people’s identity. Thus, English serves as a language that promotes the culture associated with the language.

Verschueren (2008: 26, 27) claims that the identities that an individual possesses are rarely one-dimensional; they are multiple and often conflict with one another. It highly depends on the context in which this identity is formed. According to a non-essentialist view, identity is not possessed either by a group or an individual but is produced again and again and an individual depending on a context can have different identity that shifts depending on the context. However, one’s multicultural identity can be reduced if a homogenous culture and its identity is forced upon an individual. Identity is possessed by any individual and is for the most part shaped by them through interactions, thus that entails that an individual possesses many identities at the same time and they are manifested in different situations. Perceptions of one’s identity can also be affected by how others see one and what image that particular culture projects and reinforces upon an individual.

Both Rahje (2008) and Verschueren (2008) argue that culture is not something that is innate in a group of culture representatives but rather it contains individual variations. Besides, culture always changes especially when there are other cultural influences, that is a change happens in the process of intercultural communication. According to East (2008), in intercultural communication cultural differences are eliminated primarily because of the use

of common language, English. English in turn has effects on one's identity because language is an identity shaping tool. O'Reagan and MacDonald (2008) argue that communication in an intercultural context is important in creating a new self, which contributes to identity formation. Verschueren (2008) also recognizes the importance of the context that is important in multiple identity formation where an individual shifts one's identities. By looking at these theoreticians and combining their views they all agree that communication and culture have an effect on an individual and how one constructs oneself.

#### 4.3 Culture Shock and Reverse Culture Shock/Shock of Homecoming

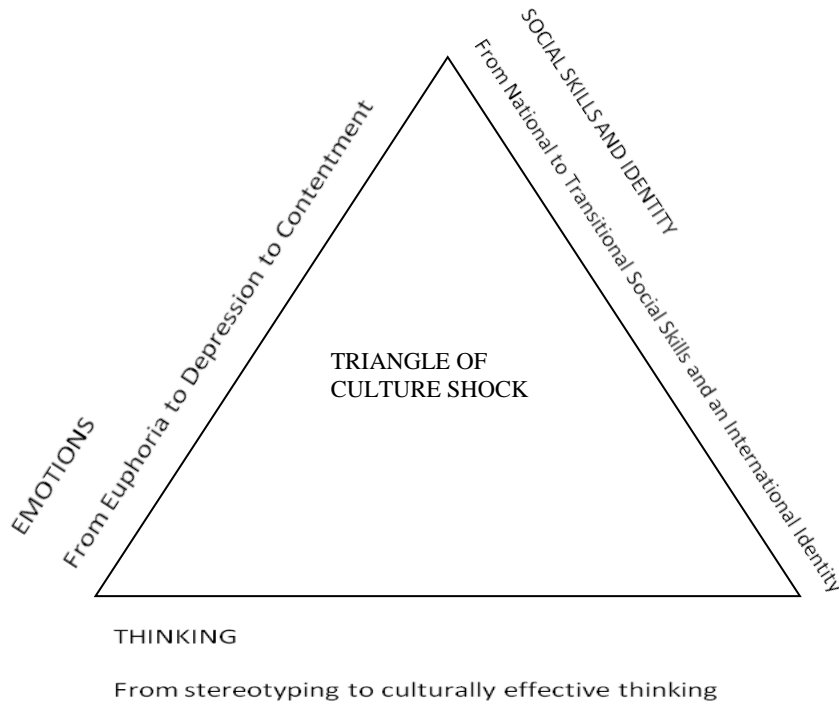
Culture shock plays a significant role in intercultural learning and identity construction. Janet M. Bennett (1998) states that whenever changes come and the stable becomes unstable, one experiences anxieties and tensions. Every transition in life is stressful. Culture shock is like that as well: it is a transition shock. It is a person's reaction to change and not like some "exotic ailment." J. M. Bennett (1998: 215, 217, 218) defines culture shock which is characterized by an emotional and physiological visitor's reactions to the foreign culture. She expands on the notion that culture shock is a subcategory of transition experiences. Loss and change are the inevitable parts of this experience. Culture shock is seen as a hindrance in the process of intercultural communication. It is viewed as a defense mechanism caused by cognitive inconsistency. J. M. Bennett makes it clear that culture shock happens when an individual is facing the unfamiliar and then change follows. It can obviously be a positive thing when learning takes place and a negative thing if it hinders intercultural communication.

According to J. M. Bennett (1998: 219), psychological reactions are triggered when one tries to adjust to a new environment. Those reactions are fight, flight, filter and flex. In the early stages of immersion into a different culture one's worldview is shattered because of discrepancies between his or her culture and the one he or she are dealing with. Because of the emotional reactions that follow this crisis in the mental set of a sojourner, he or she

chooses flight as self-protection in dealing with those changes. When recovering from the initial shock the defense is lowered until the accommodation stage is reached where one's worldview stops being that of great importance. It is obvious that culture shock happens as a result from the difficulties adjusting to a new place. As a result it works as a defense mechanism from the possible big changes that revolutionize whole perspective.

According to Berry et al (1992: 272), there is a correlation between the intercultural contact and individual psychological response. One of the psychological responses is acculturative stress; sometimes the term *culture shock* is used. "When the culture changes, individuals may change as well" (Berry 1992: 281). However, it is important to keep in mind that "the attitudinal and cognitive perspectives espoused here propose that it is not the acculturative changes themselves that are important, but how one sees them and what one makes of them" (ibid. 290). It depends on an individual what one does with the acculturative stress; the response does trigger changes accordingly. Cultural identity becomes negotiated when an individual is influenced by different cultures. What happens is the identity reconstruction under the conditions of multiculturalism. Acculturation happens when cultures come together and there is a change involved. Acculturation is described as a "cultural and psychological change brought about by contact with other peoples belonging to different cultures and exhibiting different behaviors." So indeed the changes are occurring on cultural, psychological and behavioral levels which shapes a new self-understanding in the "acculturating group." (ibid. 273.) The following figure (see figure 2) presents the how culture shock affects one's emotions, thinking, and social skills and identity.





**Figure 2.** Triangle of Culture Shock (Marx 2001: 12).

Marx's (2001) *Triangle of Culture Shock* shows how an individual changes when facing culture shock; change happens in emotions, thinking, social skills and identity. According to him culture shock changes individual's identity; it shifts from national to international identity. Both Marx (2001) and J. Bennett (1998) have a point to make: culture shock is the reaction to stress or life transitions which involves loss and change. Marx (2001) contributes to the issue of culture shock that he introduces the international identity. I consider Max's (2001) definition of culture shock taking a broader view and its impacts on an individual are more multi-sided. Thus, the reentry shock can be viewed as the transition shock, when an individual goes home and experiences the pressures of adapting to change as well.

As discussed above, J. M. Bennett (1998) defines culture shock as a subcategory of transition shock, therefore reentry shock can be looked at from the same angle. Coming to home environment is as stressful as settling in a foreign environment because an individual has to adjust his or her thinking to make sense of new discrepancies. According to Storti (2001: 51, 52), reverse culture shock is a culture shock that sets in when an individual comes home. In many cases it is stronger than the culture shock itself. Homecoming shock usually comes when one is used to being around the family and starts adjusting to new life back home. Again, it is a new transition in a person's life and causes emotional storms. People at home start expecting from a sojourner that his or her life is back to normal whereas the person concerned feels alone in that experience, suffering in silence because no one has any clue of what is going with that person.

According to Storti (2001: 52), during the honeymoon stage life home seems perfect. Then this reaction is replaced with disliking some things at home. One travels back to ones experiences abroad and remembers of good times that he or she had and that everything there was perfect. Mood swings happen constantly, feelings of disgust come when seeing something different from what one experienced. One becomes judgmental where once he or she thought they were tolerant. Ability to be patient and objectivity is lost. Often an individual is preoccupied with things that do not matter and is upset with small things and that kind of attitude and behavior will also start to annoy people around.

Storti (2001: 53) continues that, cultural reentry shock rejection of home happens because one's emotions are like a rollercoaster. It is not the home itself but the state of mind. "You have become what is called a marginal person functioning more and better at the edges of your society rather than at the center, more likely to be an observer of rather than a participant in the scene around you. It is like being a member of minority." Often that person is irrational but it is all because one is upset with the fact one still misses his or her time abroad and have mixed feelings towards home.

Storti (2001: 56--58) concludes by saying that, when one gets back home there is an enormous weight that falls on one's shoulders. One has to start life over again that is stressful enough. Physiologically one might suffer from colds and have a bad immune resistance to diseases because of the psychological stress. Other psychological reactions that come in the same package with reverse culture shock are escape and withdrawal.

Homecoming shock is a very similar experience with the culture shock because it involves transitions, learning and unlearning, adjusting. Both experiences involves emotions and thinking, thus those processes are of psychological nature which makes it hard to deal with. Storti's (2001) description of homecoming shock likens J. Bennett's (1998) portrayal of culture shock. Thus, in all probably reentry shock is stronger still it has all dimensions that culture shock has.

#### 4.4. Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)/ Deep Culture Model

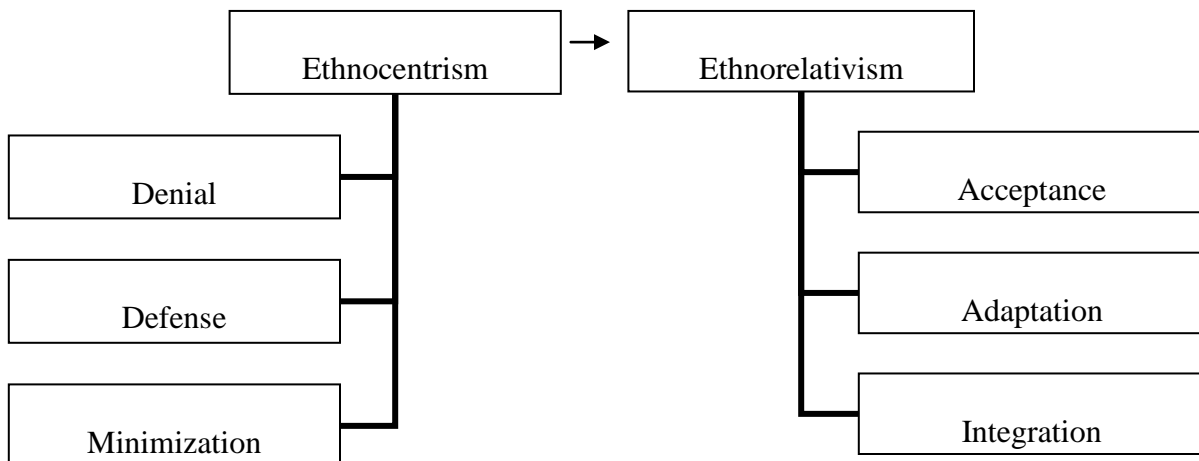
Milton Bennett (1993: 4) introduced a very significant model that explains how an individual passes through the stages until he or she reaches the level where they are able to accept the cultural differences when dealing with other culture representatives. This model is called *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)*. When an individual is trying to deal with something different than he or she experienced before, they go through different stages. In fact, there are six stages that an individual goes through in order to reach the high levels of intercultural sensitivity.

M. Bennett (1993: 26) talks about the stages of intercultural sensitivity. As previously mentioned, cultural change occurs on a psychological level. Any complex issues that needs to be tackled involve the *denial* stage (see figure 3). This is the stage where an individual is emotionally and or both physically distant from being open to other cultural differences. At the *defense* stage an individual is being aware of other differences, however has negative

position towards the “Other.” The opposite of this stage would be *reversal* where an individual is lifts up the other culture higher meanwhile humiliating his or her own cultures. *Minimization* is the stage where one realizes that other cultures exist and that there is equality among them. No one is better and no one is worse. These three above-mentioned stages are the ethnocentrically oriented stages.

Further, M. Bennett (1993: 27) discusses other stages that lead to ethno-relativity. The *acceptance* stage comes when an individual is driven by the curiosity to learn about other cultures since the understanding sets in about existence of other cultures besides their own. *Adaptation* is the ‘perspective adopting’ stage. Changes occur on a mental level understanding that other perspectives exist and behavior patterns are adjusted as well with the realization that one’s own way of reacting to another culture in another setting is not appropriate. *Integration* is an advanced level that the individual can reach in intercultural encounters. Ethnocentric reflects the mentality when the world revolves around one’s own culture and ethnorelative is when other cultures are viewed positively.

Below I suggest to visualize this process with all its stages, which are portrayed in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** Transition from Ethnocentrism to Ethnorelativism

This figure above, which I created based on M. Bennett's (1993) model, serves to show the stages of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism. It also shows the process of shifting from an ethnocentric perspective to an ethnorelativistic one. This figure is the visual aid which summarizes M. Bennett's (1993) *Intercultural Model of Sensitivity*.

Shaules (2007) suggests the *Deep Culture Model* which goes hand in hand with the *Intercultural Model of Sensitivity* that M. Bennett (1993) proposed. Shaules (2007: 246, 247, 249) defines it as a constant process and development where one adapts himself or herself to the challenges of a new cultural environment. Development is obvious when one goes from a state of being ethnocentric to a state of being ethnorelative. One can either like or accept things that are in a new cultural environment. Also it is possible when an individual dislikes something but still he or she accept it as a possibility that it can work for others. Also one can be in a constant state known as a *tourist phenomenon* when he or she accept things on a surface level and resist on a deep level. *Mixed* state is referred to a person's reaction where some cultural experience or elements are accepted and others are resisted. An individual can accept things like food and clothing but resists some of the cultural attitudes like the fact that "they" are always late. *Reversal* happens when a sojourner puts down his or her home environment but takes one the values and behavior of a new environment.

Shaules' (2007) model portrays how foreigners act in response to the demanding adaptation through a new cultural environment. One of those responses is the process of intercultural learning. Resistance, acceptance and adaptation to cultural differences are involved in intercultural learning. Intercultural experience can be experienced on a "surface" level or "deep" level. It depends on the degree of sojourners' adaptive requests, his or her reaction and not the importance of the experience itself. The two models *Intercultural Model of Sensitivity* and *Deep Culture Model* show how an individual's psychological processes of intercultural learning, starting from the denial stage and gradually moving to the integration one. These models help see an individual's mental processes and psychological

adjustments. When an individual gains an ethnorelative perspective, it leads to intercultural competence which will be discussed in the following subsection.

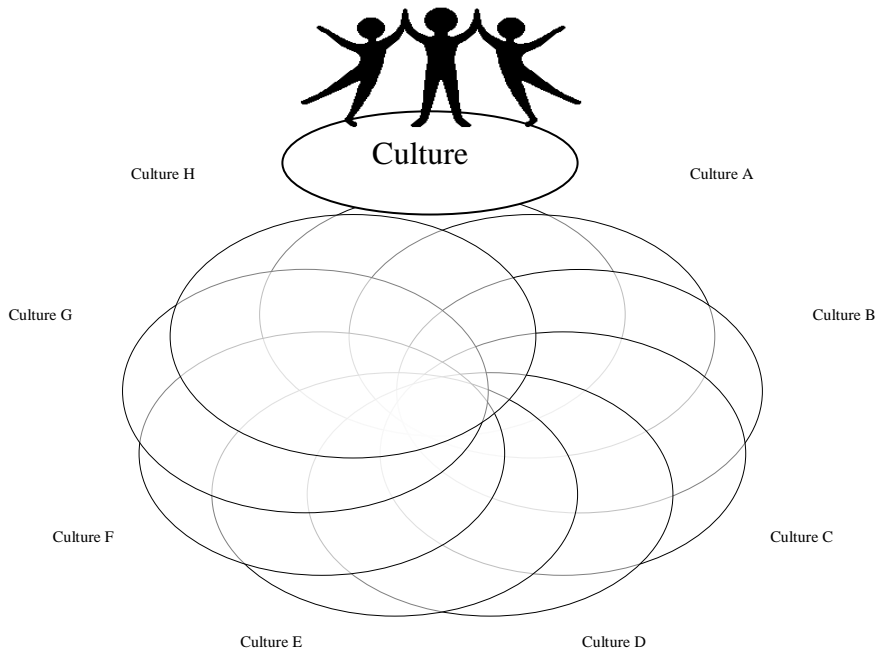
#### 4.5 Intercultural Competence

In order to evaluate whether intercultural competence has been achieved one needs to see if the interaction was efficient. If one has reached high levels of intercultural competence that is marked as success. Some argue that intercultural competence is sufficient when one has knowledge of one or more cultures. To state that one is competent in one specific culture or another, say “Finland competence,” is not to adequately present the concept itself. (Rathje 2008: 256, 258.)

More experienced travel sojourners adapt and adjust much more easily to new unfamiliar environments. So, to state that someone who is competent in one culture would contradict the concept of intercultural competence if someone has experience with various culture representatives (Rahje 2008: 257). Others see intercultural competence as a personal development, and because intercultural encounters are social interactions, they need to be socially competent (ibid. 258). Therefore, I take the side of those proponents who argue that intercultural competence highly depends on the sojourner’s experience in an intercultural environment where one is exposed to many cultures.

Rahje (2008: 259) argues that intercultural competence is interpreted using ‘inter-national’ and ‘inter-collective’ perspectives. However, the main problem with looking at intercultural competence through ‘inter-national’ perspective is that it looks intercultural interaction where national cultures interact thus excluding the intercultural elements from it. Internal communication is viewed as a form of *interculturality*. The weakness of this approach is its inability to distinguish between international and intranational intercultural situations. In contrast Rahje (2008: 260, 262) argues that the inter-collective model, abandons the notions of national cultures and argues that members of collectives have their own distinctive

culture while interacting. Looking deeper into an issue, one might wonder where to draw a line between regular and intercultural interaction because any encounter between human beings is intercultural. Rahje (2008) suggests that intercultural interaction needs to be looked at as the interaction between the collective of individuals because of their foreignness or other differences. In the same manner intercultural competence should also be viewed in that way; therefore the cohesive approach is appropriate to refer to. Interculture is transformed into culture (see Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Culture as the Outcome of Intercultural Interactions (Rahje 2008: 263).

This figure reflects Rahje's (2008) view on the impact of intercultural communication which result is culture. When international student sojourners interact with other international students they form their culture. Rahje (2008) argues that when one gained social competence one gains intercultural competence because social interaction involves

intercultural exchange. I share this view, because through communication when messages are exchanged one learns about cultures and differences between them. The next chapter describes the process of conducting interviews and presents case studies of international students which aims at showing how through close interactions with other international students they gain intercultural competence and identity reconstruction happens.



## 5 MULTICULTURAL IDENTITY IN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SOJOURNERS

### 5. 1 Interviews and Cases

For the practical part of the thesis, interviews were conducted with 13 international students, who are the target group of this study. This thesis is a qualitative study which analyzes the interviews with the 13 students, all of whom have a very strong intercultural background due to their experience of studying and living abroad. All of these students I have encountered personally and have known for an extensive time. Students were selected on the basis of their experience of studying and living abroad. Semi-structural interviews were conducted which were analyzed in-depth. Five international student sojourners, whose names are made up (Aiko, Irina, Hans, David, and Alisha) are chosen from this group as main figures and their stories made into case studies. “A case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied.” (Stake 2005: 443). Multiple case study, also called collective case study, is used in order to investigate a phenomenon or general condition where a number of cases are studied together and provide insight into an issue. (ibid. 445).

All of the participants were contacted personally either via email or face-to-face interaction form. First, consent was given from the interviewees. Their consent is obligatory, otherwise research is not possible. It was explained to them what the study is about and why they were chosen. Confidentiality was guaranteed, with protection from harm such as that the information would not be distributed and interview data would be strictly used just for the academic purposes. All of them were willing to participate in the study and in the interviews. The identity of the participants would be protected, names changed and some of the personal information altered in order to keep them anonymous. They were told that the interviews were going to be recorded and some parts cited when needed.

All of the participants share same passion for traveling and exploring and lively curious personalities that was one of the reasons to locate them abroad. The following were the profiles of the international student sojourners. Icebreaker questions were asked to set the positive psychological atmosphere. General questions were asked first then gradually moving to more sensitive issues. A friendly attitude was maintained but at the same time distance. Therefore this sampling is dimensional sampling –a technique to represent sample representativeness. The bias issue always comes up when one decides to interview people and the question comes to mind whether that particular group is truly representative.

The limitations of the interviews were: To what extent answers were honest? To what extent they were open? The disadvantages of interviews being recorded is that they do not record everything, just voice, and intonations. Such elements as facial expressions and non-verbal body language are missing. Therefore, emotional expression will be written in brackets to retain some of the information. The following section presents all 13 international student profiles who were interviewed.

#### 5.1.1 International Student Profiles

All of the international student sojourners that were interviewed came from different cultural backgrounds ranging from Europe to Asia and North America. However, all shared common experience that unites them—being an international student abroad. The purpose of this study is to show how international students become multicultural as a result of their exposure to different cultures. Names have been changed in order to secure the privacy of the respondents. From the profiles of the students one can clearly see that their interest is in international issues that take global dimensions. For example, their choice of study programs show that as well as daily intercultural interactions that raise their global awareness.

Irina comes from Russia. She is in her early 20s; studied linguistics as her undergraduate degree and is now studying for her master's degree in Intercultural Communication and

Administration. She has had some traveling experience in the USA and Germany working and volunteering. She has also visited Italy on a regular basis. Overall she has spent two years abroad.

David comes from India. He is in his late 20s. He moved to Finland 2,5 years ago to get an international degree in Business and learn more about how Western society functions and learn about other cultures as well. He feels as if he has found his home in Vaasa and finds himself adjusting well in an international environment.

Hans comes from Germany. He is in his late 20s. For his undergraduate degree he studied European and American studies and worked in the resolution area and had mediation training. He has lived in Cuba for seven months and 1,5 years in Finland, altogether two years.

Agnesa comes from Poland. She is in her late 20s. She has come as an exchange student to Finland and has lived in Vaasa for three years. She has a passion for traveling and does not identify with Polish culture in a traditional sense.

Omer comes from Turkey. He considers himself an ordinary Turk, a Western Turk with an accent. He has lived abroad for 1,5 years in Finland. In addition to that he travelled to England to visit some of his family that lives there.

Xue Yan comes from China. She is in her 20s. She has spent a considerable time in Finland, seven years altogether, doing her undergraduate degree and master's degree. At the moment she has two homes, in China and Finland. However, when people ask her what her hometown is she always refers to China.

Amanda comes from Hungary. She is in her 20s; She came to Finland as an exchange for the first time and then decided to stay for a longer time and came back as a degree student.

Fascinated by the fact that Hungarian and Finnish belong to the same language family, she wanted to get to know the culture and the language better and thus settled here for some time. Altogether it has been over two years that she has been abroad.

Aiko comes from Japan. She is in her 40s. She has been in and out of home for many years already. Altogether 7 years started her first time abroad in the USA as a student exchange in high school and then finished her undergrad studies there. Finally she is studying in Finland for her master's degree.

Alexander comes from Hungary. He was an exchange student in England for six months, where he met Finnish people, an experience which made him come to Finland. Overall he has spent three years in Finland. For his masters degree he studied intercultural studies and now is continuing with his PhD at the same university.

Peter comes from Germany. Before coming to Finland as an international student for master's degree in International Business he was an exchange student. As a high school student he went on an exchange program to South America. His family used to host international students on a regular basis.

Alisha comes from the States. She is a Guyanese immigrant to the US from the age of 11. At the moment she is studying at the university in Finland for her Master's degree in intercultural studies. For her undergraduate degree she majored in anthropology. From age nine she started traveling and visits a foreign country every year.

Anara is originally from Uzbekistan. She has been an international student at the international university in Lithuania, where she studied Theology, and is now a graduate student in the US studying Peacemaking. During her undergraduate career she has been taking an active part in the work of the intercultural program committee.

Anna comes from Poland. She has been an international student in Finland and is now studying for her Master's degree in industrial management. She has spent over two years in Finland.

To sum up, all of the 13 international students who were interviewed were students with age range of from 20 to 40. They all come from different countries in Europe, Asia, and North America like Russia, India, the USA, Poland, Germany, Hungary, Uzbekistan, Japan, China and Turkey. Most of them are students of international disciplines like International Business and Intercultural Studies in Communication and Administration programs as well as other programs.

#### 5.1.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with international student sojourners to conduct this study. Fontana and Frey (2005: 713) discuss some elements that are missing when one conducts semi-structured interviews. According to Fontana & Frey (2005: 717), nonverbal techniques such as proxemic, chronemic, kinesic, and paralinguistic communications are crucial in interview procedure. Proxemic refers to the attitudes that are communicated through how interpersonal space is used; chronemic refers to how the speech is paced and how long the pauses and silences are; kinesic refers to the body movements and postures; paralinguistic refers to the changes in volume, pitch and quality of voice. The sex of both the interviewer and the interviewed matters in the interview process because the process happens within the cultural framework. Moreover, the interviewer is not a neutral entity but is full of biases that have influence on interaction.

Interviews are a useful technique to gather information on a subject that one wants to explore, find out what they think and how they feel about a particular issue, explore their motivations and finally all the gathered material analyzed. However, interviews are not only a guide to understanding what interviewees have to say but they also help the researcher understand his or her intentions. They come to know themselves through

knowing others. (Fontana & Frey 2005: 697.) In general, interviews are widely used in qualitative research, and our society is portrayed as the “interview society.” (ibid. 698). The interview is described by Fontana and Frey (2005: 696) as follows:

Interviewing is not merely the neutral exchange of asking questions and getting answers. Two or more people are involved in this process, and their exchanges lead to the creation of a collaborative effort called the interview. The key here is the “active” nature of this process that leads to a contextually bound and mutually created story—the interview.

Semi-structured interviews are useful for tackling sensitive issues and are used widely in qualitative research. They allow a person to talk about complex issues and for this reason this kind of procedure of qualitative study will be applied to this thesis. In Drever’s (1998: 13) words it is:

Formal encounter on an agree subject and on the record, main questions set by the interviewer create the overall structure, prompts and probes fill in the structure, mixture of closed and open questions, the interviewee has a fair degree of freedom: what to talk about, how much to say, how to express it, but the interviewer can assert control when necessary.

The question of identity can be a sensitive topic for some and the use of semi-structural interviews is an appropriate tool to talk freely about it. As already mentioned before, semi-structural interviews are intended to be in an open form format so that informants have freedom of expressions of their views, opinions and feelings. Asserting control when necessary on my part was done when I asked for clarification to some of the complex question.

### 5.1.3 Metaphors of Identity

The last requirement of the interviewees is to create their own metaphor of identity. The template of the metaphor is included in the Appendices section. These were distributed to students to aid them in that creation process. They were provided with the examples of

some metaphors and also given a template so that it would assist them in that process. This task needed some pondering and time so they would be asked to do it on their own after the interview is over. They would be given an opportunity to choose between creating a very short metaphor (one sentence) of themselves or expanding and writing as long a passage as they want. Also, the freedom to deviate from the task was allowed. All in all, metaphors are a creative way for them to tell about themselves as they do not need to be verbal.

The idea of a multicultural personality is reflected in the metaphors that the five student sojourners created for themselves. What was said in the interviews was reflected in the metaphors. Therefore, metaphors could be used as a reliable tool to express the multicultural identity. It was obvious that one's self could be expressed through symbols, and metaphors achieved that purpose. According to Maynard (2007: 164), the anthropological view of metaphors has always been that they are part of the symbolic system that is represented in a particular culture. The way people view the world is expressed through the creative language of metaphors. In order to explain what purpose the metaphors served, their concept and function have to be defined by Seelye and Wasilewski (1996: 176):

Remember, you are not the metaphor and the metaphor is not you. It's simply a tool for conceptualizing salient aspects of your multicultural self. An intelligible perception of your own personal identity, and how it interacts with the cultural contexts you are inhabiting, does not come without a basic commitment to insight [...]. It is useful to make more explicit the perception and the experiences and the underlying assumptions on which our metaphors of multicultural identity are based. A clearer sense of this helps us cope in a multicultural milieu.

According to Seelye & Wasilewski (1996), metaphors are helpful to use because they reflect our feelings about our multicultural self. Metaphors are vehicles for bearing larger, deeper meaning. Through them, desires and aspirations are communicated. Maynard (2007: 69) states that the construction of self happens through a creative use of language, and one's identity is expressed and transformed through a linguistic act: creativity in a sense assists in presenting one's identity. Both Seelye and Wasilewski (1996), as well as Maynard (2007), agree on the significance of the use of metaphors in defining one's

intricate identity. They both agree that a language is a tool to do that. I hold the position of these two authorities and, therefore, I am going to utilize the method of metaphors in my study and analyze them to see how the multicultural identity is reflected in them.

## 5.2 Case Presentation

### 5.2.1 Case 1: Japanese Respondent

Aiko has spent a considerable time abroad, altogether seven years from the time she started traveling and living abroad. The first time she started traveling abroad was when she went to the USA to improve her language skills in 1987 for the home stay program, which was becoming popular at that time in Japan. There she was educated by an English teacher from Japan. Studying English was also an immersion into American culture and way of life since the tutor always tried to introduce and educate her about the American way of life as well. She thinks back to her experience saying “it was shocking in a nice way.” (interview, Feb. 19, 2009). Since that time, when her traveling started, Aiko’s international network started expanding.

Later Aiko started her two-year college in the US at the same time as she was teaching English. Overall she spent 5 years studying and living in the US. She also got involved in an international office helping American students with their exchange abroad. After graduation Aiko went to Denmark for a short visit her pen friend. After that her interest in Danish culture started growing. She spent two months traveling to two European countries, Hungary and Germany.

The person who was influential in getting her interested in traveling and different cultures was her mother, who herself dared to go against the mainstream ideal of what the married Japanese woman should be like. She went to Nepal in 1970, which was rare at that time.



She was always reflecting on her experience what it was like living there, and that found the way to get Aiko interested in other cultures too. Moreover, she was always testing her daughter's knowledge in how well she knew world capitals. Her mother was her major influence in getting her interested in cultures; however there were others who influencing her in either big or small ways.

Living abroad has been an eye-opening experience for her because she learned that there were so many different ways to live life and so many different approaches as to how people do things. Before that she did not even realize there were other options. Her whole mental state was challenged. Before she thought about life in terms of "finish the degree, get a job, get married, have kids". Living in Denmark and seeing how a girl got pregnant when she was 16 and wasn't married revolutionized her perspective. Before that it had never occurred to her that such things were even possible, because looking from a Japanese worldview that is strange and unacceptable. In Japanese society this kind of behavior would be frowned on. That also made her realize that she knew very little about her own culture and had nothing to talk about. That led her to experience culture shock and a feeling of disappointment has settled in.

At the present time she has been a Master's student at a university in Finland for almost two years. International friends play a crucial role in Aiko's experience abroad. They work as a support group for her in practical issues and also they function as a group she identifies with because common experience is the uniting force in her experience while abroad. Also she adds that sharing the same status that of a foreigner is typical of all international students. When it comes to issues like getting a visa or living permit there are other students like her who find themselves in a similar position. Also, she feels that Finnish society is not so open towards change or international people. She feels that she would not be able to participate in Finnish society if it was not for her work, where she is immersed in the local environment.

Aiko is teaching Japanese part-time to local Finnish students. Often she finds herself living two lives because of living and socializing in an international community and also being immersed in the Finnish environment because of her work. In her own words, her work environment instilled the status of minority in her because she realized that she is Japanese. However, it resembles home to her in many ways, and the head teacher of the school is friendly towards her. Teaching at a Finnish school is a rewarding experience for her because in this way she can learn many things about the Finnish way of life and compare it with her own culture. Conversing in English does not cause many difficulties: English has become her second language.

The multicultural mentality permeates all aspects of Aiko's life and thought. Aiko has decided to dedicate her master's thesis on multicultural integration and Finnish identity and find ways how best to integrate foreigners into Finnish society. Multicultural integration has greatly concerned her for a long time. She looks back on Japan and thinks of ways to improve the integration policies because according to her, "Japanese is so behind. Students don't have good experience either" (interview, Feb. 19, 2009).

In terms of the identity she describes she comments that she has not given much thought about who she is; however, this is an interesting and relevant issue for her. She thinks of herself as a multicultural traveler and hopes her life will always be like that. She appreciates differences between cultures and is willing to learn more and continue with the same experience. "It always leads me to the same path" (interview, Feb. 19, 2009). Going abroad for master's degree was incomprehensible for her; however she found herself flexible enough to adapt. She admits that she has multiple homes. Home is not only 'home-home' for her, which is Japan, but it can also be Denmark, Finland or Minnesota, where she feels safe and finds familiar.

### 5.2.2 Case 2: Russian Respondent

Respondent Irina calls herself a “professional traveler.” She has travelled to Germany and USA for student exchange and volunteer purposes. She reveals that her name is closely connected to being a traveler or a guest, and that gives her identity. She even cited the famous Russian proverb which goes like this “Как вы яхту назовёте так она и поплывёт” which means that the name of the boat fulfills its destiny.

She states that since a very early age she has been preprogrammed to develop love for traveling. That was projected via media. “There was always something that attracted me in traveling abroad” (interview, Feb.18, 2009). Moreover, studying linguistics has made her interested in cultures, because language, according to her own words, is clearly connected to culture. At her home university the students who studied translation were exposed to the culture of the language they were studying in order to become efficient and become “facilitators in between communication of two cultures” (interview, Feb.18, 2009).

Over time, while traveling, she has acquired the “travel bug” or inner drive that pushes her to travel. She is always anxious for life transitions and moving from one place to another; however this is something that fascinates her even though it is quite stressful. She feels that this time of her life is to explore. Before coming abroad Irina had expectations regarding the experiences that she would have or to get into adventure and to have challenge.

An international environment helped her literally survive in Vaasa and go through her studies and created a new self in her. She has no connection to the local environment, which is unfortunate, she thinks. Most of the Finnish friends that she has made where made through an international network.

Speaking English has become a natural skill. It does not feel foreign and gives her the feeling comfort and she has become native-like enough to express herself both

academically and personally. Expressing herself in her mother tongue has become an issue because words do not come as fluently as they come in English. Speaking English long enough gave her a chance to create her own identity that was transferred into English.

During her stay abroad she became more sensitive to other cultures, and that is reflected in the way that she demands equality among internationals and this should be the basis for a relationship. It is not overlooking cultural peculiarities and forgiving people their faults by viewing them through the lens of cultural sensitivity.

She refers to herself as a traveler and stranger and denies the possibility of being multicultural. She wishes she was one, yet regrets that she is not yet one. “I would not prefer to use the word multicultural person but citizen of the world; this is something I feel about myself. I am a constant stranger and a constant foreigner. A constant traveler. I have my personal culture and I combine something else” (interview, Feb. 18, 2009).

### 5.2.3 Case 3: German Respondent

Respondent Hans is originally from Germany, and is at present living and studying in Finland. His intercultural experience started when he was in grade ten in high school and went as a high school student exchange to the USA. For his undergraduate studies he studied Intercultural and European and American studies. He also spent seven months in Cuba as an exchange student as part of his undergraduate education. Going to Cuba was a big step and it felt exciting to explore new horizons even though the expectations were unknown. The experience as he recounts, it “was not perfect and great. I had a hard time” (interview, Feb.16, 2009).

There he had to face the realities of a different culture, different ways of doing things from what he knew from before. He experienced high levels of culture shock. In between both of his degrees he worked in the field related to his degree, which is conflict resolution, and took training in mediation. He felt that the culture and mentality in Cuba did not correspond

to his and he decided to situate himself in Finland where at least the mentality is closer to his own. At the moment he is doing his graduate studies in Intercultural Communication and Administration. Overall he has spent almost two years abroad. The experience of being in Finland was different for him and he hasn't experienced culture shock at any level during his stay.

The home issue has been the one that has been bothering him for a long time. This confusion and tension began when he started traveling around to different places and "being everywhere and nowhere" (Interview, Feb.16, 2009). He has not found home yet but he is searching for that. Being in Finland does not feel like home because it is a temporary place. For him home carries not only a geographical area but also it is about a social network of people where he feels well and would like to live and want to be for a long time. Going back home was an excruciating experience for him because that home that he called home for a long time felt distant. His friends said that he was complaining more than he used to which he has not himself noticed.

#### 5.2.4 Case 4: Indian Respondent

David is an Indian citizen and is very "proud to be in Finland" (interview, Feb.17, 2009). Currently he is a master's degree student at the University of Vaasa in Finland. "Finnish mentality is close to his way of thinking. I like the system here, it works perfectly" (Interview, Feb.17, 2009). He wishes those elements were present in his home country. He spent 2,5 years in Vaasa and likes the city and it is his first time living abroad. "It gives me an opportunity of a lifetime through which "I can get to know international students from Mongolia to Lithuania, from Alaska to South America. I am interested to know the world. My world is outside India" (interview, Feb.17, 2009).

His social network consists primarily of international friends. Even though in the beginning he was good friends with an Indian man the network started expanding and he came to know other culture representatives and formed a solid group where he always socializes. He

meets new international students on a regular basis and expands his intercultural network. Informal gatherings like “food parties” form close relationships and through socialization he learns about other cultures. He reveals “I want to learn new things” and he has learned new things from the international group of friends. The international group plays a crucial role in his stay due to the fact that he has learned and gained a new perspective on things like that of work culture.

Being some time in Vaasa and not going home has made him settle here and he even reports not feeling homesick: “I don’t want to go home. I don’t find interest to go home. I don’t feel homesick. I have good friends. In a way I made home in Vaasa” (interview, Feb.17, 2009). He describes himself as multicultural and a survivor. “I want to put myself more than a world citizen. Survivor, I will survive. Flexible. I am able to sell coffee in Sahara and ice creams in tundra [laughs]” (interview, Feb.17, 2009). Staying abroad has made him feel “less emotional” according to his own definition because life here (in Finland) is related more to practicality compared to collectivistic culture such as he has become tolerant to other cultures by being exposed to them.

#### 5.2.5 Case Study 5: Guyanese-American Respondent

Alisha was born in Guyana. However at the age of 11 she immigrated to the US and was raised in New York. Getting used to a new life in a new country was difficult. Because America is so multicultural many have so-called hybrid identities. Therefore, by living in a Guyanese American community in the US she retained her Guyanese-ness. The US constantly gets immigrants and thus the need for home and roots is refreshed all the time. “You still retain that image, only defined by how others see you” (interview, Feb.15, 2009). For a long time Alisha tried to retain her Guyanese identity and did not want to admit her American-ness:

I used to feel more Guyanese and I was so convinced that I was not American. When my mom got her citizenship and I did not go to get mine. I am not the American

citizen, I am Guyanese! And that was for a long time when I went back to Guyana and I realized how American I was. My identity was primarily as a Guyanese immigrant. There were so many Guyanese in the US and there were enough of us to maintain the community and maintain this identity (interview, Feb.15, 2009).

However, people kept confirming her American-ness. It was then that she realized that she was in fact American as well, to be more precise Guyanese American. America is diverse, and being Guyanese is a way of representing that particular diversity out of many. She shifts her identities depending on the situation and contexts. While abroad she always refers to herself as being American, but when in America she is a hybrid of Guyanese and American:

When I am abroad I see myself as American. Even when in West Indies I see myself as American because people will never get me being as Guyanese, I still educate people about the fact that I am still Guyanese and even in West Indies people know where Guyana is they still see me as American because I am (Interview, Feb.15, 2009).

Race is one important aspect of her identity. “Race thing was a big thing. When I came here [Finland] I got a break from that. Your skin color carries different meaning depending where you go. In America what color you are makes a difference (interview, Feb.15, 2009).”

She feels that in America her identity gets “crushed and flattened” (interview, Feb.15, 2009). For example asking a question like “what do Americans think about it?” is one of them. “There are different kinds of being an American. I don’t represent everybody” (interview, Feb.15, 2009). Also in America one’s last name does not carry much meaning. “In Guyana when you tell your name people can trace you where you are and where to place you in society but in Canada or US it meant nothing. I had some time to learn to navigate society” (interview, Feb.15, 2009).

White Americans are prejudiced against blacks in America and treat them differently. When coming to the US she realized how much she was discriminated by whites. White

Americans do not integrate black Americans so easily into an American society. One of the examples of discrimination is the institutional racism where Afro-American children were segregated, put into classes primarily with other black children, because blacks are seen as intellectually inferior. Even if they were exceptionally smart it was overlooked and not recognized. This was the case with Alisha. She was put in a class with other black children, and the classes she was taking did not count towards graduation, which made her study for a longer period of time. Alisha also says that it is difficult to get a job: one has to be exceptionally smart to get it.

Alisha takes an active interest in cooking and learning about other cuisines. This is how she learned of the possibility to study abroad in Finland, by watching a cooking program. There, she got a short introduction into Sami culture. That sparked her interest in Lapland and the whole mystery of them living close to Santa Claus. She made her first trip to Lapland, where she met a Finnish girl who introduced her to some study opportunities. “I wanted to do International relations. It did not make sense to do that at home because the teaching was all about America” (interview, Feb.15, 2009).

The transition in starting life abroad was smooth and no culture shock followed with the help of tutors but the fact that Finland is a post-industrial society which is the same as the US, everyone is able to converse in English. The international group plays a survival role in Alisha’s stay abroad. One of the reasons is because the local culture is not ‘arms-wide-open’ towards foreigners: “Outside international community I don’t have anchor” (interview, Feb.15, 2009). That was not the only factor that played a survival role, it also made her realize what she had become: “When intercultural communication becomes personal, that is when you find out how different you are. It is the heart of nucleus of intercultural communication (interview, Feb.15, 2009).” In a traditional American culture there is a prevailing notion of “cultural positivity”, meaning that Americans express a certain range of emotions like happiness and anger. Through international group she has learned that there are other range of emotions, thus she learned to be more expressive and



emotional. One of the challenges that she has faced is when intercultural communication has the potential to breed conflict or misunderstanding.

Home is where her heart is, she says when trying to give her concept of home. She feels comfortable wherever she goes as long as that place has certain elements that make her happy or depending on where she is. She hopes that traveling will become part of her life. Alisha started traveling from a very young age first inside Guyana and later outside Guyana. On her 9<sup>th</sup> birthday she was out of the country. Early travel experience reinforced Alisha's interest in other cultures and her family played an influential role as well. Alisha wrote a paper concerning her identity called "My Patchwork Identity." There she discussed the elements that made her identity.

### 5.3 Case Analysis

The analytical part of the thesis consists of the presentation of the idea of multicultural identity through the analysis of five international student interviews. It will be divided under the following subheadings: different kinds of status, multicultural selves in metaphors, educational travel, international network, culture shock and reverse culture shock, English language and identity. Those are important to consider and analyze in order to show what multicultural student sojourners have become. I chose these particular subheadings because these were the most obvious and salient issues that came up during the interview process. All of these subheadings are the sub-ideas of the main idea, that is, multicultural identity. I am going to go over each one of those subheadings separately and also expand on what I mean by those, as I look at the issue of multicultural identity.

#### 5.3.1. Different Kinds of Status

When international students go abroad they obtain different kinds of status. In a nutshell, it is their perceptions and definitions of themselves while abroad, in an international

environment and in their home environment. The most common status throughout the interviews was: multicultural, foreigner, stranger, traveler, citizen of the world. Among others were racial and ethnic identity, authenticity, and cosmopolitanism. All the status terms taken together represent the multicultural personality. I will define each status term to illustrate how the multicultural individual was portrayed through these definitions that student sojourners had of themselves.

In many ways a multicultural individual is a foreigner and a stranger. Adler (1977: 240) identifies multicultural person as a stranger. Elizabeth Murphy-Lejeune (2002) also identifies a multicultural individual as a stranger who has no sense of territory, is a traveler, marginal and has a fragmented identity. According to Madan Sarup's (1994: 99) definition, a *foreigner* is "the one who does not belong to the group, who is not 'one of them,' the Other. The foreigner is the Other." He continues by defining a stranger as follows:

There is cultural exclusion of the stranger, s/he is constructed as a permanent other. Stigma is a convenient weapon in the defense against the unwelcome ambiguity of the stranger. The essence of stigma is to emphasize the difference and a difference which is in principle beyond repair and hence justifies a permanent exclusion. Unlike an alien or a foreigner, the stranger is not simply a newcomer, a person temporarily out of place. S/he is an eternal wanderer, homeless always and everywhere (ibid. 102).

The terms *foreigner* and *stranger* are very similar in meaning. A foreigner is an outsider who does not belong to any specific group of people because he or she suffers the exclusion from that group. A stranger is also an outsider who has a constant status of being homeless anywhere. Both terms suggest exclusion; however in the stranger's case it is a short-term condition where he or she does not belong.

Everyone experiences the status of foreigner when going abroad, especially when there are certain regulations that do not give one the same kind of freedom and when there are restrictions, for example, in order to reside legally in a particular country where the visitors of that country require a visa. Treating a foreigner differently signifies that he or she is the "Other" and therefore more rules, regulations or restrictions apply to that person. Aiko

identified with this experience. Also, not being able to get into the local environment intensified the feeling of being out of place and of exclusion, or gave a status of a foreigner, or the “Other.” Alisha also identified herself as a complete outsider. As she said, “outside the international community I have no anchor” (interview, Feb.15, 2009).

A stigma is attached to the word “stranger” because the stranger is the “Other,” not like everyone else. Hans, in contrast with Aiko, considered himself a foreigner both abroad and in his own homeland. While Aiko felt a foreigner abroad, Hans identified himself as a foreigner both in Finland and home in Germany. Storti (2001: 53) would call him a *marginal personality* because he lives on the boundary and cannot function entirely in his culture. He excludes himself and others exclude him as a result. This description fits the experience that Hans had with being abroad and when coming back home.

To be multicultural means to be a global citizen. “Worldwide” is synonymous with the word “global,” which takes worldwide dimensions. Global also signifies “comprehensive and all-inclusive.” Arguments have surrounded the connotation of global which has been replaced with international, which is a process that has an impact on humans collectively. Thus citizen of the world means also global citizen or international citizen, according to the current views. (Wikipedia 2009.) According to Elizabeth Kruempelmann’s (2002: 1) definition, global citizens or citizens of the world are:

[...] global minded people like you and me who crave international experience and are passionate about living fulfilling lives. The term “global citizen” creates awareness of a whole category of internationally oriented people who derive satisfaction from life by discovering the world. By living in foreign countries, global citizens tend to form a unique cross-cultural group. Their worldly outlook on life bonds them together with likeminded thinkers who appreciate the world at large—its people, cultures, history engineering marvels natural resources and all the fascinating facets of life that make the world an exciting place. The global citizen’s philosophy is based on the awareness that simulating experiences of living in foreign countries help us develop as people.

To be a global citizen means being curious about the world, having international hobbies and interests, being aware of global issues, having an international network of contacts,

being involved in and contributing to global causes, language proficiency, expressing cross-cultural appreciation and adaptation, and a global way of thinking. Thinking globally meant that you were able to analyze situations and problems from the point of view of other cultures, international travel experience, an international education, international work experience, sharing international experiences. (ibid. 3.)

Kruempelmann's (2002) reasoning suggests that all multicultural people are global citizens on the basis of their desire to know the world, socialize with other internationals, and their lives abroad. Irina referred to herself as a citizen of the world, which in fact is the same as a global citizen and is close to Aiko's status of being a multicultural traveler. Aiko had a passion for traveling and meeting other cultural representatives, which also made her global citizen. One of the reasonable explanations for this is that Irina identified herself as one because she had developed a global multicultural perspective. One of the examples of her multicultural perspective was the topic she had chosen to explore for her thesis, that of global identity, which has global and local features. Aiko was writing her thesis on the integration of immigrants into Finnish society and wanted to see how the integration processes worked in order to apply it in Japan.

In Kruempelmann's (2002: 2) words, "Living a global life is simply a matter of choice. Becoming a global citizen means to experience life beyond your country's borders." Irina chose the global way of life because this was something, as she said earlier, she had been "programmed" to become: she had a rich international profile that made her a global citizen. Aiko had chosen a similar lifestyle: she had lived abroad nearly seven years, that is, "beyond her country's borders." Kruempelmann (2002) made it clear that a multicultural lifestyle is a matter of choice, and that is obvious from the examples of Aiko and Irina. Others, like Hans, David and Alisha willingly travelled abroad for educational purposes and intercultural experience, motivated by the desire to know the world in all its diversity.

According to Seelye and Wasilewski (1996: 94), "authenticity anxiety" is one of the characteristics of multicultural individuals. Fall (2004: 163) gives a definition of what

authenticity means by making the same point as Seelye and Wasilewski (1996), that authenticity stems from anxiety and is a result of that anxiety:

Authenticity involves a particular quality of awareness, of anxiety, and of response to anxiety. A person living authentically is aware of, that is, acknowledges, accepts, even embraces, the givens of life—death, isolation, freedom, and meaninglessness—as they play out in the four interrelated spheres of being. Authenticity involves neither avoiding nor being preoccupied with any given or sphere. Authentic awareness facilitates normal, rather than neurotic, anxiety as one confronts choices each moment of one's life.

Multicultural people have minority status because they are authentic, meaning that they are different and not like everyone else. Multicultural people suffer from “authenticity anxiety,” and Hans was the one who referred to himself as being authentic. He referred to himself as German but also to a large extent defined himself as multicultural. He neither completely belonged to his culture, or as Adler (1977: 228) puts it “was owned by his culture,” nor did he feel at home in another culture abroad. He was an “authentic in-between.” Germany became a distant land for him because he had not been there for a long time and every time he went there he suffered from the “displacement syndrome” and felt totally out of place in his home environment. Adler (1977) identifies a multicultural individual as someone who is vulnerable and confused, like Hans.

Being multicultural does not mean that it neglects one's national identity. One can be multicultural and strongly retain one's national identity. Being abroad made Irina more appreciative of her own people and appreciative of other cultural differences as well. Being abroad “gave her new eyes,” where she realized what her own nation meant to her. She stated: “I can feel other Russians when they are just going around and I am more sensitive to Russianness and now I treat Russians maybe with a little bit more respect” (interview, Feb.18, 2009). For Hans, being abroad or being in international settings did not mean his stopping being German. He realized he was different through interacting with the “Other.” Hans retained his national identity but it was altered by interactions with the “Other”: “I don't consider myself monocultural. Something is between monocultural and multicultural.

I am German and dealing with others makes me feel that I am German.” (interview, Feb.16, 2009.)

Being multicultural means having many identities or selves. Adler (1977: 238) says that one of the features of a multicultural person is that one contains multiple selves, or has a fragmented identity. Besides national identity, ethnic identity played a significant role in shaping Alisha’s multicultural identity. Even though America is referred to as a melting pot of cultures and immigrants who settle there going through assimilation, Alisha had retained a great deal of her ethnic identity. According to Mary Waters (1999: 19),

Three commonalities that influence the societies and their people today: the legacies of European colonialism, the legacies of slavery, and the domination of the island economies and cultures in recent times by the United States. These commonalities together shape a particular West Indian identity and culture that the immigrants bring with them to New York.

This passage is significant in understanding that history and one’s past played a significant role in identity formation. That particular identity for Alisha, West Indian identity, was retained in response to the hegemony of the West.

Guilherme (2007: 73) maintains that: “elite cosmopolitanism--extrinsic to the nation-state--lies in the upper socioeconomic levels of society, where multilingualism is the goal and dialogue between cultures is possible and therefore intercultural competences are valued regardless of how they are achieved as long as they are strategically effective.” Alisha managed herself really well in the international environment because she came from a cosmopolitan city where diversity and multiculturalism were prevalent. Her choice to describe herself as “cosmopolitan” referred to her identification with the world and being at home wherever she went. It also referred to the idea coming from a place that has multicultural demographics. Finally, being “native intercultural,” as she said jokingly, was significant to her when she conversed with students who came from a diversity of cultures.

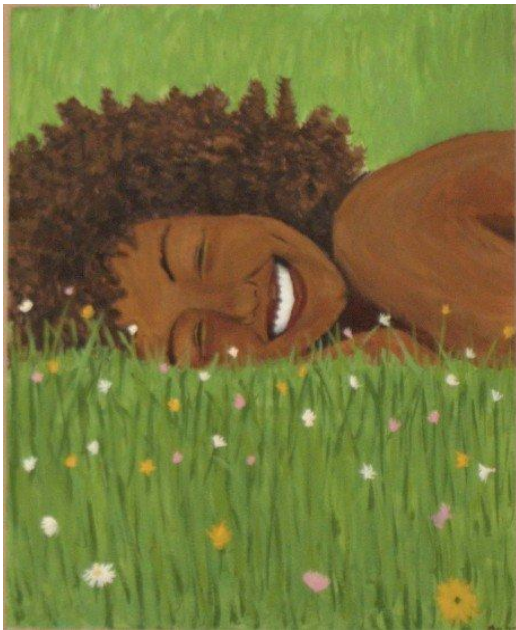
Multicultural individuals, as mentioned before, are made of multiple selves, and this can be seen in Irina's and David's metaphors. Irina's extended metaphor was a song called *Bitch* by Meredith Brooks (see Appendix 3). It starts rather dramatically in teenage fashion with the words "I hate the world today." This refers to the world full of contradictions that goes against Irina's mentality and it raises inner battles within her. This song clearly suggests the multiplicity of selves and how she perceives herself: "I am a little bit of everything, all rolled into one." This metaphor portrays a person with fragmented full of extremes and contradictions, struggles and paradoxes with misconceptions.

Same fragmentation of self can be seen in David's metaphor, which is a song *Gin Soaked Boy* by the band "Divine Comedy" (see Appendix 3). This song is full of binary oppositions. *Binarism* has been defined as "the passion of those who tend to see everything as divided into two categories." According to Chandler (2003) here are two types of oppositions: logical contradictories and logical contraries. The example of the logical contradictory would be alive/dead where "not alive" can only be "dead." Logical contradictories are obviously seen in the first refrain of the song: "darkness" and "light," "leftness" and "right," "rightness" and "wrong," "shortness" and "long," "goodness" and "bad," "saneness" and "mad," "sadness" and "joy." The song gives quite a long description of what one is, each line starting with the statement "I'm" and ends with the question "Who am I?" This metaphor addresses the issue of the multiplicity of selves which is obvious from the lyrics of this song.

Lise Sparrow (2000: 173) stated that race was one of the most important elements in shaping one's identity. According to Waters (1996a: 65), representatives of minority groups usually form bi-cultural or hyphenated identity and function in both cultures. There is a great deal of pressure from the mainstream society and minority culture on immigrant children, who have to form or adjust their identity according to those demands. Among black immigrants race is one of the forces that imposes identity on them even though they want to choose otherwise. Often the formation of ethnic identity comes with the formation of gender identity. The boundaries between different types of identities are more fluid and

permeable for girls than for boys in choosing American identity. So, by the adolescence period Alisha had her identity formed as Guyanese, while American identity was something that she chose, since she felt she came from two cultures, that of Guyana and the US, her place of birth and country of residence, and thus had a bi-cultural identity because of the pressure from both cultures.

One of the salient markers of one's multicultural identity is race and "connection to a larger whole." It makes up one of the multicultural selves that an individual may have. In addition to race, collectivism defines one's perceptions of personal identity. These elements of multicultural identity were represented in Alisha's metaphor. For those individuals who come from oral culture, what is being communicated often comes through symbols. Oral culture and messages are communicated through symbols that are prevalent in Guyanese culture. Traditional Guyanese oral tradition is prevalent, and the choice of picture to describe herself illustrates that. Visualizing herself was much easier for Alisha than for others which is in the picture *Au Naturel* below shows.



**Picture 1.** *Au Naturel* by Amma Seaforth



This image is the picture of a young black Guyanese woman, full of robust energy and life. The etymology of the French expression *au naturel* means naturally, in the plainest manner. (Wiktionary 2009). This girl is natural; she is not wearing any make-up and has naturally curly hair. Alisha states that hair for blacks plays a big role in their identity construction. During the colonial period, African hair was considered ugly by Europeans, and even now some are trying to straighten their hair in order to lessen the stigma. Also, facial expressions and the “eye curve,” as she said, make her visualize what being Guyanese is like. (interview, Feb. 15, 2009.) Here is what Alisha commented on the picture above:

I feel like this is really me. This picture is pretty significant. I was imagining this picture and a cousin who I did not know drew it. She is Guyanese Canadian [laughs] she has never been to Guyana but her parents are Guyanese. This connection that we have even when we don't know one another it just bubbles up, it comes out from nowhere [...] It links me to people that are seen and unseen, known and unknown in spirit. Part of my identity is linked to my family, they construct who I am. You don't get to be the whole person. In a certain way I still live in Guyana 'cause I still live in that community [...]. Even being here I still have connection to this larger whole. I was connected to this person that I did not even know. (interview, Feb. 15, 2009.)

One can clearly see how collectivist elements of identity were instilled in Alisha even after she moved to the States, where a more individualistic mentality and identity were emphasized. It showed her emotional attachment to the Guyanese community whether “seen or unseen, known or unknown.” Even in an international environment she was connected with the larger whole. Race and one's ethnic identity are thus very significant in perceptions of oneself. The following subsection is about the international network, in which international students socialize, build close meaningful relationships and transform their “selves”.

According to Waters (1996a: 71, 75) or white American immigrants, becoming an American means moving upward socially. For blacks, moving from the status of being an immigrant to being an African American means moving downward socially. Middle class teenagers have a higher tendency to identify ethnically, whereas those from a poor background identify themselves more as Americans. Social status plays a role as well.

Alisha was from a middle class, thus she identified herself ethnically by defining herself Guyanese. The American part came later when she decided to become one.

For individuals who come from collectivistic societies, groups, class, and nationality matter. At the beginning of her essay “My Patchwork Identity” Alisha gave a summary definition of herself: “Though I am many things to many people at different times, I can see some major themes in the forming of my identity based on family, class and nationality. It can also be examined as a before and after: response to cataclysm” (“My Patchwork Identity” 2008). The definition that Alisha gave of herself is clear, coming from a collectivist society those three are the emerging elements of one’s identity.

According to Shaules (2007: 240), not only do students learn interculturally but speakers of many languages are able to switch between languages, and are also able to adapt their behavior and communication styles and mentality based on who they are dealing with. Cultural code-switching can be likened to language code-switching. Different selves are “code-switched” without the realization that they change themselves in any drastic way. Alisha learned that lesson because at the end of her essay she talked about her immigrant identity, which requires her “to balance and manage all these selves” that constituted her.

If one considers becoming a traveler that means being away from home for some time. That is what multiculturals do most of the time—travel and through that experience become such. Multiculturals are eternal wanderers, nomads, world explorers. Four out of five students did not want to settle down, felt an urge to move around, have an exciting adrenaline-filled life. All five student sojourners stated that their passion for traveling was born out of curiosity to know the world and learn about cultures and life abroad through education. Many student sojourners travel abroad in pursuit of education. *Educational travel* is referred to by Kruempelmann (2008: 78), as being a value-added approach to travel because its emphasis is on acquiring new knowledge, and doing something that is demanding and different adds value to life. This definition of education travel parallels

Peter Adler's (1977) idea of multicultural style, which refers to this process of learning and the style of life due to an individual's exposure to how other cultures live.

Based on this definition, I treat educational travel as an expression of a multicultural style of consciousness. Aiko, Irina, Alisha, and David expressed the desire to be eternal travelers and have opportunities in life that would lead them to continue with the same international experience that they had. Aiko stated: "I am still traveling around. I would always like to be it this way. I don't know how my life takes but I would like to continue that path [...]. I always knew I am going to travel more" (interview, Feb.19, 2009). Aiko's multicultural self was reflected in her chosen metaphor of herself: "I am like a wind that comes and goes, and meets the earth at anywhere will be [sic]." In this metaphor the desire for being a wind is depicted and also its function of bringing itself to the world. Aiko's metaphor is replete with natural elements, the wind and the earth, that have a particular role. First of all, these natural elements that she identified with stress her Japaneseness. The Japanese feel their sense of identity, as Aiko admitted, coming through nature and having oneness with nature. The images in this metaphor carry a symbolic meaning. Wind and earth are natural metaphors and are personified. They perform activities that can be performed by humans: "the wind *comes* and *goes* and *meets* the earth." This metaphor suggests that the person identifies herself with the wind and wind is always in motion. It moves; so does she. The wind refers to a person who likes traveling. The wind also has an everlasting state so it refers to the state of a person who sees herself as a constant traveler and she would go wherever the wind would blow. Words like *coming* and *going* refer to that process. The wind travels to meet the earth. The earth represents the world in all its diversity, different countries, and different people of different nationalities.

Irina always felt the urge to go see new places as she described her "travel bug" leading her to new places, even though moving was a stressful transition for her. She made a very interesting remark regarding her name which means a traveler, and, keeping this in mind, she wanted to fulfill her destiny:

My name, from Greek, means traveler [...]. It means a traveler, but also hospitable. It is connected with receiving guests and being a guest myself. So maybe it is somehow connected [...]. There was always something that attracted me to traveling abroad. I also think that it would be more rational and interesting for my future in a way continue staying in a foreign country and continue with the same experience. Most likely I will continue being a professional foreigner. (interview, Feb.18, 2009.)

Many others also shared the passion for travel. David did not have the need to go home to India because he wanted to travel and see the world, saying “My world is outside India. I want to know the world” (interview, Feb.17, 2009). Alisha also expressed that desire to continue with her international experience, even when she went back home to New York, saying “I would move to a lot of different places but I will always travel to some place very year” (interview, Feb.15, 2009).

The issue of home became a very salient concern when the international student sojourners started traveling. As already discussed, when an individual starts traveling he or she develops global-mindedness. Elizabeth Murphy-Lejeune (2002) suffers from the loss of territory, so home can be anywhere. Most of the time, multiculturals develop a love of traveling, and home is any place on earth for them where they could live or call it home. Adler (1977: 228) talks about multicultural people who have a homeless state of mind which can be interpreted in two different ways. Homeless refers to an individual not having a home or place on earth, like eternal nomads or travelers, or simply having many homes, a state that makes them “homeless.”

For some of the students, home was a place anywhere on earth or something that did not have to do with any specific place, but rather an idea. For Alisha, home shifted depending on the place she traveled to and also it was an idea, the state of her mind. Alisha experienced home, depending on where she was. It was a “portable home” that she was carrying around. She took her home with her, as she said:

Home is where your heart is [laughs]. Home is wherever I am. I carry my home around with me because I think it’s an idea. It depends where I am. When I am in Finland and I say home I mean New York, when I am in New York and I say home I

mean Finland, when I am in Guyana and I say home I definitely mean New York [laughs] (interview, Feb.15, 2009).

For others home was something they were searching for, as in Hans' case, which made him homeless:

Oh (...) that's a very tough question 'cause this is something I have been dealing with a lot lately. I have had home in a very long time and I have been traveling around working in different places in Germany. Being everywhere and nowhere really. I would like to find home. I haven't decided what home is. Nowhere at the moment feels like a real home to me. Certainly not Finland yet and not Vaasa 'cause I know it is temporary. For me home is a combination of friends, social network. Place where I feel well and I would like to live and that I want to be there for a long time. So far I haven't and I am afraid I won't in a very long time. (interview, Feb.16, 2009.)

One of the multicultural person's features is that they are "homeless" individuals. Hans' metaphor of identity portrays that conflict, his quest for home: "I am like a travelling tree: sear and cut-off roots somewhere, no roots anywhere, but growing everywhere and all the time." This metaphor of identity is personified: the tree is traveling, which refers to a person who is on the move. It is a rootless tree whose roots have been cut off and are not found anywhere. However, this tree manages to grow everywhere it moves and at all stages of its life. It is phenomenal and full of contradictions because it manages to grow even when its roots are sear and cut off. Roots are important in the life cycle of the tree. Without roots, not many plants would survive either. That means that rootlessness hinders the plant from growing and developing further. However, there must be something about it that makes it survive and grow "everywhere and all the time." A tree symbolizes home and roots help it situate itself in it; however this tree lacks roots. In Hans case, the element that supplied life was an international circle of friends that made all of his transitions smoother, like water that carried life and also represented refreshment. Even though he did not feel that Finland was his home, he was continuously refreshed by the international friends that he had.

Very often a multicultural individual settles in a place that has intercultural elements, like diversity of people from different cultures. For David, however, the experience of home was different from Hans': to find home was to reject his home in India and make home in Finland in an international environment. Assimilation, according to Sarup (1994: 98) is the response to stigma. Because David wanted to distance himself from his home, he chose a new home for himself—in a foreign country in an intercultural environment. “Even if I go to another place, I miss Vaasa. I miss the place and people, especially university premises” (interview, Feb.17, 2009). The resistance towards home came because abroad he found elements that he was fascinated with and the ones that he did not find at home in India. For Irina, home was not of a geographical character, but it was rather people who cared about her. The place where she felt comfortable in was an international environment, so it was one of her homes.

For multicultural individuals one home as such often stops to exist after they have travelled for a long time. Because they have been away from home for a long time, any place on earth can be called home. For Aiko, home was where she could identify with familiar elements. Visiting a country where she had already been made her feel that way because it had something she knew already: the language she was exposed to, the way buildings or people were and ways of doing things. She did not have one home in particular, but many homes.

All five respondents had status that identified them as multicultural. Throughout interviews the most common ones that came up were multicultural or citizen of the world. All shared a passion for traveling and that is the start of their multicultural identity formation because educational learning facilitates the process of becoming multicultural or world-minded considerably, as one learns of many different ways of how cultures operate. All of them had personalities that embraced other cultures and had undergone considerable changes. The following subsection is about the international network in which international students socialize, build close meaningful relationships and transform their “selves.”

### 5.3.2. International Network

An international network is important in student sojourners' stay abroad. Adler (1977: 228) refers to a multicultural person being universal. Their universality is "an abiding commitment to the essential similarities between people everywhere, while paradoxically maintaining an equally strong commitment to differences." That is what happens when international students are immersed in an intercultural environment: the recognition of similarities between students starts to grow as well as the realization that they all have different cultural backgrounds which makes them different from one another. However, East (2008: 160) introduced the idea of tokenistic multiculturalism, where differences are reduced in intercultural socialization through English, which makes differences less visible. O'Reagan and MacDonald (2008) argued that intercultural communication plays a significant role in shaping identity that goes beyond national boundaries. Moreover, by observing cultural differences some students may internalize them and that is where intercultural learning starts, through close interaction with other students.

Because of the sense of cohesiveness, students develop a strong bond with the international community while staying abroad. Shaules (2007: 247) identified this bond and attraction to a particular community as *rapport*. The new environment makes them feel better than their old one. One of the reasons is that the new environment provides sojourners with what they need. They often experience feelings of disillusionment if that community does not meet the needs or expectations that they projected on to it. Those who feel rapport with that community often denigrate their home community. By doing so they go the reversal stage, where the new environment becomes pleasant and desirable and the old one is not. Very often this is how students feel about their new international environment, because it is a place where they feel free from the pressure to conform, as this is expected in homogeneous societies: they can be themselves in a heterogeneous society that allows and embraces diversity. For example, an international network of friends played a crucial role in Aiko's stay abroad. She felt *rapport* towards it. Also, it served as a support group for her. Moreover, the group had given her a sense of identity where she had picked up different

elements that she found admirable and adopting those to make her international self; she had become internationally competent:

First semester when I got here and everybody was thinking about the grade, what successful means. For me, 2 was ok grade and for other they were asking so are you going to take another exam? My standard was influenced by other students' 'cause they come from other cultures. I am not a straight A student. Maybe I am not doing right? and then I talked to my tutor and she said: "No, you are doing good. 2 is ok too, you already passed." If I stay with international group, I get influenced by everyone's culture. (interview, Feb.19, 2009.)

Some students may favor this particular environment so much that they actually become one with it. For David, this experience was something more than to Aiko: it was the establishment of a strong bond and assimilation with the international environment. In his own words he became "a little bit Finnish, a little bit international" (interview, Feb.17, 2009). Both the local culture and the intercultural environment contributed to the formation of his multicultural identity. Because he favored the environment he also, like Aiko, felt rapport towards it. Going back home was something that bothered him and he did not consider that as an option in the near future: "Parents were asking me to go back home. I don't want to go home. I don't find interest to go home. I don't feel homesick, I have good friends" (interview, Feb.17, 2009). He found his niche among diversity.

As the interviews with the students showed, this rapport that students develop with the international community intensified their unwillingness to socialize with the host culture. International students interact within international settings much more often than with the representatives of the host culture. Irina commented on her lack of involvement with the local environment:

Shame to admit but I am not that much included in a local environment. People who I am living with are international students even locals who I am communicating with, I do have some Finnish friends, they are somehow connected to me through this international network, they are either people interested in learning Russian or my international tutor. So it was basically like this. I don't have much connection to genuine local environment. (interview, Feb.18, 2009.)



Students' experience with the local community was not as successful as in the international one. Irina experienced the disconnection with the local Finnish environment, and it is clear from what she said that the local people were not so interested in getting to know her unless it was only some exchange of favors. For Aiko this experience was similar, but at the same time different. She stated: "Now I am working with the school. First semester was more international group and now it is two different lives I am living. I am going to university here and lots of international friends and FKF [Fria Kristliga Folkhögskolan] is completely Finnish, so I am minority in a way." (interview, Feb.19, 2009). This clearly shows that it was because of work that she was immersed in the local Finnish environment; otherwise she would not have had access to it. Hans also felt that he was cut off from the local environment and said: "it was difficult to meet people from Finland. Our study program had only one Finn of whom we did not see much. Meeting people in Vaasa is hard. I have some Finnish friends but we don't go out" (interview, Feb. 16, 2009). For Hans it was obviously the study program that prevented him from socializing with local Finnish people, but also their unwillingness to meet him. Alisha identified with the same experience but also said that, even though she wanted to integrate into the local environment, she felt that that same environment was excluding her.

The above reactions of students were quoted in order to show the fact that it is the international environment that shapes students' identity because they socialize there most of the time. Thus, international settings serve as a bubble to protect them against the negative and the pressures of the homogeneous society that they are in, and serve as a support group. According to Berry et al (1998), student sojourners experience negative reactions towards the host culture in order to soothe this experience. Also, international students share the same language, English, which makes it easier for them to express their ideas and communicate. As a result, students learn bits and pieces of each other's cultures, which makes them flexible and their identity very fluid to change. Because all of these international students were primarily socializing in the international environment, it was a place where they were learning interculturality and where their identities were reshaped in

the process of intercultural communication. Intercultural learning results in cognitive empathy, which is defined by Shaules (2007: 238) as:

[...] an increased ability to consciously differentiate cultural phenomena. Differentiation refers to the way in which one creates meaning from the perceptual phenomena in one's environment. One's worldview becomes more differentiated by increasing the perceptual categories used to make sense of one's experiences.

Today's universities are an extensive learning environment where students obtain knowledge that will serve them in the future to accomplish goals to succeed globally. Stier (2001) emphasizes that the ideologies of international education develop intercultural competence in student sojourners. Hans learned to be interculturally competent through studying in an Intercultural Communication program, but also through practicing it. He felt that "this particular program is working well because you get to live what you study. When we have lunch at school there are at least five nationalities at one table and you get to practice so much with that" (interview, Feb.16, 2009). Hans was amazed by the international variety of students that he had a chance to meet. Through communicating with students coming from different cultures or societies, he came to practice what he came to study in Finland: "I don't know if I got more tolerant. What did change is that I found myself much easier time dealing with people from other countries. Much easy to talk to people. I lost this anxiety to connect to people from other places" (interview, Feb.16, 2009). He reflected that one gets to learn many things when students from different cultural backgrounds are brought together, making intercultural learning possible. Hans saw this as an opportunity to add this practical experience to his foreign degree, which is connected to culture and communication.

Not only does international education lead one to multicultural competence, but the university context also serves as a place for international sojourners to learn of other cultures, since international students interact with each other in many ways: classrooms, mutual projects, coffee breaks and informal international gatherings. Shaules (2007) speaks on the goals of international education that are oriented to assist student sojourners gain

cultural awareness through intercultural experience. Many of the academic courses help students realize the nature of culture, how communication is influenced by cultural differences and what impact culture and those cultural differences have. The goal is to bring ethnorelativist (which is the opposite of ethnocentric) perspectives into one's awareness, understanding one's culture but also being aware of other perspectives as well in order to avoid some future misunderstandings that are caused by intercultural differences (ibid. 85). Alisha learned and saw that cultural differences come up in group situations. Through such situations Alisha learned to be interculturally sensitive or ethnorelative and keep in mind how careful she had to be in her choice of words not to be misunderstood when she wrote emails. Accumulating those different cultural elements and being aware of them, she gained a multicultural perspective. Aiko stated that she became "influenced by everyone's culture. We can share cultural things and fun and I really value that. It is always fascinating to learn those things for me but I am always curious about those things. So many ways of living, how people think" (interview, Feb. 19, 2009). Moreover, she expands on how this international circle of friends affected her identity:

Maybe I don't pay attention to who am I [sic]. I am just taking pieces of cultures. Blending in everything to make myself, maybe that is why I am not typical [laughs]. I respect some culture values oh this is so nice I want it. Build myself by adopting bits and pieces. I want to have good part of every culture. (interview, Feb. 19, 2009).

It is clear that an international environment played a role in Aiko's formation of identity. Moreover, she was engaging in activities that characterize her as multicultural: when biased she would adjust her thinking, was active in her international experience by volunteering, was exploring the issue of integration in her thesis and wanted to see changes happening in Japan as well. She had worked and desired to continue in the same vein with the international students, which made her suitable to work and function as a mediator between cultures. She said: "I hope that even if I am going home, I would like to get involved in non-profit organization. More interested in other cultures and how people live. Maybe that is why I wanted to work at international office, in multicultural settings." (interview, Feb.19, 2009). The same rings true for Alisha. An international environment is what

formed her identity, apart from her being a Guyanese-American, Black American, immigrant, cosmopolitan, citizen of the world. She described herself jokingly as being “a native of the intercultural tribe” (interview, Feb.15, 2009).

Through intercultural communication new perspectives are shaped. Irina commented on what role an international circle had played for her personally and she had learned a valuable lesson: “Through intercultural communication I came to realize that you should be treating everyone as equal” (interview, Feb.18, 2009). She realized that although there might be differences between cultures, mutual respect should be developed. Alisha pointed out the pitfalls of intercultural communication and said that through the mistakes that she made, she learned her lesson by adjusting her behavior so that it was interculturally appropriate:

On the surface level the hardest is to organize a group, challenging. Oh this is intercultural [laughs]. Sending emails if communication is written you have to be extremely careful. All 5 of them won't get the point the same way, somebody will get offended, it is *guaranteed*. Even if the email says: “Hi, how are you?” What do you mean *how*? [laughs] (interview, Feb.15, 2009).

Intercultural learning also comes “the hard way,” through painful lessons, as in the case of Alisha. But even with that in mind, she could feel at home in an international circle. Irina, too, identified strongly with the same experience and stated that the international network had been salient in forming a new identity in her. Coupled together with the English language and the international network, she had constructed her own identity just as Aiko had. Irina said:

I really enjoyed being in an international and intercultural environment so coming and settling down becoming a permanent immigrant is not an option to me. I prefer to explore new horizons. The international group gave me a sense of identity [...] This international environment gave me a particular sense of identity that made me in a way more successful in getting my goals done [...] It was a support group for me because it gave me sense of identity apart from this international group [...] All of us are foreigners and all our experiences have been new for our environment and things and so on (interview, Feb.18, 2009).

All the respondents confirmed that the international network played a crucial role in forming intercultural sensitivity and shaping their new selves, or to be more specific their multicultural identities. All the student informants said that they had felt attraction to international student body, and that they identified strongly with the experiences that they all had abroad. For Aiko it created her new self, by adopting some cultural elements that she felt attracted to. Irina created her identity through intercultural communication. Hans learned that there were many approaches. David had assimilated into the international environment. Alisha had gained a new perspective on what it means to be expressive through deep meaningful relationships with the international students.

The next subsection deals with how culture shock facilitates cultural learning. Each of the student sojourners represented a multicultural person. They continuously learned about other cultures and never cease to be interested in new things that add value to their lives. Having been exposed to different cultures, they learned that this experience was insatiable and they sought for more opportunities to travel and grow in an international environment to gain new knowledge about the world.

### 5.3.3 Culture Shock and Reverse Culture Shock

Culture shock is an inseparable part of intercultural learning. According to Martinelli, Gillert and Taylor (2003: 17), in a larger context, intercultural learning is seen as the ability to co-exist and live peacefully in a multicultural society. Literally, intercultural learning has to do with the attitudes and the knowledge gained in interacting with different cultures. Learning happens on the cognitive (acquisition of knowledge or beliefs), emotional (feelings changed through time), and behavioral levels. Marx (2001) stated that culture shock was significant in affecting one's emotions, thinking, social skills and identity. Janet Bennett (1998) contributed with her views on culture shock involving loss and change, corresponding to Marx's idea where identity becomes reshaped. Milton Bennett (1998) discussed the stages that an individual goes through when facing the ambiguity and finally reaching ethnorelativism, where they developed cultural sensitivity.

One of the multicultural person's outstanding characteristics is that they are interculturally equipped, realizing and respecting the differences when exposed to other cultures. When a sojourner is faced with cultural differences, they may feel that they are not knowledgeable enough of other cultures and are not sure how to deal with those differences. As a result, culture shock comes as a response to cultural differences. Shaules (2007: 240) comments on *cultural difference* in this way:

Cultural difference refers to ways in which products of meanings of a cultural community differ in systematic ways from those of another. For intercultural learner cultural difference implies that a sojourner's knowledge of his or her environment is inadequate in systematic ways.

However, students who have learned interculturally adjust their thinking and take their focus off their own cultural preferences to consider other existing cultural possibilities. All the respondents had experienced culture shock and the shock of homecoming for some extent, either mild or strong.

Shaules (2007: 142) states that intercultural experiences can be demanding, meaningful and deep. The demanding part requires adjustment on high levels from a sojourner, whereas the meaningful element plays an important role for the sojourner. Some of the respondents, such as Hans, had both strong levels of culture shock and reverse culture shock. Hans was the one who experienced intense degrees of culture shock that made him question his own culture and differences between other cultures as well. The hardest thing for him to realize was that when he came back home, seeing and feeling home was different from the time when he first left. Homecoming was strange and painful because it did not feel like home any more, however it was a great intercultural learning experience because he and other people observed how he changed: "People told me I would be complaining a lot" (interview, Feb.16, 2009). He was complaining "a lot" because he learned new ways to do things and the old way was not attractive anymore, to the point where it was annoying. Others had a strong culture shock but then came to terms with it and made their home in the host country as well the international environment, as David did. For David having some

background knowledge about the country he was going to did not prevent him from having culture shock. One of the obvious features was the period of silence that David had when he moved abroad to Finland. Finland was his first country of visit. The first 6 months in Finland were “lonely and difficult” (interview, Feb.17, 2009). It was a culture shock that he had because he saw that the way of life in Vaasa was different: “it is not India where you approach people on the street and talk to them freely” (Interview, Feb.17, 2009). It was a lesson in living, and then realization came when he said: “I opened my mouth and made lots of friends with my mouth and enemies [laughs]” (interview, Feb.17, 2009). Through observing and learning of other cultures David dared to finally take his first step and became open, and that was the moment when intercultural learning started for him.

For many sojourners, culture shock was an intense experience but it also depended on a person’s reactions towards change and transitions. Two respondents, Irina and Aiko, experienced only mild levels of culture shock. Irina did not report experiencing any “big” culture shock: rather, she experienced transition shock when she had to move from one country to another. Aiko observed many cultures and learned about cultural differences and was able to look at her own culture in a new way. Culture shock was something she did not know about until she went abroad for the first time. She said that “it was shocking in a nice way” (interview, Feb. 19, 2009). For Aiko, in comparison with Irina, the transition was not much of an issue, but some culture shock was present. Those who did not experience a severe culture shock had a strong reverse culture shock experiences like in Alisha and Hans’ case. For Alisha, culture shock was not much of an issue when she was abroad, however reverse culture shock became relevant after she came back home for the summer. Reverse culture shock was something that hit Alisha when she came back to the US after a year of studying abroad. Social expectations were the hardest to deal with for both her and Hans. All in all, all students had both similar and different experience that facilitated their intercultural learning experience. In the next subheading the impact of language on students’ identities will be discussed.

### 5.3.4 English Language and Identity

Throughout the interviews, language came to be a prominent issue in affecting one's identity. By analyzing what all five international students said, it was obvious that there was a correlation between language and identity. There was a strong link that English facilitated in creating a multi-sided identity, gave them empowerment, suppressed their mother tongue and reshaped their national identity, and limiting the freedom to express thoughts and feelings unreservedly. Their own national language played a role in shaping their national identities; however with speaking English national identities started to change.

When it comes to using English, the dilemma of new cultural identity arises. I take sides with Kawai (2008: 47) who states that English is a cultural force that changes one's identity. Thus, it works as a tool to shape new identity. Guilherme (2007: 74) expands on the connotations of English: "it is the language of imperialism, consumerism, marketing, Hollywood, multinationals, war and oppression as well as of opportunity, science, social movements, peace processes, human rights and intercultural exchanges." The spread of English is prevalent in many spheres, thus it affects one's mentality.

Since English is often referred to as a global or international language, many students feel that it has shaped global-mindedness in them. Their national language played an important role in retaining their ethnic identities and the weakening native language reinforced the global or multicultural identity when speaking English. For Aiko, speaking English became a natural skill after having lived abroad but her mother tongue started deteriorating: "Last year I had no one to speak Japanese with; I am losing fluency and especially here in Vaasa. It is affecting me, I even forget some Chinese characters. I don't read much like I used to read" (interview, Feb.19, 2009). According to Kawai (2007: 41), the Japanese value and treasure their language. It is the "spiritual blood" and the "nation's mother" for Japanese. After the Russo-Japanese war of 1905, the Japanese language became the nation's symbol.



Through language the essence and ethnicity of being Japanese was reflected. Based on the information above, language equals culture, so if a Japanese loses their language or if it is replaced by another it means that they lose their national identity in a way. Eradicating language, in a traditional Japanese society, would mean eradicating or lessening self.

Irina's case was similar to that of Aiko. Irina had acquired a Westernized identity just like Aiko because English had shaped that self-consciousness in her. Her identity was based on learning English, through which she created it. Identity was a topic that highly interested her; therefore she chose to explore the topic of global and local identity in her thesis, however not on the individual but on the social level. Surprisingly enough, her identity was based on English more than on her mother tongue, Russian: "I think English has shaped part of my identity" (interview, Feb.18, 2009). Her behavior was adjusted accordingly: she was more direct:

On the other hand I think I would not be able not to speak my mother tongue at all. I would be feeling very lost and that's why it's very important when you are in international community to have some people to share the same language with you or to call home often and to speak your own language. Because it's part of you and it is difficult to be apart from your roots. When I speak my mother tongue I tend to be more vague and less direct. When I speak English I am much more direct. And I think this is when it gets to part of my identity. I think my identity even in Russian has changed to be more direct really. I think in the last years when I was using English a lot in communication I turned to be more direct. (interview, Feb.18, 2009.)

Many students had trouble with code-switching which signified that their mother tongue was worsening. While for Aiko and Irina speaking English did not create any inconvenience in code-switching, speaking English gave Hans a hard time at first, and he recalled how difficult it was, but the fact that he had overcome this obstacle was significant: "In the beginning it was tiring. But this is the longest period ever I had to communicate in a foreign language. I got so used to it now. I even started dreaming in English. The switch is actually difficult to me. English words constantly pop up" (interview, Feb.16, 2009). Just like for Hans, speaking English for David was a problem because he could not express as much in English as he could in his mother tongue. He said that speaking English affected

his identity “a little bit,” where he absorbed both the elements of the local culture and the international environment.

Code-switching is not a problem for those who are native speakers of English, as in Alisha’s case. Still, she stated that had language signified a great deal in shaping her identity, especially since she had moved to the States. Language became a signifier of prestige and revived her roots. As she put it in her own written account:

Language emerged as another big factor in shaping or performing identity. While in high school, among Anglophone immigrants, the place one immigrated from was important and the level of closeness to “home” was measured by how well one could speak the “home” language. Surprisingly for me the purest form of the home language was seen as the basolect. So the language I was taught to keep far away from in my former life now became the language of covert prestige and cultural capital. (“My Patchwork Identity” 2008.)

Her basolect is a variety of English that is close to colonial English, which is a marker of prestige. Also, English has the status of cosmopolitanism, while oppressed groups use it as a tool to struggle against hegemony (Guilherme 2007: 76). All in all, English was not only the language that signified prestige but it also her cosmopolitan, multicultural identity as a defense from hegemony. All in all, language is an integral part of an individual: both their native language and English played a significant role in shaping a student.

All of the above student sojourners were representatives of what it meant to be multicultural. The following chapter concludes by presenting the idea of multicultural identity, summarizes the results of the conducted study by reviewing each case and the strengths and weaknesses of Peter Adler’s (1977) idea of a multicultural person. It also presents Lise Sparrow’s (2000) points that were present and absent from the study. Finally, it sums up the hypothesis and the effect of intercultural communication on multicultural identity formation.

## 6 CONCLUDING REMARKS: BEING AND BECOMING MULTICULTURAL

According to Peter Adler (1977), being a citizen of the world is the same as being multicultural. Those expressions fall into the same category, with slight connotational differences between the words. Being and becoming multicultural happens in stages. It is a process, both becoming and being multicultural. Moreover, there are many degrees of being multicultural. Every individual has their own distinctive features. Being multicultural does not mean that the same experience has shaped one to being and becoming the same. On the contrary, it suggests variety. First of all, every human being is an individual and experiences things differently and reacts differently. That is one cannot be one way or another. No human being is a robotic creature but an individual with his or her wishes, likes and dislikes and preferences, and reacts to life in their own individual way. Because identity is fluid it cannot be the same, it contains variations like a color that has variety of different shades.

All five cases studied in this thesis share commonalities but at the same time some features make them different. In case 1 Aiko is the multicultural traveler, feels at home anywhere. In case 2 the respondent is a world citizen, makes the world her home. In case 3 the respondent is an alien and does not have a home, is rootless. He is in search of one, experiences very intense feelings, resisting experience from the host culture abroad. In case 4 the respondent has found his home in an international environment and found home among diversity. Case 5 talks about the respondent who has a hyphenated identity and race is one the most important aspects of shaping identity in her but also refers to herself being cosmopolitan. For all of the respondents their home was in an international context, a world in its diversity. They have partially departed from their mono-cultural selves and found their niche in an intercultural context or the world of diversity.

Intercultural development comes with experience, cultural learning and personal development. Multicultural identity does not imply the total departure from one's national

self or the roots: rather it works as a mathematic formula. It is adding one's national identity plus other identities that student sojourners have acquired. I suggest a summative way of looking at this phenomenon.

One of the major weaknesses of Peter Adler's article about the multicultural person is that it is too general. Adler's article can be looked at philosophically. Specification is needed to understand which kind of people qualify for being multicultural. It is impossible to put everyone in the same category. Also, this study suggests variations among multiculturals. People come from different backgrounds. He makes the same mistake as Hofstede and Hofstede (1981) who put cultures in two main categories, that of collectivistic and individualistic, not admitting that there can be varieties among collectivistic societies among different countries and also that there are variations in one or another particular culture as well. However, human mentality works in a stereotypical way because it helps one make sense of the world. I am still taking Hofstede and Hofstede's idea of individualist and collectivist societies as the base to explain the differences how international students from different cultures relate to one another and also are the base for the construction of their identities.

The purpose of this thesis was to show how an individual becomes reshaped in an intercultural environment through close contact with international people. They still retain a great deal of their identity such as national, and ethnical, but they also absorb many other cultural elements that make up their identity. I took the idea of Peter Adler and elaborated on it, that one becomes multicultural in an environment where one learns different cultures. Adler did not go into much detail by looking at other factors that make up one's identity like race/ethnicity etc, as Sparrow did. However, he remains the leading voice of this paper because the purpose that I was aiming at was to see how interacting in an intercultural environment contributes to the formation of multicultural identity, how other identities are added as a result of interactions and how those identities affect the identity/ies that student

sojourners had before going abroad in an intercultural context without departing from their initial roots.

Because identity is a sensitive and complex issue, some elements or it can either be present or absent. Some of the identity elements, such as religion or age or gender that Lise Sparrow (2000) emphasized as significant are not present in this study. The most visible element was race and individualist and collectivist dimensions. Based on this, one can boldly make a statement that there is great individual variation in identities and self-perceptions.

In this study I have not looked at how local culture transforms international student sojourners. Rather the focus is on how the intercultural culture transforms them. One of the parts of the hypothesis comes from the statement that international student sojourners are not active members of a local community because of the resistance of the host culture and the psychological reactions that follow. Thus, that leaves them choosing an international circle of friends where the learning takes place. That hypothesis was confirmed in the process of conducting interviews with 13 international student sojourners.

National identities as a result of intercultural contact become reduced or reshaped. Multicultural identity is about containing many identities and shifting them according to the situation, and the environment includes in itself different kinds of identities. This multicultural identity affects and reshapes the national identity and it gains another tone: it can be rejected or strengthened. Many students identified themselves as multicultural and global citizens, which means that their identity became 'globalized' or 'multiculturalized' which is unavoidable in the globalization age. Some of the limitations of conducting this study might be that interpretations of the international student sojourner cases are not entirely true. This might be due to the fact of looking at some case studies from the western perspective, the accuracy becomes distorted.

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## APPENDICES

**Appendix 1. Interview Questions**

1. Introduce yourself. Your country of origin? What is your family background? Are you bilingual, trilingual, monolingual? Are you a majority or minority in your own culture (either ethnically, linguistically)?
2. Have you had experience of living abroad before? What was the reason of going abroad? Was it a big step for you? Do you regret about it? Did you get any support from your family? Do your family members have the same experience/background? Any intercultural marriages in your family?
3. What were your expectations before going abroad? how do you deal with these changes? is it a stressful experience for you? Was adaptation easy or difficult? What was it like going back home?
4. Why are you interested in cultures, traveling?
5. Did you become more tolerant towards other cultures and viewpoints? Or more defensive of your own culture?
6. How did the image of your culture alter? Your perception of your own people.
7. How is this going abroad experience important for you?
8. How important is international group for you in your experience abroad?
9. What is your progress with the new culture, interaction with natives, interaction with foreigners.
10. Are most of your friends international students or natives?
11. Do you participate in a local community or international community more often?
12. Where are you in terms of your own culture? How have you developed personally and culturally?
13. Create your own metaphor of identity
14. Which of these suits you best: mono-cultural, multicultural, stranger, foreigner, traveler, resident, survivor, bicultural other
15. Your definition of home. Do you feel like you have a constant urge to change places or are you settled?

## Appendix 2. Generating Your Metaphor of Identity: Who am I?

**Your task** is to produce the metaphor that communicates the message about you, your identity in other words. You can either create a short one-sentence metaphor or the extended version of it.

“Metaphors represent an artificial image, an artifice, one that does not exist in “reality”. Nonetheless these images are useful aids for getting a handle on a murky issue of self.” (Seelye & Wasilewski 1996: 198)

1. Here is one of the examples to create a metaphor that consists of one sentence:

I am like a \_\_\_\_\_ that \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Another example is a more extended version of it:

I am (a subject, an object, a set of relationships or a process) that has \_\_\_\_\_ (certain qualities) that lead me to \_\_\_\_\_ (behave in certain ways) in contexts that are seen to be \_\_\_\_\_ (kind of situation), which have \_\_\_\_\_ (given) and \_\_\_\_\_ (artifacts). With which I am related in the following ways: \_\_\_\_\_ (relationships).

### Examples of some metaphors from Japan

“I am a thinking stone searching for a heart.”

“I am like a philosopher who does not have his own opinion.”

“I am like an improviser who perceives sand thinks deeply.”

“I am like the seed of a plant that travels around the world seeking somewhere where I can find comfort in the future, where I can reside and bear fruit.”

“I am like a child who desires the places where I feel I belong.”

**Example of the extended metaphor of self**

“I am like the water; I am the sea  
I hold no shape; I hold no place  
I am nowhere yet all over  
And I am still yet I am flowing

I am clear; I have no color  
But I love to reflect assorted tins  
I can be azure like the cloudless sky  
And I can be gold like the setting sun

I am capricious, so-to-speak  
I change myself as I feel  
When I am happy, I’ll be gentle  
But when I’m not, I’ll be rough

I am caring; I am concerned  
I look after all those around  
I try to guide all lost vessels  
Back on the route safely home

I want to be the nest for those  
Who seek for me and care for me  
For those in trouble; for those in tears  
I want to comfort as much as I can

I wander, I drift  
I search; I look  
I fight; I protect  
I rest; I dream

I am strong; I am weak  
I am trying; I am challenging  
I search for myself; I see my shadow  
I am who I am; I am myself

I want to be the water; I want to be the sea” (Seelye & Wasilewski 1993: 177)

### Appendix 3. List of Metaphors

I hate the world today  
 You're so good to me  
 I know but I can't change  
 tried to tell you but you look at me like maybe I'm an angel  
 underneath  
 innocent and sweet  
 Yesterday I cried  
 You must have been relieved to see the softer side  
 I can understand how you'd be so confused  
 I don't envy you  
 I'm a little bit of everything  
 all rolled into one

Chorus:

I'm a bitch, I'm a lover  
 I'm a child, I'm a mother  
 I'm a sinner, I'm a saint  
 I do not feel ashamed  
 I'm your health, I'm your dream  
 I'm nothing in between  
 You know you wouldn't want it any other way

So take me as I am  
 This may mean you'll have to be a stronger man  
 Rest assured that when I start to make you nervous  
 and I'm going to extremes  
 tomorrow I will change  
 and today won't mean a thing

Chorus

Just when you think you've got me figured out  
 the season's already changing  
 I think it's cool you do what you do  
 and don't try to save me

Chorus

I'm a bitch, I'm a tease  
 I'm a goddess on my knees

when you hurt, when you suffer  
 I'm your angel undercover  
 I've been numbed, I'm revived  
 can't say I'm not alive  
 You know I wouldn't want it any other way (Irina, Russia)

I am like a bird, which fly away freely and come back when feels hunger; I am a bird that has wings that lead me to fly away and be absolutely free that you have to let fly away and be free to experience and see the world and when it feels hunger and miss its nest and home, it will come back, will come back to you. It can stand with two legs on the floor or it can fly to the high and blue sky where the world seems to be completely different (Amanda, Hungary).

I am like a travelling tree: sear and cut-off roots somewhere, no roots anywhere, but growing everywhere and all the time (Hans, Germany).

I am like a paradox fraught with misconceptions (Omer, Turkey).

I am like a cloud that the wind takes me far away from home. I am a traveler want to go back home but can't stop my steps ahead. I am a lonely bird that sitting on the branch singing a song. I am a housekeeper that want to find a home of myself. I am a person who is waiting while seeking (Xue Yan, China).

"I am Ingres, passionate about all sorts of violins, without being able to paint." (Alexander, Hungary)

"I am like a wind that comes and goes, and meets the earth at anywhere will be (sic)." (Aiko, Japan)

#### Gin Soaked Boy

I'm the darkness in the light  
 I'm the leftness in the right  
 I'm the rightness in the wrong  
 I'm the shortness in the long  
 I'm the goodness in the bad  
 I'm the saneness in the mad  
 I'm the sadness in the joy  
 I'm the gin in the gin-soaked boy

I'm the ghost in the machine

I'm the genius in the gene  
 I'm the beauty in the beast  
 I'm the sunset in the east  
 I'm the ruby in the dust  
 I'm the trust in the mistrust  
 I'm the trojan horse in troy  
 I'm the gin in the gin-soaked boy

I'm the tigers empty cage  
 I'm the mystery's final page  
 I'm the strangers lonely glance  
 I'm the hero's only chance  
 I'm the undiscovered land  
 I'm the single grain of sand  
 I'm the Christmas morning toy  
 I'm the gin in the gin-soaked boy

I'm the world you'll never see  
 I'm the slave you'll never free  
 I'm the truth you'll never know  
 I'm the place you'll never go  
 I'm the sound you'll never hear  
 I'm the course you'll never steer  
 I'm the will you'll not destroy  
 I'm the gin in the gin-soaked boy

I'm the half-truth in the lie  
 I'm the why not in the why  
 I'm the last roll of the die  
 I'm the old school in the tie  
 I'm the spirit in the sky  
 I'm the catcher in the rye  
 I'm the twinkle in her eye  
 I'm the jeff goldblum in the fly

Who am I? (David, India)

**OBS:** Some interviewees' metaphors of identity were not submitted and that is why they are not included in the Appendices section.