

**The adjustment journey of international postgraduate students at a
university in England: an ethnography**

Lorraine Brown

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Bournemouth University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

January 2008

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with its author and due acknowledgement must always be made of the use of any material contained in, or derived from, this thesis.

Abstract

The aim of this study is to capture the adjustment journey of a group of international postgraduate students at a university in the South of England. An ethnographic approach was used, involving regular in-depth individual interviews with thirteen students of different nationalities and overt participant observation of the entire postgraduate cohort of 150 students. Research began on the first day of induction in September 2003 and ended in October 2004 upon completion and submission of the Masters dissertation. Students' experience of adjustment to academic and sociocultural life was therefore captured from arrival in the new country to the return home one full year later.

Seven research categories were generated by this ethnographic study: the shock of arrival; language acquisition; academic orientation; eating patterns; interaction strategies; collective and individual identity; and finally, transformation in personal and cultural outlook. The overarching category was interaction, which influenced every other theme that emerged from analysis.

This study found that stress was at its height in the initial stage of the academic sojourn; this was caused by the struggle to cope with the challenges of foreign language use and an unfamiliar academic and sociocultural environment at a time when students were beset with homesickness and loneliness. An association was made between the passage of time and a gradual decrease in acculturative stress; however, this was not a generalisable process; there was not only fluctuation in experience across the student body but also in the individual's subjective sense of success across different aspects of life in the new country. This led to the conceptualisation of the adjustment journey as an unpredictable and dynamic process, which is experienced differently among sojourners, and fluctuates throughout the sojourn as a result of a host of individual, cultural and external factors. There was some universality of experience however during the initial challenging stage of the sojourn and in the final stage

when an outcome of positive personal and cultural change was documented: this was complemented by apprehension over re-entry to the origin country.

Inhibiting forces in achieving adjustment to an unfamiliar academic, language and sociocultural environment were cultural dissonance and segregated friendship groups. The greater the cultural gap between the home and host cultures, the greater the acculturative stress students suffered. Interaction strategy was found to be a powerful influence on both the experience and outcome of adjustment: the bicultural bond with the host was noted for its absence, and segregation was the most common friendship pattern. This implied minimum exposure to culture and language learning, and a failure of the international campus to realise the benefits of cross-cultural contact. Individual motivation to optimise the benefits of the intercultural experience and to tolerate the anxiety inherent in the cross-national context was found to be the key factor in the adoption of a multicultural attitude towards interaction and in the cultivation of multicultural skills. This was the route exceptionally chosen, informing the creation of the category '*exceptional student*', who, in deviating from established norms of interaction, came to embody the intercultural mediator. Despite observation of a tendency towards gravitation to same-nationality members, an increase in intercultural competence and a reformulated sense of self were universally recorded. This suggests that distance from the origin culture is sufficient to promote self and culture learning, and that segregation is not incompatible with the development of tolerance.

The implications of the study are that international students require both academic and pastoral support from the start and also throughout their stay in the host country. Furthermore, it is suggested that HEI have a role to play in influencing students' interaction strategies, so that the benefits of the international campus can be reached.

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Acknowledgements	7
Chapter 1 Introduction	8
Research aim and rationale	8
Relevance of the research topic	9
Crossing cultures: an overview of relevant theory	12
Studies of international education	27
Identifying the gap in the literature	32
Chapter 2 Methodology	37
Adopting a qualitative approach	37
Conducting an ethnographic study	40
Anthropology at home	42
Choice of setting and sample	43
The timing of primary data collection	47
The informant-researcher relationship	48
Research methods	50
Participant observation	51
Document analysis	55
The ethnographic interview	56
Interview question guide	59
My research diary	61
Ethnographic analysis	63
Writing ethnography	65
Demonstrating credibility	68
Ethical considerations	70
Limitations of the research	73
Chapter 3 Starting the journey	77
Fear of the unknown	77
Feeling adrift	82

Enjoyment of the new	87
Confronting the day-to-day difference	91
The experience of stress and sleeplessness	95
Longing for home	97
Feeling lonely	100
Feeling depressed	102
Feeling calm and settled: a deviant case	104
Chapter 4 Coming to terms with speaking English	107
Feeling stressed	107
Struggling with language and meaning	116
The terror of speaking in class	120
Speaking in English	123
Improving language skills	127
Chapter 5 Facing the challenges of academic life	133
The threat to emotional well-being	133
Taking responsibility for learning	139
Thinking critically	145
Finding the courage to debate	149
Overcoming the power distance	155
The end of the academic journey	159
Chapter 6 Exposure to a New Food System	163
Tasting the difference	163
Recreating a taste of home	172
The pleasure of communal eating	176
Sustaining faith	178
Embracing diversity	180
Chapter 7 Combating loneliness	185
Finding unity in difference	186
Embracing cultural diversity in friendship	188
Worlds apart: the barrier between East and West	194
Seeking understanding and safety	203
Recreating the comfort of home	210

Reaching out	221
Chapter 8 Confronting the self	236
Dismantling the old role	236
Protecting national identity	246
Reflections on faith	263
Chapter 9 The end of the journey	270
Reaching a place of ease	270
Learning about other cultures	272
Changing perspectives on life	279
Going home: a new beginning	293
Chapter 10 Conclusion	299
A model of adjustment for international students	299
The contributory themes	305
Implications and recommendations for HEI	313
Recommendations for future research	316
Reflections on the research process	318
Appendices	324
References	330

Acknowledgements

There are many people I would like to thank for their contribution to the completion of this study. First of all, I extend my gratitude to all those students who agreed to participate in the research, in particular the thirteen interviewees who gave up so much of their time during a demanding period in their lives, and who were willing to share with me a privileged glimpse into their private world.

Secondly I owe my thanks to colleagues, friends and family, who have given me support over the last five years, in particular, Professor Adele Ladkin, who encouraged me to undertake a PHD in the first place, at a time when academic research was not the priority of the university; my brother-in-law, Professor Barry Richards, for taking the time to read through the thesis, and for giving me important feedback; my sister Joanne Brown who showed an active personal and academic interest throughout every stage of this research journey, and indeed throughout my life.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the dedication of my supervisors Professor Immy Holloway and Professor Iain Graham, whose constant input and critique helped me to refine my thinking and writing. I am privileged to have received such support.

This thesis is dedicated to my two children, Louise and Max Brown, who have been extremely understanding and supportive during the last five years.

Chapter One: Introduction

Research aim and rationale

This study aims to capture the adjustment journey of a group of international¹ postgraduate students at a university in the South of England. An ethnographic approach was used, involving regular in-depth individual interviews with thirteen students and overt observation of a cohort of 150 postgraduate students over a full academic year. My role as a lecturer in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) allowed direct access to interviewees and ample opportunity for observation in an overt participant role. Research began on the first day of induction to this intensive Masters course in September 2003 and ended in October 2004 upon completion and submission of the Masters dissertation. Students' experience of adjustment to academic and sociocultural life was therefore captured from arrival in the new country to the return home.

My interest in the subject of adjustment derives from a small research project I conducted with international students, which noted the difficulties they faced in everyday life².

Additionally, I have been working with international students in British Higher Education since 1989, and since 1999, I have worked on a full-time basis with international postgraduates in the role of study support tutor, and have therefore regularly had glimpses into the challenges they routinely face in a new environment. Over time, I became interested in the personal journey they undertake when they move to the UK. Possibly for the first time in their life they experience existential loneliness, as a consequence of their displacement and removal from their familiar world. I became interested in the obstacles they face and how

¹ International students are confusingly referred to as overseas, international, European or foreign. This study will adopt the definition of the term put forward by Leonard et al. (2002) – an international student is any non UK domicile student.

² Title: *An investigation into the educational and pastoral needs of international students atUniversity* (2001)

they overcome them. I was particularly keen to learn of any changes in behaviour and outlook which may emerge at the end of the academic sojourn as a result of enforced reflection on the self and their place in the world. As Brewer (2000) tells us, the researcher's interest shapes research and must not be overlooked. My interest in this subject is a reflection of my own inclination towards introspection and meditation on life and meanings, which must have helped to shape the lines of enquiry pursued in data collection.

Relevance of the research topic

Williams (2003) argues that research must be judged on the basis of its relevance to practical concerns, producing information that has general relevance beyond local circumstances.

Indeed, according to Brewer (2000), relevance is the main criterion by which to judge data in the current post-modern moment in ethnography, which sees a challenge to accepted thought.

The relevance of this study lies in the observation that the majority if not all British universities are recruiting increasing numbers of international students, an industry practice that is encouraged by successive government initiatives. International education is a major export industry, with fierce competition among the key markets of the UK, Canada, New Zealand and Australia (Cushner and Karim 2004; Ryan and Carroll 2005; Curtis 2005). Since 1997, the number of international students studying in the UK has soared (Taylor 2005), and their recruitment by British universities has steadily grown (Leonard et al. 2002). Figures from UCAS show a 19.6% rise in the number of international students accepted into UK Higher Education (HE) between 2001 and 2002 (Tysome 2003), and reveal a specific 67% and 31% increase in the number of Chinese and Indian students respectively. UKCOSA³ statistics (2006) show that there are 318000 international students in British HE, and 106000 are postgraduates. Nationally, international students make up 13% of the total student population, with the percentage varying across institutions. In 2004/05 international students

³ Renamed UKCISA in 2007, this is The UK Council for International Student Affairs, the UK's national advisory body offering advice and information to international students and to those who work with them.

made up:

- * 11% of full-time first degree students and 10% of all first degree students;
- * 65% of full-time taught postgraduates and 40% of all taught postgraduates;
- * 48% of full-time research degree students and 41% of all research postgraduates (ibid).

In 2006, the then British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, announced the second phase of an initiative to promote British Higher Education following the success of his 1999 programme: this set an original target of 75,000 additional international students, which was comfortably exceeded (MacLeod 2006). In this second initiative, British universities are urged to build partnerships overseas which will extend to the recruitment of 100,000 more international students by 2011, as well as collaborative research and teaching.

Income from international students plays an important role in the financial health of the HE sector, representing almost a third of the total fees income for universities and higher education colleges in the UK. The advent of full-cost fees means that most British HE institutions are dependent on income from international students (Leonard et al. 2002): £4bn was earned in fees and as much again was spent on living costs in the UK in 2004; this rose to £5bn in 2006 (MacLeod 2006). However, the market for international students is volatile (Ryan and Carroll 2005), and many warnings are issued to universities which are seen to be too dependent on the income from overseas (e.g. Taylor 2006; Ramesh 2006; MacLeod 2006). Nevertheless, both Kemp (2001) and MacLeod point out that recruitment was unaffected by (respectively) September 11 and the London bombings in July 2005.

The experience of international students' adjustment to academic and sociocultural life in England is relevant, as a positive experience is more likely to be enjoyed by international students if there is better understanding of the issues facing them, if their unique needs arising from cultural dissonance are met (e.g. Eland 2001; Ward 2001). Rogers and Smith (1992) and later on Lord and Dawson (2002) and Ryan and Carroll (2005) argue that responsible recruitment demands that adequate provision is made to cater for the special needs of

international students: welfare provision should be not to be confined to crisis management. This will result in positive word of mouth (Smith 2006a), which was recently described by Goldblatt (2007) as the most common factor in purchase decision. In an effort to accommodate and to attract an increasing number of students and to acknowledge the fact that their student profile is becoming more international, it has been suggested that many institutions have made adjustments to fee policies, student support and counselling as well as to campus life (Tysome 2003; Ryan 2005a). However, it is often argued that HE institutions (HEI) do not provide timely pastoral and academic support for what is often described as a vulnerable group (Ackers 1997; Ward 2001; Lord and Dawson 2002). The market for international students is increasingly competitive and HEI need to provide an optimum service (Tysome 2003; NUS 2004; Taylor 2005). Furthermore, an increasingly assertive attitude is visible among many international students who are now aware of their consumer power and are starting to take into consideration support structures in choice of where to study (Bloor 1997; Smith 2006a). If institutions do not consider international students' needs, it is possible that their future recruitment will be endangered (UKCOSA 2004; Taylor 2005). An inside view of students' adjustment journey may help to inform the way Higher Education handles international students so that their experience of the academic sojourn⁴ might be improved. Ward (2001) and UKCOSA (2004) emphasise the need for researchers to disseminate their findings in order to underpin good practice across the HE sector: this study's findings will be communicated through traditional academic and sector-specific routes. This study did not start out to be applied, or practitioner, ethnography, defined by Hammersley (1992) as research that has relevance and application beyond the research community, but as themes of interest to the wider educational and social context emerged, my sense of duty to communicate the findings grew.

⁴ The term 'sojourn' is used to refer to a temporary between-culture stay (Ward et al. 2001).

Crossing cultures: an overview of relevant theory

Ward et al. (2001) attribute the increase in cross-cultural movement to mass access to air travel, the globalisation of industry, increasing affluence supporting tourism, and growing migrant, business, refugee, foreign worker and student movements. Not only is international student mobility increasing, but it is also an important impetus and focus for much cross-cultural research. As this is an inductive study, the bulk of the sojourner adjustment literature will be presented in the Main Findings Chapters (3-9), as the emergent themes dictated the collection of secondary data: the literature is tied to the categories which emerged from data analysis. A range of theories and studies will be deployed; a battery of resources will be drawn upon where appropriate in later chapters none of which is superordinate or primary. However, this section will set the scene for the study of the international student sojourn by offering an overview of the phenomenon of transition: firstly the concepts of culture and culture shock will be presented; this will be followed by an introduction to models of adjustment.

Defining culture

Understanding culture is important in this study for two reasons: the aim of ethnography is the description of a group's way of life, its product is the writing of culture (Fetterman 1998), and culture is used as the tool to help us to interpret behaviour (Spradley 1979; Brewer 2000); in addition, comprehending the international student sojourn is not possible without a grasp of cultural differences, which inform the experience of transition (Hofstede 2001). More than a hundred definitions of the concept of culture can be found in the social science literature, with differing definitions adopted by different academic disciplines (Williams 1981; Gudykunst

1998; Smith 2000; Jandt 2001). The word itself derives from the Latin *colere* which alludes to the tilling of the soil (Hofstede 1991); the term was first used as a noun of process (Williams 1983), referring to the cultivation of crops, to people living in and using nature to live (Cope and Kalantzis 1997). In the late eighteenth century, it came to refer to the spirit of a people (Williams 1981), and to intellectual refinement, or to cultivation of the mind (Cope and Kalantzis 1997): indeed, in most western languages, culture is narrowly defined as civilisation or refinement (Hofstede 1991). A pluralist interpretation was developed in anthropology in the nineteenth century to designate a distinctive way of life, with the emphasis on lived experience, on human interaction and practices (Williams 1981, 1983; Cope and Kalantzis 1997). This new understanding of culture was a product of the anthropological study of exotic societies (Cope and Kalantzis 1997), which has influenced the emphasis in the modern concept of culture on the collectivity, as reflected in Hofstede's (1991, 2001) comprehensive body of work. Hofstede (2001) states that culture is a phenomenon collectively generated by people who share the same social environment and are mentally programmed in a way that distinguishes them from other social groups. This understanding will prove useful later on in explaining interaction patterns in an international setting. Most often used to categorise a nation, the term culture can be applied to any collective or community whose membership is self-defined and changeable (Huntingdon 1993; Cray and Mallory 1998). This is of particular relevance to heterogeneous modern society, in which subcultures represent divergent though often overlapping life worlds where people hold beliefs and values that are often determined by their particular location within a culture (Giddens 1991; Barker 2000). Cope and Kalantzis (1997) argue that such communities share some but not all of the values, norms and rules of the larger culture; fragmentation does not imply the loss of cohesiveness. The durability of this argument will be challenged by the sub-cultural norms observed in this study.

Williams' (1981) distinction between the external manifestation of culture and culture as a way of life is helpful. Firstly, culture is manifested in social activities and in mass

communication processes such as language, the arts, education, philosophy, journalism, fashion, and advertising; it refers to all institutionalised public forms of social communication that disseminate and perpetuate the cultural reality of a society (see also Bruner et al. 1956; Kim 1988), and is manifested in physical surroundings, institutions, rituals, symbols and heroes (see also D'Andrade 1981; Hofstede 2001). According to Herskovits (1972) and Triandis (1972), it includes everything that is observable to those who arrive in a new culture and attempt to participate in the host environment. Williams' second definition of culture refers to a country's social order, its way of life, which is informed by its systems of values: these are defined by Hofstede (1991) as enduring beliefs that are programmed early in life. Values, which vary widely from one society to another (Vontress 1976; Davidson 1979; Forgas and Bond 1985; Hofstede 2001), influence every aspect of personal and social life, including food, religion, upbringing, rules of intimacy, expression of emotion and discipline (Hall 1959; Kim 1988; Gudykunst 1998), and therefore carry an important, though often unrecognised, impact on personality (Wittkower and Dubreuil 1968; Hall 1976; Hofstede 1991). As noted by Price-Williams (1968) and Draguns (1979), group character is also influenced by individuals over time; this intermixture of universality and uniqueness is not easily untangled (Kluckhohn and Murray 1949; Sundberg 1976).

It is universally accepted that culture is transmitted from generation to generation through the process of socialisation (e.g. Wittkower and Dubreuil 1968; Kim 1988; Hofstede 2001): this involves conditioning and programming in the basic social processes of communication and providing children with an understanding of the world and culturally patterned ways of responding to it (Gudykunst 1998). Most knowledge and rules of social behaviour is learned as a child through the observation of adults (D'Andrade 1981; Rex, 1991; Cope and Kalantzis 1997; Hofstede 1991, 2001), whose transmission of attitudes towards life and modes of perception are absorbed by the child and form the driving force behind their conceptions of right and wrong (Gudykunst 1998; Hofstede 2001). By learning the rules of a particular

society's culture (Bock 1970; Hofstede 1991) and by incorporating a specific culture's rules of behaviour into the self, the child acquires a cultural identity that is so well programmed that by the time they reach adulthood, it becomes part of their personality (Kim, 1988). Adler (1975) and Hofstede (2001) state that the extent of cultural programming is unappreciated however: people experience the world through culturally influenced values, attitudes and assumptions but remain largely unconscious of this cultural imprinting that governs their personality and behaviour (Durant 1997). They often only become aware of the influence of culture on communication when they interact with members of other cultures, when there is deviation from the familiar (Kim 1988; Gudykunst 1998). The cultural component of behaviour is revealed upon confrontation with diversity (Hofstede 2001). Unaware of the impact of culture on their outlook and lifestyle, people largely act out of habit (Hall 1969; Kim 1988; Storti 1990; Gudykunst 1998). The first step towards changing culturally ingrained behaviour is by developing self-awareness (Hall 1980); however patterns of behaviour that have been instilled over a lifetime are not easily changed, hence Hall's reference to cultural deprogramming as 'the greatest separation feat of all' (p. 240).

Culture shock

It is sometimes argued that globalisation will see a gradual homogenisation of cultural identity; therefore using theories of culture to explain and understand attitudes and behaviour will become less relevant (see Featherstone 1995; Todres, 2002; Martin and Harrell 2004). Hofstede (2001, 2002) counters that though there is evidence of some change in individual countries, cultural divergence will remain, and differences may in fact be increasing: an increase in individualism among countries that have become richer is pointed out; similarly, instead of diminishing power distance, the process of globalisation is acting to widen the power gap. In the current literature on transition, there is a commonly accepted premise that

most sojourners will experience some degree of culture shock following their immersion in a new culture; this is based on the notion of cultural difference between societies and on the move from a familiar to an alien environment (e.g. Kim 2001; Ward et al. 2001). Culture shock is commonly defined as anxiety that results from losing the familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse, and their substitution by other cues that are strange (Hall 1959; Oberg 1960; Adler 1975; Detweiler 1980). Familiarity is associated with comfort and reassurance whereas unfamiliar stimuli prompt feelings of anxiety, disturbance and meaninglessness (Detweiler 1980; Guthrie 1981). At the heart of culture shock is therefore a clash between the expectations, values and behaviour of the origin and the new culture (Smalley 1962; Guthrie 1982; Gudykunst 1998). According to Hall (1959), the greatest impact of culture is on communication, which helps to explain the stress that arises from interacting with those from a different culture (Ward et al. 2001). This is often caused by the sojourner's tendency to adopt previously learned behaviour which can lead to miscommunication in the host society (Schild 1962; Torbiorn 1994). Kim (1988) describes human interaction as an elaborate and complex symbolic interchange of information, involving the encoding and decoding of messages and the creation of meaning (Gudykunst 1998; Gudykunst and Nishida 2001; Koester and Lustig 2003). However, communication patterns are influenced by cultural values (Hall 1959; Hall and Whyte 1963; Gudykunst 1998), which dictate how behaviour is predicted and interpreted. It is to be expected then that intercultural encounters may prove stressful, as they represent for all parties deviance from the familiar (Kim 1988).

The move to a new environment is often cited as a traumatic life event as sojourners are usually forced to cope with substantial cultural change (Zajonc 1952; Gudykunst 1998; Berry 1994; Kim 2001; Hofstede 2001); the clash between the coherent home world (Bock 1970) and the apparently chaotic and confusing new culture (Detweiler 1980) provokes severe strain which taxes the sojourner's resources (Guthrie 1981; Gudykunst 1983; Torbiorn, 1994; Ward et al. 2001). Among the many symptoms of culture shock are low self-esteem, low morale,

social isolation, dissatisfaction with life, bitterness, homesickness, disorientation, anxiety, depression, role strain, identity confusion, stress, loneliness, self-doubt, hostility, distress, personality disintegration helplessness, irritability, fear and self-deprecation (e.g. Adler 1975; Alexander et al. 1976; David 1976; Detweiler 1980; Jacobson-Widding 1983; Furnham and Alibhai 1985; Adelegan and Parks 1985; Kim 1988; Storti 1990; Lu 1990; Pedersen 1991; Hofstede 1991; Sam and Eide 1991; Persaud 1993; Redmond and Bunyi 1993; Berry 1994 Gudykunst 1998; Kim 2001 and many more). Sources of strain include racial discrimination, weather and food differences, language prowess, accommodation and financial problems, diminished social interaction, role and status change and a different educational system (ibid). Culture shock is likened by many writers to a period of mourning for the home world, characterized by feelings of grief and separation anxiety (Bock 1970; Adler 1975; Garza-Guerro 1974; Detweiler 1980; Furnham and Bochner 1986; Storti 1990; Furnham 1997). The stress that characterises the life of people in transition (Kim 1988) can also have consequences for physical health, with existing health problems exacerbated by entry into a new physical environment or new illnesses provoked (Detweiler 1980; Jacobson-Widding 1983; Storti 1990; Hofstede 1991). Mental health is usually temporarily affected, but in the extreme, culture shock can provoke psychiatric illness (Teoh 1974; Adler 1975; Ko 1978; Berry 1994). In the literature on international students, culture shock is noted by all authors as one of the obstacles to adapting to the culture of the host society (e.g. Klineberg and Hull 1979; Furnham and Alibhai 1985; Lewins 1990; Skelton and Richards 1991; Blue 1993; Persaud 1993; Sharples 1995; Okorochoa 1996a; Ballard and Clanchy 1997; Ward et al. 2001). Indeed, over several years, researchers have highlighted adjustment strains among international students, including physical and psychological health problems (e.g. Anumonye 1967; Bourne 1975; Cole et al. 1980; Miller and Harwell 1983; Ebbin and Blankenship 1986; Allen and Cole 1987; Hsu et al. 1987; Lago 1992; Mori 2000).

The severity and duration of the experience of culture shock are a function of cultural and individual differences (Kim 1988; Searle and Ward 1990; Furnham 1993; Ward and Chang

1997; Ward et al. 2001). Not all migrants suffer culture shock, and individuals differ in the type and degree of shock experienced (di Marco 1974; Thomas and Harrell 1994; Kim 2001). *Cultural distance* is one of the crucial variables determining the ease and outcome of acculturation (Helson 1964; Taft 1981; Gudykunst 1998; Torbiorn 1994; Redmond 2000; Ward et al. 2001). Conceptually this refers to the degree of similarity, and the affinity between the symbols and values of cultures (Boski 1994): there is consensus that cultural groups which have made a large cultural journey may be less adaptable than others. *Personality* is also judged to play an important role in the adjustment process (Helson 1964; Hamburg and Adams 1967; Berry 1994; Furnham and Erdmann 1995; Ward and Chang 1997), dictating the amount of discrepancy people will tolerate (Detweiler 1980; Gudykunst 1998). This variation is referred to as category width: in all cultures, there are broad categorisers who accept diversity and narrow categorisers who cling to their own cultural values (ibid). Personality also influences an individual's *coping capabilities*: defined by Lazarus et al. (1974) as the potential to master a new, possibly threatening, situation, Mechanis (1974) states that capacity to withstand stress informs the subjective experience of transition. The sojourner's *motivation* to learn the necessary rules to minimise shock is also important (Mechanis 1974; Gudykunst 1983; Berry 1994). Furthermore, the level of acculturative stress experienced is a function of the *social support* received by sojourners (Berry 1994; Ward 2001), including host contact (Di Marco 1974; Ward and Kennedy 1992; 1993; Ward 2001), host receptivity (Gudykunst 1983; Ward and Kennedy 1996) and friendships with compatriots (Kim 1988; Ward et al. 2001). Finally, *preparedness for change* is cited in Kim's predictive framework (1988) as a vital variable; also referred to as psychological readiness, this involves acquiring knowledge about the new culture in advance (Stevenson 1991; Taylor 1994). Mechanis (1974) states that to some extent people can determine the demands placed on them, by planning solutions to foreseeable problems, in other words, worrying in advance (Hamburg and Adams 1967) can offset potential problems.

The process of adjustment

Overcoming the painful experience of culture shock involves a process of change that accompanies migration to another culture (Zheng and Berry 1991; Berry 1994). Gudykunst (1998) describes this as a process of resocialisation, or deculturation, whereby old social patterns are unlearned. Acculturation is the term used by Berry (1994) to denote individual-level culture change, referred to as behavioural shifts that result from continuous first-hand contact between two distinct cultural groups. A review of the literature on sojourner adjustment shows the reader that the terms adaptation, and adjustment are often used interchangeably by many writers to refer to this process of change.

The term 'adaptation' derives from the Latin *adaptare*, meaning to adjust. The synonyms of the verb 'to adapt' are as follows: accommodate, adjust, arrange, conform, fashion, fit, harmonise, attune, and prepare (Helson 1964). Adaptation came into psychology from biology and denotes favourable organic modifications suiting a plant or animal to its environment, or adjustment to the conditions under which people must live in order to survive (ibid). According to Hamburg et al. (1974), adaptation signifies the reproductive success of a population, often being a compromise between the long-range and immediate requirements of survival. Adaptation is thus the fit between a person and his/her environment (Pruitt 1978). Kim (1988) applies this definition to the cross-cultural situation, defining adaptation as a process of change over time that takes place within individuals who have completed their primary socialisation process in one culture and then come into continuous, prolonged first-hand contact with a new and unfamiliar culture.

Synonymous with adaptation, adjustment is a term widely used in the literature, to refer to the goodness of fit between the characteristics of a person and the properties of his environment (French et al. 1974). According to Biddle (1979), adjustment has many connotations

including adaptation, ability to perform and flexibility; it implies an ability to cope with the demands exerted by the environment. Thomas and Harrell (1994) use the term adjustment to refer to the psychological process of culture learning and individual change that occur when someone enters and attempts to function within a new culture. Torbiorn (1994) argues that adjustment deals with extended stays in unfamiliar cultures, not with short trips, and refers to the total life setting (not just the professional or the private sphere), dealing with everything that is of psychological relevance to the individual. It is important to note that the term adjustment is used to sum up the process and outcome of change experienced by sojourners: variation in the adjustment strategy adopted or imposed means that the outcome of the adjustment journey will also vary among individuals (Pruitt 1978; Biddle 1979; Baumann 1999).

According to Ward and Kennedy (1999), there is limited consensus and clarity as to what adjustment means, as the construct has been described and measured in varying ways and from several perspectives, and various, often conflicting, models have been put forward. In Lysgaard's (1955) model, adjustment seems to follow a U-shaped curve; the first stage is characterized by positive feelings; this is followed by a stage of maladjustment; and finally adjustment is reached. In Oberg's model (1960), adjustment is grouped into four stages: a first honeymoon stage of fascination; a second crisis stage of hostility and aggression; by the third recovery stage the visitor feels more used to the new cultural environment and develops a sense of humour; and in the fourth adjustment stage, adjustment is complete. In the W-curve model put forward by Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963), the U is extended to a W, to take account of the U-shaped readjustment journey made by sojourners once they return home. Many researchers have elaborated the U-curve model, for example, Brown's acculturation model (1980) incorporates the four stages of excitement and euphoria; culture shock (loneliness, estrangement, sadness, hostility, homesickness, physical illness); culture stress (partial recovery); and adaptation. Similarly, Adler's model of transitional experience (1975) delineates five phases: contact (excitement and awareness of cultural dissimilarities);

disintegration (denoting a period of confusion and disorientation); reintegration (a strong rejection of the new culture and a seeking out of co-nationals); autonomy (understanding of the new culture); independence (cultural relativism achieved). Torbiorn's (1994) first stage of fascination is followed by a period of culture shock: after a few months, feelings become more positive, and satisfaction increases; towards the end of the first year, subjective adjustment is reached. Similarly, Mohamed's model (1997) identifies four stages: orientation and autonomy (learning new skills); transitions of self-worth (stress and ambivalence between complying with and resisting new demands); consolidation of role identity (awareness of various systems); competence and integrative maturity (development of hope and confidence).

Though they are still widely used, there is much criticism of the U-Curve models: Church (1982) and Coates (2004) suggest that there is little empirical evidence of their applicability, and Ward (2001) can find little support for the early euphoria. There is also some disagreement as to exactly when the stage of culture shock takes place. According to the U-Curve models, culture shock emerges in the second stage, however, Furnham (1993) states that transition is best understood as a process of change that is especially stressful at first, with problems being the greatest upon arrival and decreasing as a function of various variables: this is a view shared by many researchers, from Biddle (1979) to Ward (2001). Furthermore, Thomas and Harrell (1994) comment that the U-Curve model is one-dimensional and doesn't recognise the multifaceted nature of person's life, nor does it allow for personality differences among individuals. Instead of a single measure of adjustment, they argue that there are multiple curves over time, each representing one aspect of the sojourner's life. This view of the adjustment process is reflected in the study by Gao and Gudykunst (1990), which shows that adaptation is facilitated by a reduction in uncertainty and anxiety, which may not be linear but rather curvilinear and dialectical, going up and down throughout the stay.

An alternative to the U-Curve is the culture learning model, which views cross-cultural adjustment as a learning process: the central thesis is that to adapt it is necessary to learn the norms and rules of the new sociocultural system. Furnham and Bochner (1986) argue that sojourners often never fully adjust in the sense of the 'U-curve' and suggest an alternative 'social skills' model of cross-cultural accommodation. This model argues that sojourners can be strategic in what they learn, employing enough behavioural traits to 'get by', without necessarily understanding or accepting the new culture. As Oberg (1960) states, an individual is born with the capacity to learn a culture: this is a social skill that can be analysed, taught and learnt (Furnham 1993, 1995), hence the development of an informational, culture learning models by Bochner et al. (1980) and Furnham and Bochner (1986) that focus on the acquisition over time of appropriate behaviour and skills. Liu's (2001) culture learning model similarly consists of three stages: observation, taking the plunge, and functioning. Meanwhile, Ward et al. (2001) propose a social skills and communication model that focuses on the acquisition of culture-specific skills to enable sojourners to navigate the social and academic/professional situation. The value of such models lies in their predictability, as adaptation tends to follow a predictable learning curve with rapid improvements demonstrated in the first few months. A measurement tool known as the SCAS (Sociocultural Adaptation Scale), devised by Searle and Ward (1990) to measure the cultural or behavioural competence of cross-cultural sojourners, has been frequently used in quantitative studies of adjustment, and its usefulness in tracking adaptability has been noted by Ward and Kennedy (1999).

However, to best deal with the complexity of the phenomenon of adjustment and to account for the variation in experience among and within individuals, a model combining psychological and sociocultural variables was put forward by Ward (1996) and Ward and Kennedy (1999). Adjustment is divided into psychological (emotional, referring to well-being, anxiety depression, fatigue) and sociocultural (behavioural, referring to ability to fit in) domains. The former can best be understood in terms of a stress and coping framework, predicted and explained by personality and social support variables and life changes, whereas

the latter should be viewed from a social learning perspective, predicted by variables related to cognitive factors and social skills acquisition (Ward and Kennedy 1999; Martin and Harrell 2004). Sole reliance on the psychological adjustment model is rejected by for example Bochner (1986), Furnham (1993) and Leonard et al. (2002) on the grounds that it often stigmatises those experiencing difficulties in adjusting, instead of focusing on the sojourn as a learning process. Using a mixed model offers a simultaneous understanding of the unpredictability and variability of psychological adjustment (Searle and Ward 1990; Furnham and Erdmann 1995) and the reliability of the sociocultural approach to adaptation, given its location within a social skills or culture learning paradigm (Ward and Kennedy 1996, 1999). My own understanding of the adjustment journey made by international students will be offered in Chapter Ten, the Conclusion.

The outcome of adjustment

The level of adjustment reached by the sojourner varies as a function of individual, cultural and environmental factors: sojourners may adjust fully or minimally to the new culture, or they may reach different levels of adjustment in different aspects of life (Berry 1994; Ward and Kennedy 1999; Cushner and Karim 2004), choosing whether to fully embrace or to reject some or all of the new culture's norms and behaviour patterns (Gudykunst 1983; Thomas and Harrell 1994). The outcome of the international sojourn refers not just to adjustment, however; it also refers to the cultural and personal changes that take place in the sojourner as a result of an extended stay in a foreign country. This change is cast in the literature on transition and international education as at once negative and enriching (Hall 1976; Gudykunst and Kim 1984; Kim 1988; Giddens 1991; Hofstede 2001), offering the development of *cultural complexity* (Hofman and Zak 1969; Adler 1975; Detweiler 1980; Gudykunst 1998), *self-awareness* (Kim 1988; Giddens 1991), *increased pliability and resilience* (Kim 1988; Ting-Toomey 1999), *intercultural competence* (Bochner 1986; Taylor

1994; Martin 1994; Althen 1994; Gudykunst 1998; Hofstede 2001), *independence* (di Marco; Berry 1994; Martin and Harrell 2004), and *increased employability* (Westwood and Barker 1999; Ryan 2005a). These outcomes are a function of the adjustive strategy adopted by the sojourner (Thomas and Harrell 1994), which is itself mediated by individual, cultural and external factors (Berry 1994; Ward 2001). Five possible strategies are distinguished in the literature on adjustment:

- The sojourner may remain *monocultural*, clinging to their own culture. This is the segregation approach, which implies an absence of substantial relations with the larger society, along with maintenance of ethnic identity, heritage and traditions; this may be imposed by the dominant group or may be sought by the acculturating group (Berry 1994; Piontkowski et al. 2000). This is described by Bochner (1981) as exaggerated chauvinism. If segregation, also referred to as separation, is pursued, there is a reaffirmation of heritage behaviour, which may lead to conflict between the needs and expectations of mainstream society and the individual (Schmitz 1994). Sojourners may also undergo a process of reaction, which refers to changes which retaliate against the environment, e.g. acculturating individuals may campaign for changes in schools and health care in the dominant society that better meet their culturally-based needs.
- The sojourner may become *monocultural*, rejecting their own culture and replacing it with the new one. This is the assimilation approach, an option which involves relinquishing cultural identity and moving into the larger society by way of absorption of a non-dominant group into an established dominant group (Schmitz 1994; Piontkowski et al. 2000). If an assimilation strategy is pursued, substantial behavioural change occurs (Berry 1994), as minorities, or less influential groups, are fully integrated into the dominant culture (Martin and Harrell 2004). Bochner (1981) argues that this is incompatible with the desired outcome of adjustment, that of a

multicultural society, indeed, according to Furnham (1993), it implies cultural chauvinism on the part of the host, which has made it necessary for the sojourner to abandon the culture of origin.

- The sojourner may become *bicultural*, retaining their own and learning a new culture. This is the integration approach, which implies the maintenance of some cultural identity as well as movement to become an integral part of a larger societal framework, with a number of distinguishable ethnic groups cooperating within a larger social system and sharing common goals (Berry 1994; Piontkowski et al. 2000). Honeyford (1988) uses the term harmonious integration to refer to a situation whereby people maintain their original culture privately but assent to overriding principles common to all citizens. According to Storti (1990), the stress is on the sojourner to adjust in order to avoid alienating the locals, but in any case, individual change is often the only realistic option, as reaction may not be feasible in the absence of political power and withdrawal is not possible if the individual is not part of a larger sub-group (Berry 1994). Ward and Rana-Deuba's study (1999) corroborates Berry's (1997) contention that integration is associated with the lowest levels of acculturative stress, given that change on the part of the incoming group reduces conflict and increases the confluence or fit between the environment and the individual.
- The sojourner may become *marginalised*, renouncing their own heritage and refusing a relationship with the dominant group. This involves feelings of alienation and loss of identity, as groups lose cultural psychological contact with both their traditional culture and the larger society (Piontkowski et al. 2000), through forced exclusion or voluntary withdrawal (Berry 1994). Though the dominant group usually dictates whether the outsider is allowed to form relationships with the host (Berry 1994),

some sojourners voluntarily withdraw from the dominant culture if the experience of adjustment is too difficult (Storti 1990).

- The sojourner may become *multicultural*, retaining their own and learning several other cultures. Indeed, the acculturation strategy advocated by many writers (e.g. Bochner 1981; Furnham and Bochner 1986; Gudykunst 1998; Ward et al. 2001) is multiculturalism: only the mediating response provides a real framework for acquiring multicultural attitudes, skills and self-perceptions, providing the basis for a pluralistic society (Kim 2001; Gilroy 2007) in which different groups retain their basic ethnic identity, practices, beliefs and language, while being united within an umbrella framework of national allegiance and having equal access to power and economic and political resources. According to Furnham (1993) and Martin and Harrell (2004), the multicultural approach avoids the ethnocentric trap of advocating the abandonment of the first culture.

In the model of attitudes towards adjustment put forward by Berry and Kim (1988), two questions are posed, answers to which can be used as a predictive framework for determining sojourners' strategies: is it considered to be of value to maintain one's cultural identity and characteristics; is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with other groups? This model has been further developed by Schmitz (1994) and Ward et al. (2001), and can be used to predict behavioural responses to many aspects of life in the new country, including interaction patterns. The strategies associated with the maximisation of the positive outcomes previously identified are multiculturalism, assimilation or integration (Berry 1994; Ward and Rana-Deuba 1999), but the multicultural approach is widely agreed to be the most relevant to contemporary society, given the implied fostering of the values of tolerance, cultural relativism and respect.

Studies of international education

Accompanying the steady rise in the number of international students in global HE and the desire of HE institutions to attract more full fee-paying students, there has been a growth in the research dedicated to the international student experience. The international student body has also been the focus of research for those scholars interested in investigating the adjustment process, given the ease of access to this group as a research population. Indeed, many researchers have used international students as the testing ground for theory, which is then applied to other categories of sojourner (Coelho et al. 1974; Storti 1990; Altbach 1991; Crano and Crano 1993; Torbiorn 1994; Mohamed 1997; Furukawa 1997; Ward and Kennedy 1999; Liu 2001; Toyokawa and Toyokawa 2002). They have also been used to test various models of adjustment, and to further understanding of what constitutes the international sojourn; some studies have led to a reconceptualisation of adjustment (Searle and Ward 1990; Ward et al. 2001). It should be noted that most studies have been quantitative and have focused on countries other than the UK. However, qualitative studies are slowly on the increase, capturing, according to Ward (2001) and Cushner and Karim (2004) aspects of the experience of adjustment that quantitative studies have missed. The following topics have been identified in the literature on the academic sojourn:

Academic needs and cultural differences

There is an extensive literature on differences in lecturer and student expectations and behaviour across cultures, with academic cultural dissonance cited as a major challenge for international students (Hofstede 1986; Ballard 1987; Richardson 1994; Houghton and Dickinson 1995; Reagan 1996; Barkema et al. 1996; Biggs 1996; Ladd and Ruby 1999; Levin 2001; Deal 2002; Ramburuth and McCormick 2002; Biggs and Watkins 2002). Cross-cultural differences in participation in class discussion have been the subject of many studies whose

findings often point to a link between power distance and contribution to debate (Barker et al. 1991; Lynch and Anderson 1991; Furneaux et al. 1991; Kirchmeyer 1993; Okorochoa 1996a; Cortazzi and Jin 1997; De Vita 2000, 2001; McLean and Ransom 2005; Gu 2005). According to Hofstede (1991), power distance refers to the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. A country that is high in power distance country is highly hierarchical, and obedience and deference are shown towards those in a powerful position, whereas in a country that is low in power distance, the emotional distance between employer and employee/ lecturer and student is quite small. However, Ward (2001) criticises studies which stereotype the Asian student as shy and reserved, and argues that researchers should note evolution in participation as the sojourn progresses, and adjustment to a culturally different academic system is made.

Critical analysis has also received attention from researchers of international education, with SE Asian students in particular described as uncomfortable with critical exchange and contradiction: a high score on the dimension of power distance is usually given as the explanation for the common clash between reproductive and problem-based learning, between a reactive and a proactive approach to education (e.g. Skelton and Richards 1991; Okorochoa 1996a; Ballard 1995; Ballard and Clanchy 1991, 1997; Cortazzi and Jin 1997; The British Council 1999; Thorstensson 2001; Gu 2005). It is increasingly concluded that international students from a different academic culture should be eased into an educational approach that encourages critical thinking (Case and Sylvester 2000, Louie 2005), and that Western lecturers should acknowledge the cultural specificity of their own approach to knowledge (Holland 2005; Louie 2005). Ward (2001) and Leask (2007) argue that empirical evidence to support such a move is lacking, however.

The relationship with academic authority is another theme of previous research, with cross-cultural differences noted in attitudes towards tutors and supervisors (Argyle and Henderson 1986; Channell 1990; Rogers and Smith 1992; Dickinson 1993; Ballard and Clanchy 1997;

Thorstensson 2001), and also library staff with whom students have much contact (Ball and Mahony 1987; Bilal 1989; Chadley 1992; Sarkodie-Mensah 1992). Although there is evidence that international students' perceptions of teaching staff are generally positive (I-Barometer 2007⁵), reticence about approaching staff has been noted (Barker 1997; Cortazzi and Jin 1997). Furthermore, there is some disappointment in international students over the lack of mentoring received from academic staff (Chan and Drover 1997; Cortazzi and Jin 1997; Macrae 1997; Todd 1997; Ryan 2005). This mismatch in attitudes towards the staff-student relationship is often interpreted as a product of differing scores in the dimensions of power distance and uncertainty avoidance. Uncertainty avoidance (UA) is defined as the extent to which members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations (Hofstede 2001). People from countries which are high in UA shun ambiguous situations and show a need for structure in organisations, institutions and relationships to make events interpretable and predictable, whereas people from countries display an openness to change, risk and diversity. In the educational setting, this often implies a greater need among those from a high UA culture for direction and guidance (Cortazzi and Jin 1997; Hofstede 2001).

The potential for curricular diversity is commonly cited in the literature on international education (Altbach 1989; de Wit and Callan 1995; de Wit and Knight 1995; van der Wende 1996; Zuniga et al. 2002; UKCOSA 2004). According to Ackers (1997), international students are an important educational resource, bringing fresh perspectives to British education, and increasing the attractiveness of the curriculum for both international and domestic students who are prepared for a globalised working environment even if they have not travelled extensively (van der Wende 1996). In addition, an internationalised campus has the opportunity to bring cultural understanding between different ethnic groups (Knochenmus 1986; Greenaway and Tuck 1995; Leask 2005) and the opportunity for professional development for academic staff who are increasingly exposed to cultural diversity (Cortazzi

5. I-Barometer is an annual questionnaire survey carried out for British universities to measure international student satisfaction.

and Jin 1997; Louie 2005). Higher Education is thus an important meeting ground for cross-cultural contact (Bochner and Furnham 1982; Cray and Mallory 1998; Ward 2001); this is exemplified in the study by Westwood and Barker (1999), which documented the benefits of the cross-cultural classroom as increased cultural awareness, international links and opportunities for future work. However, it is increasingly acknowledged that the potential for an internationalised curriculum and for the development of intercultural competence is not sufficiently substantiated through empirical evidence (Sherlock and Sharples 1998; Ward 2001; Seymour 2002; Wright and Lander 2003; Cushner and Karim 2004; Louie 2005; De Vita 2005; Killick 2007; Leask 2007).

Friendship networks

Friendship has long been noted as a major contributor to emotional well-being and sojourner adjustment (Hamburg and Adams 1967; Dyal and Dyal 1981; Owie 1982; Gudykunst 1985; Kim 1988; Wisemann 1997; Ward et al. 2001): the interaction patterns of international students have therefore been the focus of much research. In the friendship typology created by Bochner et al. (1977), which is still cited today, the most important of the three friendship bonds is bicultural, as contact between the host and sojourner facilitates cultural and linguistic competence. It is argued that those who enjoy greater contact with host nationals appear to develop greater communication competence (e.g. Kramsch 1993; Ward and Dana-Reuba 1999; UKCOSA 2004). Having local friends is also related to lower stress levels and fewer social difficulties, less depression, greater life satisfaction, happiness and self-esteem (di Marco 1974; Klineberg and Hull 1979; Kim 1988; Searle and Ward 1990; Ward and Kennedy 1992; 1993; Furnham and Erdmann, 1995; Gudykunst 1998; Ward and Dana-Reuba 1999; Ward et al. 2001). However, to international student dissatisfaction, a low incidence of bonds between international and local students has been long and widely documented (Bochner et al. 1977; Pruitt 1978; Klineberg and Hull 1979; Furnham and Tresize, 1983;

Lewins 1990; Richardson 1991; Richardson 1991; Barker et al. 1991; Rogers and Smith 1992; Ward et al. 2000; UKCOSA 2004; Cushner and Karim 2004; De Vita 2005; Ward 2005; Peacock and Brown 2007; Leask 2007). All of these studies have focused on the international student perspective: to tackle the problem of poor integration between host and visitor, research into the host perspective is increasingly called for (Ward 2001; Peacock and Brown 2007).

The most common bond noted in studies of interaction patterns is the monocultural bond; a ghetto pattern is usually observed by researchers (Bochner et al. 1977; Dyal and Dyal 1981; Furnham and Alibhai 1985; Furnham and Bochner 1986; Bochner 1986; Sodowski and Plake 1992; Esack 1993; Bauman 1999; Ryan 2005a; Leask 2007). It has been shown that friendships with compatriots serve an important function in diminishing loneliness and stress but they are also accredited with decreased intercultural interaction and diminished language progress (Bochner et al. 1977; Bochner et al. 1985; Bochner and Orr 1979; Klineberg 1981; Furnham and Bochner, 1982; Sykes and Eden 1985; Kim 1988; Furnham and Erdman 1995; Yand and Clum 1995; Wiseman, 1997; Ward and Rana-Deuba 1999; Ward 2001).

A third bond, noted by Bochner et al. (1977) as the least important, is the multicultural friendship network between students of different nationalities. Nevertheless, this friendship group is credited by Wisemann (1997) with the alleviation of loneliness among international students, and multiculturalism is elsewhere observed as an important route to the acquisition of intercultural skills that will aid global understanding and increase employability among graduates (Gudykunst 1998; Westwood and Barker 1999; Ward 2001).

Linguistic competence

The difficulties experienced by international students in reaching sufficient linguistic competence as to master sociocultural and academic demands have been the focus of much research (Garza-Guerro 1974; Klineberg and Hull 1979; Blue 1991, 1993; Persaud 1994; Ballard and Clanchy 1997; Carroll 2005a). Many researchers have concluded that admission criteria either need to be raised or that HEI should improve their support structures (e.g. Bloor 1994; Cammish 1997; Ackers 1997; Ryan and Zuber-Skerritt 1999; Eland 2001; Lord and Dawson 2002; Ryan 2005a; Carroll 2005a). Given that international education is an important income stream, institutions are increasingly responding to such calls (Ryan 2005a; Taylor 2005; Smith 2006a), although Ward (2001) questions the evenness of distribution. Many studies have focused on the role of language in improving international students' adjustment to life in the new country, with good language skills facilitating acceptance by the host community and reducing everyday communication difficulties (di Marco 1974; Kramersch 1993; Hofstede 2001). Most researchers observe a distinction between verbal and non-verbal communication, with the latter being shown to have as much and sometimes more importance in interaction with the host (Gudykunst and Kim 1984; Tarone and Yule 1987; Strevens 1987; Smith 1987; Dissnayake and Nichter 1987; Hall 1992; Ward and Kennedy 1993; Torbiorn 1994; Cammish 1997; Todd 1997; Ting-Toomey 1999).

Identifying the gap in the literature

Despite extensive research on international students, some gaps in the literature have been identified:

- As observed by Wright (1997), Leonard et al. (2002) and Bowl (2004), few studies have examined sex differences in adjustment despite the fact that women form a growing part of the international student population and often experience stress and

conflict relating to the demands of their traditional role and their studies. Equally, few studies mention the impact of being a parent on the experience of the international academic sojourn (Durjayie and Donald 1984 is a rare example).

- Very little research has aimed to access the views of the domestic student population on host-sojourner contact, and similarly, no study has investigated the attitudes of the host community towards the presence of international students.
- The potential of international students to change both the content and the process of education has received considerable attention in the literature where it has been argued that they bring an international perspective to classroom discussions and that they challenge staff to consider new methods of instruction. However, little research has been done on receiving institutions and claims of an internationalised campus and curriculum have rarely been substantiated; no national survey has documented the extent to which higher education curricula have become internationalised.
- Few studies acknowledge the academic and linguistic progress made by international students over the course of the year (Ward 2001; Leonard et al. 2002; Morrison et al. 2005).
- Many writers betray limited awareness of the HE context (Leonard et al. 2002), a criticism echoed by Fetterman (1998) of a failure among many ethnographers to contextualise their data.
- A criticism also aimed at much ethnography and many studies of international education is that they betray a lack of theoretical sophistication (ibid).

- There has been very little empirical research on the role of food in the academic sojourn of international students; it is usually mentioned only incidentally by researchers as one of the aspects of the sojourn that students find distressing (e.g. Okorochoa 1996b; Furukawa 1997): Hall's (1995) small study is a rare example.
- There has been little research on the importance of religion to student identity and interaction (Weller 1992, Lawson 1993, Trafford 1993 and UKCOSA 1995 are unusual, whilst Appleton 2005 concentrates on the British Muslim student body), and on the link between faith and racial abuse among international students in the UK. Similarly, few studies have investigated the incidence of racism experienced by the international student community.
- There has been little research on the impact of global politics on the experience of international student adjustment, particularly on the contemporary situation of tension between Islam and the West, and the consequences for student well-being.
- The British drinking culture is acknowledged to be problematic for international students by journalists and university staff, but no researcher has investigated the impact on students of this phenomenon.
- There is a dearth of qualitative studies of adjustment; there are fewer ethnographic studies still. Most studies use questionnaires and/or interviews that look at students' experience retrospectively, or they capture only a snapshot of the experience, rather than tracking changes over time. No researcher has conducted ethnographic research into the process of adaptation (called for by Altbach 1989; Taylor 1994; Potter, 1996; Brewer 2000; O'Reilly 2005) by following the same sample of students over a whole

academic year in order to facilitate an understanding of the dynamics of sojourner adjustment.

- Less research has been done on international students in the UK than in Australia, New Zealand, and the US.
- The literature on the supervision of postgraduates is growing, but there is very little research on supervising across cultures (work by Todd 1997, Zuber-Ryan 2005 and Hall and O'Connell 2006 is exceptional).

It could not be my aim in this inductive study to fill the gaps in the literature on international students, as I did not know what topics would arise from the data analysis; however some of the topic gaps identified above have been filled by this study's documenting of:

- the British context;
- the difficulties associated with being a single parent student;
- the link between faith and interaction and host receptivity;
- the impact of increasing international student recruitment on lecturers;
- the importance of food to identity and interaction;
- an evolution in participation patterns;
- the impact of the macro on the micro setting;
- incidences of racism and the fear of aggression linked with alcohol abuse.

In addition, the research findings are clearly situated within the context of contemporary British society, which has an impact on the student experience. Parallels are drawn in the thesis between international students' experience of life in the UK and Britain's reception of visitors, and the mirror of British culture held up by students is a subject of some reflection.

Furthermore, the findings are contextualised within contemporary British Higher Education, raising questions of relevance to staff and students. As Hammersley (1992) states, the role of ethnography in policy change is not always maximised, and the duty of the researcher to communicate their findings is not always met (Williams 2003), but this will not be the case in this study, as findings will be, have been and are being used to inform policy and practice.

Chapter Two: Methodology

Introduction

There is clear consensus in the literature that the majority of sojourners experience culture shock, and have to undergo an adjustment process. The aim of my research is to explore this process, focusing on a cohort of 150 international postgraduate students at a university in the South of England. The selection of a university as a case study is apposite because of the cultural diversity found in higher education (Wolcott 1982; Spindler 1982; Bochner et al. 1985; Ward et al. 2001), and the choice of one particular university is justified on the grounds of my immersion in the setting and its potential to typify the situation of the majority of those universities in the UK, which recruit high numbers of international students, although no claim for the generalisation of findings is made. An ethnographic approach was used to investigate the adjustment journey, involving four in-depth one-to-one interviews with 13 postgraduate international students (52 interviews altogether), and overt observation of the entire postgraduate student body over a period of one academic year (2003-4). This chapter will present and justify the research approach used in this study as well as the individual methods. It will discuss the analysis techniques used, and will put forward the limitations of the research.

Adopting a qualitative approach

Researchers are confronted with a host of research approaches when starting their study, the choice of which is a reflection of the subjectivity, culture and preferences of the researcher (Schatzman and Strauss 1973; Spindler 1982; Denzin and Lincoln 1998; Brewer 2000;

Hofstede 2001). Hammersley (1992) and Mason (2002), among others, argue that qualitative research should not be seen as antithetical to quantitative research as they complement each other and answer different research questions. It is not the purpose of this chapter to repeat the well-documented distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research, but to offer the rationale for my choice of the qualitative approach.

A qualitative approach was chosen as I wanted to make an in-depth study of the individual, subjective experience of the move to a new culture at the same time as identifying the common patterns shared by this cohort of students. The process of adjustment is a journey whose destination is unknown to sojourners at the outset. For this reason, the initial inductive approach of qualitative research was appropriate: on a personal level, I welcomed the element of serendipity; I did not know what themes would emerge from a study that aimed to capture the emic, or the insider's, view of the adjustment journey. Qualitative researchers usually enter the research process uncovering their assumptions and setting them aside; they do not begin with a theory, which they impose on informants, but with curiosity (Brewer 2000). Inductive researchers begin fieldwork with a foreshadowed problem in mind, but an essential part of the research task is discovering what is significant: Wilson (1977) describes this as the anthropological research tradition of suspending preconceptions. In my case, I knew that international students often face a challenging adjustment process, but I had no idea what aspects of the sojourn they would find more difficult or more rewarding. As Spradley (1979, p.4) states, ethnographers typically start research with a 'conscious attitude of almost complete ignorance'. Therefore, during the field work phase, I avoided reading the literature so that I wouldn't influence the data collection with pre-conceived ideas.

Qualitative research denotes an orientation concerned with the study of social life in real, naturally occurring settings (Schatzman and Strauss 1973; Wilson 1977; Brewer 2000). This means that informants feel comfortable, and are natural and spontaneous, in as far as possible when they are being interviewed or observed; as Derrida (1976) stated, the mere presence of a

spectator is a violation, and may colour the behaviour of those observed (Fielding 1993). This qualification is offset by pointing out that I was a participant observer, therefore my presence was not unsettling to students: I would be present whether I was engaged in observation or not. By studying the adjustment process in students' natural setting, the university campus, it was possible to be spontaneous in terms of when data were collected, as many data were collected outside the interview situation in unsolicited conversations and unexpected observations.

Close engagement through regular in-depth interviewing permits access to informants' feelings and perceptions (Denzin and Lincoln 1998; Brewer 2000). The rapport established with informants required time to develop but opened a window onto their emotional world that I felt quantitative research could not deliver. As Torbiorn (1994) notes, adjustment is a subjectively lived experience, and quantitative research could not hope to reach such subjectivity. The depth and richness of qualitative data are a function of the ability to sensitively explore topics of importance with informants (Mason 2002). The flexibility and spontaneity associated with the in-depth interview (Potter 1996; Mason 2002) meant that I could explore any avenue; the interview could and often did lead me in unexpected directions, as it was directed by the interests and preoccupations of the informant. Whilst participant observation was invaluable to this research, it must be noted that only in the interview situation were sensitive topics explored in any depth.

It was decided from the outset that the data collection would last no less than one full academic year, in order to capture the whole adjustment journey of informants. Most qualitative researchers advocate long periods of contact, as the greater contact with informants the better (Potter 1996), particularly to capture processes such as adjustment that take place over time. This has implications for researchers' intellectual, practical, physical and emotional resources (Mason 2002), an observation borne out by this study, as the

fieldwork phase was an exhausting period, given the energy needed to create and sustain rapport with informants over 12 months (and in some cases longer than this).

Finally, having read around the methodological debate among researchers on the challenge posed by postmodernist thought to the collection and interpretation of data, I realised that I tended towards agreement with those qualitative researchers (see Denzin and Lincoln 1998; Seale 1999) who are sceptical about the ability to faithfully represent the social world⁶. I realised that my tendency to question conventional wisdom would be better reflected in a qualitative approach in which reflexivity and doubt are not only welcomed, but demanded.

Conducting an ethnographic study

After months of immersion in the methodology literature, it became clear that ethnography, and particularly ethnography ‘at home’, was the most suitable approach to capture the international student experience of adjustment, offering access to informants over an extended period, on a daily basis in their natural setting. By using participant observation and extensive interviewing over one academic year, I was able to gain an unparalleled insight into informants’ world that is typical of ethnography (Spindler 1982; Agar 1986; Hammersley 1992; Fielding 1993; Gilbert 1993). It also acts as a way to triangulate data to achieve validity or trustworthiness.

Ethnography is an interdisciplinary research approach (Bohannan 1969; Clifford 1986), which has a strong presence in social and cultural anthropology, sociology and social psychology as well as in applied areas like health and education (Hammersley 1992). Educational

⁶ Denzin (1991) states that postmodernism is not a formal theory but a perspective on all theories in a chaotic, disordered imagined existence. It is an anti-theory, an assault on unity, used to dismiss traditional ways of thinking in natural and social science.

ethnography refers to the study of any or all educational processes (Spindler 1982), and can be used as an evaluation tool (Fetterman 1998). This study did not start out as applied or evaluative research, but as will be seen in later chapters, there are clear implications from the research findings for educational practice.

Ethnography is the tool of anthropology (Spindler 1982), a term which derives from the Greek, and means the study of people (Bohannan 1969). The goal of anthropology is to describe and explain social behaviour and the perspectives of cultural members (Wolcott 1982; Wilcox 1982), with the ingrained principle of studying behaviour in a natural setting (Spradley 1979; Fielding 1993; Brewer 2000), necessitating close association with informants over a long period (Hammersley 1992). This is made possible by the use of the participant observation technique which is so closely associated with ethnography (Fetterman 1998), the attraction of which was immediate to me, as my role of study support lecturer allowed extensive observation opportunities. Culture is used as the central organising concept of anthropology (Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952; Spradley 1979). In fact, ethnography, which similarly derives from the Greek, means *the writing of culture* (Fetterman 1998). The focus on cultural patterns drew me to the choice of ethnography, as I was interested in the sub-culture informants would create during their sojourn, as well as the widely recognised influence of cultural origin on their behaviour (Spradley 1979; Wolcott 1982; Spindler 1982; Brewer 2000).

The product of ethnography is a mirror of a group under study, a detailed slice of life (Taylor 2002), typically referred to by ethnographers as thick description (Geertz 1973). In this study, the activities and patterns of behaviour of international students were recorded in detail so that the reader can glimpse the sub-culture students created during their stay. It is crucial that ethnographers present data from the emic (the students') perspective (Spradley 1979; Clifford 1983; Fetterman 1982, 1998), following which they seek to explain behaviour, combining the view of the insider (the emic) with that of the outsider (the etic) to describe the social setting

(Wilcox 1982; Fetterman 1998). Ethnography is thus associated with a rejection of the principle that the researcher's view is paramount, as the insider's view of society is equally if not more valuable than that of the outsider perspective of the researcher (Bourgeois 2002). Throughout this study, I interpret patterns of behaviour observed by myself and described by students using a combination of my own judgement, theoretical and empirical research, and students' own views, who frequently try to make sense of their own and others' behaviour. I will seek to point out to the reader the distinction between the etic (my) and the emic (the students') point of view, which sometimes conflict. This will comply with Fetterman's (1982, 1998) injunction to researchers to make their ethnography phenomenological, that is, to include the perspective of the 'experiencing person' (Becker 1992). Given its commitment to capturing the emic perspective, ethnography is usually associated with the inductive approach to research, with discovery being the aim of the researcher (Geertz 1973).

Anthropology at home

Crucial to this study is the distinction between anthropology, which entails research in alien cultures, and sociology, which involves studying at home, using anthropological approaches such as ethnography (Clifford 1986). In the latter case, there is no alien tongue to master and the culture of interest is partially known at the outset of study (van Maanen 1988). In this research, the context of study is the South of England, home to the researcher. Burgess (1984) states that field researchers working in their own culture share familiarity with the society studied. This is not necessarily an advantage, as a common problem of conducting anthropology at home is 'making the familiar strange' (Spindler 1982). It is difficult to achieve an outsider's perspective on a familiar setting (Wolcott 1982; Weil 1987). England is familiar terrain to me, being the socio-cultural context of my primary socialisation (Mascarenhas-Keyes 1987). I therefore do not enjoy the advantage of distance and de novo sensitivity of the outsider who can usually see properties lost to the insider (Schatzman and

Strauss 1973; Triandis 1979; Spradley 1980). Striving to portray the setting from the perspective of international students was a challenge: as most anthropologists (e.g. Barley 1983) note, it is much simpler to describe the exotic. Yet, as Spradley (1979) points out, ethnography offers one of the best ways to observe the complexity of our own society: indeed, time and again in this study, a mirror on English life was held up by informants.

On the other hand, I entered the international student sub-culture as a ‘cultural stranger’ (Ball 1983); I did not share their experiences and perceptions. A subculture usually shares some of the norms and rules of the larger culture (Cope and Kalantzis 1997); however, this heterogeneous group shared few, if any, English cultural norms. This posed a challenge that Fetterman (1998, p.146) describes as familiar to ethnographers who “wander through a multicultural wilderness, learning to see the world through the eyes of people from all walks of life”: this study involved negotiating a relationship with informants from different national and cultural backgrounds, learning to see England and the multicultural group from an emic point of view.

Choice of setting and sample

According to Brewer (2000), all ethnography involves case study research, which focuses on the particular but not necessarily at the expense of the general (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). The *case* in this study is a university located in a town in the south of England (population 165,370), chosen for its capacity to portray the experience of international students in British Higher Education. As argued in Chapter 1, the increasing recruitment of international students into HE makes the results of this study relevant to all those HEI affected by this growing student population. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) and Daymon and Holloway (2002) describe a *setting* as a named context in which phenomena occur that

might be studied from any number of angles. Any physical setting can become the basis for research as long as it contains people engaged in activity (Spradley 1980). The research problem and the setting are closely bound together and the role of pragmatic considerations must not be underestimated (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). As the aim of my research is to explore international student adjustment, the setting chosen for this research was my department's Graduate School, because I work there as a lecturer in English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and have direct access to and close involvement with a large group of international students. This satisfies Spradley's (1980) recommended criteria in choice of setting: simplicity, accessibility, unobtrusiveness, and permissibility. Furthermore, Daymon and Holloway (2002) argue that the site must be an intrinsically interesting test site for theory. Being my place of work as well as of research meant that the possibilities for data collection were maximised; I had far better access to data than an outsider would obtain. As Leonard et al. (2002) point out, one of the problems faced by all researchers is how to get the co-operation of a group of international students with whom to undertake their study

Ethnographers mostly use purposive sampling, selecting a specific location and informants (Daymon and Holloway 2002; Williams 2003). All Masters students in the Graduate School were observed over one academic year in a variety of situations, and I had opportunity over the year to interact with most students. For the interviewing aspect of the research, I aimed to find ten students who would be interviewed several times each over a twelve month period. The sample in qualitative research tends to be small as the focus is on deep exploration (Daymon and Holloway 2002), although, as Hammersley (1992, p. 16) argues, it is possible to produce research that identifies generic features: "to find the general in the particular; a world in a grain of sand." During induction in September 2003, I presented the topic of research to a new intake of 150 students; I described what would be required of them, and asked for volunteers to participate in the year-long study. In the end, fifteen students volunteered to take part in the interview survey. Of these, eleven were female, which reflects the gender bias in this and successive cohorts. Two students, both male, dropped out of the project, citing a busy

schedule. Wolcott (2001) advises that the study should offer a firm footing in the description of characters, to make the reader feel comfortable with the scene; therefore a profile of each interviewee is offered below, which should help the reader to locate and become familiar with the main players in the thesis (pseudonyms are used, and I made sure that students cannot be identified):

Olga, female, Russian, 22, Christian, financed by parents, single, a student living with her parents in Russia, living in a university hall of residence with 5 students from a mixture of nationalities.

Kyoung, female, Korean, 40, Buddhist, translator, sponsored by company, married with two children, in England she lived for three months with a British host family and for the rest of the stay she lived as a single parent in a flat with her two children.

Natalia, female, Slovenian, 32, Christian, Head of Research, sponsored by company, cohabiting, living with partner in a small flat.

Xia, female, Taiwanese, 33, no religion, lecturer, self-financing, married, living in Halls with a mixture of nationalities.

Brigitte, female, German, 26, Christian, secretary, self-financing, single, living in a shared house with English students.

Antonio, male, Brazilian, 30, Christian, lecturer, self-financing, single, living in Halls with a mixture of nationalities.

Mohamed, male, Jordanian, 26, Muslim, head chef in five-star restaurant, self-financing, single, living with parents at home, living in Halls with a mixture of nationalities.

Ning, female, Chinese, 28, no religion, PA, self-financing, single, living with parents at home, living in Halls with a mixture of nationalities.

Paranee, female, Thai, 28, Buddhist, tour guide, financed by parents, single, living with parents at home, living in Halls with a mixture of nationalities.

Rini, female, Indonesian, 27, Christian, administrator, financed by parents, single, living with parents at home, living in Halls with a mixture of nationalities.

Panya, female, Malaysian, 22, Muslim, student, financed by parents, single, living with parents at home, living in Halls with a mixture of nationalities.

Kiana, female, Iranian, 32, Muslim, office manager, self-financing, married with one child, living in a flat with her daughter as a single parent.

Cecilia, female, South African, 34, Christian, teacher, British Council scholarship, married with two children, living in Halls with a mixture of nationalities.

Given the importance of personality in the subjective experience of life events, including adjustment (Berry 1994), it is acknowledged that a different sample of interviewees might have produced different findings. Whilst it is not the intention of qualitative research to generalise its findings, this study nevertheless notes a repetition of patterns among informants that hints at some universality of experience.

The timing of primary data collection

Institutions have their own temporal phenomenology; therefore the timing of research should take into account the institutional timetable, as this can be as significant as the choice of the institution itself (Ball 1983). Assuming that students would have particularly intense emotional experiences at the start of term when they would be attempting to adapt to a new sociocultural and academic environment, I started the collection of the primary data during induction in September. Had I started later than this, accounts of the first stage would have been retrospective and possibly unreliable: indeed, in the second round of interviews, students had often forgotten their earlier emotional state. Bearing in mind that the availability of informants imposes constraints upon data collection (Ball 1983; Mason 2002), I contacted students during induction, so that not only would their initial experience be fresh, but they may also be more willing to give up their time, as they were not as yet inundated with assignments. For subsequent interviews, enough rapport had been created with informants that they were willing to give up their time to meet me. The second round of interviews was conducted just after the Christmas holiday, when some adjustment to academic and sociocultural life might have been made. I conducted the third round of interviews shortly after the Easter holiday, towards the end of the taught part of the course, and the last interview was conducted after the Masters dissertation had been submitted in September. Had I finished the interview data collection any earlier, I would not have captured the mixture of feelings arising from returning to their home country or their reflections on their year abroad. Between September 2003/4, participant observation took place on a daily 9-5 basis, therefore any event which occurred in interviewees' life could be accessed both in and outside the interview situation.

Anthropologists (e.g. Spradley 1980) and qualitative researchers (e.g. Potter 1996) often advise spending a year with a group: time enables relationships to develop, and permits the observation of detail and processes, rather than a static image captured at certain points (French et al. 1974; Potter 1996; Brewer 2000; O'Reilly 2005). Furthermore, cultural patterns have an incubation period, which takes time to develop and to study. As Church (1982) and Leonard et al. (2002) note, the most important limitation of much research on international students is that it is not processual; this is inadequate to the study of adjustment and coping. A study of adjustment which does not last for the duration of the sojourn cannot hope to capture the experience from the arrival stage to the final outcome, unless the aim is to study only one aspect of the sojourn.

The informant-researcher relationship

Central to ethnography is the use of key informants with whom ethnographers work to produce a cultural description (Fetterman 1998). In this research, the term informant refers to the 150 students I observed on a continual basis, and to those students I formally interviewed once every 3 months. It is with the interviewees that I felt I had to establish rapport, defined by Spradley (1979) as a harmonious relationship between ethnographer and informant, as it is they who gave up their time and energy. As the research involved four interviews over 12 months, the rapport with interviewees had to be strong enough to ensure that they would be willing to engage in the research over and over again, representing, according to Spradley (1979), one of the challenges of ethnography. Trust has to be developed over time (ibid), which was possible in a year-long field research. Brewer (2000) argues that the importance of the personal relationship makes qualitative research especially demanding in terms of time and energy. This was pertinent for me as my aim was to gain access to informants' emotional world, which requires hard work on the part of the researcher to develop an atmosphere of security and confidentiality (Mason 2002). Hence, the field work phase of the research was

an exhausting period, requiring personal investment into thirteen long-term relationships.

This involved for example instigating email contact outside the interview situation: in a bid to convey that my interest in them was not just instrumental, I would often follow up on issues that had arisen during the interview. Whilst I saw it as my ethical duty to take care of informants, this was very demanding, particularly when major changes in students' lives necessitated sustained effort on my part to maintain engagement and to offer support.

Although exit strategy from the field shouldn't be important in this study as I ended data collection as informants finished their course and returned home, three interviewees stayed on in the UK; therefore emotional disengagement had to be considered (Brewer 2000). However, I felt that I couldn't simply withdraw from these students, despite pressures on my time: as Mason (2002) points out, some ethnographers remain emotionally engaged long after the research is completed. The possibility of the burden of long-term commitment should be anticipated at the planning stage (Brewer 2000), however, I wasn't prepared for students staying on, for the perceived duty to continue rapport with them.

Spradley (1979) warns that the ethnographer-informant relationship can be problematic when there are power differentials between the two, and I worried that it would be hard for me to maintain a professional boundary outside the interview situation, in that students may see me not as a tutor but as a friend. As it transpired, most seemed to adapt to the differing relationship in the interview situation and in the classroom, when they reverted to being just one of a group. In fact it was I who experienced the awkwardness of moving between roles, as my diary shows:

At the end of Interview 1, Natalia deferentially asks if I will look at her assignment.

Strange sensation of entering and leaving different roles of grateful researcher and informative but formal academic tutor all within minutes of each other.

A further problem associated with using the lecturer role to establish relationships with students is that its authoritative connotations may inhibit informants (Ball 1983). In this study, there was a danger that students may not voice any negative feelings they had about their academic life, as they may see me as a cultural outsider, identified with course management. Indeed, students tended to apologise if they said anything negative about the course, requiring many reassurances that I was not upset by what they said, and that confidentiality was guaranteed. In addition, I may be seen as an outsider in respect of national and cultural origin, and be identified with the host community. This was particularly noticeable when students recounted incidents of discrimination; they appeared nervous in case they offended me, and only relaxed when I showed sympathy with them. This fear of giving offence could be compounded by a tendency towards deference among those from a culture high in power distance (Hofstede 1991; Hofstede and Hofstede 2005), describing the majority cultural origin. Whilst all interviewees voiced negative feelings about some aspect of their experience, I clearly cannot know whether or not they withheld other thoughts that they felt they could not share. Nevertheless, the findings show similarities with previous research on adjustment, and lead me to hope that interviewees grew to trust me sufficiently to confide in me. As Brewer (2000) notes, trust has to be negotiated: ethnographers need to be aware that informants may seek reassurance and even set tests for confidentiality.

Research methods

During this ethnographic study, I was committed to the use of more than one method, given the advantages of multidimensional data (Mason 2002), including participant observation of a cohort of 150 students on the same Masters course and four rounds of one-to-one interviews. I also kept a diary of personal reflections which allowed me to record emerging themes, methodological notes and my own observations and attitudes, which all form part of the data (Fetterman 1998). The use of triangulation within method is the source of ethnographic

validity (Fetterman 1998), as data of different kinds can be systematically compared, to test the quality of information and to put the situation into perspective (Denzin and Lincoln 1998; Seale 1999). According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), trustworthiness is also improved if different kinds of data lead to the same conclusion. Throughout this thesis, I refer to data collected from interviews, opportunistic conversations, class discussion, observation and email correspondence, as well as my research diary and the literature.

Participant observation

Participant observation involves participating in the informants' social world, and reflecting on the products of that participation (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995; Mason 2002; O'Reilly 2005). In acknowledgement of Fetterman's point (1998) that observation is a product of subjectivity, and should therefore not stand alone as a research tool, I am pleased that I also had access to the understanding derived from conversations and in-depth interviewing. On the other hand, what is said is not always what is done, and it was often the case that the emic view of the scene differed from etic observation.

Participation ranges from spending some time in a group to full immersion (Spradley 1980). In this study, participation was 'complete', a term used to refer to the highest level of involvement which is offered when ethnographers study a situation they are already participating in (ibid). I used my existing role to research a familiar setting, removing the problems of resocialisation, acceptance or misunderstanding (Brewer 2000). As I was fully immersed in the academic field, I could move around in the location as I wished, without appearing unusual or intrusive, observing in detail on a daily basis, with access to opportunistic interviewing, as well as to spontaneous observation (Mason 2002). Though I could study social and academic behaviour, I had access to students' private life (evenings and weekends) only through subjective self reports. Observation can be overt or covert,

depending on the topic and the field (Spradley 1979): as I was an overt participant observer; all those involved (staff and students) knew about the research, therefore I didn't need to hide my research identity.

Planning for field work takes time, especially for longer periods of data collection (Daymon and Holloway 2002), and the following questions were considered before field work commenced:

- *When and for how long would I observe students?*

In order to allow myself time to experience the ambience of the scene, and to permit observation of the repetition of patterns (Schatzman and Strauss 1973), I decided that observation would be on a daily, 9-5 basis (during the week) from the start of induction week.

- *Where would I observe students; and whom should I observe?*

I decided to observe *all* of my department's international postgraduate students in various situations, taking advantage of naturally occurring groups and discussions (O'Reilly 2005): in the classroom, my office, the administration office, the corridor, the library, the coffee bar (indoor and outdoor), the canteen. For example, at the coffee bar, I was able to observe interaction patterns, the type of food consumed and the language spoken; meanwhile, in the classroom, participation patterns, proxemics, and ingroup/outgroup behaviour were observed and reflected on.

- *Will I note everything, or only those peculiarities that strike me?*

What is recorded will depend on the foreshadowed research problem (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995), but in this inductive study, I made no prediction of the topics of relevance to students, and therefore everything had to be noted down. The questions suggested by Daymon and Holloway (2002) were useful to start the field research, when I felt overwhelmed by the task ahead:

1. Who is present?
2. What is happening, what are the rules of behaviour?
3. Where are people located in the physical space?
4. When and how do interactions take place?
5. Why do people act as they do and why are there variations in behaviour?

As time went on, and preliminary analysis had been undertaken, I adopted a more instinctive approach and noted whatever seemed relevant to me, practising selective sampling (Schatzman and Strauss 1973; Spradley 1980), which is shaped by the emergent themes (Potter 1996). Therefore data collection became more focused and less time-consuming as the field research proceeded.

Observation was also complicated by the fact that the data generated from interviews sometimes had an influence on the data collected in the field, as I sought to confirm patterns and corroborate interview data, e.g. the themes of food habits, study experience, language difficulties and interaction patterns emerged from both interviews and observation. Important information was often proffered outside the interview situation, for example, Kiana (the Iranian interviewee) revealed that for the first time in her life she had decided to give up the Ramadan fast. As advised by O'Reilly (2005), when opportunistic conversations occur, the ethnographer should ask questions on the spur of the moment. Therefore the skill of conversational management (Peshkin 1982) associated with interviewing was found to be necessary in daily participant observation (which involved more than just *watching*), including, for example, listening carefully, and asking sensitive follow-up questions.

- *Should I immerse myself in situations that I wouldn't normally be involved in?*

According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), the ethnographer has to resist the temptation to see, hear and participate in everything that goes on. I decided that I would frequent *some* social events for international students outside working time, such as the university's Diwali celebrations, or Diversity Day, and that I would go more often than usual to the university coffee bar and library, given the observation possibility of interaction patterns. In addition, I acknowledge that I often moved between the roles of lecturer and interested researcher in class and encouraged some discussions because I knew they would be relevant to my research. However, the field of observation was on balance *no different* from the field I still find myself in as study support tutor, furnishing ample opportunity for observation. The difference lies in the attention to, the 'explicit awareness' (Spradley 1980) of, the life I then found myself immersed in.

- *How often should I record my observations?*

Throughout the study, every working day provided an opportunity for the collection of data; the problem became how to find time to note down my observations. There was a tension between facilitating and participating in discussions and finding time to remember and record what had been said. Sometimes, it was possible to make a quick note of key words: even though I was an overt observer, I didn't want to violate the scene too much (Derrida 1976) by appearing too obtrusive. Usually, I hoped I would remember the event or conversation later on that day. I made certain to unload the observation experience as soon as possible to avoid the problems of memory recall (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). Though it was challenging to find time to write up a full, expanded account (Spradley 1979) of what I had observed, on the occasions where I did not do so (usually in the evening at home, and not infrequently in the ladies toilets at work), I realised that I could not recall observations in their entirety. Indeed, on later rereading, I was often surprised to find records of events, which I had since

forgotten. A discipline of daily writing (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995) and systematic recording tactics are vital then (Spradley 1979). However, the ethnographer's task is not one of only recording observed events, but also of introspection and thought (Geertz 1973; Spradley 1980), as ethnography is a subjective construct of both observation and analysis (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). It very soon became clear to me why ethnography is often described as demanding of researchers (Mason 2002), as my weekends and evenings were devoted to reviewing field notes and thinking about emerging themes. Sensitivity to the debate over the influence of the researcher on data collection and analysis (e.g. van Maanen 1988; Mason 2002) meant that I distinguished in field notes between reflection and observation. This was useful in the writing up stage, as I was able to interweave the emic and the etic view.

Document analysis

Documents that relate to the social world include photos, diaries and letters (Macdonald and Tipton 1993). As soon as the research project began in September, I asked interviewees to keep a diary, so that I might access feelings that they might not want to express face to face (Mearns and Woods 1983; Crane 1984). Unfortunately, all of the students told me that they would be too busy to keep a diary, and instead they agreed that they would email me with their thoughts and observations on an ongoing, ad hoc basis. I also asked the rest of the cohort to email me with in such a way, and indeed the majority emailed me regularly on a variety of topics. This was a further useful source of data corroboration, with the following topics contributing to emergent themes:

- Loneliness (*I don't think it will be easy for me to have a happy Christmas with my family so far away*).
- Weather (*I think that I can not get used to the weather in England. It's too cold for me, and I got a bad cold from last Saturday*).

- Deference to tutors (*When somebody learn us somthing he/she make us his/her slave*).
- Stress (*I have hardest time in whole my life I hope I can cope with all of things*).
- Host contact (*I got the information from my friends that people there are kind of aloof*).

In order to keep their interest and commitment alive, I made sure to reply to every email: as over 1000 messages were received, this proved time-consuming, but it often led to lengthy correspondence on issues of significance, e.g. the elections in South Africa (April 2004), terrorism in Europe, and working conditions in the UK. Informants often commented that this communication offered a source of comfort and a way to practise their English:

I am so sad with the fact that I am struggling to get a decent job and with other issues. You are one of the few people who make me feel better. Thanks a lot!

(Thai student)

Though not as in-depth as a personal diary would have been, the rapport created and sustained through email contact meant that I was able to access data that I would not have otherwise been privy to, particularly from those students who were not among those selected for interview.

The ethnographic interview

Unstructured interviews are most common in ethnography (Mason 2002; O'Reilly 2005), allowing participants a greater voice and minimising the influence of the interviewer (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995; Denzin and Lincoln 1998). Interviews were chosen as the best way to access students' experience of the international sojourn, allowing them to express themselves in their own words and at their own pace (Brewer 2000), vital considerations in

this research where self-expression could be hindered by the fact that informants were non-native speakers of English.

One-to-one interviews were decided on, as it was felt that a focus group situation might prevent some from disclosing sensitive information and inhibit those students with lower level language ability and less confidence in public speaking. The interview offered me the chance to delve deeply into important topics that opportunistic conversations didn't allow, for instance it was only in the interview situation that the topics of identity, stigma, discrimination, loneliness and ingroup pressure were explored in detail (although shorter conversations with other informants did yield some data). The unstructured interview permits flexibility and spontaneity (Mason 2002), which allowed me to pursue such issues of importance to students. The ethnographic interview is responsive to situations and informants (Potter 1996; O'Reilly 2005), and for this reason, each interview with all thirteen informants was unique, although there was some similarity of topics.

The comfort of informants is an important consideration: as recommended by many researchers (e.g. O'Reilly 2005), no interview lasted longer than 120 minutes (the minimum was 90 minutes), as I considered that this would be the maximum either party could last without tiring. When I felt that the student was wilting, I offered a refreshment break. Due to limited room availability, I decided to conduct the interviews in my office, with which they were already familiar: I put a Do Not Disturb sign on the door, switched off the computer and the phone, organised comfortable chairs, and made each student a drink, checking their preference in advance.

In terms of how to record the interview, I decided not to make notes during the session, which I felt would distract interviewees, so I purchased a transcription machine and a very small hand-held recording device, which was placed unobtrusively on the table between the two of us. Once the initial embarrassment of speaking on tape had worn off after just a few minutes,

students paid no attention to the machine, except when they felt they were saying something derogatory either about the course or about the UK, whereupon they would nod towards the machine as if nervous about it being proof of what they were saying. At this point I would give several reassurances about confidentiality, thus complying with the ethical responsibility of the researcher to guarantee anonymity (Mason 2002).

In order to make informants feel comfortable, the most important thing to do in the interview situation is to get them talking (Spradley 1979), using the interpersonal skills that are needed in everyday social life (Brewer 2000), such as maintaining eye contact, adopting relaxed body language, showing an interest, and asking relevant follow-up questions (O'Reilly 2005).

Despite nervous awareness on my part of the importance of these interviews to my research, I sought to be friendly, reassuring and empathetic. The need to strike a relaxed pose is one of the stressful aspects of qualitative research (Mason 2002), but three interviewees commented on how at ease they felt:

Every interview should feel like this, you make us feel so comfortable! Xia, Taiwanese interviewee

According to Warren and Hackney (2000), I should acknowledge my gender in this thesis, as in all situations, including research, being a man or a woman will shape experience. Ellis (1991) and Ellis and Flaherty (1992) argue that a full grasp of the social world demands attention to emotional experience, which women may be better placed to access owing to their alleged superior communication skills and sociability skills (Warren and Hackney 2000).

Indeed, I believe that being a female researcher *did* contribute to the unfolding of information in this study, particularly on sensitive topics such as body image, relationships with partners and children, and homesickness: many interviewees said that they would not have volunteered the same information to a male researcher because of feelings of shyness, and in the case of

two Muslim informants, because they are not used to speaking to men on such subjects. Otherwise I don't believe that women by virtue of their gender necessarily make good interviewers: both men and women need to put in the thought and planning necessary for successful qualitative research (Mason 2002), and male researchers can prepare themselves to be just as solicitous and receptive as women have traditionally been brought up to be. Besides, women, just like men, can be uncommunicative and taciturn, qualities which make for poor ethnographers (Brewer 2000). On the other hand, it is possible that my gender worked against me in interviews and conversations with the two male interviewees who may have confided more in a male researcher.

Interview question guide

It is important in the unstructured, ethnographic interview to ask questions that are open-ended, to get interviewees talking about a broad topic area, whilst remembering that the informant guides the content (Spradley 1979; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). When I drew up a list of questions for the first round of interviews, I had to bear in mind that I didn't want to lead the student, but on the other hand, I had to prepare enough questions in case the conversation dried up, as happened with Olga, a particularly inexpressive Russian student. In addition, I had to use simple, intelligible vocabulary and be prepared to repeat or rephrase any questions that students may find hard to understand. Spradley (1979) recommends the use of grand tour or experience questions in the opening ethnographic interview, followed by focused mini tour or example questions, depending on the interviewee's response (see Table below).

Interview question types

<p>Grand tour question</p> <p>An open, descriptive question that can keep an informant talking for hours.</p>	<p>Could we start by you telling me some general information about yourself?</p> <p>Can I ask you to try to remember how you felt the last few days before you left your country?</p> <p>Could you describe your journey to the UK?</p>
<p>Mini tour question</p> <p>Stimulated by response to grand tour questions, deals with a smaller unit of experience, woven throughout the interview.</p>	<p>You said that before you came to the UK, you expected the weather to be cold- is it colder than you expected?</p>
<p>Example question</p> <p>Used to gather further information on a topic raised by the informant.</p>	<p>Can you give me an example of what you found difficult to cope with when you first arrived? (only asked in response to allusion to difficulty)</p>
<p>Experience question</p> <p>Open ended and best used after asking numerous grand and mini tour questions.</p>	<p>What was it like when you arrived at Heathrow?</p> <p>What were your first impressions when you arrived?</p>

Source: adapted from Spradley 1979

Each interview took a different direction, requiring the ability to think on my feet (Mason 2002): Cecilia talked about her experience of leaving her children; Kiana described her experience of removing the hijab upon arrival; Ning spoke about the host's perception of China. Therefore, subsequent interviews and informal (opportunistic) conversations took

different turns: this was an aspect of research that was interesting in its unpredictability, and yet demanding. In the second interview then, the interview approach was more directive, as topics were followed up from the first interview (Spradley 1979; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995), including language use, the weather and loneliness. Initial conceptual categories thus guide further interviews, however Mason (2002) warns against premature coding, which can inhibit the openness of the interview, and I made sure that I continued to ask grand tour questions as well as follow-up questions. I feel confident that informants continued to guide the interview in that new topics which had not arisen in Interview 1 were raised in subsequent interviews, such as changes in the self, and some topics such as living expenses and the weather were dropped as major preoccupations.

To prepare for subsequent interviews, transcription (undertaken by myself) and analysis began immediately. Though it was a very time-consuming process, taking at least four hours to transcribe each interview, transcription made me feel closer to informants, as I could pay attention to their intonation, pronunciation, and grasp of grammar and vocabulary, and on many occasions I was reminded of their distress in interviews. Besides, the thickness of the foreign accent, especially in the initial interview, would have made transcription very difficult for an outsider, and may have meant the loss of vital information.

My research diary

If we take on board the central role of the researcher in qualitative research, where the researcher is the main 'instrument' (Hammersley 1983; Brewer 2000), we have to acknowledge the need for a reflexive account of the research process (Seale 1999; Davies 1999). Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) argue that as we are part of the social world we study, the data collected and interpreted are coloured by our own biases, which is particularly

relevant to my study, as I am so familiar with and embedded in the academic environment. For this reason, I kept a diary for an almost daily record of my personal reflections, which, as Spradley (1979) recommends, was started well before the data collection phase began. By keeping a diary, I was able to subject my research activities to rigorous analysis (Peshkin 1982; Hammersley 1983; Pratt 1986), with reflections recorded on methodological issues such as sampling, interview conduct, rapport with informants, ethics, analysis and interpretation.

According to Clifford (1986), self-reflexive accounts provide an important forum for the discussion of existential and political problems, which is particularly true for this research, as the findings led me to consider larger social and educational issues, such as the commodification of HE, racism and Islamophobia. Thus, the diary is an acknowledgement of the dialectical, dynamic interplay between the ethnographer and the study: the researcher impacts on the study, which in turn impacts on the researcher, with implications for professional practice and personal development. The diary was also a way to record changes in myself, for example, I learned to challenge my own prejudices, which I had previously been unaware of, a common undertaking made by most anthropologists (Herskovits 1972; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). Refining one's thinking is for Mason (2002) as important as reading and writing, and just as time-consuming; indeed, I found that the best writing was often done after a period of reflection. Besides, as I discovered, if researchers don't write memos to themselves (Glaser 1978), they may lose their thought as they move on to new writing.

On a more banal level, the diary was a useful channel for the release of tension during the data collection period: I was overwhelmed by not only the demands of my job as an EAP tutor, but also by the taxing nature of ethnographic data collection and analysis, and not least the amount of energy needed to sustain rapport with interviewees and the rest of the student body (Mason 2002).

Ethnographic analysis

Analysis can be defined as the process of bringing order to data, organising undifferentiated comments and observations into patterns, categories and descriptive units, and looking for relationships between them (Fetterman 1998; Brewer 2000). As ethnography produces enormous amounts of data, which increases in proportion to the data collection duration, analysis is therefore demanding (Fielding 1993). In addition, in ethnography, analysis is not a distinct stage of research, but takes place throughout and after the field work stage (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995; Brewer 2000). It is an interactive process; used from the start to guide interviews and observation (Schatzman and Strauss 1973; Denzin 1997).

Whereas many researchers collect and analyse data in distinct stages, this twelve-month ethnography involved every aspect of research except for the literature review, which was conducted *after* the field work was complete: it was only then that relationships were established between the primary and secondary data, as Hammersley (1992) advises.

Analysing data involves thinking that is self-conscious and systematic (Schatzman and Strauss 1973; Hammersley 1992). Creating an analytic code is essential, as this conceptualises patterns of empirical indicators (Glaser 1978), and stops the researcher from getting lost in the data (Mason 2002). There are many terms used in the methodology literature on ethnographic analysis, but for this research I will adopt the terms used by Spradley (1979): the sub-code, code and category. A code is a word used to represent a phenomenon the researcher notices in the text. It must be distinct so that it is obviously different from another code, and there must be a low level of inference (it must be close to concrete description). Once codes have been identified, researchers need to look for the main theme, i.e. the core category, a cluster of codes with similar traits, asking themselves questions such as: is it central, does it recur, is it meaningful, does it have implications for

theory? Coding is a laborious task, as it involves reading and rereading through notes and repeatedly listening to tapes and reading through transcripts until certain phrases occur repeatedly in the text and themes begin to emerge (Brewer 2000). Nevertheless, as Potter (1996) observes, though time-consuming, ethnographic analysis is not demanding in terms of technology: I used a codebook, created during analysis of the first round of interview transcripts, which I updated as the data collection proceeded. After each round, the transcript was scrutinised, with the aid of different colour highlighter pens to identify recurring words. Codes and categories therefore emerge from the data, from the emic perspective, depending on how often something is mentioned by the informant. At the end of the data collection period (September 2004), I began to analyse and organise interview and observational data into relevant chapter sections, which reflect the major research categories (language, academic life, identity, food, interaction, changes in the self, culture shock). An illustration of an analytic category is food. The following codes constituted the food category: eating communally, perceptions of the British diet; eating home country food; food and religion. Inside the code, British diet, the following sub-codes were identified: fatty, bland, expensive, and unhealthy. As O'Reilly (2005) points out, some codes can overlap different categories, e.g. communal dining is a code referred to in the chapters on interaction, religion and food.

Once codes and categories have been identified, the ethnographer can undertake qualitative description, defined as vivid descriptions of behaviour and talk, which reflect the identified category and codes (Brewer 2000). Key events may be highlighted about which comprehensive descriptions can be developed, and vignettes can be created as a micro analysis of the data. This, along with using extensive quotations can bring the ethnography to life, as well as giving voice to informants, one of the commitments made by the ethnographer (Hammersley 1992). Thus when presenting the category food in chapter Six, I use excerpts from interviews to illustrate every code.

Many writers, including Mason (2002) and Brewer (2000), warn that the process of sorting data is not neutral. This is reflected in the fact that this thesis represents a selection of the data collected; I couldn't present all of the study's findings without exceeding the word length, but what I choose to include and therefore to prioritise is surely a product of subjectivity and at times expediency. What is more, the interpretation of data, defined as a creative enterprise that involves skill and imagination (Geertz 1973; Brewer 2000), is also a subjective activity (Mason 2002). I have endeavoured to adopt a reflexive approach to my interpretations, especially when they are at odds with the emic view, with the literature or when they are a clear reflection of a western bias, but it is inevitable that some subjectivity will have escaped detection. Nevertheless, by presenting variability in interpretations, I am allowing a tone of ambiguity to enter the story, which, according to Van Maanen (1988), establishes intimacy with the reader.

Writing ethnography

Imposing a narrative is a device used to order the mass of ethnographic material collected (O'Reilly 2005), but the presentation of ethnography requires much care (Brewer 2000), and ethnographers need to cultivate their skills of writing (Clifford 1986; Marcus 1986; Atkinson 1990; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995; Atkinson et al. 2001). I underestimated the amount of time and thought needed to do justice to informants' stories, and many hours were spent considering how to capture their 'journey': Geertz's caution (1988) that ethnographers are not novelists was of little consolation, as I found the need to refine over and again my writing style.

The ethnographic text is usually arranged into a sequence of chapters, and Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) offer a choice between: natural history; chronology; thematic organisation; separation of narration and analysis. A mixture of the first three options was chosen for this

thesis: Chapter Three presents the sense of shock experienced by students upon arrival in England, the outcome of the sojourn is captured in Chapter Nine, whilst the intervening chapters were created according to the main categories, with a strong sense of the passage of time within each chapter. In terms of writing style, Hammersley (1990) tells us that the most common mode of writing ethnography is realistic or naturalistic whereby the reader feels they are observing the scene described. This involves the adoption of an institutional voice (Van Maanen 1988); the ethnography reads as objective reality. The emic point of view is represented through quotes (Wilcox 1982) but the researcher maintains an interpretive omniscience, and has the final word on how a culture is interpreted and presented. There is often an assumption of good faith that a similarly placed and well-trained participant observer would see and hear the same things as the researcher saw and heard (Van Maanen 1988). However, there is radical scepticism in the research community about the claim of any author to faithfully reconstruct social reality (Jackson 1989; Denzin 1991; Seale 1999; Brewer 2000), thus confessional accounts of field research are common companions of realist tales: 'the omnipotent tone of realism gives way to the modest, unassuming style of one struggling to piece together something reasonably coherent out of displays of initial disorder, doubt and difficulty.' (Van Maanen, 1988, p. 75)

My solution to this conflict of opinion was to adopt a reflexive approach to the writing of a realist account of my research findings. Whilst critical self-scrutiny and a reflexive tone in the interpretation of data are evident, I have tried to avoid producing a thesis that is 'pervaded by a strong note of disquiet' (Geertz 1988 p. 97) and 'peppered with methodological anxieties' (Seale 1999 p. 15). For example, to discuss interaction patterns, I combine the emic view, the literature and my own observations, but I leave the reader in no doubt that the segregated approach to interaction predominated. As Hertz (1997) advises, I try to strike a balance between an unreflective account at one extreme and narcissistic self-scrutiny at the other. Seale (1999) asks what it takes to trust an author, and concludes that researchers need to use

the issues raised by postmodernists as a sensitising debate to convince the reader that a trustworthy, credible piece of work has been done, which involves revealing the researcher's perspective and offering their own philosophical and methodological reflections. In addition, negative instances should be offered to counter claims of over-simplification or too great an attachment to personal perspective. Bearing these debates in mind, I have opted for a readable realist tale that regularly points to inconsistencies in data collection and possible personal and cultural biases.

When writing ethnography, an important consideration is one of voice, which concerns the struggle to work out how to present both the author and the informant (Hertz 1997).

Academics traditionally practice silent authorship, keeping their voice out of what they write, however, audible authorship is recommended by many writers (e.g. Charmaz and Mitchell 1997; Seale 1999; Brewer 2000), so that subjectivity is revealed. I will use the first person throughout the thesis chapters to show my personal involvement in the field and consequent influence on the collection and analysis of data. Meanwhile to give informants their voice, polyvocality is advocated (Clifford 1986; Tyler 1986; van Maanen 1988 Denzin and Lincoln 1998), achieved through the extensive use of quotations which are the stuff of ethnography (Hammersley 1992), bringing a sense of immediacy and involvement in the field (Brewer 2000). This also fulfils the author's moral commitment to empower the silenced Other (Seale 1999), who should not be modified through paraphrasing (Hollway and Jefferson 2000).

However, quotations should not be overused; they should illustrate, not be used to replace analysis (Brewer 2000): this was something I had to bear in mind in writing the Main Findings chapters. Furthermore, I had to decide whether or not I should correct students' English or quote them verbatim, mistakes and all. Whilst an uncorrected version may be hard to follow, in the interest of authenticity, I decided to quote verbatim, which gives rise to the problem that the reader may be annoyed by the frequent shift between academic English and informants' mistake-ridden language.

Demonstrating credibility

Reliability refers to the consistency, stability and repeatability of research findings, an invalid criterion in qualitative research as responses cannot be made identical by using repeat questions and besides, social situations are not replicable (Brewer 2000). In the current study, it would be impossible to generate the same findings if another researcher conducted the study in the same conditions, not only because they would have different biases (Brewer 2000; O'Reilly 2005), but also because different students from different situations and with different circumstances and personalities would be involved. Furthermore, as previously noted, data interpretation is a subjective undertaking, and according to Hollway and Jefferson (2000), an alternative explanation of events is usually available: even if the current findings could be replicated, it is likely that their analysis and interpretation would differ.

Generalisability, or external validity, is also likely to be irrelevant to ethnographic research, which tends to focus on a single case or small sample (Fielding 1993); there is a consequent reluctance to move to general classifications (Hammersley 1992). Nevertheless, ethnographers often feel that similar settings are likely to produce similar data (Evans 1983; Potter 1996), and that theory-based generalisation can be achieved, involving the transfer of theoretical concepts found from one situation to other settings and conditions (Daymon and Holloway 2002): thus the term transferability is preferred to generalisability. Hammersley (1992) describes this as theoretical inference, drawing conclusions from the features of the local events described, by identifying generic features. The setting for this research was chosen for the researcher's ability to transfer the findings to similar settings, i.e. Higher Education institutions in the UK that recruit international postgraduate students, and also to similar actors, i.e. international postgraduates on a one-year intensive Masters programme. It is possible to infer that such students may well face a similar experience to informants in this

study, with modifications according to differing external circumstances and personality differences. Schatzman and Strauss (1973) suggest that phenomenon recognition can establish the ethnographer's credibility if other writers recognise the situation and experience portrayed. The review of the literature on adjustment reflects many of this study's findings, and my extensive professional experience of international education, which has involved networking with academics working in a similar capacity, all tell me that I have managed 'to find the world in a grain of sand'. Furthermore, I have started to present my findings at conferences and in academic papers, and feedback suggests that these findings are recognisable to those working in a similar context.

Hammersley (1992) and Fetterman (1998) claim that the issue of *validity* should not be dismissed, even though the term is used differently among qualitative and quantitative researchers. Validity, often referred to as *trustworthiness* in qualitative research, means that the real world of participants is presented and that those studied must recognise the social reality depicted (Bruyn 1966; Fetterman 1998; Brewer 2000). For this reason, member checks are valuable (Daymon and Holloway 2002), whereby the data from the interviews or the summary of the data from one informant is taken back to that informant (Cheater 1987; Stanley 1990; Brewer 2000). I did not let any informant see the full ethnography in case they recognised their friends (the promise of confidentiality had to be upheld), but I was able to show them their own interview transcripts when they asked. Trustworthiness was also established by my willingness throughout this thesis to present deviance from cultural patterns (Seale 1999).

Brewer (2000) states that *relevance* may be the only criterion left by which to judge the validity of research, and many researchers call for studies which have a wide public and social relevance (e.g. Mason 2002; Williams 2003). According to Spradley (1979), ethnography is well placed to contribute to social policy, given its emphasis on understanding

human problems. Even before the ethnography was completed, I became involved in the initiation of action designed to address some of the problems raised in the study, including becoming a member of three university projects: the University Race Equality Committee, the International Student Support group, and an Academic Orientation Working Group, using the ethnographic data produced to provide the world view of those affected by policy-makers and to inform decision-making, as recommended by Brewer (2000). In addition, I helped to create an interdisciplinary research group, which focuses on the challenges posed by the international and intercultural campus.

Ethical considerations

The need and moral duty of researchers to protect participants in the research process is well documented (e.g. Spradley 1979; Bulmer 1982; Denzin and Erikson 1982; Williams 2003). According to Mason (2002), qualitative research raises a number of ethical issues which should be anticipated in advance, so that the researcher can take into account how their actions may affect participants, as well as to maintain the integrity of sociological enquiry as a discipline (Brewer 2000). The BSA guidelines for researchers (in *ibid*) were borne in mind before, throughout and after data collection and analysis.

Ethical approval to undertake the study was granted by the University's Research Ethics Committee, and thereafter was sought from the main gatekeeper, in this case the Head of School. When access is gained via a gatekeeper, the principle of obtaining *informed consent* from the participants to whom access is required should also be adhered to (Spradley 1979; Brewer 2000). Accordingly, during induction week (September 2003), when I met the entire student group in my capacity as EAP lecturer, I introduced my research topic verbally and in writing, thus conforming to the duty to communicate research objectives clearly to all involved (Brewer 2000). When asking for volunteers for the interview aspect of the research,

I made sure that I did not pressurise students, and it must be mentioned that although I was their language and study support tutor, I was never in the position of marking assignments; therefore there was no danger of students agreeing to the project out of a desire to curry favour. As individuals volunteered (by a show of hand), an information sheet was issued which informed them of *confidentiality* issues, their *right to withdraw* from the study, and the *anonymity* of data. I subsequently emailed students to set up a mutually convenient interview time, and it was from this point that a one-to-one relationship with interviewees was established. Before the first interview started, I reminded them of the research topic and of their anonymity, and I sought permission to tape record the interviews. As covert observation violates the principle of informed consent, it was not an option for my research. I decided that I would adopt the role of an overt observer at all times; as Brewer (2000) states, covert methods are defensible when access is likely to be closed, but as access was granted, there was no need to be covert. Students and staff were told from the beginning of induction week that observation data would be collected on a continuing basis. In September 2003, I sought approval from the student group to observe them during the academic year, and promised that all names would be anonymised, and that I would not divulge any information I obtained.

Informants were assured of their *anonymity*, therefore none of the following are revealed: the name and location of the university, the title of the academic programme studied, and the names of students or staff. However, interviewees are given a pseudonym that reflects their nationality: an understanding of their experience and interaction patterns could not be fully obtained without knowledge of their national, and therefore, cultural origin.

According to Williams (2003), being ethical is about achieving a balance between being an objective researcher and being a morally-bound citizen: social research should not create *harm or distress* even if the outcome may be beneficial to society. The research experience may be a disturbing one, as participants may experience uncalled for self-knowledge or unnecessary anxiety: attempts must be made to minimise disturbance, and special care should

be taken where participants are vulnerable (Brewer 2000). Due to the sensitive nature of the information many of the interviewees shared with me, and my perceived duty to protect them, I felt that I took on four roles in this research, those of counsellor, researcher, friend and study advisor. Indeed Mason (2002) states that the interview can feel like a conversation between friends in its informality and relaxed atmosphere and sometimes like a therapeutic encounter. Many informants cried during interviews; many confessed to emotional problems and difficulty in adjusting to their new life. Mason's (2002) note of caution about discussing personal matters which may distress them was a real concern for me. On many occasions, I had to stop the tape while interviewees regained their composure and sometimes I had to change the subject in order to preserve their dignity, even though further data would have been interesting and useful (reminding me of the dilemma of the war photographer – should s/he stand by and take pictures, or put the camera down and help?). My diary reveals the tension that I felt derived from the instrumental need of the researcher to gather sensitive data:

Kiana tells me about her feelings about being a Muslim in the West; she says this is good data for my PhD: 'I can be useful for you, not for myself'. I had the sense that she would be leaving the interview with a heavy heart so I felt bad for her, and bad about myself.

March 9

Cultural differences may also come into play, as I may have raised emotionally sensitive topics that are not normally broached in another culture. Indeed, many students said they had found the interview to be more revealing than expected. I tried to alleviate any sense of exposure by following up with email contact, and being solicitous whenever I saw interviewees on campus. This was another conflicting aspect of the research: my compassion for students was set against limited time.

Furthermore, I was concerned that interviewees may misinterpret the researcher-informant rapport as friendship, and may come to rely on me outside the interview situation: indeed,

according to Warren and Hackney (2000), a hallmark of post-modern, qualitative research is that the interviewer is seen as a confidante or best friend. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) point out, it is important that the researcher realises that the interview may be an important part of the informant's social life. In fact, two interviewees regularly asked me to go out with them socially. This is a dilemma for anyone working in a support capacity as I do – there is never enough time to meet every client's needs, but when the individual is someone whose needs are known and whose time is sought by the researcher, it is very difficult to maintain a professional distance. This has ethical implications in terms of consideration of informants' feelings and expectations, and is all the more pertinent to research with potentially vulnerable international students undergoing the stress of transition to a new culture.

Ongoing debates over ethics have led to researchers being more informed, reflexive and critical (O'Reilly 2005): in retrospect I feel confident that I followed the guidelines on consent, anonymity and confidentiality. In terms of safeguarding the well-being of informants, I feel that I handled them with sensitivity and care.

Limitations of the research

In the conduct of interviews and field research, I had to pay attention to the language used both by myself and by informants whose ability to convey experience in a foreign language varied widely. Given their limited language ability, particularly at the start of the year, I had to ask the same question in several different ways and not take for granted that I had got from them the answer they intended. This required attention to the syntax and vocabulary used, as well as to nuances and facial expressions.

Most students' English language ability was average or poor, thereby restricting their self-expression, which was also hindered by a difficulty in translating cultural references. It is highly likely that informants often stopped themselves from using culturally specific terms that were too complicated to explain, and that a same-language user might have obtained richer data from informants.

My position as a lecturer and as a host national may mean that students would not feel comfortable about disclosing thoughts on either England or the academic course, therefore I have to accept that I possibly missed some important insights that a cultural insider (i.e. another international student or a conational) may have been able to obtain. Level of disclosure is also influenced by cultural origin (Gudykunst 1998): it is possible that some sensitive aspects of the adjustment experience were suppressed.

Conducting anthropology in the researcher's home environment carries the disadvantage of the struggle to maintain an outsider perspective on that which is familiar (Wax et al. 1971; Burgess 1984). I had to constantly remind myself to try to see that which was familiar to me from the foreign student's perspective.

My presence as an EAP tutor carries a direct impact on the experience of adjustment. My role is to alleviate academic culture shock, and to equip students with the academic cultural skills to survive western education, therefore whilst this study's observation of widespread stress related to academic life may be representative of international students in British HE, the gradual diminution of this stress may be atypical, given the patchy provision of such support in the sector.

The bias in the number of female interviewees (11) compared to the two men interviewed was compensated by the access I had to the rest of the student body on a regular basis, but it is acknowledged that only in interviews did students discuss their feelings at length and in

depth. On the other hand, this bias mirrors the gender make-up of the course; the majority of students were female. Furthermore, a growing proportion of international students is female (UKCOSA 2004), and as Wright (1997) and Bowl (2003) point out, women in education represent an under-represented community in research, and this study may fill some of that gap.

There is also a bias in the sample towards South East (SE) Asian students who made up six of the interviewees. This again represents the bias in the nationality make-up of the course, which in turn reflects a national trend (UKCOSA 2006). The dearth of British students on the masters course meant that there were few opportunities for interaction between international and home students (out of 150, only five students were British); had this number been large, the level of host contact may have been different. Having said that, parallels between this study's findings and the sojourner literature indicate that host-visitor interaction is universally problematic.

I felt that I could not adequately interpret a student's experience of life in the UK without learning about their personal and cultural background; however this was an ambitious task and it is inevitable that I sometimes failed to take into account the cultural influence on behaviour. Equally, my own personal and cultural biases must have influenced the research process: my predilection for investigating the emotional dimension of life, whilst important as an under-researched area in sociology (Mason 2002), means that I may have encouraged this over other topics in conversations, and that I may accord it more importance in the final account than it deserves. However, as Seale (1999) notes, this revelation of researcher perspective might help to improve the trustworthiness of the study.

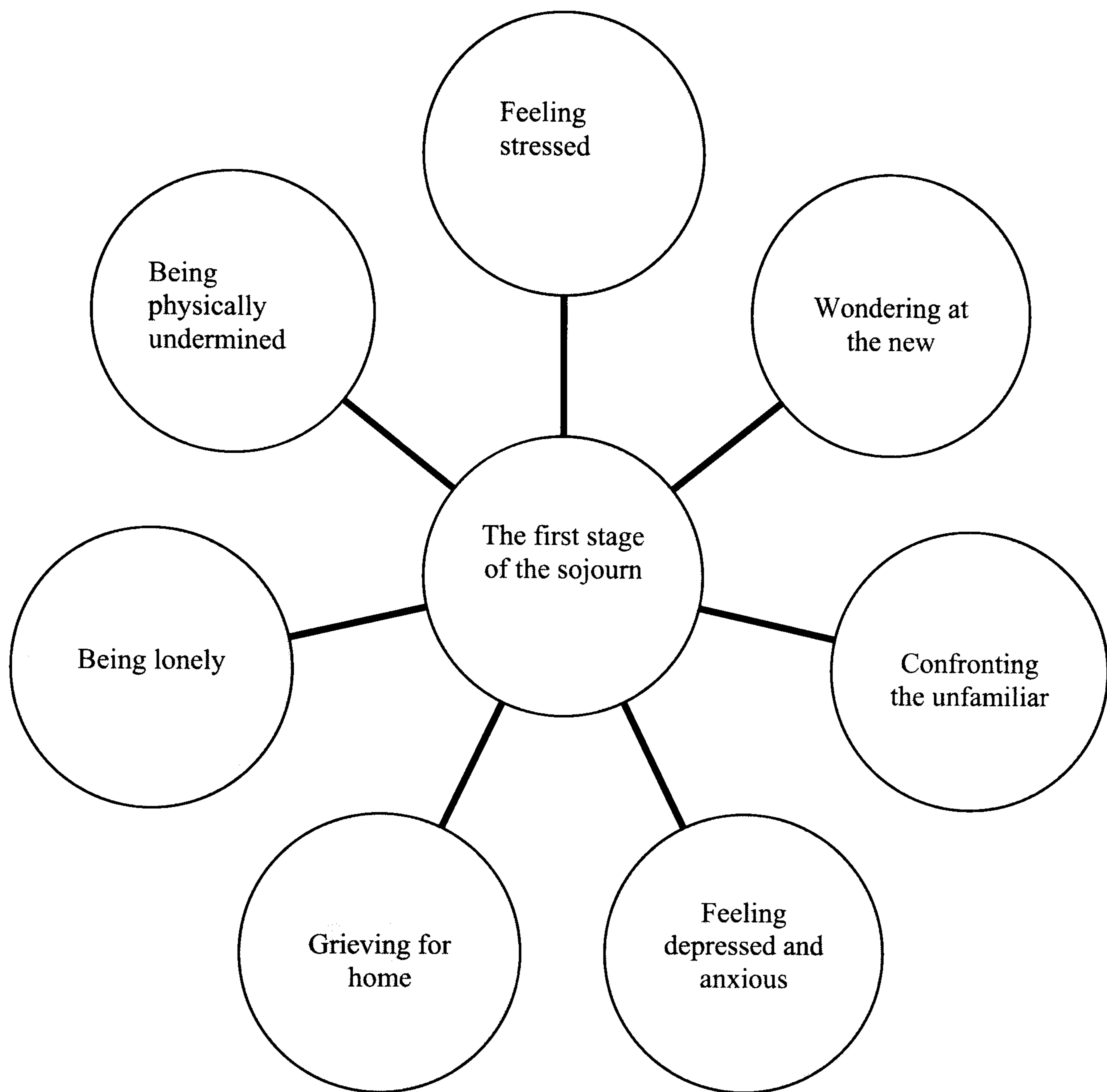
Summary

A large amount of rich data was collected during this ethnographic study, which involved email correspondence in-depth interviews and participant observation as stated before. Using different sources of data was challenging, but it was vital as a means of providing some measure of validity. The first year of the research was an intensive period of data collection and analysis. This was followed by analysing and interpreting data with the help of theoretical and empirical work by many other authors.

Chapter Three: Starting the journey

Introduction

This chapter draws upon observations noted and interviews conducted at the start of the academic year just after students' arrival in England when informants experienced a range of emotions regarding the academic and sociocultural world they were entering and the home world they were leaving behind. This account of their early experience, captured in the diagram below, will serve to engage in the debate in the literature over what exactly constitutes the first stage of the international sojourn. The duration of each stage of the sojourn varies from model to model, or it is sometimes unspecified, but in this study, the first stage refers to the first few weeks of the academic year.



Fear of the unknown

The following words were recurrent in the first interview transcripts to describe feelings about departure from the home country and arrival in England: *scared, frightened, unsure, nervous, anxious, stressed, uncertain, and excited*. The vocabulary used by interviewees reflected a nervous state of mind; Cecilia was typical in her account of feeling jittery and stressed in the week prior to departure:

I was very nervous. I was like a bit undecided whether I was doing the right thing, especially as I was going to leave my children, and I was also very busy and stressed, lots of stress because of the preparations. I was especially nervous of the unknown.

The unknown could refer to any aspect of their new life, but as found in the study by Lord and Dawson (2002), interviewees' nerves initially centred around the arrival at the airport, travelling to the university town and greeting either the host family or university accommodation staff:

I'm a little afraid to come in the airport. It's very crowded, and every people looks very tired, and rushed... I'm nervous because they speak so quick. Xia

I was little bit nervous... Oh my god! I don't know how to catch the coach! 'How can I get that?' I went to coach station. I was a little bit nervous, a little bit confused because, 'where is it?' I mean I don't know England at all because I haven't been here before, that's why. Rini

I was nervous even when I was on the train, whether I was going where I want to go, whether I am lost... Oh, the country, the strange country! Cecilia

The first day of the sojourn was a time of confusion and apprehension that threatened to overwhelm students. Giddens (1991) claims that anxiety is never far away in people; it was easy to see that the international sojourn would provide numerous anxiety-provoking occasions, starting with the arrival at a foreign airport. For those who stayed initially with a local host family rather than in university accommodation, there was further apprehension about meeting local people:

They have a different culture and I was thinking, 'it will be nice, it will not'? All the things come across your mind, because a different culture. Mohamed

Maybe a little bit nervous because I have to go to host family and it was tough!

Because I didn't know about the rules. I was a little bit nervous for me. Paranee

Not knowing what to expect, but being aware of possible differences in accepted behaviour was disturbing, and there was a fear of being caught up in misunderstandings that could arise due to their own lack of awareness of what was culturally acceptable in England. This anxiety is explained by Detweiler's (1975; 1980) theory of categorisation: meanings are learned through socialisation; individuals who are socialised in the same culture categorise and interpret situations and behaviours similarly and therefore have similar expectations; socialisation in different cultures involves different categorisation resulting in different meanings and expectations, and possible conflict.

On the first day of induction, which took place just one or two days after arrival, informants' nervousness was palpable, as the field notes show:

Just come back from meeting and greeting students over coffee. Shy, nervous smiles all around, and many looks of bewilderment, incomprehension and panic. At the end of the session, students seemed unwilling to leave the room, and a big queue of students formed, wanting to speak to me about their language and study worries. Tried to give as much time as possible, but with 100 students to welcome in two hours, this is impossible. September 29

A need for information and succour was manifest in countless emails expressing anxiety and in frequent visits to my office, with students showing a childlike clinginess and need for reassurance; the opening greeting was often the wail: *I am so nervous!* My allusion to

infantilism is apt: Giddens (1991) is one of many writers to imbue the confrontation with an alien and seemingly chaotic culture with the capacity to return sojourners to the vulnerable and dependent state of early childhood. Indeed, vulnerability was the defining reaction to the encounter with unfamiliarity. This was particularly revealed when students were called upon to start speaking in English immediately upon arrival:

I'm a little bit nervous because my English not good enough. The grammar is not good, something like that, vocabulary is not... I mean it's not like the native speaker, something like that. I'm very very nervous. Rini

The vocabulary used repeatedly by most informants to refer to English language ability included words such as *nervous, scared, embarrassed, ashamed, not confident, frightened, panic, confused* and *shy*, reflecting an association between foreign language use and feelings of fear, distress, anxiety and shame that other writers have noted (e.g. Kim 1988; Gudykunst 1998; Ward 2001). Indeed, the importance widely attached to the role of language in adjustment was reflected in Cecilia's choice of country to study in:

Something that made me not too nervous was maybe the language; our sponsor said we can choose any country but must keep in mind that we don't choose a country where we have to struggle with the language.

That most students *did* struggle with communication in everyday and academic life became clear (see the following chapter); the contrasting relief of the linguistically more adept students highlights the contribution of language ability to students' sense of ease in the initial stage.

In this study, a high state of nervousness characterised the first weeks of the sojourn, however it is important to recognise that this was not the universal experience. Throughout this study, reference will be made to what Seale (1999) describes as deviance from the overall patterns identified: this is recommended to improve the trustworthiness of the research, but it also paints a more rounded picture of the student scene. For Brigitte, Antonio and Natalia, previous travel experience and good language skills combined to allay apprehension; meanwhile Ning attributed her lack of nerves to the forethought she put into the trip. All three variables are commonly cited in models of adjustment as predictors of ease (see Martin and Harrell 1996, 2004):

Probably many students would feel a little bit nervous before they come here but I feel very calm, yes. I've done a lot of research on contrast between western culture and oriental culture. I think that helps a lot. Preparation is very important.

This last statement by Ning finds its echo in culture learning theories of adjustment which credit pre-arrival training with an alleviation of acculturative stress. This informational approach that is recommended by Furnham and Bochner (1986) and Cushner and Karim (2004) focuses on the acquisition of appropriate knowledge and skills to ease adjustment. Biddle (1979) describes this as anticipatory socialisation, a coping strategy used to remove or minimise stress in the new environment. However, this study shows that this approach has only limited value, as such preparation didn't remove all the challenges that some students would face in the initial stage.

Feeling adrift

Initial interviews captured students' feelings of disorientation and confusion upon being faced with unfamiliar physical surroundings (both on and off campus), and unfamiliar conventions.

Disorientation is defined by di Marco (1974) as disruption to the internal system caused by the removal of familiar cues associated with home: according to Detweiler (1975, 1980), this can result in situations feeling unpredictable and uncertain, and this is encapsulated in the following email:

Everything is different compared to Greece and I seem to have some difficulties with life here... It all seems Greek to me as they say!!! September 29

Noticing difference was a common theme: students described feeling overwhelmed by the myriad features of their new life. This is supported in Kim's (1988) conceptualisation of culture shock, which suggests that sojourners' feeling of disequilibrium in the early stage of transition is a function of difference between the new culture and the home world. Physical orientation in the new town was the first challenge faced by students, many of whom described getting lost or struggling to find their way around in the first few weeks; it occurred to me that this could be seen as a physical manifestation of their inner turmoil:

I walked so much. Every day I walked to get used to the area. I bought a map and then I got used to the road and location. Every morning I walked for one hour, yeah. I think it was to prepare for staying here for a year. So I could feel better about being here. Kyoung

At first it was awful because I didn't know anything, everything is a shock, the buses, the taxis, the times, everything. I used to look for the sign in my country in my language, now it's in English, so you need to translate, to think, 'what does that mean?' And for crossing the road, I thought 'oh my god, how can I cross the street in England?' They drive the opposite way! Your mind is confused. Mohamed

Mohamed's exclamatory speech, denoted by emotive words such as *awful*, *confused* and *shock*, was not atypical; it is indicative of the distress caused by the difficulty initially faced by students in negotiating daily life, and reinforces the notion that it is the simple day-to-day activities such as shopping and catching a bus that can make the sojourner feel disoriented (see Storti 1990; Ballard and Clanchy 1997). Difficulty in interpreting signs either in English or carrying unfamiliar road traffic symbols was also to be expected: as pointed out by Geertz (1973) and Jandt (2001), these are extrinsic sources of information carrying complex meanings recognised only by those who share the same culture. It would take time to learn these new meanings; meanwhile, a sense of exclusion from mainstream communication symbols would hover. Furthermore, though pre-arrival information had prepared students to face some aspects of their new surroundings, thereby offsetting some discomfort, it was clear that socialisation in an alternative system would take time to unravel. Mohamed's seemingly paradoxical statement, *I knew but I was not prepared for them (cars) driving on the wrong side*, illustrates David's (1976) point that the truth of cultural learning is not always evident in anticipatory activities, but is revealed in direct experience.

The negotiation of everyday communication episodes was a further cause for concern; students were preoccupied by the disquieting sense that their behaviour might be inappropriate and that their ability to read the cues given by the host community might be deficient. Cross-cultural communication theories tell us that this fear is justified: Torbiorn's (1994) concept of behavioural applicability, defined as the match between behaviour and the new situation, is useful as a way to understand students' fear of making intercultural mistakes. In order to achieve applicability, Gudykunst (1998) and Detweiler (1980) highlight the importance of interpretation skills; however, inadequate knowledge of *English rules* (Xia) meant that miscommunication was likely. As Detweiler (1975) argues, successful social interaction requires accurate understanding and prediction of others' behaviour, which is impeded by a lack of familiarity with the norms and rules guiding communication. This deficit was reflected in frequent exclamations of *I don't know what to do!* with reference to a

range of situations: how to queue, how to eat, how to engage in small talk, knowing the ‘right’ topics of conversation, knowing the end of the working day (and thus the ‘right’ time to approach a tutor), learning appropriate email etiquette (the list went on). The term *rules* was often used to refer to local norms, echoing the term employed by cross-cultural theorists to describe the unspoken laws of a particular culture that guide inform communication behaviour (e.g. Singelis and Sharkey 1995; Gudykunst 1998). Being unable to communicate with ease led to a feeling of childlike vulnerability, as students felt they had to learn how to do the smallest of things all over again. There was tacit understanding of the need for resocialisation in new cultural patterns.

It was really difficult because oh my god, different culture, different everything and you feel like a kid! You don't know anything!

Mohamed

The key word in this and other students’ comments is *different*, justifying the importance attached to cultural distance in theories of adjustment; the more dissimilar the origin from the home culture, the greater the acculturative stress (Hall 1959; Boski 1990; Ward et al. 2001). There was painful awareness of their ignorance of the rules governing behaviour in England, which Kim (1988) describes as a vital survival skill: it is a heightened state of awareness that helps to avoid intercultural mistakes. However, it carried an inability to relax and obstructed the acquisition of ease, as Kiana’s comment shows:

When you go to new country, you have to respect, but when you don't know anything, how you can respect something? You don't know any rules. So then you don't know about the easiest subjects. Even I didn't know how to talk to people at a bus stop. You know you didn't know anything! Nothing! What can you do, you have to wait and get used.

Repetition of the word *know* points to the importance attached to familiarisation with local customs, thus vindicating the culture learning model put forward by Bochner (1986) and Furnham and Bochner (1986) whose core construct is that the acquisition of second culture social skills is the route to increasing a sojourner's sense of ease. Until some sociocultural competence was acquired, many students described pursuing a strategy of observation: in Liu's (2001) model of adjustment, this is typical of the first stage of the sojourn. A contrasting absence of communication difficulty explains why monoethnic contact was commonly prioritised over cross-national interaction; the irony was not lost on students that whilst offering comfort, this would delay the acquisition of culture-specific skills that help to ease disequilibrium. Nevertheless, as Gudykunst (1998) predicts, some miscommunication in the cross-cultural setting was inevitable, and though unsettling, this was a route to learning about the new culture, as shown in the following confusing communication episode:

I was going down an escalator and there was this girl in front of me and I was looking at her because I thought she was good looking. And when she realised that I was looking at her, she moved to the side because she thought, I wanted to get by. In Brazil, it's not common practice for example, to stand on the left or the right so people can walk past, if you are using escalators, because the whole idea of escalators is that you don't have to walk. You see? I thanked her and just kept on walking, so I'm adapting. Antonio

An important cultural learning opportunity is offered by intercultural mistakes; indeed, in Kim's (1988) theory of the adaptation process, the communication process between sojourners' internal system and the external world leads to adaptive change in assumptions and behaviour; the adaptation process is conceptualised as transformation through the successive interplay of degeneration and regeneration. This particular failure in non-verbal communication taught Antonio the rules of etiquette governing the escalator situation;

however the unacceptability of staring went unchallenged, and later on in the sojourn, miscommunication would result in violence.

Enjoyment of the new

A feeling of euphoria, described by Oberg (1960) as the honeymoon stage of adjustment, is often said to characterise the first weeks of the sojourn, and this notion was upheld in this study as interviewees described themselves as being excited about many different aspects of life. The thrill of the new was evidenced in Antonio's delighted comments on such banalities as riding on a train:

I was enjoying every minute of it, everything that happened, everything I saw, you know the buildings, the people, the cars, shops, everything! I like the fact that you have shops in the street. It's not very common now in Brazil. I love it. I found it great. I had never travelled on a train like you have here. We have trains in Brazil but they are just like the underground, nothing like here, so comfortable, with a trolley and food and restaurant and toilets inside. So it was a great feeling.

The heightened state of awareness referred to earlier to discuss feelings of disorientation took on a positive aspect, as new discoveries were gleefully embraced. As Furnham (1997) argues, some sojourners fall into the category of sensation-seekers who do not suffer adverse effects but enjoy the stimuli of the unfamiliar.

Interview 1 also captured the sense that students felt they were embarking on a journey, the sojourn represented possibility and opportunity, marking a departure from the 'known-ness' of their home life. Furthering their education abroad had been a long-held and yet distant dream, as Kyoung indicated:

I always wanted this, but usually in Korea, the women have difficulty to get better choice. Many Korean people would like to go abroad because of the benefits, but women cannot get that kind of opportunity, always women they apply but they fail, fail, fail! I was lucky.

Bowl (2003) conceptualises Higher Education as a major life change for women, and this is possibly more applicable to those from societies in which power and opportunity are not equally distributed between men and women. Further, though studying away from home marks a change in life for home as well as international students, the transition is arguably greater among those who move to a different culture and away from a situation of dependence on parents: the distribution of power is again significant. Indeed, the younger students in the cohort were both nervous and excited about what the future held; this was a journey whose outcome was unknown:

On the plane, I felt like 'am I making the right decision? What I'm going to face after this?' It's like, umm, another adventure for me! What is my destination, or something like that. Exciting in one way and question mark all the time. Paranee

The academic sojourn was glimpsed as a life-changing event, instilling simultaneous feelings of wonder and apprehension.

Interview 1 revealed one of the greatest sources of gratification to be the immediate academic environment; the international make-up of the course provided not only a consoling feeling of solidarity in hardship in the first few weeks but also the unique and exciting chance to mix with a wide range of nationalities:

I really want to mix with all of them. They seem very nice!

Rini

It is very unusual to study with Thai students, it's very exotic.

Olga

It's great, I never seen so many different nationalities before! So many Chinese, Thai, Indonesian! I like meeting other nationalities; I like this international contact.

Natalia

These typical comments reflect a prevalent early enthusiasm for cross-national interaction, which students linked with improved employability and personal and cultural growth: this association is justified according to the literature on the international sojourn (e.g. Taylor 1994; Gudykunst 1998; Westwood and Barker 1999; Koester and Lustig 2003; Cushner and Karim 2004). However, Ward (2001) argues that the outcome of the sojourn is under-researched and that this link is therefore hypothetical: what the present study contributes to this debate is revealed in Chapter Nine.

Interview 1 further revealed that a door was opened by the sojourn onto the experience of a new physical environment; students were emphatic in their praise of the greenness of the landscape and good air quality in the host town:

The countryside is very beautiful and totally different from Taiwan. We didn't have so many grasses and hills, it's just like a picture on the wall. And the air is clean, here you can benefit from walking on the street. I think I will lose some kilos!

Xia

The most important thing is the lovely landscape. In Jordan, it's a little bit desert, here, there's lots of trees, and green, a very good environment actually, because you know you have lots of trees, you know it means you have fresh oxygen. Mohamed

A less polluted environment was not only aesthetically pleasing but it was also seen to offer the route to an improved physical self: all thirteen interviewees commented that they walked between their home and the university, and a link between stress and population density was also revealed:

I think English is very blessed country; Seoul I think is one of the biggest cities in the world, many populations, over 12 million. Very big, big city, very complicated and very crowded. So it's very easy, very easy to get used to here because not crowded, not busy

Kyoung

This place is beautiful, fantastic; it's quite different from the place I come from, because in my hometown, it's high rise, and sky scrapers and many cars. It's very crowded, very noisy, and dusty. I like quiet environment. I like green, I like grass, I like blue sky with white cloud, yes. It's peaceful.

Ning

Student testimony to improved physical and emotional well-being indicates that the host town was a therapeutic landscape, defined by Milligan et al. (2004) as an aesthetically pleasing and healing environment. As Tunstall et al. (2004) state, place and people are inseparable: the physical fabric of a place is a major determinant in people's health. It should be acknowledged that the positive reactions of interviewees to the physical environment must have been influenced to a large part by the location of the host town, and that a different reaction would have obtained had students found themselves in a big industrial city such as London or Manchester. Architecture and urban layout would still be strikingly different,

given the influence of culture on urban planning (Hall 1976), but these cities may well have been less aesthetically pleasing than a Southern English coastal town.

The excitement expressed by all interviewees over their new life journey and the pleasure they found in their new environment offer some empirical support for the notion embraced in the U-Curve models of adjustment that a feeling of euphoria characterises the first weeks of the sojourn. Whether or not this first stage was dominated by positive feelings however will be discussed in the conclusion to this chapter.

Confronting the day-to-day difference

Sitting alongside feelings of excitement was dissatisfaction with various aspects of life in the host country, the most important of which were here were: the expense of the course and of the UK in comparison with their country, the English weather and the high level of drinking by the host population. UKCOSA (2004) recommends pre-arrival orientation on cost of living as a vital pre-requisite for proper preparation for the sojourn, and student comments show that this is especially necessary for those from Less Developed Countries (LDC). All interviewees described their shock at the expense of day-to-day essentials such as food and rent. Studying in England had often necessitated years of savings and sacrifice, and financial management was now needed to stretch their budget:

It's very expensive compared to the living standard in China because the weekly rent here is enough to live in China for one whole month. Everything is expensive. Food, transport, the rent, bills. I knew that so I save four years. Ning

It's not cheap especially for my nationality (Iranian), it's really expensive. If you have money in England everything is all right. If not ... Kiana

The high cost of living in England necessitated frugality, the emotional reaction to which was frustration. As Gudykunst (1998) states, the majority of postgraduates are older and therefore professionally well established at home: indeed, most students in this study had left behind high status jobs in their country, thus they were unused to the impoverished lifestyle that restricted means implied:

I think it's difficult for us who have been working and already have certain positions.

Suddenly you're just a student, so you have to spend less, or you spend less on the things that you don't necessarily need.

Natalia

Having to watch what they spent was also a new experience for the younger students who were financially dependent on their parents at home, and unused to exerting control over daily living expenditure. The drop in economic status had an important influence on lifestyle choices during their stay in the new country, but it was noticeable that though students had to assume financial self-control throughout their stay, after the first interview, cost of living was dropped as a topic of conversation and as an important theme of this research: shock was a transient feeling.

One of the greatest sources of discomfort in the initial stage, and remembered as an obstacle to adjustment in the final interview, was the English weather. To describe the weather, the following adjectives were commonly used in the first interview: *cold, wet, windy, irritating, freezing, uncomfortable, bothersome, disoriented* and *unpredictable*, and the following few complaints were typical:

I feel the wind, and the rain! Oh my god. The wind, ahhh! I think now it's colder cos of the rain and the wind. I cannot stand the rain and the wind!

Rini

It's so cold and raining and wind is so big. That's why my friend told me to buy rain coat. Xia

It's cold and it's wet. I don't like wet; when it's wet it will be windy also. It's horrible here, I will get sick! Paranee

The link between physical and emotional equilibrium is revealed in students' exclamatory and emotive speech: their reaction to perceived harsh weather was shock and minimal outdoor activity, until they understood the length of the winter season. The coldness of the British climate was also blamed for the frequency of physical illness, which was associated with increased homesickness and a diminished ability to concentrate. Such feelings are supported in other studies of the international student experience (e.g. Klineberg and Hull 1979; Okorochoa 1996b; Maundeni 2001). There was a positive correlation between cultural dissimilarity and distress, as for those from Germany, Slovenia, Russia and Korea, the British weather posed no problem because of similarity or improved weather to the home country. Pre-arrival information on weather differences did little to offset the shock of direct experience or to reduce the effect of the years of socialisation in a different weather system, and the importance of time in the adjustment process was revealed:

I think I'm coping, and I think my body's getting like adapted. I no longer feel that much cold. Now I go out because I understand it can rain every day. So I think I've adapted to the weather If I want to go out, I will. Cecilia, Interview 2

Maybe my body is adapt now. A little bit cold, but it's ok for me. Rini, Interview 2

It must be remembered that students arrived in England in September, and as such their discomfort didn't dissipate for many months, for many not until the arrival of the warmer

weather in May 2004. However, by the second interview, informants had become, if not adjusted to the weather, then less disturbed by it: shock was pronounced in the early weeks of the sojourn when differences were highlighted. Could it be also that adapting to the weather was less emotionally demanding than the other aspects of life in the new culture that challenged students, requiring mostly a physical response?

The observation that difficulties caused by the cold weather and a high cost of living were no longer mentioned in subsequent interview shows that they were of less consequence than other strains, including the last source of both dismay and hostility, that of British drinking behaviour. If culture is indeed what is observable to visitors, if it is an open window that reflects a society's values (Geertz 1973; Williams, 1981), then the conclusion quickly drawn on British culture is captured in Antonio's observation that:

People drink much more here. Girls like drinking a lot, and falling on the floor, and you know, in the streets, and standing up and walking as if nothing had happened. It's so strange; you wouldn't see that in Brazil. If you speak to people from different countries and they know somebody who came to England, they would tell you that people drink a lot.

Though prepared by their friends and information websites to witness a high-level of drinking among English people, still students were surprised by just how much alcohol was consumed in the host town. Not only was such consumption unfamiliar, an unsettling association was made between drinking and increased aggressiveness: feelings of apprehension and vulnerability fuelled by word of mouth:

I don't think it's wise to go outside at night. I think if it's on the campus, maybe I will, but off campus, I don't think it's a good idea. Because I always heard about, well people talking about the drunk men, drink too much. It makes you feel insecure. Ning

Dislike and fear of the drinking behaviour observed on the part of the local community was enduring, likened by Antonio in Interview 4 to *a British disease*. This perception is supported by a contemporaneous survey by UKCOSA (2004), which found that British students are widely perceived by international students as heavy drinkers. The perception of a culture of heavy drinking was not confined in this study to the university student population, however; it applied also to the world outside the campus, as witnessed in extensive media coverage of the excesses of alcohol consumption.

The experience of stress and sleeplessness

Stress was a word used repeatedly by nearly all students when referring to the academic demands of the masters course they had just started. The definition of stress as a physiological and psychological reaction to confrontation with an alien system which calls for the learning of new and the unlearning of old repertoires of behaviour (Zajonc 1952; Berry 1994) is a useful way of thinking about students' reaction to confrontation with the challenge of studying in a foreign academic culture and in a foreign language. Stress was manifested physically and emotionally, in loss of appetite, insomnia, nervousness and tearfulness. The vocabulary used to describe how they felt about the course included *worried, nervous, scared, afraid, tough, pressured, tiring, hard and demanding*, and the following complaints were typical:

Sometimes I cannot sleep, I don't know why. I don't get up, I just try to lie on my bed, one hour later, I give up, I get up. There's too much work! Paranee

Unfortunately, at the moment, I am so stress I cannot concentrate. I worry so much about that. Hence, I need the help from you because nobody can help me.

Chinese student, October 20

Panic resulted in a desperate need for direction in the first few weeks of term, revealed in a constant stream of emails and office visits: a common refrain was the cry, *I am so scared!* Indeed, fear of failure was common in this study, and is revealed in the following emotional articulation of anxiety:

At the moment, the only thing I have is the course. Nothing else. I can't sleep, maybe 2 or 3 hours a night. I try to sleep but I can't, just think. And I wake up every day very early. I lie in bed. I feel so nervous! I think this January will kill me, so many essays! I think before I was 31 year old but now I am 41 year old, really! Sometimes I forget to eat. I try to eat but I can't. Just smoking, nothing more. I feel too nervous. Kiana

Using the distinction made by Ryan and Twibell (2000) of a stressful situation into three categories (challenging, threatening or harmful), this representative portrait shows that for international students, the academic course had the potential to harm their health.

Performance anxiety may be common among all students (see Sazberger-Wittenber et al. 1983; Ryan and Carroll 2005), but this study shows that stress is compounded for international students by unfamiliar academic norms, a foreign language and a sense of duty to their family or sponsor to successfully complete their studies.

By documenting a high level of stress among its informants, this study alerts us to the demanding nature of dealing with international students, whose special status usually infers a need for additional support. However, a survey conducted by the Higher Education Policy

Institute, HEPI, (2007) found that 30% of international students are dissatisfied with the support received from British HEI. Leask's (2007) call for research into the impact of increasing numbers of international students on receiving institutions is timely in an era of growing pressure to generate income from international education. This topic will be revisited in subsequent chapters.

Longing for home

This study shows an association between transition and a high incidence of homesickness, which increased among those whose dependents at home were a source of concern.

Homesickness was a common theme of conversation with students in the early stage, who expressed their distress both in words and in tears; seven out of thirteen students cried in the first interview when talking about the people they had left behind. The word *miss* was frequently uttered:

I'm missing always the company I had when I was home. I am thinking always of somebody that I can talk to deeply. Open mind talk.

Paranee

I'd like to be with them, riding a bike, and going out together, you know, staying together, that's all I miss. I miss the fact that we used to do so many things together, we were always together.

Antonio

I miss him a lot. I phone a lot, almost every day.

(Xia breaks down crying, and I switch off the tape recorder to comfort her.)

Grief and transition were interlinked. Indeed, a connection is often made between bereavement and the move to a new culture (Garza-Guerro 1973), and there is similarity in

the language used by writers in both areas. Furnham (1997) describes the key psychological features of homesickness as a strong preoccupation with thoughts of home, a perceived need to go home, a sense of grief for home and a concurrent feeling of dis-ease in the new place, which is not home. In this study, the focus of homesickness were the people left behind, though students also missed objects associated with home, such as food. Feelings of loss were universal, but they were particularly intense among married students for whom the clash between the student and family role inhabited at home was a painful shock, as Cecilia described:

It's not easy, my social life, it usually involves my husband. So it's difficult. Most of the people here they are young, and they go out. When I go out it's usually with my husband; now, I usually eat, listen to the radio, I read.

For those who lived as a single parent in England, like Kiana, homesickness was compounded by isolation:

I miss her dad, and she miss her dad. Because he's not here, and I really need him; I have nothing here. He call me two or three times a day. Ah, I really need that. Sometimes I think I'm really alone, alone, so I call to him or he call me.

With no access to the support structures enjoyed at home, her time in England was one of intense loneliness, reflecting perhaps the alienation that can be seen as the hallmark of living as a single parent in an individualist culture like the UK. Hofstede (2001) states that the fundamental dimension on which societies differ the most is between the individual and the collective: individualism stands for a society in which the ties between individuals are loose; everyone is expected to look after themselves and their immediate family only. On the other hand, collectivism stands for a society in which people from birth onwards are integrated into

strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout their lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. It is understandable that Kiana, hailing from a collectivist culture, would struggle to adjust to an isolated daily life.

Given that the postgraduate student body is traditionally older than the undergraduate population (MacLeod 2006), it should not be surprising that many informants were married with children, and that worry about those left behind was a common theme, exacerbating feelings of longing for home. This is poignantly expressed below:

I'm sure he feel sad, he miss for us, and he said to me, 'you lost just me but I lost two persons, my wife and my daughter.' So he really missing us, it's a bad situation at the moment.

Kiana

Just two days before I left, in the middle of the night, my husband was crying. Every day I call him and talk with my children and husband everyday. I send email everyday. So I don't feel so parted from my family, so I don't feel so lonely.

(Kyoung breaks down crying, and I stop the tape to comfort her.)

Concern over the emotional distress of family members was preoccupying, underlining for me the personal sacrifices that are often made by both the international student and their family to enable them to pursue their study: a similar point is made by Ryan (2005a) to explain a high fear of failure among international students.

Many models of adjustment suggest that homesickness is most intense in the initial stage and diminishes over time, as sojourners go on to create a network of friends, but subsequent interviews showed little correlation between homesickness and loneliness. Indeed, at

significant times (e.g. during sickness and national events), thoughts of home resurfaced or intensified:

I got cold again. I'm homesick, especially today! (Crying) Sorry! (Crying) Xia

I didn't feel well, and I missed my mom. At home my mom would take care of me. She wouldn't do anything particular, I just feel better when my mom is around me. Ning

As these emotional statements show, the connection with home was strong, and feelings of homesickness fluctuated throughout the stay as a function of individual and environmental factors.

Feeling lonely

The definition offered by Berg et al. (1981) of loneliness as a feeling of the realisation of a lack of meaningful contacts with others and a lack or loss of companionship is appropriate to this study, which revealed intense loneliness in the first stage of the sojourn arising from the loss of the sustenance of family and friends and a lack of friends in the new country.

Loneliness was intertwined with transition; the words *lonely* and *alone* were used repeatedly by students in and outside the interview situation during the first few weeks:

Most important to me, I've got no friend here. Loneliness is around me all the time.

Every night I just think of the same question - go back or not?

Chinese student October 2

Being lonely posed an obstacle to many students' ability to settle in the new country: the impact of their initial isolation was profound enough to lead some to contemplate returning home; considering the sacrifice involved in international education, this is a telling measure

of students' distress. Highlighting the key role played by university staff in alleviating loneliness in the initial stage, many students visited my office just to instigate interpersonal contact, as the opening greeting from Olga shows: *I just came to say hello, I need the human touch.* (October 13) In her study of chronic illness, Charmaz (1983) notes that medical staff receptivity and friendliness are important components in a patient's experience of their daily life, and it strikes me that a similar observation can be applied to vulnerable international students: I similarly felt that my response to students like Olga might be significant in shaping their mood.

In a bid to reduce their discomfort, most students went about creating a conational friendship network. Loneliness therefore declined as students started to make friends, but there were exceptions: for those who were the sole nationality in the cohort, loneliness was an enduring and demoralising feature of the sojourn:

It is not easy to make meaningful friendships here, not very easy, not at all. I wish it were, but it's not. Antonio

During the night, I have time, but what I have to do? What I can to do? Nothing, so I have to stay home, watch TV, sometimes I buy a drink. But by yourself it's not really enjoyable. I have no friend at the moment, just I say hello to everybody. I want to say I have a friend in university, but I don't. Kiana

It struck me that without the support of friends, such students came face to face with the fundamental loneliness of *being*, described by existentialist philosophers such as Sartre (1943) as a truth that people spend their life trying to avoid. Furthermore, their isolation posed a shocking contrast with the belonging and network of support they had left behind. I wondered whether the gap between the old and the new life might also be all the more

pronounced for those from a collectivist culture. Indeed, according to Barker (1997), many international students are unpleasantly surprised and unprepared for the time spent alone by individualists: this is unsurprising when one considers the UK's high score on the dimension of individualism (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005).

Feeling depressed

In the first interview, many students described feeling *down*, *depressed*, *fed-up* or *sad*. The root of their feelings is important in establishing the link between transition and negative mood states. The cause of the depression suffered by Kiana and Cecilia was their separation from their husband: the academic sojourn was clearly the trigger. Meanwhile, Ning was demoralised by a *terrible, terrible* encounter with an unexpected and upsetting case of discrimination on the part of a British lecturer in induction week. Given the established link between collective identity and self-esteem (Crocker and Luhtanen 1990), the negative consequences of racism for emotional well-being were to be expected. Again, the trigger was located in the sojourn experience.

However, depression was not always provoked by the sojourn. For example, Antonio struggled to cope with the end of a relationship that had taken place before his departure:

(Sighing) I need something to cheer up a bit because (sighing) I've been feeling a bit down lately, for lots of reasons. (Hesitating and sighing) The problem is (sighing); it's just something personal I think more than anything else. (Sighing) I get a little depressed. Physically I feel very good. It's just emotionally that I feel a bit....

(Sighing and silence)

Coping with the loss of a relationship at the same time as facing intense loneliness in a new culture put a strain on Antonio that was a clear illustration of how the sojourn has the capacity to push sojourners to breaking point if they have pre-existing problems (see Berry 1994). Meanwhile, it was the pressure placed on Paranee to gain a qualification in a subject of her family's choosing that occasioned her despair, and this was related to personal autonomy:

It's like a destiny! It's like I tried to escape, do what I want, but I couldn't! This is what, fate, or destiny. I think this is something that I born for!

Frustrated attempts to flee the trap set by her family reveal a conflict in Paranee's attitudes to the notion of destiny, which informed her mood. Destiny is defined by Giddens (1991) as preordained determinism: this implies a view that all events have intrinsic meaning which cannot be challenged, even if that meaning is not immediately clear. An inability to flout familial demands can also be linked to the constraints imposed by collectivist culture, in which the demands of the in-group, in this case, the family, are considered to be higher than those of the individual (Hofstede 2001). Triandis et al. (1988) state that resentment of ingroup pressure does not usually find expression: perhaps instead it turns to depression.

This study points to a need to distinguish between a pre-existing disposition towards depression, pre-departure problems and symptoms associated with transition, especially among those staff who offer psychological support. A strong argument for such a distinction is made elsewhere by Golden (1973), Yeh (1976), Cochrane (1977), Yeh et al. (1981) and Cushner and Karim (2004). Having said that, it was hard to determine whether depression was caused by transition, or whether pre-existing problems had been exacerbated by the stressful nature of the sojourn. Equally, reaction to triggers during the sojourn is surely a function of personality: not all students reacted in the same way to similar challenging situations. As Ward and Kennedy (1996) point out, psychological adjustment is predicted by

personality variables and therefore varies across individuals and over time, and indeed, the duration of depressive feelings and their cause varied among students.

Feeling calm and settled: a deviant case

Describing her mood as *calm and happy*, Brigitte appeared to suffer no acculturative stress during the first stage of the sojourn:

I felt fine. As soon as I arrived, I felt like I was at home. Very comfortable: I've never travelled with so much confidence.

This relaxed demeanour could be explained by Germany's low score in uncertainty avoidance: an associated openness to change and tolerance for diversity would reduce the shock of confrontation with new phenomena (Hofstede 1991; Hullett and Witte 2001). In addition, cultural similarity between Germany and the UK could be an explanatory factor in Brigitte's adjustment speed: the greater the gap between the home and the host cultures, the greater the sojourner's disorientation (Gudykunst and Gao 1990). Brigitte also felt that her linguistic aptitude eased her entry into life in England, an assumption that is supported in all models of adjustment and theories of cross-cultural contact (e.g. Kim 2001 and Hofstede and Hofstede 2005):

I think that language is very important, at the moment I would say I don't feel I'm abroad, I don't feel an outsider. I imagine that is very difficult for some of the international students here.

Being able to communicate freely with local people meant that Brigitte could avoid being treated as a stranger, a term used by Simmel (1910) to describe a visitor whose difference

from the dominant group can influence how they are treated by the host. According to Shack (1979), people from the visiting group are classed as strangers where there is a high degree of strangeness and a low degree of familiarity. Good language skills allowed Brigitte to reduce the gap that normally exists between host and visitor, as did her preparedness for the sojourn, which she had achieved, like Ning, by reading about the UK before she left Germany:

I felt as if I know where I'm going, I know the place, I will not have problems. I was relaxed, yes, because I knew what I was expecting. I knew everything that was going to happen.

As predicted by Helson (1964), securing information about the new environment in advance helped to reduce ambiguity and increase confidence. As can be seen, Brigitte was in the uniquely enviable position of benefiting from a wide range of factors that facilitated her adjustment in the initial stage and contributed to a confident and positive outlook. Brigitte was unusual: for the most part, this study reveals that success in one sphere of life was often matched by dissatisfaction with another: students differed in their experience of transition, with responses to different aspects of the sojourn varying as a result of a myriad of factors.

Summary

This study suggests that the initial stage of the sojourn is experienced as a time of vulnerability, loss and longing. Meanings previously taken for granted were suddenly questioned at the same time that the development of fitness for the new life setting was still lacking. The notion that the first stage is characterised by positive feelings of euphoria and discovery, as suggested in the U-Curve models, was not upheld. As this chapter has shown, feelings of excitement *were* experienced in the first few weeks of the sojourn but they were outweighed by the more negative mood states of anxiety, homesickness, loneliness and stress.

Though some health problems may be pre-existing, it was clear that transition acted as a trigger for stress: the evidence of this chapter points to a general pattern of decreased happiness and stability in the early weeks of the sojourn (see Appendix 1). This study therefore contradicts the notion embraced in the U-Curve models that culture shock characterises the second stage. However it must be noted that there was variability in the range and intensity of acculturative stress suffered as a function of several factors: transition was *not* a generalisable experience. These findings have implications for the provision and timing of support by HEI, which will be addressed in Chapter Ten. Though I acknowledge the point made by Crano and Crano (1993) that researchers should be wary of psychopathologising the international student sojourn, I would argue that the discomfort felt by students is intense, and we cannot afford to overlook their distress, however temporary it may be. The use of ethnography as a research approach meant that follow-up of students was possible; therefore the following chapters will present the adjustment journey followed by informants after this initial stage.

Chapter Four: Coming to terms with speaking English

Introduction

Gudykunst (1998) states that communication is primarily a linguistic code, a set of rules or body of knowledge that acts as a link between people: language is viewed by all cross-cultural theorists as central to communication activities; it is according to Kim (1988) a primary conduit between communicators; to Oberg (1960), it is the principal symbol system of communication. Nevertheless, it is universally accepted that non-verbal behaviour also needs to be learned if the sojourner is to be communicatively competent, and that different cultures have collectively elaborated specific conventions which have to be negotiated if mistakes are to be avoided (Kim 1988; Brumfit 1993; Ting-Toomey 1999; Hofstede 2001). As cultures vary in their verbal and non-verbal communication patterns (Hall 1976; Tarone and Yule 1987), it was to be expected that in the move to an environment where the dominant language was not their native tongue, students would experience some degree of language shock. When analysing the preoccupying phenomenon of language, the issues that were uncovered included: the emotional reaction to foreign language use in and outside the classroom, friendship networks and reflections on linguistic progress.

Feeling stressed

In the first few months of the sojourn, there was a high level of stress in the cohort of 150 students over the twin needs to meet the demands of the course and to cope in an English-speaking environment. Informants were conscious that linguistic competence would affect their ability to navigate day-to-day life and to overcome the academic hurdles placed in front of them, including writing assignments and following lectures and class discussion. Though

all students had achieved the minimum language qualification required by most HEI of IELTS 6, language ability and consequently anxiety over their ability varied enormously in the cohort, pointing to the unreliability of IELTS as an indicator of ability or confidence, a point that is also made by Carroll (2005a).

In the first interview, nearly all students described their shock upon arriving in the UK, when they were confronted with spoken English in everyday life. For those who had never left the comfort of the home environment, feelings of panic and fear were understandable reactions to a world that was both unfamiliar and at times unintelligible; suddenly they faced the loss of their predictable home world. The following comments express this clearly:

Oh my God, everything is in English, and I don't know what it all means!! You need to translate, to think, 'what does that mean?' Yeah, the first days the shock was the different language, it was awful!

Mohamed

After flying about 11 hours, I reached England which is completely brand-new for me. At the beginning of arriving here I feel out of place because I couldn't switch my Chinese into English freely.

Chinese student, October 2

Because I didn't speak English very well, so I'm very nervous about just speaking to the foreigner. Maybe they don't understand me, and I don't understand them?! Xia

Panic and speaking in English were intertwined for interviewees who spoke of the terror of communicating with people in any social context: at the airport, on the coach and at the train station, with taxi drivers, shop assistants, with university library staff and their course administrators. There were three sources of fear: being misunderstood, if they used the wrong vocabulary or if their accent was unintelligible; being unable to understand comments

addressed to them; and being unable to respond in time. The likelihood of making mistakes in listening and speaking meant that attempts at communication were commonly preceded by a fear of failure and apprehension over *annoying* people who may be asked to repeat or rephrase what they had said: indeed the word *annoy* was frequently used to refer to host contact. Failed communication attempts were accompanied by feelings of frustration, embarrassment and inadequacy:

Sometimes it's annoying when you say something and they don't get it! Rini

Just I try to hide away someplace because I don't want to annoy. Kiana

Fear of communication breakdown was especially noticeable during induction week, when I observed how the majority of students seemed anxious about speaking in English. If they didn't understand what was said to them, looks of panic and embarrassment would cross their face, shown in nervous smiles and giggles, especially when they had to ask people to repeat questions. I wondered what students were afraid of: that they would be exposed as incompetent, that they didn't belong on the course, that their level of English was inferior to another classmate's? All of these fears were confessed to, and felt very real to informants. Such crises of confidence are according to Ballard and Clanchy (1997) and Carroll (2005a) an inevitable consequence of a struggle with day-to-day and academic tasks. Sometimes anxiety had a paralysing effect and meant that students didn't ask for repetition or clarification but simply stood staring, requiring the person addressing to repair the conversation. Ryan (2005a) states that this communication skill is not widely possessed, and yet this study reinforces the importance of patience and of a facility for rephrasing and predicting responses, particularly among those working with international students. On the other hand, Charmaz' (1983) commentary on interaction with sufferers of chronic illness has some relevance here: she points out that sociability is compromised by visible distress, as it causes unease and embarrassment for both parties involved in the social encounter. In the cross-cultural

situation, both the sojourner and the host will be discomfited by failed or limited communication. According to Goffman (1972), interaction will only be 'safeguarded' if the more competent speaker shows tact, a protective reaction designed to 'rescue' the other participant.

Avoidance was a common reaction to the discomfort of speaking in English; fluent compatriots would often be used as the mouthpiece of the lesser able students. Equally, speaking in a group setting was routinely avoided; students managed their anxiety by targeting one-to-one communication: fear of exposure as an incompetent was perhaps reduced in this less threatening context. Invitations to ask questions in class were ignored, embarrassment over the 'refusal' to meet a lecturer's request outweighed by the drive to preserve self-esteem. Furthermore, the stressful unpredictability of conversations with other nationality students often led to the avoidance of cross-national interaction, and it can be construed that self-esteem was protected at the cost of longer term self-development. As David (1976) points out, most sojourners seek to minimise the various punishing experiences associated with transition to a new culture, amongst which speaking the host language was counted in this study.

However, speaking in English could not be avoided altogether, thus feelings of helplessness and ineptitude were commonly confessed in the first few weeks, reactions to an almost daily occurrence of communication breakdown, as reflected in Kiana's cry:

When you can't speak English, then you don't have eyes, you can't see anything! You feel you don't know a thing! It's really difficult! You know you be embarrassed when you can't speak English, like a little girl! I feel people look at me, especially when I speak because of the accent. Just I try to be careful, but just sit in the corner.

Kiana uses vivid images to illustrate her intense discomfort, of being blinded by a lack of communicative competence, of being shamed into withdrawal, of being reduced to the helpless state of childhood. Kiana is not alone in her distress: this feeling of impotence is commonplace in the initial stage of the sojourn, as the visitor feels they revert to the mental state of an infant in which they have to learn to do simple things again (Smith 1987; Storti 1990; Kramersch 1993; Brumfit 1993; Scollon and Scollon 1995; Hofstede 2001). Students' sense of inadequacy was justified: in everyday conversations, their speech was typically halting and stilted. It was not hard to understand why they would seek to avoid such frustrated attempts to communicate in face-to-face encounters, which required immediate feedback and response, and therefore carried the potential for embarrassment. Brumfit (1993) argues that those who are professionally well-established at home will particularly struggle to accept feelings of inferiority deriving from linguistic incompetence. This is a relevant point as many informants had come from management positions, and described frustration over inadequate self-expression and the high incidence of communication errors. Students commonly chose to *keep silent* (Kyoung, a translator for the National Tourist Board) over suffering embarrassment, but this meant that they came to embody a different self. Identity was no longer based on previous professional and social activities; here was an unfamiliar and disorienting version of themselves as shy and withdrawn. The ensuing sense of alienation was to be expected, as students struggled to retain a sense of competence in a foreign language environment: feelings of inadequacy and child-like vulnerability were intense and only declined in line with progress in speaking skills in particular. This study observes a correlation between communicative fitness and self-worth that made me wonder at the debilitating blow to self suffered by those more vulnerable sojourners such as asylum seekers and refugees whose stay in the new country is not pre-determined and whose impetus for travel is usually traumatic.

Looking at the phenomenon of stress when using a foreign language, I observed that panic was amplified by the connection students made between linguistic ability and academic

prohess. This was reflected in the hundreds of requests for help (by email and in person) in the first term, including the following common refrain:

I am so frightened about my English. How will I understand? Korean student,
October 7

Fear of failure was linked with feelings of shame; this was reflected in Kyoung's demeanour when she came to ask for feedback on her assignment:

She hid her face in her hands, and bowed her head, telling me, 'don't look at my work, don't look, it's terrible!' It pained her so much to show it to me that she was almost crying, yet this was the purpose of her visit.

Kyoung was not unique; the words *ashamed and embarrassed* were used frequently by students who equated language skills with intellect, a common attribution in the international classroom (Archer 1994; Beykont and Daiute 2002; De Vita 2005). Self-denigrating comparisons with more articulate students were widespread, weakening an already precarious self-esteem: Kiana was not alone in her description of herself as *rubbish, really bad; stupid*. Non-verbal communication also betrayed intense discomfort: accounts of attempts to communicate and engage with their study were often accompanied by facial gestures such as wincing and frowning, as well as nervous laughter, the latter, according to Scollon and Scollon (1995), being a common means of expressing embarrassment in Asian culture. Hofstede's (1991) observation that there are cross-cultural differences in the cause of and response to the universal emotion of shame explains why some students of equal or less ability than many SE Asian students did not always seem inhibited by their lack of prowess: coming from a collectivist culture that is high in uncertainty avoidance, they would be less willing to stand out in a group and to face the insecurity of an unpredictable situation that is typified by a dialogue in a foreign language (ibid).

The emotional aspect of learning is increasingly recognised as an important dimension of the student experience. Sazberger-Wittenber et al. (1983) argue that all learning situations can catalyse infantile feelings of vulnerability, helplessness and fear of humiliation, but these feelings are surely exaggerated for international students who face the twin challenges of becoming adept in a foreign language and adapting to a new academic culture. This might explain why it is often stated that academic success is more important to international students than sociocultural adjustment (e.g. Blue 1993; Sharples 1995). Though it is hard to determine what was the most distressing for students, communication in the social or the academic context, over time, it became clear that that informants put most of their energy into fulfilling their academic duties, and minimised the opportunities in their social life which held a potential for feelings of inadequacy. As Gudykunst (1998) points out, international students may confine their adjustment to the academic world, minimising stress where they can to help compensate for unavoidable stressors in the sojourn such as academic pressures: given the personal and financial sacrifices involved in international education (Ryan 2005a), this should come as no surprise.

Thus far, the commentary has focused on stress induced by verbal communication; however interpretation of non-verbal messages was also problematic. For example, students pointed to a difficulty in reading facial expressions:

I cannot tell from their face what they think, here you cannot see they are angry or they are happy. But in Taiwan, you can tell, only no speaking and the face, very terrible.

Xia

Emotion is a universal feeling but rules of display are culturally ingrained (Ekman and Friesen 1971; Gudykunst 1998): socialisation in a different culture inhibited Xia's ability to decode and respond to non-verbal messages, and a sense of dis-ease ensued. Awareness of

differences in levels of physical contact also led to apprehension in social settings:

I am always be careful. I didn't have any confidence near the people. I didn't know anything. I didn't know your rule. When I went to visit a street, I didn't want to touch another people, because in my country if you touch to people, when you go walking, it's rude. When you go to shopping, all the time you are nervous! Kiana

Given her upbringing in a low contact culture, Kiana's nervousness was understandable; until she could gauge the local tolerance for physical contact, she could not relax. Conversely, Antonio, who came from a high contact culture, maintained vigilance over a culturally ingrained tendency to be more tactile than most of his peers. As many cultural theorists, including Baddassam and Feller (1975), Gudykunst (1998) and Jandt (2001), have observed, physical contact varies across cultures, and often overrides the spoken word: it is difficult for sojourners to learn spatial rules as different topics of conversation and different social situations often require different physical behaviour, with various conventions applying depending on the formality of the situation. Students' attention to such nuances and their consequent apprehension were acknowledgements of the importance of non-verbal communication. As argued by Cammish (1997) and David (1971), communicative competence goes beyond linguistic ability: vocabulary, grammar and verbal facility alone will not lead to successful communication; unless people understand the subtle cues implicit in tone, gesture and expression, they will misinterpret what is said and may cause offence. Nevertheless, though informants' stress was sometimes increased by a detection of differences in non-verbal communication, the claim that this is just as, if not more, important than the spoken word in cross-cultural communication (see, for example, Smith 1987; Storti 1990; Hall 1992; Brumfit 1993) was not upheld. This study shows that informants' main preoccupation throughout their stay was with linguistic ability and its improvement: this finding is supported by Scollon and Scollon (1995) and Ward et al. (2001) who argue that the importance attached to the role of non-verbal communication in intergroup encounters is

exaggerated. Ignorance of the rules of non-verbal communication may well lead to communication problems, but my study shows that the desire for mastery of vocabulary, grammar and oral fluency outweighed the need to learn non-verbal behaviour.

Given the stress inherent in successfully managing the social and academic task, which this study underlines, a pertinent question arises: should the IELTS entry score be raised by British universities? This was the question asked by the more linguistically able informants whose responses to poor language skills included irritation and consequent doubt over the quality of the programme they had paid so much for:

I feel sometimes irritated with the fact that some people in the class have extreme difficulty to express themselves. Lecturers get tired of reading things that are difficult to understand and then when they get something that they can understand well, they are going to judge that by the fact that it's well-written, and not so much by the content in terms of argument and critical analysis. Antonio

Antonio's concern that the level of the course was negatively affected by the poor linguistic level of the majority of the cohort reflects the tension brought by differing language levels within an international cohort. It is also important to note that the 'dumbing down' of education is a topic of contemporary concern, not least for institutions that heavily recruit international students with basic language skills. Interestingly, all informants were unanimous in their view that language ability was a crucial determinant of academic success and subjective ease, and that the minimum level of English accepted by British universities should be increased. As recognised by Antonio however, restricting the number of international students *would only happen in an ideal world, we don't live in an ideal world.* On the contrary, there have been suggestions that some British universities are lowering their entry level to IELTS 4.5 in order to attract international students, the longer-term result of which

will be the creation of frustrated failing students (Carroll 2005a). We can only wonder at the stress these students will face in the development of linguistic and academic competence.

Struggling with language and meaning

Whilst the first interview concentrated on the initial shock of a new language environment, later interviews saw students become aware of differences in the meanings attached to the vocabulary they used and heard. Smith (1987) states that it is common for sojourners to adopt the discourse strategies of the mother tongue in the new language, nevertheless students slowly appreciated variations in formulae of politeness, greetings and regret between the host and the native language. Their awareness grew, for example, of the impact of culture on expressions of politeness (see Hall 1959 and Gudykunst 1998), with the implication that they had to start to adopt vocabulary they were not used to using, in order to conform to the English norm of civility. For Brigitte, this led to an unexpected readjustment to origin cultural norms upon her return to Germany at Easter:

I went into the bakers and I said 'kann ich bitte eine Pretzel haben?', which is very English and polite, but my sister told me, 'you don't say that, you just say, eine Pretzel bitte.' And I felt I wasn't being very polite.

Cross-cultural variability in expressions of politeness was conversely reflected in Kiana's description of frustrated attempts to find adequate vocabulary in English to convey apologies and gratitude:

In my country, we have 10 different words about 'sorry', and you have just one! You say 'you're welcome' and we have 10 or 20 different words for 'you're welcome'. I try to forget but I can't. I been using these word for 20 years, I can't forget it. It's a

part of culture. You make somebody in front of you completely disappointed if you just say 'you're welcome'.

Kiana quickly learned that the same range of synonyms for the above phrases did not exist, a common difficulty facing sojourners who attempt to replicate the vocabulary used in the native language (Mir and Jalali 1980; Hofstede 2001). Kiana's difficulty in accepting that she was not causing offence to local people if she wasn't sufficiently gracious is explained by the universal reference to culture as a product of socialisation whose hold is hard to escape, even when consciousness of its influence is raised (Hall 1959; Hofstede 2001). This also explains the phenomenon of a simultaneous awareness among SE Asian students that bowing was not the norm in the UK and its continued practice: Paranee described feeling torn between reminding herself not to bow, and fearing that she was showing disrespect if she did not. It was not until analysis that I realised how often students bowed, or worked hard to suppress bows. Nearly every day there was a mention of this in the field notes, the following being a typical entry:

A Japanese student thanked me for seeing her, and backed out of the office, half bowing. Later on, I helped some Thai students with their assignment and at the end of the class they all executed a bow in thanks.

As Gudykunst (1983) states, bowing is a form of greeting that is common in Asian culture, though it is often used to show respect to those in authority, and to mark affection and gratitude; in a Western egalitarian culture, the expression of differing status is subtler. In their theory of cross-cultural communication, Scollon and Scollon (1995) distinguish two strategies that show politeness and respect: the involvement strategy emphasises informality and equality between participants and is indicative of a culture low in power distance; the independence strategy emphasises formality and inequality, and is typical of a culture high in power distance. Differences in communication styles explain informants' tendency to feel

apprehensive about ‘negating the status of the other’ (ibid). This was manifested in the many times that SE Asian students would visibly stifle a bow in greeting: a physical representation of the difficulty in separating from the origin culture that challenges all sojourners, according to Hall (1959). The sojourn engendered a state of tension between a reluctant replacement of formality with a communication style associated with disrespect: a reflection of the clash between the formality associated with cultures high in power distance and the more egalitarian, horizontal approach to communication that is found in a country that is low in power distance, such as the UK (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005).

Much importance is attached in theories of cross-cultural communication to the intention of the message-sender and the interpretation of the receiver (see Detweiler 1975, 1980; Gudykunst 1998; Koester and Lustig 2003). This was reflected in the attention informants paid to the meanings associated with vocabulary used for greetings. For example, a discrepancy was found between the use of the phrase ‘how are you’ and the sincerity of the user:

When people meet you, they say ‘how are you?’ But in Slovenia, you really mean it and you expect the answer, but here they don’t, it just means ‘hi’; it’s just automatic

Natalia

When they say how are you, they mean hello, but that’s it.

Antonio

Local people are not helpful; they ask how you are but they don’t really want to help.

Ning

It took some time for students to learn that they shouldn’t offer an account of their well-being in automatic response to this question, as they learned to deduce that what people say is not what they mean; use of the equivalent words in their language and in the same context would

carry a different intention. As Ellingsworth (1977) points out, meanings that are taken for granted in the native language become questionable when using a foreign language. Bruner's (1956) concept of categorisation, which has been used extensively to understand cross-cultural communication difficulty, explains this disparity: the capacity for categorisation is human but the choice of categories and the vocabulary that evolves for different categories is culture and situation-specific. Those socialised in the same culture categorise and interpret situations similarly and have similar expectations: variations in the way things are characterised have an impact on meaning and expectations (Detweiler 1980). Thus it was not uncommon to hear informants conclude that the politeness for which British people are famed (Leonard 1997) was a façade, an empty convention. This may have been informed by widespread disenchantment over a lack of host contact, and by exposure to racial abuse (to be discussed in Chapter Seven). The clash between the language of civility observed in requests and greetings in everyday life and the discriminatory vocabulary used by members of the host community led to a perception of artifice and deceit: which version of Englishness was to be believed?

The scrutiny of differences in the expression of politeness led me to fear that I could sometimes unwittingly cause offence to students, who may not be used to the rules governing my culturally-informed behaviour. I started to experience some of the apprehension confessed by students following confrontation with unusual modes of communication: did I sometimes offend or upset them with hitherto unmet familiarity or an abrupt way of responding to requests? I developed awareness of culturally different communication strategies, and learned to modify some of my responses to students: this is a small illustration of the potential for the presence of international students to change practice in the receiving institution.

The terror of speaking in class

Class participation is intrinsically linked with western education (Cortazzi and Jin 1997), thus students quickly learned that they could not avoid the challenge of speaking in class. As they had no idea what different lecturers' approach to eliciting contributions would be, they described suffering apprehension throughout the class, and when it was time to give accredited presentations, the panic induced by the thought of speaking in front of their peers was manifested in nervous pacing outside the class room (as observed throughout the year), and expressions of disquiet in email and in the tutorial situation. The following wail by a Chinese student about to do a presentation was a typical reaction:

I think I am going to die!

A lack of participation was noted among South East Asian students by all lecturers, and this was echoed in study support classes, where I observed that not only did they avoid answering questions, but they also avoided eye contact. This was attributed to poor language skills, as the following Taiwanese student told me:

Carole feels she only understands half of what is said; she spends so long translating words into her language that when she returns to the discussion she has missed another nine sentences, so there is not time to think about what she would like to say.

Despair over inadequate aural comprehension was prevalent, as were panic over misunderstanding lecturers' questions, and fear over giving the wrong answer (as often happened). As Carroll (2005a) notes, lecturing staff can do much to improve the student experience, by paying attention to their own communication techniques. However, even when they understood a question posed by the lecturer, many interviewees described feeling

stressed by the need to respond quickly, and articulately; the desire to avoid the feelings of inferiority and shame caused by making mistakes in front of their peers was common:

I have many ideas, but I have to stay quiet, my English is so bad. Kyoung

I cannot catch what other student talk. They are so clever. Like, ' what are you talking about?' Paranee

I am not satisfied with my spoken English, it's full of mistakes. That embarrasses me.
Ning

Fear of making mistakes inhibited spontaneity; the shame associated with contribution to class appeared to mirror informants' feelings about communication in everyday life. I concluded that the western participative approach to education constituted a cultural challenge for which most students were not linguistically equipped. The link between language ability and contribution to class discussion is supported in the literature on the academic sojourn (e.g. Furneaux et al. 1991; Persaud 1994; Okorochoa 1996b; Ballard and Clanchy 1997; Carroll 2005a), although there is some debate over whether the greater obstacle is posed by language or cultural obstacles. It was observable that linguistic inadequacy was not always a deterrent; European students participated extensively in class, despite deficient language skills, as Ning commented enviously:

Even if their pronunciation is not perfect, I think they are braver to express themselves, and I am always thinking about any mistakes I will make.

Conversely, silence in class did not always signify a lack of ideas or of articulacy, as Antonio found to his surprise:

They are so quiet, very reserved, but I don't know why they are so afraid of saying things, because, you know, they are very good. I've met so many people that were so quiet, but they were so intelligent.

The prevalence of non-participation among SE Asian students regardless in some cases of language ability, and the incidence of participation among poorly speaking students used to a culture of class participation confirms that the university seminar was culturally challenging. However, there was deviance from the stereotype of the non-participating SE Asian student, represented by Richard, a Taiwanese student, who, though anxious about his poor language skills, was determined from the outset to speak in class, trusting that his initial linguistic incompetence would be allowed for:

The teacher here are very kind and they are all understand me that am not a native speaker they try to speak slowly and clearly when I can't catch up the speed when they teach.

As Helson (1964) notes, people may belong to one cultural group but are unique in terms of personality; this means that no single person can be representative of all characteristics of a group or pattern, nor can they be influenced in all aspects of their life by the culture they belong to.

Though Kember and Gow (1991) and Ward (2001) are critical of the caricature portrayed in the literature on international education of passive South East Asian students, this study can do little to counter this image, as the evidence points to a pattern of behaviour in class from

which there was little deviance. What this study adds to the story however is the emotional component of the incidence of non-participation: informants *did* want to contribute to class, but felt held back both culturally and linguistically, creating a sense of frustration and inadequacy that lecturers would do well to bear in mind when formulating strategies for eliciting contributions from international students.

Speaking in English

Interview 1 showed a unanimous desire to use host contact to improve English language ability, vindicating and supporting a correlation that features in all models of adjustment.

Understanding of the importance of host contact is shown below:

I am living with 2 English guys, they are very friendly, and I can practise my English with them. When I just came here I felt a little bit difficult to understand what they said but now it is much better.

Chinese student

Speaking still, I have lots of problems. If I had English friend, I'm sure it was better.

Kiana

I want to practise my English all the time. For me the important thing is language.

Rini

Conversely, near-native speakers felt that their language skills would facilitate acceptance by the host. Antonio was keen to show that he could speak fluently, so as not to be confused with the stereotype of the immigrant who could not communicate well:

I don't want to be seen as another foreigner who didn't learn properly, I want to be part of the British society.

The supposition that a good grasp of the host language facilitates acceptance is also reflected in models of adjustment (e.g. Berry 1994; Ward and Kennedy 1999), and it was vindicated by Natalia's revelation that British students on the course were intolerant of poorly-speaking international students:

They told me, we tolerate them if they can speak good English. Otherwise we're not interested.

I wondered whether informants, whose anxiety was already high, detected that tolerance (rather than acceptance) on the part of the host was dependent on the extent of their fluency. As Chapter Seven reveals, the area of host contact is complex and dynamic, however, with factors such as personality, cultural differences and host receptivity coming into play alongside language level.

By Interview 2, it became clear that host contact was limited: English was spoken mostly with other nationalities, and this was seen as a very poor second best. Students often claimed that their language ability had deteriorated after one year of speaking with other poorly speaking international students; they felt that it could only have improved by speaking with English people. Whilst my observation was that students *did* make progress, I cannot dispute that the absence of British friends was a serious handicap for those wishing to improve their language. Nevertheless, informants were aware that it was important to operate in English, albeit with other non-native speakers; a link was made between conational interaction and deterioration in language:

Sometimes I feel if I had a Jordanian friend it would be easier for me, but on the other hand I can see it's really useful for me to improve my English and to be confident to know 'yeah, I can manage. If I always speak in my own language, my vocabulary would be maybe the same or lower. Maybe the Arabic students would help me if I missed a lecture, but maybe my English would be the same, so what's the point?

Mohamed

It's getting worse because I speak Thai all the time, every day I meet all the Thais.

Paranee

However, most informants chose to speak in their native language with compatriots, describing despair over their poor speaking skills as an inhibiting force:

I need to speak English. But my English is not so good. Always I feel difficulties in talking about the native speakers and I want to improve my English, but I'm so shy.

Kyoung

I would like to mix with many nationalities but sometimes feel so shy because of my language.

Chinese student

Shame and the desire to avoid anxiety inspired the retreat from English-speaking scenarios into the comfort of the monoethnic ghetto. Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999) describe this as a common phenomenon among migrants and sojourners, which can be understood by referring to Goffman's (1972) description of communication breakdown as a disruptive event that causes confusion, discomfort and embarrassment for all parties. Defensive practices are a common reaction to such episodes, their aim being to avoid 'discrediting occurrences'.

The fatigue imposed by speaking in a foreign language was also cited as a reason for speaking the mother tongue, as Xia explained:

When I with Carole, we speak in Chinese because we need to take a rest. It's a relief because we need to use a lot of words to express our thinking, it's a release.

Self-expression was only truly possible in the native language: speaking in English was not only difficult, but it was also alienating. The frequent use of words such as *relief*, *easy*, *familiar*, *cosy*, *home*, *relaxing* and *nice*, painted a vivid picture of the contrast between the discomfort of operating in English and the guilty pleasure of using the native language. Language and home were especially interlinked; indeed, recreating a sense of home is, according to Kim (1988), the most intrinsic and lasting function of ethnic social communication. Baumann's (1999) concept of *home* in his work on identity is relevant to ethnic language use: home is inside, 'it is a space where one seldom, if at all, finds oneself at a loss, feels lost for words, or uncertain how to act.' (p. xxiii). Conversely, being outside, or in this case speaking the host language, is a place people tend to avoid; it involves feeling out of place and out of one's element, inviting trouble and fearing harm.

As Edwards (1994) argues, language is the pillar of groupness; it is crucial to understanding issues of identity and belonging (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 1982). Giving up this link with home was not to be brooked: this was reflected in students' dogged attachment to speaking the native language despite awareness of the negative implications for English language development. The urge for comfort and belonging meant that over the course of the year the patterns of language spoken within the first few months were maintained, with students mixing mostly in co-national groups and speaking their own language. This study corroborates theories that highlight the role of anxiety-management in the development of linguistic competence in the cross-cultural setting (see Wilder and Shapiro 1989; Stephan and

Stephan 1992; Gudykunst and Nishida 2001), as those few informants who overcame their nervousness and plunged into English-speaking situations made the most linguistic progress; however the need for the succour brought by speaking the mother tongue must also be taken into account when trying to understand attachment to the mononational group.

Improving language skills

Reflecting the emphasis placed by Cammish (1997) on international students' commitment to language learning, students in this research felt that they should make efforts to improve their language skills. The most commonly employed strategies included speaking in English, going to the cinema, watching TV, reading grammar books, newspapers and fiction, and listening to the radio. Though these are for the most part passive language learning strategies, improvements in vocabulary were acknowledged as a vital contribution to both confidence and academic ability. Reflecting the common willingness of international students to dedicate a huge amount of their time to academic and linguistic progress (Barker 1997; Ryan 2005a), many informants added the improvement of grammar and vocabulary to their list of academic tasks. Perceiving her language level to be *a big hole, a big gap*, Kiana spent at least three hours a day in the first few months on language exercises from EFL text books. The same undertaking was made by Xia, Rini and Ning. The obstruction to linguistic progress through excessive conational interaction did not carry an implication of indifference to proficiency, but reflects the weight that is attached to the emotional response to speaking in a foreign language: informants would often prefer the lonely and monotonous task of grammar improvement to the anxiety associated with speaking with non-native peers whose outcome was unpredictable. Students' determination to improve was part of a desire to return to the home country with good language skills, widely recognised as one of the secondary benefits of international education for non-English speaking students. Kiana's comment that *your language is very powerful* is indicative of the importance of English to international business

(Ryan and Carroll 2005): even in their home country, holding good English language skills would improve their employability.

Steady progress in spoken English was observed in weekly classes and tutorials, as well as in casual conversation outside the office and classroom. Given my close involvement with interviewees, in my capacity as researcher and EAP tutor, my observations of language progress will be included in this section. However, as an ethnographer committed to documenting the emic perspective, I will point out differences between my own observations and students' own views of their progress, which sometimes differed.

A contrast between conversations with students in the initial stage of the sojourn and those about to leave was facilitated not only by a review of transcripts, but also by an overlap between the arrival of the September 2004 cohort (who do not form part of this study) and the departure of this study's informants: there was a marked difference between the fluency and vocabulary of the cohort under study, and those newly arriving. Furthermore, an examination of the interview transcripts and listening to tapes revealed improved vocabulary and grasp of grammar, greater speed of delivery, improved intonation and pronunciation, and fewer hesitations between questions and answers. Informants themselves pointed to a difference between their language ability in the initial and later stages, and time and immersion in the host culture language were viewed as key in linguistic progress:

At that time, I felt my English was so horrible. If I have to talk with the British, I will feel very nervous. My English was ugh! I think the more I live here, there is improvement. I mean, maybe I can speak more quickly and for the listening it's easier for me. I'm used to it; I'm always talking in English. I'm not so scared anymore. Rini

My language is much better. My listening I think is 100%, I can understand everything. I am here long enough now. Kiana

Though this extract clearly reveals some mistakes, these students' vocabulary, delivery, fluency and comprehension were much improved and this confirms the pattern in the group.

As the months passed, I started to notice that communication with informants was becoming easier: Carroll (2005a) notes that speed of delivery should be adapted in the cross-cultural situation, and indeed, I became aware that I could speak more quickly following detection of improvements in aural ability; and informants were articulating themselves more fluently. The only exception to this overall pattern was Kyoung who spoke entirely in Korean in her private life, and with whom conversation was similar to that with a newly-arrived sojourner: by Interview 4, she was still struggling to find vocabulary, her speech was characterised by hesitation, and her delivery was accompanied by nervous, apologetic smiles, looks of blankness and sometimes panic when she didn't understand simple questions, many of which needed to be repeated. However, Torbiorn (1994) points out that the sojourner's own subjective sense of adjustment is important: whilst it was clear to me that she had not made much improvement in her conversational skills, *she* was pleased that she had improved her vocabulary and translation skills.

By contrast, a clash between subjective and objective judgement was revealed in Olga's statement in Interview 4 that her language hadn't improved, whereas I observed an increase in fluency, comprehension, pronunciation and vocabulary, reflected in her use of the sophisticated phrase, *my priority is to*. Ning also showed an excellent grasp of grammar and vocabulary and was fluent in delivery, yet my objective judgement of Ning's language ability clashed with her own self-appraisal: *I think my spoken English has gone from bad to worse*. (The reader will note that the phrase that Ning used here reveals a good level of spoken English.) Perhaps both these students were uncomfortably aware that less conational

interaction would have led to greater improvements in their English, that they had not maximised the opportunity offered by the sojourn? Indeed, Ning commented resignedly in Interview 4:

I would do differently now, I would mix more.

On the other hand, as Kramersch (1993) points out, whilst feelings of inadequacy tend to subside as language ability grows, they never completely disappear, and enduring self-doubt is to be expected.

The association between foreign language use and the incidence of anxiety was complemented by a similar growth in confidence alongside improvement in language ability.

Kiana's use of visual images to capture her feelings is telling:

After two, three months you think when you put your leg on the ground you have confidence to walk! It took one year, but now almost I have no problem.

Improved language skills increased mobility; a fitting allusion to the feeling of handicap experienced in the earlier months of the sojourn. The panic, shame and anxiety associated with speaking in English had largely abated and were replaced by a feeling, if not of fluency, but of ease: *all situations easy now*, as Rini commented with relief.

The consensus in the literature on the international sojourn that foreign language ability is negatively impacted by monoethnic communication (e.g. Kim 1988; Furnham and Erdman 1995; Ward 2005) is confirmed in the observation that progress was a function of interaction strategy. However, my judgement is that *all* students, regardless of friendship groups, made

some progress, which is to be expected given that they had lived in England for one year (see Appendix 2): at least minimally they had to operate in English on a daily basis even if the foreign language was only used in mundane activities such as shopping. An increase in vocabulary was also inevitably linked to the secondary research required on a Masters course. All models of adjustment point to a link between time and improved communicative competence, a link that is also borne out in this study.

Summary

Feeling stressed, struggling with language and meaning, terror over speaking in class, practising spoken English and the need to improve, were the subcategories of the major theme of adapting to an English-speaking environment. The findings show that nearly all informants suffered anxiety in the initial few months of the sojourn in respect to language ability, given their understanding that mastery of language was crucial to success on the Masters course, communication outside the course, and progress in their future career. Difficulties were mainly posed by inadequate speaking and listening skills, and the areas impacted were participation in class, listening comprehension in lectures and cross-national interaction. Informants noted a decrease in anxiety related to language ability as time passed and as improvements were detected, suggesting a link between time and adjustment. However, the anxiety suffered by students over linguistic prowess should not be downplayed, particularly as good language skills are vital from the outset of the course, and any deficiency may be reflected in the marks students obtained for assignments. There were variations in language progress, with most improvements noted in those students who avoided or minimised monoethnic contact and maximised their use of English in daily life, underlining the link between ethnic communication and deterioration in host language competence. Experiences of shame and incompetence informed the gravitation towards conationals and the self-restriction on using the foreign language. Meanwhile, the positive link made by many writers

between linguistic ability and host contact was not confirmed in this study, as even those who displayed a near-native language level could not achieve interaction with the local or home student population.

Chapter Five: Facing the challenges of academic life

Introduction

Studying abroad held challenges for informants that felt at times overwhelming: their status as international students meant that they were faced with an alien language and a dissimilar academic culture on top of the stresses normally faced by students in Higher Education.

Considering these burdens made me grasp the debilitating nature of the academic sojourn. Of particular difficulty were the intensive assignment schedule, the requirement to carry out extensive secondary research, the incorporation of critical thought into writing, the call to speak in class, and finally relationships with academic staff. The interrelationship between culture and educational conventions is revealed in every area of academic life.

The threat to emotional well-being

The link between emotional well-being and the academic task was striking from the start of this research: within the first days of their arrival in England, students were highly stressed over the amount and nature of the work in front of them, overwhelmed by the enormity of the task of completing a Masters degree in a foreign language and in a foreign educational setting. The very first entry in the field notes is indicative of the anxiety experienced by students when they started the course:

A very nervous Taiwanese student (Richard) came to see me today; his first words were: I'm very scared, very scared. September 27

This fear, which was prevalent, was provoked by students' confrontation with the reality of an intensive assignment schedule that is typical of the British one-year Masters course (Durkin

2004). As revealed in the following scene, which repeated itself on a daily basis in the first term, students' agitation catapulted them into an infantile clinginess and urge for succour:

Bumped into Kyoung this morning, who started talking to me excitedly about the course. Two more Korean students saw us, and rushed over (worried, frowning faces), anxious about their ability to pass assignments. All three students were very nervous, their bodies hunched over, wailing every now and then, and grateful for any advice I could offer.

September 29

The learning situation provoked anxiety and a need for reassurance in equal measure, as the following words, found over again in both the journal and interviews in the first six weeks of term, reveal: *nervous, scared, anxious, worried, frowning, wailing, stress, difficult, stressed, work hard, tough, pressure, confused and tearful*. In particular, students were afraid of failing to meet the challenge of writing an assignment in a foreign language, following culture-specific guidelines and all within a tight time frame. The impact of high anxiety on the enjoyment of daily life is illustrated in the following comment from Richard (the Taiwanese student mentioned above), which captures the state of mind of so many of his colleagues:

I've been here for four weeks and I still don't feel better! I can't sleep because I am so very stressed!

October 25

Worry over workload manifested itself emotionally and physically in tearfulness, sleep deprivation, nightmares, exhaustion, lack of concentration, loss of appetite and depression. Stress was an inhibitor of concentration on academic work, as Storti (1990) and Mori (2000) also found: this was reflected in the frequent use of doctors' notes that testified to complaints such as insomnia, anxiety, depression, and in the extreme suicidal thoughts, to justify the late submission of coursework. For a few students, stress over study demands was significant enough to explain deferral of the programme. For those who 'stayed the course', the first term

would be synonymous with a diminished quality of life that would impact on their ability to settle.

The initial few months of the sojourn represented both hardship and a test of endurance; many students described the challenge of studying abroad as the hardest thing they had ever faced, requiring the need for courage and resolve:

I tell myself, everything goes fine and I will be OK here, don't worry, don't be nervous, I just tell myself like that. Sometimes, with some stress, you can have more power come out.

Xia

Oh, I was not sure if I could finish, I was so nervous but I think I think I will finish, and I feel proud of me.

Kyoung

A sense of pride in completion of a difficult task was a function of the degree of anxiety experienced: the ability to surmount the obstacles posed by academic study increased students' sense of self-efficacy, delivering the promise of improved self-worth that is an oft-cited outcome of the sojourn (e.g. Martin and Harrell 1996, 2004). There was some congruence with Kim's (2001) model of stress and growth; however self-esteem fluctuated depending on both external reflections of achievement such as assignment marks and students' own evaluation of their ability to cope. Feelings of stress and incompetence sat alongside a sense of validation and achievement: another reminder to me of the power of the sojourn to enhance as well as to undermine self-concept, as Berry (1994) suggests. Using Kinch's (1972) definition of self-concept as the organisation of qualities that an individual attributes to themselves and his stress on the dynamic aspect of self-concept which evolves in response to external stimuli, we can see how the encounter with under-performance would indeed challenge the self as previously understood.

The road to academic success was not smooth: informants commonly dedicated several hours every day to studying:

I only have 2 or 3 hours sleep a day. I study hard because so many books to read, and I'm not English. I worried! That's why I sleep less. You know, so many works to do, I don't want to buy the television, because I think I don't have time to watch it! Xia

Such self-denial was not uncommon, especially among those who also faced language problems. A common theme of the first interviews was students' single-minded determination to overcome the academic hurdle in front of them and to avoid the stigma of failure:

Not many Chinese students have leisure time, and neither do I. Except sleeping, to eat and to attend the lecture, I spend almost all my time to study. Ning

It's the matter of time management. Friends said 'oh you are busy!' They always go to the bar to have drink together. But lately I disappear! Normally I'm not going out often; I think I a bit lost contact with my friends. Paranee

This conscientious attitude, which was a source of admiration among British students (*they are amazing! They study so hard!*: November 10), can be understood as the need often felt by non-traditional entrants to HE to invest time and effort in their study so that they perform as well as more traditional entrants (see Bowl 2003). It may also be a reflection of the tendency found in Asian culture in particular towards a long-term approach to life that is associated with hard work and perseverance (Cheung 1984; Hofstede 1991). Such a work ethic is described by Thomas and Harrell (1994) as a contrast with the more laissez-faire approach to study often shown by British students. However, one might speculate that, given their

maturity and the financial sacrifices involved in their education, most postgraduates tend to be more focused than undergraduates. This certainly appeared to be the case in this research, as students were universally hard-working, irrespective of cultural background, though the challenge of a foreign language and an alien academic culture combined to exhort them to study hard.

Fear of failure was preoccupying during the first term, with the importance of academic progress reflected in the following highly emotional reactions to assignment results:

Yeahhhhhhhh! I am on cloud 9! Oooooooooooooohhhh, that period was very tough but I feel so confident of myself as I did it all by myself. I am so so thankful!

Email, Indian student

I have not slept for two weeks, I dread telling my parents that I failed; this has changed my whole life! I feel useless, so low. Email, Thai student

The link between academic success and personal validation is revealed in these reactions of despair or hysterical relief, emotions that were only intensified by informants' awareness of how their family, friends and sponsor would react to news of their progress. Loss of face is a real fear, particularly for those from collectivist cultures where success or failure is a matter for the group as well as for the individual (Hofstede 1991), but students' reactions of tears or smiles were also manifestations of the desperate need to compensate the sacrifices involved in studying abroad with academic progress. Given that students' achievement in assignments fluctuated, it is easy to understand that their apprehension in the build-up to the release of marks was high, causing me to reflect on the exhausting emotional journey imposed by academic life.

That students started to adjust to the demands of the course was reflected in the evolution of journal entries: in October, 42 entries related to study stress were recorded in the field journal, in November there were 39 entries, in December 23 entries. Over time the volume of visits to my office and email contact lessened, as students' agitation decreased, confirming again the importance attached to the role of time in the adjustment process. By the second interview, students had for the most part grasped what the academic task involved; they had learned what was involved in essay-writing, referencing and secondary research, for example, and they had acquired some familiarity with academic vocabulary. Some informants used words such as *fine*, *confident*, and *positive* to describe their mood, but most described the taught part of the course as *tiring*, *hard*, and *stressful*, and the end of this stage of the sojourn was met with some relief:

I have been released from prison.

Olga

I see the finish line. It's just there.

Paranee

I was so desperate, so tired. I feel headache, I don't want to study anymore.

Kiana

The character-building aspect of hardship was clearly not enjoyed by all; however, though growing familiarity with academic requirements did not lead to a universal decrease in stress, there was a decline in the panic experienced by students and the consequent desperate need for support.

The finding that learning shock is most severe at the start of the academic sojourn carries implications for the institutional timing of academic and pastoral support, which has to be carefully considered if student distress is to be alleviated. Reflecting on the high level of stress universally experienced in the first term, which is echoed in other studies of

international students (e.g. Blue 1993; Okorochoa 1996a,b; Ballard and Clanchy 1997; Thorstensson 2001; I-Barometer 2006), I conclude that without access to academic support, students' stress level would have been even higher. A comparison between the high failure rate among international students in other schools in the university, which do not offer dedicated support, and the high ratio of graduating students (usually 95%) who do have access to support lends weight to the call for academic support, which is positively linked by Durkin and Main (2002) with improved student progression.

As I was and continue to be part of the social world I have studied, it is important to record and reflect how student distress impacts on me. Frustration over the tension between the support students sought out and the time I had available to meet their needs in the first term describes my response to student demands, a feeling recognisable to all staff dealing with international students (Macrae 1997; Ryan and Carroll 2005; Leask 2007). The extra hours and effort I dedicate to student care derive from a sense of responsibility to students who have made a huge journey, geographically, culturally and usually emotionally. This commitment is only likely to increase given the insight I have further developed from undertaking this research: I have discovered a stronger duty of care to international students, which is only complicated by my acknowledgement that my time and energy are limited. Nevertheless, I derive comfort from Charmaz' (1983) reflection that a few words of empathy and kindness from figures of perceived importance have a great impact on an individual's experience of their day: this is vindicated in students' gratitude for what often appears to be little input from me.

Taking responsibility for learning

At the beginning of the course, many students were shocked to discover that class contact time was as 'little' as 12 hours per week and that they had to undertake many more hours than

this of self-study in order to pass assignments and follow lectures. Student dismay was a function of their experience in the home country; it was not unusual to hear the comment that 30 hours weekly class contact time was the academic cultural norm:

Back in China we have class from Monday to Friday usually at least 6 hours a day!

Here it is so little, and we pay so much!

Chinese student

A perception of exploitation, of poor value for money, was widespread, and constituted a source of dissatisfaction that was pronounced in the early weeks, and which is echoed in other surveys of international student satisfaction (HEPI 2007; I-Barometer 2007). This begs questions of the pre-arrival literature sent out by university International Offices: is the issue of student/staff contact time omitted, and if so, does this imply an ethnocentric assumption of the universality of the western approach to knowledge accumulation?

Once shock subsided, students responded by dedicating most of their day to reading, with panic over deficient reading skills increasing their determination to study hard:

Reading in English so hard! I think I need to read twice or three times to get more understanding.

Xia

You have to depend on yourself, do a lot of reading; I have to depend on myself.

Ning

Indeed, independence was a word often used to refer to the learning situation; students inadvertently echoed the term used widely in Higher Education to distinguish a passive learning system from a student-centred approach which sees the student directing much of

their own learning (Kember and Gow 1990; Hofstede 1991; Todd 1997; Ryan 2005b). Such a distinction was quickly grasped, as students realised that the British lecturer would not offer all the subject-specific knowledge that they needed to progress. Reaction to this new method of learning was often disillusionment:

It is not so great here, we have to do everything! Korean student

However, there was also appreciation of the control they now had over their own education:

In Indonesia, I don't want to read because the teacher can explain it to me. But here I read, and the more you read, the more knowledge and information you got. I think this is very good for me. Rini

Affirmation of the approach to knowledge transmission that was intimately intertwined with western culture was offered by most interviewees. Application of the adjustment concept to the area of independent learning reveals that shock slowly diminished. Furthermore, evolution in attitudes towards the learning style associated with British HE was particularly detected during the dissertation stage of the course as many students acknowledged a sense of personal achievement that can be derived from self-study. This is shown in Xia's account of reward that derived from hardship:

It's been very hard but very profitable. It is very demanding because you have to read a lot, but I'm quite sure that the more you research, the more you see.

Initial irritation over limited lecturer-student contact time was mostly replaced by enjoyment of self-responsibility for learning: exposure to a student-centred system that is typical of the

western approach to education (Todd 1997) had forced students to adopt unfamiliar behaviour, thereby challenging their attitudes to knowledge acquisition. Displacement from a tutor-centred approach to learning pushed students into a position of self-reliance. This both burdened and stimulated them, simultaneously offering stress and personal growth, a paradox that appeared to be the hallmark of transition to a new culture. However, the evidence of marks frequently lost in assignments for limited secondary research tells a different story, of a reluctance or inability to make the transition from a culture of serving an apprenticeship under the master/teacher who directs learning (Cortazzi and Jin 1997) to one in which the student has autonomy. Hofstede (1991) claims that attitudinal change is effected through forced change in behaviour; however this study showed a much more ambiguous association between attitudes and behaviour.

Responsibility for their own learning meant that time management became a recurrent theme, especially for those students who were used to a more externally regulated academic life, in which their time was managed for them. The notion of *management* became synonymous with *independence*; in order to complete their learning tasks, students needed to exert self-control, which often constituted an internal battle:

I know I have to arrange my time. If I prepare from the start, it shouldn't be a problem, but I'm not good manager. I know that's my fault. I have to improve myself, this is my duty, but, oh! I look at the Europeans; they work hard but they still have time to play. I cannot believe it; I want to be like that, I want to work hard and enjoy life.

Rini

Cross-cultural differences in managing time were observable and noted by many students who conveyed feelings of envy and admiration from both sides of the cultural divide: respect for Asian industriousness was matched by envy of the European ability to juggle leisure and academic pursuits. The divergence in students' approach to academic and social life was

further reflected during the dissertation stage of the course, which marked the culmination of independent learning:

For dissertation you have to be organised. I have to be really serious, like every day, organised. I will probably work in the morning then go to the beach in the afternoon.

It's up to you to organise your time.

Natalia

It's hard work, you don't expect to read that much. It's really hard work. I just stopped everything and stayed in my room.

Panya

Natalia's approach to study reflects a delineation between social and work activities whereas Panya's course of action was to study until the job at hand was finished. Gudykunst's (1998) elaboration of Hall's (1976) theory of chronemics is relevant here: a distinction is made between two common time patterns - monochronic (M-time) and polychronic (P-time). This is helpful in understanding differences in students' approach to research. The 'work hard play hard' ethic detected in North European students reflects a compartmentalisation of time that is characteristic of individualist, M-time culture, which sees the separation of task-oriented and social time. The P-time approach that is indicative of collectivist culture shows a more fluid attitude towards time schedules; emphasis is placed on activities rather than on the clock itself. The contrast between the Asian dedication to study until the task was finished and the European switching between pleasure and work epitomises this distinction between the two cultures. The desire for pleasure as well as study among many SE Asian students did not manifest in the adoption of the European approach however, causing me again to stop and wonder at the immutability of long-held cultural traits.

Students' acceptance of self-managed learning is a happy outcome: the pressures on HEI to combine teaching activities with increased research outputs mean that a move to reduced

face-to-face contact is only likely to continue (MacLeod 2005). However, students' initial reaction of disappointment was a surprise to me; self-managed learning is a practice that is so ingrained in British academic cultural life that I had become blind to it: as Spradley (1979) observes, it often takes a cultural stranger to reveal to the cultural insider the hidden axioms of the host society. Carroll (2005b) advises lecturers to become more explicit in their dealings with international students, and indeed, exposure to students' initial experience of disappointment has led to practical applications in two areas:

- a) As Channell (1990), points out, students unused to working independently need to be eased into self-responsibility. The creation of a pre-arrival website for students on this course is intended to ease transition to a new academic culture: class contact time and secondary research are two areas addressed on this site.
- b) To facilitate adjustment to the norm of self-managed independent learning that is promoted by the western education system, a discussion of expectations of contact time is now incorporated in my academic orientation sessions during induction week, helping not only to diminish student stress, but also to limit negative comparisons with the education received at home.

An interesting question might be whether or not students re-entering education in the home country (as either student or teacher) would find it hard to return to a teacher-centred system. Would it be acceptable to introduce a new learning style into their home academic system? Given the interdependence between cultural values and education (Cortazzi and Jin 1997; Louie 2005), it is easy to imagine that this would be challenging indeed. Or might their conclusion be that the western system is not as student-centred as it claims to be, given the workload that is transposed from academic staff to the student?

Thinking critically

Critical analysis posed a major challenge for those students whose educational system differed from that which they confronted in the UK. The importance of critical thinking to British Higher Education has been well discussed (e.g. Skelton and Richards 1991; Cortazzi and Jin 1997; McLean and Ransom 2005), and was reflected for students in assignment title vocabulary, assessment criteria and the weighting of marks. Study support classes equipped students with understanding of what was involved in the critical approach to assignments, as Ning's definition shows:

I understand it means discussing different topics from different points of view. There is always some authors that are against something, and the others are pro. So there are always different opinions to the same matter, and I have to give my opinion too. I think this is exactly what makes the topic interesting.

Defining critical analysis did not imply application, however: there was widespread recognition that students' socialisation in a different academic culture had shaped their attitude to learning, making it difficult to challenge either the tutor or the literature, both of which were viewed as *expert*. Hofstede (1991) argues that self and cultural awareness derive from exposure to new cultural norms, which forces people to challenge hitherto accepted assumptions; however the style of learning in the home country was not so much challenged by students, as used to explain their difficulty in adapting to a new and conflicting approach:

When I was at university, you have to write what is in the book or what the professor says, and not really to argue too much, the teachers are influential in influence the students' thought. We just go to the class and take notes.

Xia

The above comments were made time and time again by students from South East Asia in particular, who made frequent use of the words *copy* and *recite* to describe how they acquired knowledge at home. Such terminology denotes a passive, teacher-centred education system that is common in countries that are high in power distance (Hofstede 1991), in which the challenge to authority is associated with censure and disapproval (Chan and Drover 1997). This would explain why difficulty in adapting to this difference in academic conventions was not confined to SE Asian students but was also experienced by other nationality students from countries high in power distance. It struck me that students were as destabilised by the call to reverse their mode of writing and thinking as I would be if I were forced through fear of failure to memorise and copy received information in their country: like many students from a low PDI country, I might struggle *not* to engage in intellectual debate with text and tutor (Hofstede 1991). Students were thus caught in a clash between two opposing cultural approaches to education, and academic difficulties arose from the need to negotiate the pull between what Ballard and Clanchy (1997) have termed ‘reverential reproduction’ and argumentation.

The internal conflict that the adoption of alien thinking patterns provoked was intensified by the connection between censure and critical thought: challenge to authority and dissent might not be easily tolerated at home, but they are encouraged in the UK. Conversely, copying might be accepted at home, but in the new culture, plagiarism is considered a punishable offence. It is interesting to note that plagiarism is increasingly a subject of academic interest (e.g. Carroll 2004; Schmitt 2005), although it must be noted that culturally divergent attitudes towards plagiarism between the receiving institution and the origin academic culture are not solely responsible for an increase in incidences of plagiarism. The confusing association with

censure would take time to unravel; emulating the critical approach would involve behavioural change that could meet inner resistance. Socialisation in reproductive learning led students to feel uncomfortable about subjecting lecturers and academic texts to critical scrutiny. Nevertheless, there was awareness that engaging in debate with the literature was a practice they needed to adopt; the realisation that this would take time provoked simultaneous feelings of impotence and panic over the possibility of failing assignments. Insight into the emotional response to confrontation with new educational practices supports the call made by Louie (2005) for academic orientation sessions on the western norm of critical analysis.

The impetus to learn the rules of the new educational system derived from a fear of failure, and did not imply a judgement that the western approach was superior. Indeed, many students, in particular those from South East Asia, preferred the authority of the tutor at home, equating equality of opinion in debate with a lack of expertise in the British system:

I am a little bit disappointed with the professors here; they don't know so much. On the other hand, I admire my teachers in China; I think 'wow, they're very intelligent!'

They know everything!

Ning

Disappointment in the lecturer's grasp of knowledge wasn't uncommon, suggesting that a fundamental shift in attitudes was not widely enjoyed, despite Hofstede's (1991) claim for the transformative power of behavioural habits. As Hofstede (1991) explains, students from a tutor-centred, passive educational system expect and want their lecturers to be experts in their field, to be the source of their learning. In the Asian culture, learning takes the form of an apprenticeship, involving years of tutelage and memorisation (Cortazzi and Jin 1997).

Hofstede (1991) attributes this approach to a high score in uncertainty avoidance: students from strong UA cultures are socialised to look for certainty in education and expect their teachers to have all the answers; exposure to an opposing system that promotes an egalitarian

approach to knowledge acquisition clearly had the effect of sometimes confirming a preference for old habits: this shows that attitudinal change is not the only outcome of cross-cultural contact. One might then question the purpose of gaining a British qualification: is it simply to further employment at home? Is the acquisition of such transferable skills as problem-solving and critical thought that are increasingly sought by international companies (Westwood and Barker 1999) not one of the goals of the sojourn, or is their acquisition more problematic than writers on international education might imagine?

Chan and Drover (1997) and Ward et al. (2001) argue that for academic success in a new educational environment, the assimilation of new educational practices is the only viable adjustment strategy. However, the skill of critical thinking that is so ingrained in British academic culture was one that many students struggled to acquire, resulting in a loss of marks under the criteria of critical evaluation and problem-solving right up to and including the dissertation stage (as commented on by both staff and students). This study shows that the cultural norm of argumentation that is common to British HE was not assimilated by many students: the important role played by time in the process of adjustment was not widely reflected in this domain. As it is unlikely that marking criteria will be changed to accommodate the internationalisation of British HE, the onus will continue to be placed on the student to adapt to the new situation, though the cultivation in lecturers of a non-ethnocentric awareness of differences in academic cultures should help to ease the adjustment journey. This study suggests that the empathetic attitude that is advocated by all writers on the academic sojourn (e.g. Louie 2005; McLean and Ransom 2005) is not widely displayed by lecturing staff; instead irritation over the general tendency among students towards a lack of debate was prevalent. This indicates an important area of future research, that of staff awareness of the academic cultural gap that so often divides staff and students.

Finding the courage to debate

Contribution to class discussion was understood to be an important part of British education, a facet of academic life for which students were prepared by pre-arrival literature. Nevertheless, there was an observable pattern of non-participation among a significant section of the cohort that was commented on by *all* students from interview 2 onwards:

I think most of the Asians don't participate. I'm not contributing so much! I mean, I never ask, just listen. I think most of us, I mean, Asian never speak! We Asian never speak.

Rini

The ones who participate the least are from Asia.

Cecilia

Thai students participate least. The Asians almost never. There is probably a case but really rare. So I would say Asian people, really the least.

Natalia

This emic observation of non-participation among Asian students was unanimous, and was further confirmed in observation of my own classes and in other lecturers' comments on their sessions. Fetterman (1998) argues that ethnographers should document the meaning attached by informants to behaviour: in this instance, the global term 'culture' was cited as the main reason for a lack of contribution to discussion by all students:

Some nationalities like Chinese or Thai are a bit shy, and I think it is their culture.

They are very knowledgeable people, but they never participate because they are a bit shy.

Mohamed

I think Asians are very quiet as a rule, quieter, more reserved and shy: 'Oh no, don't make me speak!'

Antonio

The words *shy* and *quiet* were repeatedly used to denote a cultural trait of passivity in a group setting; the inference was clear that students would find it hard to fight their cultural programming. Differences in the cultural dimensions of masculinity/femininity and collectivism/individualism can be used to explain this 'shyness'. Members of feminine cultures are motivated by a desire to blend in whereas those from masculine cultures such as the UK or the US will try to make themselves visible in a class situation and will compete openly with each other (Hofstede 1991). This is because people in masculine cultures value assertiveness, ambition and competitiveness (Hofstede 2001), whereas in feminine cultures, people value nurturance and modesty (Gudykunst 1998), and assertive behaviour and attempts at excelling are ridiculed (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005). Furthermore, Ward et al. (2001) observe that those from a collectivist culture will be particularly hesitant if members of the out-group (in this study, other national groups) are present.

Non-participating students explained their behaviour by reference to prior socialisation in a different academic culture, an inhibiting influence that is widely acknowledged in the literature on participation in the international classroom (e.g. Okorochoa 1996b; Ballard and Clanchy 1997; Thorstenson 2001):

In my university, not often student participate.

Paranee

Since the age of six, I've been told to shut my mouth! It's hard for me to speak.

Chinese student

I feel like my mouth is glued together.

Burmese student

When we study in the university it's totally different, in Taiwan, even if the professor asks some question, they don't usually wait for the answer, they will tell you the answers.

Xia

Contrasting academic cultural norms were held responsible for students' behaviour being at odds with the new culture. Such behavioural dissonance is attributable to differences in the cultural dimension of power distance (as well as those mentioned above). Hofstede (1991) states that in a large PDI country, education is teacher-centred; students tend to listen to the teacher as expert and speak only if invited. Conversely, in a low PDI culture such as the UK, education is a student centred process; students' opinions are sought by lecturers who will frown on those who are reluctant to speak out. Students commented that they enjoyed the interactive classroom but they felt tongue-tied, creating an inner turmoil that was only increased by a detection of annoyance in lecturing staff.

The overall lack of participation in class by South East Asian students, who represent 60% of the typical international student cohort (UKCOSA 2006), had a significant impact on the quality and enjoyment of the academic experience: particularly in the first term, a passive, teacher-centred education system was recreated, leading to frustration and irritation on the part of students and lecturers alike. This is a picture commonly painted in the literature (De Vita 2001, 2002), and it conflicts with the hypothesised benefits of an internationalised classroom. By the end of the programme, regular contributors to class discussion concluded that all students should be forced to talk, regardless of cultural background:

More should be done to hear everyone to talk. Professors should embarrass these students. In most cases they would answer correctly, so it's not knowledge. They look a little bit shy but I don't think they would be terrified. They know this is how it is done here.

Natalia

An assimilationist approach to this aspect of academic culture was advocated, involving the adoption of host culture rules to govern the class room situation. This would mean that classes could not be dominated by the minority of students who were willing to speak in class but who were embarrassed and tired of so doing:

I got so irritated. I don't want to be seen as egotistical you know, so I sit there as well. I just sit there and think 'oh my god, everyone can answer that!' I don't know why they are so afraid of saying things! You think, 'oh my god, I know you've got such brilliant ideas.' Why don't you show this?

Antonio

I feel very uncomfortable about how much I speak compared to others: I am not a bully. I don't like this feeling.

Brigitte

Outnumbered by students who felt programmed to be quiet and unassertive in a group setting left participating class members feeling self-conscious and uncomfortable about their level of contribution: frustration and embarrassment were their reactions to their unsolicited domination of discussion. Is it possible that they also detected that the rest of the group felt intimidated by their presence, that self-deprecating comparisons were made between the groups? Fear of ridicule was indeed a deterrent to participation, reflecting the emotional struggle endured by students coming to terms with new rules of conduct in class:

We don't want to ask some question, because maybe it's the wrong question, and maybe the student will laugh at us.

Xia

I feel a lack of confidence over here; I don't feel like speaking as I feel others are better. Its funny and I don't know why it is happening, I never felt like this back home.

Indian student (near-native speaker status)

A feeling of incompetence became the companion of passivity in the face of more assertive students, particularly Europeans, whose contribution to discussion was equated with both intelligence and dominance:

They're very smart, very clever.

Kyoung

When she (Natalia) speaks there is no time for you. She just wants to talk. Kiana

The international classroom was revealed as a focus for conflict between attitudes and behaviour, with students resenting, but not articulating, the divergent approaches adopted by their class mates. This study is unusual in its depiction of intra-cohort tension, which is explained by Cortazzi and Jin (1997) by reference to the dimension of individualism and collectivism: students from individualist cultures are seen as ill-mannered, whilst those same students will see the quietness of students from a different academic tradition as lacking in opinion and imagination.

This study shows that both staff and students find the cross-cultural seminar unsettling; from the lecturer's perspective, the experience of the international classroom was described by limited interactivity and grateful relief towards the handful of willing participants who broke up the monotony of a mostly passive class. As Ryan (2005c) points out, it is common for academic staff to feel gratitude towards the more vocal students in the international class room. Gudykunst's (1998) notion that a class of SE Asian students from the same cultural background might engage in debate without the presence of the more dominant individualist class members was not my experience; such classes were usually much quieter than a mixed

seminar. The impact of decreased participation in an Asian-dominated cohort was often demoralisation and fatigue in lecturers, one of whom described the experience of teaching such a class as *like pulling teeth*, revealing a conflict between the desire among British lecturers for discussion and disagreement and the focus in non-western groups on group consensus and harmony (King and Sorention 1983; Cortazzi and Jin 1997). Calls by members of academic staff to address this tension by reducing the recruitment of SE Asian students reflect the difficulty in managing the international classroom; Chinese students represent the largest and fastest segment of the international student market (UKCOSA 2006), however, and it is unlikely however that such calls will be heeded.

Ward (2001) states that too few studies deviate from the caricature of the non-participating Asian student, failing to acknowledge progress in participation rates. My study fills a gap in that it documents the evolution in students' engagement in class discussion, though it must be pointed out that depending on cultural origin, students themselves varied in their judgement as to whether or not adjustment in participation level had taken place. Many Asian students observed improved participation in themselves and others as the class size decreased in the second semester:

I think I improve a lot, we all did.

Xia

It is compulsory to speak in a smaller group; I feel that I was forced to.

Ning

On the other hand, Natalia felt that *not much had changed, to be honest*. However, it could be that Natalia was so unaware of the enormous linguistic and cultural challenge faced by most students that she did not grasp the effort involved in even the smallest external change in behaviour. Indeed, observation of my own classes conflicts with Natalia's judgement, as changes were charted in contribution by the majority of students (see appendix 3). Over time, students grew more confident, but this was a painstakingly slow process, as discomfort was

manifested for many weeks in nervousness, quiet and sometimes inaudible contributions, avoidance of eye contact and blushing. It might be expected that participation would improve in the setting of small study support classes, which contrasted the lecture format, the main delivery pattern in the first semester. Nevertheless this pattern of progress in participation was echoed in similar observations made by other lecturers, as well as by students themselves. By charting their progress in the area of classroom debate, I noted that Asian students are not static in terms of their behaviour. Speaking in front of a group was a source of exposure and tension, but it was shown that students can adjust their behaviour, albeit slowly: time appears to be the contributory factor in students' adjustment, vindicating again the importance widely attached to this variable in the adjustment process.

Overcoming the power distance

Relationships with tutors was an area of some dis-ease in the initial few months of the sojourn, as many non-western students found it hard to shake off the level of formality and deference that typified their dealings with academic staff at home. An initial source of surprise was their discovery of the practise of using first names with tutors:

You don't really call the professors by name in Slovenia. Here, the interaction is less formal. For me it's unusual, I still have to get used to it.

Natalia

How can I use his name, treat him as an equal? He is a god to me. In Iran, we have to say 'Professor and family'. He will kill you if not.

Kiana

A fear of transgressing appropriate boundaries was common among those socialised in a different relationship with authority, and though the allusion to death appears exaggerated, for those from highly autocratic countries, fear of retribution was a realistic reaction to

inobservance of authority. Kiana's feelings of guilt and anxiety when using first names was typical of most students, many of whom found a medium ground in using a mixture of a title and first name (Professor John) in their care not to cause offence, as the following note reveals (names have been changed):

Teacher, I'm sorry I missed the class, teacher Linda. I'm sorry I won't miss the class again.

Thai student, Oct 13

Though there was a clear understanding that hard to change culturally ingrained habits were responsible for their apprehension, it took months to lose the sense that they were behaving inappropriately when using first names with tutors. This was a common theme of this research: understanding that cultural programming lay at the root of their behaviour did not necessarily imply a desire or ability to change. The clash between spontaneous reactions to authority and the realisation that new modes of address were not only permitted but demanded was enduring:

I strongly believe my Asian culture influences my reaction. I am not comfortable to use first names with those that are older as I do not wish to be considered as a disrespectful individual.

Indonesian student

Something that you were used to for several years, you cannot just use first names, even if someone says to you, you still feel certain distance.

Natalia

The term distance is apt: Cortazzi and Jin (1997) use the cultural dimension of power distance to explain differences in terms of address, as those from a country high in PD are unused to an

egalitarian, horizontal relationship with their tutor: they may be afraid of censure and of causing a loss of face to those in authority if a respectful stance is not adopted (Podhisita 1998). According to Hofstede (1991), face describes the proper relationship with one's social environment, attention to which varies as a function of the amount of equality and distance in relationships. Scollon and Scollon (1995) explain that cultural variations in the expression of hierarchy and power often lead to cross-cultural communication difficulty. While the westerner tends to prefer symmetrical solidarity, expecting both parties to use involvement strategies of politeness, including giving first names, non-westerners tend towards symmetrical deference, which involves independence strategies of politeness and the use of formal names and titles. British lecturers who adopt the face system of symmetrical solidarity can create cultural tension in those who are oriented toward a hierarchical face system (ibid): for students in this research, moving from deference to solidarity involved the use of unfamiliar vocabulary as well as confrontation with disquietude.

Forms of address are also bound up with gender and power for students from a country with differing rules of conduct between men and women, as Kiana found; addressing a male lecturer in informal terms, given the prohibition of contact between men and women in Iran (see Mahdi 2000), was unsettling not just because it was different but because it was dangerous at home:

In Iran the restriction about the religion is really high in university. Some people with very very hiding place check every time during the lecture, in the garden, in the library. Even you say one word, you have to go in security rooms, and you have to explain. Even if I said hello with smile to one of the lecturers, if he's a man, I can't do that. I can't speak with the man in the university.

Fear of punishment was lingering, constituting a powerful inhibiting force in cross-gender communication: for many months, Kiana avoided such contact, even though she realised that her response was irrational in the new context of England.

Linked with a common reluctance to adopt the horizontal approach to staff was a widespread nervousness over approaching tutors outside class time, which took some time to abate: the assertive approach typical of home students (Channel 1990) was largely absent. My own reaction to students' reticence was to adopt a maternal attitude, in an endeavour to get them to feel relaxed and secure: given the association in Eastern culture between teachers and parents (Cortazzi and Jin 1997), this meant that it was I, not they, who adapted my behaviour in the cross-cultural setting. This raises another area of research for scholars of the internationalisation of HE: the extent to which academic staff are changed by the presence of international students.

During the dissertation stage of the course, this reluctance to 'bother' academic staff extended to the relationship with supervisors who were criticised for offering insufficient tutorial time and academic guidance. These were unofficial complaints; the culture of litigation referred to among those working with home students (Olliffe and Stuhmcke 2007) is virtually non-existent in the international student setting. Hofstede (1991) states that reluctance to voice criticism is common in countries high in power distance, where fear of causing a loss of face to those being criticised or fear of retribution might make it hard to challenge those in authority. Meanwhile, supervisors frequently described their student as too passive, in need of too much direction, a common complaint voiced by supervisors of Asian students, according to a study conducted by Hall and O'Connell (2006). This clash in perception points to the challenges involved in supervising a student who may have academic, linguistic and cultural difficulties. Ryan (2005b) and Carroll (2005b) point to possible difficulties in the international student-supervisor relationship, and Gu (2005) calls for British supervisors to

cultivate awareness of and prepare for differences in learning so that misunderstandings can be minimised; however the widespread criticism of a lack of imagination in international students suggests that this relativistic approach to is not generally present.

My first reactions to the hierarchical approach commonly adopted by international students were surprise and awkwardness: I felt uncomfortable in the face of both deference and nervousness, even though I understood the cultural differences governing their approach to the staff-student relationship. Conversely, I was equally if not more discomfited when a handful of students who, determined to assimilate the British horizontal approach to formal relationships, overstepped the student-staff boundary (calling me, for example, *my darling tutor*). It is clear that cross-cultural differences in the relationship with authority in the educational setting pose challenges for both staff and students. Interestingly though, as a lecturer used to working with international students for many years, I have to confess that it might be hard to readjust to the egalitarian approach typically adopted by home students. It is possible that I have become socialised into an educational culture that is in conflict with mainstream British education cultural norms; this begs the question, just how challenging is it for academic staff to return to the home academic culture, even if they have never left home?

The end of the academic journey

According to Leonard et al. (2002) and Morrison et al. (2005), little has been written about the academic achievement of international students and international postgraduates in particular: I hope this study goes some way to filling that gap, by charting the progress of a very mixed sample of students, who varied not only in terms of cultural background but also in language ability. Firstly, this study found no correlation between language ability and progression. The two (out of 150) students who failed the course were native and near-native speakers of English (UK and Malaysian). Though important, language was not the sole

determinant of success, a claim that is supported by Ward et al. (2001). Whilst language difficulties created stress and extra work for students, as long as this work was put in, they did not determine the final mark achieved.

Secondly, this study found no automatic correlation between academic culture and progression: those who achieved a distinction were from an academic cultural background that differed in many respects from the British: China, Brazil, Slovenia, and Indonesia (see Appendix 4). If sufficiently motivated, it would seem that students could remove the obstacles posed by prior socialisation and assimilate new cultural norms in the academic sphere. However, as previously noted, a student who omits to show critical thought or to conduct sufficient secondary research will be penalised, assimilation is therefore the only route to academic excellence.

That the major drive among international students is for academic success was reflected in informants' delight and relief as the course progressed that they had passed their assignments. To fail would be a disaster, but many students appeared largely unconcerned about their actual grade, and the following comments were typical:

Actually I don't worry about the mark much; to pass is ok. Paranee

The mark is not important as long as you pass. The competition is with yourself, and what is important is what you learn. I seldom compete with others, I only compete with myself, and I think if I do my best, I will be happy. Xia

I'm the sort of person who cares more about the process than the result. Ning

This attitude of equanimity can be explained by the influence of a country's value system on perception of achievement (de Vos 1968). Indeed, there is a tendency in collectivist cultures

to prize interpersonal relationships over achievement, whereas competitiveness and achievement drive tend to be more characteristic of individualist society (Triandis et al. 1988; Tafarodi and Smith 2001). This divergence is reflected in the pattern of complaints among western students over lower scores for group work due to inconsistent group member performance: such complaints were and are seldom received by Asian students. However, it is also possible that mature students (who make up most of the postgraduate student body) value personal and academic development equally. Academic success provided a sense of fulfilment and positive self-image and impacted on their personal and professional future, but the re-evaluation of life goals and priorities that had taken place was perceived to be an integral aspect of their year away from the home environment.

Summary

The academic task was a source of stress and fulfilment throughout the sojourn, promising a sense of achievement and self-actualisation or an overwhelming sense of failure. This study shows that international students face problems that relate to both their international and academic status: they experience cultural and linguistic difficulties associated with their foreignness and they suffer the stress associated with studying in Higher Education and in a foreign educational culture. This stress was manifested in self-reported physical and psychological illness. Academic cultural dissonance was a key determinant of students' inner feeling of competence and outer achievement of success: what runs throughout this chapter is the importance of cultural differences in the experience of difficulty. In particular, stress was created by differing positions on the continuum between low and high power distance and uncertainty avoidance: although all dimensions are important to the adjustment journey through academic life, these two dimensions were found to be most critical. The relationship between time and adjustment was observed; this study is unusual in its portrait of a gradual assimilation of new ways of studying and interacting in class. However, an association

between censure and dissent meant that many students resisted a change in their attitudes towards intellectual authority. Though different adjustment strategies can be used in different spheres of life in the new country, in the academic sphere, the assimilationist strategy is the only option open to international students if excellence is to be achieved and mediocrity or failure is to be avoided. It is often stated that international students bring the potential to effect change in both the content and process of education; Ryan (2005c) uses the phrase 'internationalised pedagogy' to refer to changes that staff should make in response to a changing student population. However, the present study shows that even when the student cohort is overwhelmingly international, academic cultural norms are not modified, and students' cultural background is rarely taken into account. By drawing attention to the stress inherent in adapting to a culturally different education system and documenting the tensions this causes inside the heterogeneous student group, this study indicates a need for the receiving institution to accommodate academic cultural diversity. Confronting the clash between the education system of the home world and the new academic culture might characterise the academic sojourn, but raising awareness among academic staff of academic cultural differences should ease students' emotional experience of change, and at worst, failure.

Chapter Six: Exposure to a New Food System

Introduction

It is accepted in the literature on food and eating behaviour that food habits are inseparable from the culture an individual inhabits, and vary from culture to culture (e.g. Finkelstein 1999; Gosden 1999; Civitello 2004). Consequently, some degree of food shock is inevitable upon moving to a culturally dissimilar country, and it should come as no surprise that difference would be preoccupying in this study. Ethnography reflects issues of importance to participants (Taylor 2002), and the centrality of food to most students is illustrated in the dedication of a whole chapter to this subject. Though the study of food is a major topic in anthropology, and one of the growth areas within academia (Ehrhardt 2006), a literature search shows that there has been very little empirical research on the role of food in the academic sojourn of international students. There is a growing body of research on food and migration, which has been used to understand eating patterns in this study, but most researchers on international education have chosen to focus on other aspects of the sojourn. This chapter marks a departure by alerting the reader to the importance of food tastes for international students, reflecting on the role of food in the adaptive living experience and illuminating the adjustment strategy adopted by students in the area of food choice: behavioural reactions included a segregationist regression to the origin culture, a multiculturalist willingness to embrace diversity in food habits and an assimilationist adoption of the local diet.

Tasting the difference

Local food tried by students in the first few weeks of the sojourn ranged from that provided in the host family to food bought from the university canteen, takeaway shops and local shops

and supermarkets. Cultural affinity and cognitive flexibility were important factors in adjustment as no problems in adapting to an English diet were reported by those who were either open to new culinary experiences or whose food culture was similar to that in the UK. However, for many students whose food preferences were distinct from the local population, stress was caused by exposure to a new food system. The universally accepted notion that the experience of difference lies at the heart of culture shock explains why dissonance between home and local food meant that SE Asian students in particular experienced food shock, and eating became a focus of intense emotion.

A strange sensory experience

It was commonly stated in Interview 1 that students were open to trying new food, to broadening their eating experience. This willingness to expand their food repertoire was soon put to the test by their confrontation with what was perceived to be bland and tasteless local food that stood in unpleasant contrast with the spiciness of home country food:

There is not strong taste to English food. I need spicy food. I mean it's not hot food but a lot of spice, more taste, more flavour than here. Here, there's not too much spice.

Rini

I like some taste, but the potato over here usually has no taste: that's very strange for me. And I like vegetables but the vegetables here are only boiled, no spice at all. Xia

Local food was widely deemed to be *tasteless*, *not spicy* and *boring*. Key in students' reaction was the experience of dissimilarity, reflected in the repetition of the adjective *strange* and of the adverb *here* to denote 'not home': the more dissimilar the home and host cuisine, the greater was students' aversion to local food. The condemnation of bland local food by an

overwhelming number of Asian students allowed me to conclude that dislike of local food was caused by cultural differences in taste preferences: this finding is confirmed in other studies of migration and food choices conducted by Zwingmann and Gunn (1983) and Smart et al. (2006), and vindicates the importance attached to cultural distance in theories of adjustment.

Not only did students manifest a negative reaction to their sensory experience but there was also a strong emotional reaction to eating unfamiliar food, as reflected in exclamatory speech and in the equation of adopting a local diet with grief and loss:

If I had to eat local food, I would be very sad because I cannot stand the food here, I cannot stand it!

Xia

Food could therefore influence mood, helping us to understand the widespread intolerance of local food among SE Asian students. Locher et al. (2005) explain that attachment to home food is predictable, as food holds the power to manipulate emotions. Deprivation of flavourings associated with home also seemed to represent a betrayal of national identity, as reflected in repeated references to national heritage when the topic of food arose:

I have to have chilli, everybody eats chilli in Malaysia. You're not a Malaysian if you don't eat chilli.

Panya

The attachment to seasoning peculiar to Malaysian cuisine symbolises a desire to maintain cultural identity as well as to improve sensory pleasure. Reflecting the influence of programming in their own culture's approach to flavouring food, students spent much money on importing seasoning (and other cooking ingredients): the drive for frugality was outweighed in this area of life in England by the need to recreate familiar and comforting objects associated with home. Here was a complicated relationship between taste, identity and

emotion that is well acknowledged by sociologists and anthropologists (Counihan and Esterik 1997; Ikeda 1999; Gosden 1999); this makes it all the more surprising that there is next to no literature on the impact of diet on international student well-being.

Controlling the body

A diet of local food was positively linked by many female Asian students with weight gain; the second interview revealed a common consensus that reverting to home country food had produced weight stabilisation:

I put weight on especially in those first six weeks, getting smaller now I cook by myself. I can't eat too much, it'll make me fatter. Paranee

Mindfulness of body size was a common theme and was often cited as the reason for not adopting a perceived fatty English diet:

I heard from my friends that it's very oil. I don't like! I don't like that everything is fried; I like well-cooked food, so I think I might cook for myself. Xia

Self-responsibility for ensuring physical well-being through healthy eating was important. However, for those who lived with a host family, there was little option but to eat what was offered; the emotional cost is revealed in Kyoung's reaction of frustrated tears to a diet she considered not only tasteless but also too high in carbohydrate and fat:

I have to have English food. It's one of the most terrible things I experience here!

(Crying) *Everyday they gave me potato, smashed potato, boiled potato, fried potato!
Everyday the menu is different but always we get potato, and they pour some horrible
sauce over it! So fat! So horrible!*

The extent of the food shock experienced by Kyoung is revealed in her exclamatory tone as well as in the frequent use of negative superlatives (*horrible, awful, terrible*); this was compounded by the inescapability of her situation. Her English host family was not to know that their effort to introduce Kyoung to traditional English cuisine would meet such an extreme emotional reaction that would not lessen until she moved into self-catering accommodation in January 2004. Only then could she take control of what she put into her body. Ironically, according to Marshall (2000), ‘proper meals’ that consist of meat, potatoes, vegetables and gravy are disappearing from English life, increasingly replaced by processed food and/or international cuisine: as such Kyoung’s experience was perhaps atypical.

Nearly all of the interviewees commented disparagingly on the high fat, sugar and carbohydrate content of the English diet. Monneuse et al. (1997) and Atkins and Bowler (2001) state that preoccupation with health and body image is common among women in the West; it appears that this preoccupation was mirrored in this study’s international student body following their exposure to a westernised diet. *Western food* (an emic term) was viewed with some trepidation; this was an unfamiliar and unnerving development in students’ relationship with food. Moreover, recent scientific studies of the health status of immigrants conducted by Saleh et al. (2002), Kedia (2004), Burns (2004) and Himmelgreen et al. (2005) appear to justify students’ anxiety as a deterioration in health (including a higher incidence of obesity and diabetes) is associated with an increased consumption of western food in the new country.

Concern for their own health was matched by a negative judgement that English people had

lost the art of self-control:

They eat too much fat. I think that's why it will make people to get weight. I don't know why they do that. They don't say no! Xia

Eastern people care for health but western people don't. If we eat hamburger we have one cheese, but here people like to order double. They don't care.

Chinese student

A perception of over-consumption in England (usually generalised by students to the UK or the West) was commonplace, reflecting Gronow's (1997) conceptualisation of the modern, westerner as a self-indulgent hedonist. In contrast, self-deprivation of fattening and luxury foods such as chocolate and cakes after only a few months of living in England became a common theme, with students using self-denying phrases like *I daren't* or *I can't*. I found that my data reflected a tension that Schlosser (2002) says is widespread in contemporary western society between individual responsibility and environmental supply, between consumer freedom of choice and awareness of the dangers of overeating: students found themselves in an uncomfortable situation of ongoing resistance of temptation.

Spradley (1979) suggests that ethnography offers a revealing mirror on the host society; in this instance, it projected a disconcerting image of an indulgent, unhealthy population.

Moreover, there was a recognisable truth in informants' observations: there is a high incidence of diet-related deaths in affluent industrialised countries (Atkins and Bowler 2001), which is only likely to rise given that obesity is on the increase in the UK (Logue 2004; Edwards et al. 2005). The emic judgement that the British make unhealthy diet-related choices suggests agreement with the argument put forward by Lang and Gabriel (1995) that consumers are not victims, that they should assume responsibility for their own well-being.

A fear of contamination

The second interview revealed some concern about the quality of fresh food in England compared to the home country, with reference to fruit, vegetables and meat. The terms *artificial*, *tasteless*, *not fresh* and *plastic* were used often to describe an unfamiliar taste that students attributed to factory farming and the use of pesticides. Blythman (2003) states that most people in the UK shop in supermarkets for reasons of cost and access; she argues that this has implications for the quality and taste of fresh produce. This is relevant to this research as most students also bought the cheapest food available: awareness that they had no control over the food supply inferred a resigned deferral of gratification: the pleasure derived from eating superior quality food would be restored only upon the return home.

More worrying than taste was the threat posed by chemical contamination to physical health. Olga was the most outspoken in her condemnation of the quality of the fruit and vegetables available in England, which she repeatedly described as *not real*, with particular reference to their uniformity:

Here I can't find good vegetables and fruits because all of them are specially treated, not really real. Umm, you know the apples are all the same size, the bananas are the same size, potatoes are the same size, especially selected, especially made, not really really real. It was growing specially selected. We have real food; we have good vegetables, not like here.

As Smart et al. (2006) point out, there are cultural and geographical variations in food supply, therefore it should not be surprising that Olga would be suspicious of and apprehensive about fruit and vegetables that all looked the same, clashing with her experience in Russia. Beer (2001) attributes such uniformity to the dominance of supermarkets over the food industry

and their strict imposition of standardisation of size, colour and shape. While farmers' markets offer a counterpoint, providing locally produced and often non-standardised food, Oliver (2006) observes that they are not a traditional part of day-to day life in England; as such they are not generally accessible to international students. Eating food she did not trust was therefore unavoidable, creating dissatisfaction and alienation from a significant part of her life that she could not control. Giddens (1991) claims that alienation commonly results from a perception of powerlessness, which my findings support in respect of food choice: until control of diet was restored, life satisfaction was significantly impaired.

Distrust of fresh food was increased by perceptions of differences in the perishability of fresh produce between the home and the new country:

Here bananas can be fresh during two weeks out of fridge, I think it's not real! I left a banana on a plate on a shelf and it's still good! I left it there two weeks ago; it couldn't be really real! In Russia, if I left a banana like that it would become not fresh on a few dates!

Olga

Suspicion over food safety was unsettling. However, further investigation shows that there are many reasons for this disconcerting discrepancy between the decay of fruit bought in Russia and England: one may be that the supply chain used by UK supermarkets is quicker (fruit arrives more quickly and has longer to ripen); bananas are shipped to the UK in a protected atmosphere to arrest decay Russia may use different banana suppliers which provide a different strain of banana (Friends of the Earth 2004). Unaware of such food industry practices, Olga was left with an intense fear that physical harm may be caused by exposure to chemical additives. One might wonder whether or not Olga was aware of health concerns over soil and water contamination in Russia deriving from intensive cotton farming (Calder 1995). However, as Hofstede (1991) points out, insight into a new culture's practices is commonly sharper among newcomers than in those who are embedded in the culture, and it

was understandable that students would be quicker to note objects of disquiet in the new unfamiliar culture than at home.

I was struck by the way students' distrust of some foods echoed a generalised lack of public confidence in food safety, which is a subject of much debate in the contemporary food literature. Atkins and Bowler (2001) for example point to scientific evidence of poisoning through over-exposure to chemically treated food, lending some credence to students' concerns. Townsend and Asthana (2004) attribute an increased consumption of organic⁷ food in the UK to anxiety over food safety and a perception that organic food has healthful properties. However, the cost of such food is prohibitive to international students on a tight budget, therefore dissatisfaction and enduring suspicion marred their enjoyment of eating food they could not avoid:

I have to eat vegetables, but I will eat it with sadness, because the taste is not really real. I will continue to eat because I have no choice, but I will eat without pleasure.

Olga

Feeling trapped resulted in a reduced quality of life: as Tester (1999) argues, it is beside the point whether or not risks associated with certain foods are real or not, what matters is that the perception of danger has a profound impact on people's sense of ease, as shown in Olga's dissatisfaction with the compulsion to eat food she not only disliked on grounds of taste but whose health implications she feared. There is a parallel to be made with the poorer segments of the British population who may not have the financial means to access healthy food, for whom doctored food has both physical and symbolic properties, representing a possible negative impact on health as well as distance from control over important life issues.

⁷ There is debate over the term organic, but it is defined by Beer (2001) as a natural farming method which aims to produce healthy wholesome food without resorting to agrichemicals, with implications for healthier and tastier food.

In summary, distaste and distrust distinguished students' reactions to local food which was criticised for being fattening, bland and chemically treated. It must be observed, however, that access to local food was mainly obtained through the university canteen and local takeaways, which were a source of high dissatisfaction in the recent survey of international students by I-Barometer (2006). Students enjoyed very little contact with the local population, the best source of knowledge about the host culture (Ward 2001). If they had benefited from such interaction, they might have drawn different conclusions about the type of food eaten by local people, though it is likely that variations in food habits and tastes would still have been noted, given the established link between food and culture. Furthermore, many researchers including Meiselman et al. (2000), endorse the link students made between a decline in health and an increased consumption of western food, which might still have been made even if their daily regime had been more authentic.

Recreating a taste of home

A pattern of consumption of home country food was noted among all South East Asian students in this research. This suggests a segregation approach to food choice, which is characterised in models of adjustment strategy by the maintenance of ethnic identity (Berry 1994; Piontkowski et al. 2000; Ward et al. 2001). Describing her three-month experience of English host family food as *a very bad horrible experience*, the juxtaposing relief of resuming a Korean diet was the highlight for Kyoung of moving into her new flat. This relief was shared by Paranee, who moved in with fellow Asian students after just six weeks of life with a host family, for the sole reason of improving her diet:

I wanted to eat Thai noodles or something Asian like rice and oyster sauce and veggies. I thought, oh! I'm not going to die because of English food!

Restitution of home food signalled release from intolerable living conditions. Such strength of feeling explains why students who did not live with a host family took the decision to cook their own national cuisine usually within days of arrival in September, a decision that was explained in emotive language:

I am happy, I find I can buy rice here, buy noodles.⁸ I cook quite simple, rice and vegetable, that's it. I'm glad I can do this still.

Ning

I cannot eat local food!! I love cooking and eating Chinese food. I like the special taste of Chinese food. It is a familiar thing I do in Taiwan and it made me feel familiar with my home town, and made me feel more comfortable.

Xia

These comments reflect that consuming familiar food was about more than taste, as some emotional sustenance was also derived from eating home country food. The word *comfort* was frequently used to describe the act of eating national dishes, which was often credited with the alleviation of stress and loneliness. Locher et al. (2005) explain that food can become a nostalgic object for the sojourner, carrying the power to manipulate emotional states and feelings. Thus a jar of pomegranate paste bought from a local Iranian food shop could transport Kiana to the cosiness of home during a period of intense loneliness:

She said she doesn't really miss Iranian food, but when she saw this she was comforted; she said it smells like home, and it had made her feel happy. If her husband comes to live here, she won't miss these things so much.

Field notes

Students commonly imbued certain foods with the power to alleviate homesickness, echoing the link made by Garza-Guerro (1974) and Locher et al. (2005) between food as a 'love

⁸ The high proportion of university and language school students from SE Asia is reflected in the growing proliferation of Asian food shops.

object' associated with home and a reduction in feelings of grief for home and significant others. In addition, the consumption of home food helped to compensate for the unavoidable stressors in the sojourn such as language difficulties and academic pressures. This would explain why, despite pressures on time, *all* of the South East Asian interviewees dedicated sometimes up to two hours per day to cooking home-cooked food. For the younger students, who had to learn to cook for the first time in their life, the desire to eat home food sparked a cultivation of independence that both challenged and frustrated them: as was found in research into domestic students' eating habits by Edwards and Meiselman (2003), a lack of cooking experience is common among younger students. Recognition of the importance of food to emotional well-being was reflected in the establishment of a Korean support group, to which Kyoung belonged, that took in turns cooking for newly-arrived Korean students: the aim was to ease their adjustment to life in England by removing the extrinsic environmental stressor that local food can represent.

An association between health and diet that was prevalent among South East Asian students was also cited as the motivation for adopting an original culture diet. The medicinal use of food and drink (to aid digestion, to alleviate stress, to clear a headache and to ease period pains) was noticeable, as Xia's reference to food and drink reveals:

In soup I cooked today, I put some dates. For woman, it's better for skin and you can have more comfortable during the periods. And this drink here (pointing to a flask), it's a kind of Chinese herbs to keep your health, you can just drink like tea. I drink this for years. It will make you feel clear and healthier. I cannot find those things here, so I brought them.

SE Asian students were attached to the reassuring belief that people can influence their own health through nutrition; not only did home food taste better, it also offered physical and emotional sustenance: this is a common inference in non-western cultures (Ikeda 1999).

Nevertheless, surprise and bafflement by their entrenched food preferences were common; for those who considered themselves culturally flexible, discovery of their dependence was shocking:

Most of my flatmates are Asian, so we eat a lot of rice. I have to have rice - what can I do? I don't know why, I just can't live without that!

Rini

I had to go without Chinese food for 10 days, and I got upset, emotionally, all I could think about was rice! Me and my wife now cook separately from the English host family, we always cook Chinese. It is what we are used to.

Chinese student

Survival seemed dependent on access to the familiar, deprivation of which was a source of distress until relief was offered by its reinstatement. The consumption of rice appeared to be intrinsic to emotional well-being; it was about more than nutritional value. Perhaps the loss of rice acted as a reminder of displacement: what became clear was that no SE Asian student in this study appeared willing to find out how quickly they could adjust to a diet without rice in it. As Hall (1959) notes, during transition, sojourners commonly realise the depths of their learned cultural habits, and face the choice as to whether or not to challenge various aspects of their behaviour. My attention was drawn to a theme of resistance to change despite an avowed aim to display openness. Henry and Wheeler (1980) define the acceptance of new food as a willingness to eat local food sometimes and to develop some preferences for some local foods over others: using this definition, we can conclude that SE Asian students in this research displayed a closed attitude to food diversity. Perhaps the tendency towards resistance to change that is common in cultures high in uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede 1991) explains this reticence. On the other hand, Warde (1997) claims that food is not as open to individualising tendencies as other consumption fields, as Meiselman et al. (1999) reflected in their observation that British university students' food habits remained stable during their

time away from home. Little wonder then that attachment to home food was SE Asian students' response to an encounter with culturally strange food.

The pleasure of communal eating

The social component of eating was highlighted in this study, and is a common focus of observation for anthropologists (Counihan and van Esterik 1997). Food played a central role in both the construction and maintenance of social relationships, particularly for South East Asian students who made frequent reference to communal eating. The daily preparation and cooking of food (in pairs or in small groups of four or five students from the same country or region) were accompanied by larger weekly parties of around twenty students. When talking about their social life, the most frequently mentioned activity by SE Asian students was communal eating, with the preparation of food being as important to interaction as its consumption; the following comment was typical:

We always cook, we always have Asian dishes or Thai food, we always have three kinds of dishes, and because we always share, we have lots of food. It is the best thing we do.

Paranee

Food was a vehicle for socialising, giving students a feeling of belonging and security as well as offering them the opportunity to eat the food they liked. As Simmel (1910) pointed out nearly a hundred years ago, eating is both a personal and a social act: the sensual pleasure of eating is subjectively experienced, but it is often undertaken in groups – and this is still so. This is particularly relevant to collectivist cultures, which put emphasis on shared experience and group interactions (Triandis et al. 1988): it is unlikely that students would distinguish eating from interaction. This was contrasted with the emic perception of distance in English family life, as commented on by a Vietnamese student staying with a host family:

Here, they do things separately. They have a table, but they don't sit at it, they sit and eat alone!

Bafflement over the English approach to mealtimes was common, as was vindication of the SE Asian link between togetherness and eating: not only was this a way of interacting that they were used to, but it offered comfort in an otherwise frequently unsettling environment. Interestingly, the perception that the family meal is not widely enjoyed in the UK carries contemporary significance; as Marshall (2000) notes, people are increasingly called upon to reinstate communal dining as a route to improving communication and emotional health. The tendency towards shared experience among SE Asian students in particular is thus set against increasing isolation in British society that carries implications for emotional and physical health (McKintosh and Kubena 1999).

Indeed, sitting alongside a pattern of social eating was a contrasting phenomenon of loneliness at mealtimes among those who were alone in terms of nationality. Envy of their Asian peers, whose group identity was clearly cemented through interaction around home food, was often expressed:

They are always together: they always eat together and they cook only Asian food.

Olga

Preparing intricate national dishes was time-consuming and if the effort was not compensated by companionship, it was usually abandoned by those who did not belong to a conational group. For Cecilia, for example, the association between food and interaction, between mealtimes and bonding with family, was a shocking and saddening realisation, precipitating a deterioration in her eating habits:

I'm not used to it. It's not easy to cook for yourself. Like sometimes I say 'I want to cook' and I end up not cooking. I eat but maybe a sandwich, something like that.

As Atkins and Bowler (2001) point out, there is a strong connection between women and the domestic preparation of food; outside the domestic context, eating represented the substitution of the familial role and personal significance with loneliness. For those informants, like Kyoung and Xia, who had left behind husband and children, mealtimes with conational friends were a source of solace, a reminder of home, but for Cecilia, they reinforced her isolation and provoked nostalgia for her place in her family and community in South Africa. The key difference lies in the friendship networks students enjoyed: both interaction strategy and opportunities were influential in the subjective experience of the sojourn.

Sustaining faith

Food was of much importance to the Muslim students on the course, acting as a focus for communal religious celebration. Though not all Muslim students adopted the segregationist approach to food that was noticeable among SE Asian students, it was at times of national and religious significance that home country food became a powerful symbol of both home and Islam, as well as a unifying force. During Ramadan (the Muslim annual period of fasting, which occurred in October/November 2003), Muslim students used mealtimes as a vehicle for consolidating religious identity, gathering every day at sunset to break their fast, and preparing specific dishes to recapture the sense of community and festival of home. Mohamed indicated the central role of food in the replication of celebratory events in Jordan, in tying students to the parent culture:

My mum she used to cook, you know, the typical Ramadan food, like you Christian

people at Christmas, you eat turkey. Here, you feel homesick, because in England, it's normal day. This is the first time I'm away from my parents. So I try to do the same with my friends.

Food was central to the maintenance of ritual, i.e. completing the Ramadan fast and celebrating Eid (a day of festivity that marks the end of the fast): the presence of specific food and Muslim friends were key ingredients. As noted by Counihan and Esterik (1997), the period of Ramadan and Eid is a rite of spectacle, involving an aesthetic display of food in large amounts, as well as a rite of unity that celebrates the togetherness of a group: as such students spoke of spending many hours preparing national dishes together. Food and companionship were also interrelated with an alleviation of homesickness during a time of national and religious festival, when, as Germov and Williams (1999) point out, extended families typically gather to share food and maintain kinship. This explains the frequent reference by Muslim students to the creation of a temporary *family* during this significant time.

The 'black sheep' of this family was Kiana, who used food as the vehicle through which to flaunt her lack of piety to the rest of the Muslim cohort. An avoidance strategy of consumption was reflected in the common choice to eat fish or imported halal meat for the duration of the sojourn: as Beardsworth and Keil (1997) state, Muslim students would rather not eat meat at all than risk eating meat that had not been prepared according to Islamic traditions. However, Kiana was keen *to make a distance* from Islam, which she negatively associated with poverty and tyranny in Iran. Firstly, she ate pork in front of her Muslim peers; next she abandoned her Ramadan fast. As Woodward (1997) notes, food is a medium through which people can make statements about themselves. By consuming pork, and by eating and drinking during Ramadan, Kiana was able to communicate both difference and distance:

I made her (a female Omani student) completely disappointed. She was thinking I'm really Muslim, I'm the same, and we are the same. She made me a very bad feeling. So ok, if you are thinking I'm the same as you, I don't want to have fast! The next day, I was trying to have my fast, then I saw her, I started eating to show her I am not the same. I am not like you!

Food therefore had the power to simultaneously communicate non-compliance and allegiance to Islam. This study shows that distance from the parent culture can have profound implications for personal behaviour: in the area of eating habits associated with faith, it can mean that sojourners find themselves in a position to challenge the practise of long-held traditions, particularly if they perceive a negative association between collective rituals and socio-political conditions.

Embracing diversity

The multicultural strategy towards adjustment is defined by Berry (1994) as the retention of one's own and the learning of several other cultures. This strategy was appropriate to diet as students had access to the diverse range of cuisines offered by their peers, as well as to local food. However, as intimated earlier, this approach was adopted by a minority of students, whose behaviour was influenced by many factors, including cultural similarity, as Cecilia explained:

There is nothing I can say is strange. For me, to eat English food, in the end, it is the same in South Africa. We eat greens, roast chicken or chicken curry or beef; we eat pasta, or cottage pie. There is nothing much different.

A small cultural distance between the England and South Africa, at least in the food domain,

accounts for Cecilia's feeling of ease, the implicit assumption being that relocation to an unfamiliar culture would be more difficult. Familiarity with English food meant that Cecilia showed a high acceptance of local food, though a lack of sociability around meal times and a shift in roles spoiled her enjoyment of eating and dictated her meal choices.

The motivation to experience something new and previous experience were attributed by other students, including Antonio, Brigitte and Mohamed, to their willingness to try different national foods: these are both universally cited as important variables in successful adjustment. The chance to try out different national dishes was afforded through sharing meals prepared by flatmates of various nationalities, and by attending food parties to which students brought national dishes that they wanted others to sample, as Antonio's comment shows:

In my flat most of them are Asians, and they cook beautiful food. I've never eaten so much, it's beautiful!

Pride in national cuisine was common, and contrasts the resentment of the Iranian immigrant in Anne Tyler's novel, *Digging to America* (2006), who is hostile to pressure from the American host community to put on 'ethnic demonstrations of food'. Instead, food was often used to communicate affection or gratitude by the many informants who brought home made snacks and traditional sweets to my office: the challenge was to avoid rejecting this important aspect of their culture by manifesting any distaste. As Beardsworth and Keil (1997) state, the acceptance of food gifts can show a willingness to establish or strengthen a bond. The central role occupied by food in communicating culture that I learned to appreciate during the course of this study is now reflected in my own use of traditional English snacks during induction week to welcome students to England, and to invite them to be open, right from the beginning, to different foods. This activity carries symbolic power: the often hesitant act of

eating unfamiliar food might carry an ongoing influence on students' openness to new experiences.

This study found that the example set by members of conational friendship groups cannot be underestimated in the cross-cultural setting. Whilst Mohamed regularly cooked Arab food, he saw it as '*my duty*' to try out other dishes, in his aim to learn about other cultures, and to insist on openness in his Arab friends, whom he described as rigid in their mononational food habits. In this and other aspects of life, Mohamed embodied the intercultural mediator in Bochner's (1981) model of culture contact, who is described as a facilitator of cultural learning and tolerance in others:

I do shopping, I buy lots of different food, and I try to suggest to them, 'please this one you can cook this way, you make the sauce with this', to teach them about this.

Synthesising his own and other food cultures meant that Mohamed became an example to his Arab friends of how the sojourner can embrace diversity without renouncing the origin culture.

Conversely, embracing new cuisine may not always reflect openness to new cultural habits, as much as withdrawal from the origin culture. As previously indicated, food can be used to communicate difference and to create 'a personalised identity', a term used by Harris-Shapiro (2006) to refer to deliberate distinction from the dominating group. For Kiana, Iranian food was a symbol negatively associated with Islamic rule in Iran, from which she was keen to wean herself:

I don't care if I never eat my food again! If she (her 6-year old daughter) doesn't want, I'm not going to cook. I never mind, I don't care if she said 'I don't want

Iranian food'. If she said 'I'm not Iranian', its better. I don't like my nationality.

Whatever she wants to do she's free. If she wants fish fingers every day, that's fine.

This declaration about freedom of choice refers not just to food but to the ability to control her own future; by welcoming her daughter's preference for what she defined as *English food* (including burgers, oven chips, fish fingers and pizza), Kiana shows that the symbolic power attached to Iranian food outweighed the health concerns she might justifiably have about processed food (Atkins and Bowler 2001). Consumption of food was shown to be highly meaningful: this is reflected in Warde's (1997) comment that when people eat, they are consuming not just nutrients but also meanings and symbols. Iranian food was rejected by Kiana because of its association with a disliked government and religious culture; by eating English food, one could reflect that Kiana declared her non-allegiance to the Iranian government and signalled her desire to be a part of British society. Conversely, by eating a variety of national dishes, students could convey the tolerance and openness that are central to the success of cultural pluralism in both the academic and wider community.

Summary

This chapter has shown how the challenge posed by living in a new culture to traditional eating habits and practices met fierce resistance; the multicultural approach to diet was adopted by a minority of students, whose behaviour was influenced by circumstance, cultural similarity and motivation. The centrality of food to self-definition and to emotional and physical well-being is revealed in the observation that eating habits were challenged by fewer students than any other feature of life in the new country. The segregation strategy was more widespread, reflected in the mononational eating plan followed by South East Asian students upon whom the decisive influence was cultural dissimilarity. However, it would be misleading to conclude that home food was consumed just because of taste differences, as it

was clear that food was also a comforting symbol of home and a means of bringing people together, of consolidating and celebrating an identity that was diluted in a mixed-nationality setting. The strength of students' attachment to home country food is revealing of the complicated symbolic and sensory properties of food, of the relationship between eating and ethnicity.

Smart et al. (2006) describe the tendency among anthropologists to present eating as a rite of passage as recognition of the role of food in intercultural exchange. Given the widespread avoidance of local and other national cuisines, it is fair to conclude that most informants failed to rise to this challenge and to embrace cultural diversity. However, Boski (1994) claims that attachment to national symbols such as cuisine is usually accepted in the new culture, as it does not interfere with the host society. The question then is whether it matters what sojourners eat during their stay, especially if it facilitates their happiness by alleviating other stressors. I would argue that eating habits *do* matter, given the proven link between interaction and food. Consuming home country food was shown to be a personal choice that had wider implications for cross-national contact; segregated eating involved interaction with same nationality members. Chapter Four showed that students were highly anxious about their language ability, and yet conational interaction has been shown to hinder linguistic progress. What the institution can do about this is unclear, and whether it can influence student behaviour in their private sphere is arguable. This study can at least help to start a debate on the role of food in the adjustment of international students, on which more dedicated research is needed.⁹

⁹ Research is underway at the newly established SOAS food research centre.

Chapter Seven: Combating loneliness

Introduction

Friendship was important to all informants in this study: from the very first interview, students spoke extensively of the friends they had made and the comfort they brought during times of stress and homesickness, while others spoke of their loneliness. Kiana commented in Interview 2, *having friends is the best thing when you are lonely*. This statement has universal truth, especially for international students who are usually displaced academically, culturally and linguistically. Ward et al. (2001) comment that given the importance of friendships, it is surprising that so little attention to social life has been paid by researchers: this chapter goes some way to filling this gap, as friendship emerged as a major theme in this research. In their typology of friendship, Bochner et al. (1977) and Dyal and Dyal (1981) found three categories: the host national friend, who acts as a cultural informant, the co-national who acts as a reference of values from the home culture and other nationality friends who act as a general social network. These categories were also found in this study but this delineation was extended by the emergence of the formation of two further friendship groups whose focus of interaction was collective religion and regional culture: all five categories are discussed in this chapter. My study shows that the interaction strategy adopted by students varied from multiculturalism to segregation and marginalisation, with each strategy carrying different implications for their adjustment to life in the new country. The category social interaction was therefore dominant in this study, influencing most other categories of research.

Finding unity in difference

In the first few weeks of term, the words *together* and *not alone* were recurrent, indicating the formation of a community of international postgraduates that offered belonging and shared identity. This is reflected in the following typical comment:

We are all international students together, all in the same situation. Xia

The unifying characteristics of this sub-culture of the heterogeneous university population derived from the challenging situation students found themselves in:

1. They were all away from home;
2. Most were struggling with language difficulties;
3. They were all studying in a foreign academic culture;
4. All were facing the pressure of an intensive assignment schedule.

Students were bound together through their sense of solidarity in shared hardship, as the following comments indicate:

It's easy to study together cos we are probably on the same level of English, a little bit lower than native speakers. It's better to stay with international. We can share our problems. Olga

We come all over the world, have different culture, speak different language, but now we are all in the same big classroom and it's hard for us all. Thai student

I would find it hard to be in a group of UK students, but here it's ok because everyone is new. Brigitte

Share, all, same, together, everyone: these recurring words testify to the comfort obtained from students' unity in difference from the host society, in their shared linguistic inferiority, their foreignness and their vulnerability. Sharing the identity of strangers in a foreign country can be understood as a need to find reassurance in sameness, given students' removal from the feeling of belonging usually obtained at home. Grouping together could offset the loneliness and disorientation that are inevitable outcomes of displacement (Ward et al. 2001), offering coherence and security in the face of uncertainty and change. A common 'postgraduate culture' was thus observed that enables students from different national cultures to bond, suggesting a multiplicity of identities, and causing me to challenge the notion that the multicultural context necessarily leads to cultural misunderstanding. This study suggests that the presence of a supportive international community helped to alleviate the distressing aspects of the initial stage:

It is hard, I cry everyday, but I know a lot of nice guys in my school, which make me feel happy to stay here. We have many different nationalities and we all feel the same.

Chinese student

The intense sadness that immersion in a new life world provoked was balanced by the comforting knowledge that distress was shared and understood. Thus, there was a positive link between friendship and coping ability that is widely supported by theoretical and empirical work that highlights the importance of companionship in helping sojourners to withstand acculturative stress (e.g. Hamburg and Adams 1967; Cobb 1976; Cohen and Hoberman 1983; Furnham and Erdman 1995; Wiseman 1997). This gave me pause to reflect on the lonely experience of those international students who find themselves on a course outnumbered by host nationals whose familiarity with their surroundings might not encourage empathy.

Embracing cultural diversity in friendship

Increasing intercultural competence was a theme of Interview 1: all interviewees commented positively on the informal education opportunity represented by the international make-up of the course to learn about cultures they had never met before and may never come across again. Brigitte's comment is indicative of an enthusiasm that was universal:

It is great to mix with so many nationalities like this. For me the interaction with others is really important, just as important as the academic.

Cross-national interaction was associated with improved cultural awareness, alerting me early on to the possibility of the international sojourn to stimulate cross-cultural understanding. This finding echoes the correlation made in all models of adjustment between extended cross-cultural contact and the acquisition of intercultural competence, with the following being just some of the terms used interchangeably to describe the transformed sojourner: the intercultural mediator (McLeod 1981; Taft 1981; Bochner 1981), the intercultural broker (Bochner 1986) and the intercultural person (Gudykunst 1983). Gudykunst (1983) states that the interculturally competent person is someone whose cognitive, behavioural and affective characteristics are open to growth beyond the psychological parameters of any one culture, a 'model for human development' unbound by original culture norms and values. The attributes associated with intercultural competence are, according to Koester and Lustig (2003), respect, empathy, cultural knowledge, tolerance for ambiguity and the capacity to manage interaction.

Enhanced employability would also result from exposure to a mixed-nationality network of friends:

When I go back I'm sure I work in international industry, so I need to know about these countries. These students you know they are not normal students; they are educated people, so they have a clear idea about their countries. Mohamed

There was universal awareness that globalisation entailed international cooperation and that internationalised companies would prize the cultural skills that the international study context was instilling, an assumption that is supported in many studies such as that by Ledwith and Seymour (2001).

Furthermore, a growth in cultural awareness was also frequently credited with the potential to reduce global tension, as students were optimistic about the transformative power of their exposure to new cultures:

There are lots of students from everywhere, all different cultures; you know you have a good experience. Lots of foreigners, people they live in peace, really. You know, it's a good atmosphere. We will always remember this! Mohamed

When I came, I had never spoken to any Greeks. Now we know how we are alike. We would not support a war like before. You have to travel to see this. Turkish student

An enduring memory of peace and community that would outlast the sojourn and prevent conflict: such a noble claim for their stay abroad might appear exaggerated. Yet according to the literature on the international sojourn, it is not misplaced. Indeed, cultural rather than economic or ideological change is credited by Huntington (1993) and Gudykunst (1998) with the power to achieve world peace. Gudykunst states that the outcome of cross-cultural contact is the development of a mindful attitude, which equips individuals to build a world

community based on civility and tolerance. This study offers empirical support for this notion, although the long-term consequences of students' international experience cannot be measured. This led me to question the growing trend towards providing British education overseas in response to increasing competition and economic difficulties in generating countries (see Leonard et al. 2002), which would surely have deleterious consequences for students' exposure to diversity and for the outcome of such contact.

The words *open* and *not closed* were used repeatedly to refer to the necessary personality attribute for successful cross-national interaction; the following comment was typical:

We are here, all international students, and I think it should be international experience. There is so much to share if you are not too closed in yourself. Natalia

An open mind was seen as the precondition to maximising cultural learning, echoing the importance attached to this variable in models of adjustment. The conceptual term used by Gudykunst (1983) is cognitive flexibility, defined as the capacity to be mentally flexible in dealing with ambiguity and unfamiliarity. Confrontation with diverse values and practices challenged students' tolerance of deviance and disturbed their preconceptions, and this challenge was welcomed:

I can compare the images I have, or the impressions I have of other nationalities, and then see well, 'are they that much different from my personal experience in Brazil, coming from a hot tropical Latin country?' I am learning about myself and I think I will learn what to expect from other people. Antonio

Maybe we will realise people are not like what you think before. Rini

Immersion in a mixed-nationality context allowed existing knowledge to be called into question, as first-hand contact between different cultural groups sat alongside word-of-mouth and social stereotypes. The phenomenon of stereotyping deserves some attention: a stereotype is defined by Hofstede (2001) as a fixed notion about a category of people, its validity being a statistical statement about a group. Gudykunst (1998) differentiates between unique stereotypes that are based on individual experience and social stereotypes that are shared with other members of our ingroups. Both types create expectations regarding how strangers will behave, but it is widely accepted that the latter form a powerful obstruction to communication (ibid; Scollon and Scollon 1995; Jandt 2001). In theoretical work by Detweiler (1975) and later on Gudykunst (1998), the willingness to modify preconceptions is related to the sojourner's category width, which is defined as the extent of consistency in the range of perceptual categories or the degree of discrepancy a person will tolerate. A narrow categoriser is unaccepting of the idea that a behaviour or situation might have multiple interpretations, whereas the broad categoriser is more open and makes fewer negative inferences. Acceptance of diversity and openness to modification of stereotypes were universally displayed in the first interview, suggesting that all interviewees were broad categorisers, accepting of diversity and moderate deviation. However, it later struck me that there may be a gap between thought and action; self-description was not always realised in behaviour. Perhaps this was an ideal version of the self that students promoted in conversation with me?

Among some students, a challenge was made not only to social stereotypes of Other but also of Self, evidenced in a refusal to conform to negative images of their own culture (e.g. the unfriendly European and the shy, impassive Asian) that the mixed-nationality context exposed them to:

I think they (Asian students) are really happy, they are quite surprised that someone makes the effort because it's not so usual for European students to do that ... you

show you're not just like someone from Europe, this typical European who perhaps don't even try to get to know the culture! Natalia

The successful challenge to dominant behaviour was revealed in the tendency to categorise such students as unique: *Natalia is nice to us* (Xia), and *Richard and Carole are not typical Asian because they are friendly* (Kiana). By breaking their own continental stereotype, these students had engineered a process of decategorisation, defined as communication between strangers based on individual characteristics rather than pre-determined categories (Gudykunst 1998). Willingness to stand out from the crowd was however a rare phenomenon, requiring the personal qualities of extroversion and motivation. Given the implicit success in creating a multinational network of friends, envy of deviance and regret over their failure to interact widely were commonplace:

Carole is so brave; I would like to be more like her. Korean student

In fact, this study reveals an intermittent tendency by compatriots towards the emulation of successful interaction styles, as students like Xia described learning from a friend's inclusive behaviour:

Usually I stick with my friend Carole, and she usually have conversation with other national people, so sometimes she encourage me to do so, so sometimes I will chat with other nationalities, yes.

Schmitz' (1994) argument that sojourners can influence compatriots to retain the origin culture found confirmation in this study, but on the other hand the power of exceptional individuals to influence the peer group was observed and should not be underestimated. Equally, it is important to note that inter-ethnic contact was not at the cost of cultural identity:

the multicultural strategy involved the retention of students' own distinctive culture and traditions whilst displaying respect and tolerance for others' (see Berry 1994). Here was an illustration of the power commonly imbued in the sojourn to provoke the acquisition of multicultural skills and attitudes (e.g. Bochner 1986; Ryan and Hellmundt 2005).

It gradually became apparent that the enthusiasm for cultural learning displayed in interview 1 did not translate into a widespread adoption of a multicultural approach to interaction. Indeed, cross-national interaction was exceptional (outside same culture members); such a display would be unusual enough to make me turn and stare. This alerts us to an important finding in this study, to the clash between self-perception and behaviour, between stated goals and their realisation. This was reflected in the simultaneous desire and failure to interact cross-nationally; the stated openness towards new cultures did not carry implications for behaviour, suggesting that the acknowledged advantages of international contact were sacrificed to the more powerful urge to bond with compatriots, that the espousal of multicultural values reflected aspirations that felt out of reach.

De Vijver and Leung (1997) state that it is common for researchers to use culture as the explanatory factor in interaction patterns; indeed, I wondered whether this would explain the phenomenon of the '*exceptional student*' who interacted cross-culturally. However, since such students were from a range of nationalities and cultures, it was not possible to use cultural dimensions to explain this emerging category of student. Neither could linguistic superiority be cited as the explanation: language ability was variable among these students, who withstood the stress of foreign language use in their determination to achieve cross-cultural contact. Motivation was therefore key: this was especially noticeable in students' contrasting reactions to a lack of conational friends, which provided the impetus for withdrawal or engagement with other nationalities:

Just I say hello. That's it. I haven't got anything to say. I can only talk about assignments. We have different culture, age, different perspectives, there's nothing in common.

Kiana

I really like it, because I would regret that everyday I sit only with Slovenian. I would lose the opportunity to be with other students.

Natalia

Motivation to maximise the benefits of the international context was the driving force behind the cultivation of cross-cultural competence, behind the desire to build bridges between students of diverse national and cultural backgrounds.

Worlds apart: the barrier between East and West

Undermining the desire expressed in interview 1 to mix across nationalities, students drew my attention very early on to a divide between those from the East and the West (these are emic terms): cross-national interaction and self-identification were taking place *within* rather than *across* regional/cultural groupings. Paranee's description of her friendship group was typical:

All of my friends are international. Actually, most are Asians. I have one Thai, Korean, Japanese, Malaysian.

This was a pattern of interaction that was identified by all those I spoke to; it subsequently became a focus of observation. The distinction between East and West was first alluded to by Natalia, who was shocked and dismayed by observation of this phenomenon during the induction week coach trip:

I couldn't believe it! I don't know how this is possible, there were two buses, but with one or two exceptions, one bus was European students and the other one was Asian students, and I couldn't believe it! And then after the lunch, the same again, you know. And I was really thinking, why are we separate? It disturbed me thinking this way.

Apprehension sat alongside shock; Natalia was nervous about the reasons for this early example of segregation, which Piontkowski et al. (2000) define as the maintenance of ethnic identity and the avoidance of host relations. This definition has relevance for this study, as by grouping together, students were able to maintain cultural identity, but avoidance referred to their distancing from the immediate international student group rather than the host. The ideal of an inclusive international student community had come under threat, and was causing some disquiet. Panya's comment reveals that Asian students were also aware of the divide between the two continents:

You could see that there is a pattern there. European students automatically sit on the European side and this is Asian side.

As the word 'side' indicates, a stand-off had emerged; the use of the term 'pattern' denotes the recurrence of the phenomenon. Fetterman (1998) states that ethnographers should look for cultural patterns; indeed, it was hard not to be aware of the Asian/European division, which students themselves described in anthropological terms. The notion that the pattern was fixed, that the divide was unbridgeable is reflected in Ning's use of the rather military word 'camp' to describe the formation of two entrenched groups:

There are two camps. European students are usually mix with the European students. And we stay together too.

Further evidence of polarisation was found in the second and subsequent interviews as well as in observation of social and academic settings. In class, communication across the cultural divide was rare; subgroups with the common denominator of national or cultural background were formed, with the effect that those who belonged to neither grouping were left isolated. This observation underlines again the gap between self-perception (as willing cultural learners) and self-actualisation.

It is important to understand the emic interpretation of the division in the cohort, which was explained in various ways by South East Asian students. Firstly, the emotional component of Asian group membership was important; feelings of comfort and acceptance were cited as reasons for sticking together:

I only mix with Asian students, because I feel more comfortable with them. I have to admit that I haven't tried very hard to mix with the European students. We will talk but different feeling. I don't know, sometimes the ambiance, very hard to describe. I will say I feel Asian students, Chinese, Taiwanese, Thai, Korean, are more friendly and they're more willing, welcoming to chat with me. I mean the Asian is more open for me. So I get into the way that is open.

Ning

The frequent use of the word *open* by Asian students is revealing: feelings of ease and security were instilled by a perception of welcome among the Asian student body, and a contrasting anxiety was provoked by a perceived lack of receptivity among European students, prompting their avoidance. Anxiety was therefore at the heart of the gravitation to same culture members. The reassurance provided by the Asian friendship group provoked emotional attachment, but it occurred to me that perhaps students' unwillingness to give up this safe haven was also indicative of the classification by Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) of most Asian countries as uncertainty-avoiding cultures that are conservative and resistant to

change and unpredictability. The ability to withstand the precariousness and insecurity that accompany transition might have a strong influence on the national make-up of students' friendship groups. Shared heritage was a further reason offered for the gravitation to same culture members. Verna (1990) states that members of ethnic groups have a comforting sense of shared origins, and believe they are distinctive from other groups in some way. What unified Asian students was their derivation from a particular region of the world, which they referred to as *Asia* or *the East* as often as they mentioned their country. Wary of the criticism made by Leonard et al. (2002) and Louie (2005) of researchers who tend to homogenise 'Asian students', this is something I tried to tease out with Paranee by asking her:

Are you saying that all Asians are alike?

Her response was that there were many national differences, but the similarities shared were sufficiently substantial that comfort could be found in interacting with other students from Asia, even if language was an obstacle. This understanding conforms to the standard definitions of ethnicity: according to Arora (2005), an ethnic group is described as a group of people who are aware that they share a common cultural heritage, that they are bound by a shared colour, race, religion, language etc. Interestingly, the emotional and intellectual difficulties posed by English language use were not mentioned in regard to communication between same culture members. It struck me that the sense of exposure that derived from speaking in English obtained mostly in communication with non-Asian students, who were largely referred to as *westerners*, rather than by nationality. It was *their* negative judgement that Asian students feared; this drove the avoidance of non-Asian relations.

Affiliation to the Asian *camp* was also attributed to the mutual care and protection it offered, which all students explained by reference to differences in cultural norms:

I think the Europeans and Asians keep separate because, what, maybe the culture. I have to say that the Europeans' culture of personality, they always think of themselves first, they think themselves at the centre, I don't know, they always think

about themselves, that's all I know. But in our culture, I mean the Asians always think about others, not all the time, but aware. Actually I know that before I came here but when I came here, it's confirmed.

Paranee

This is a striking portrait of the clash between the community-minded Asian and the self-driven European. Self-interest and self-preoccupation were characteristics commonly attributed to European students, informed by the understanding that styles of relating to self and others are influenced by cultural values. Such a deduction was accurate as these traits are routinely associated with individualism: Hofstede (2001) states that in individualist society people are expected to look after themselves and their immediate family only. In contrast, the emotional and instrumental support that Asian students offered each other is indicative of collectivist society, in which people are socialised into cohesive, protective in-groups that offer a lifetime of security and companionship (Triandis et al. 1985, 1988). The stereotype of the uncaring, self-motivated 'westerner' was strengthened, not challenged, by Asian students' encounter with European students. It was therefore unsurprising that gravitation towards same culture members took place, especially when one considers Hofstede's (2001) claim that it is on the dimension of individualism and collectivism that societies differ the most greatly. In a situation of flux, cohesion and reassurance were only provided by those socialised in the same attitudes towards friendship.

Sustained reflection on cultural differences in social responsibility attuned me to media reports on the growing phenomena of alienation and isolation in Western society that are increasingly used to explain both rising crime and mental illness (Bennett 2001). A lack of community is associated with neo-individualism and excessive capitalism, and these are only set to increase in an era of intensified global competition (ibid). I started to wonder whether we might have much to learn from the collectivist approach to relating: we might have to swap our desire for privacy for the emotional benefits that belonging to a reliable in-group

can provide. This would necessarily involve a rebalancing of self and group that might not be tolerated however.

Fear of discrimination was a further contributory factor in the formation and maintenance of an Asian friendship group. This was suspected by Natalia, who asked:

Do you think that they are a little bit afraid of Europeans? That we look more aggressive, or they feel like we wouldn't treat them equally? I think they are actually a little bit afraid!

These misgivings were founded; anxiety was prevalent, engendered by the encounter with verbal abuse from European students. A fear of verbal derogation and the desire to protect the self from distress led to a strategy of avoidance, as illustrated in the following accounts:

I met some people mean to me. It was European, not British. They said very rude things to me, last night and then this morning. I think I will stay here but I cried last night. Very bad. I don't want to see them again. Xia

I came to the library to use the computers, and I remember clearly that a European student sat next to me, and just said, 'go back home'... In the holidays, I don't have the feeling of being a minority. I feel more comfortable, when the campus is empty. I discovered I feel less comfortable when European students come back. Ning

Minority status was a source of vulnerability whilst European students, the dominant group on campus, were a source of threat: visible distinctiveness aided the detection of difference and increased the fear of attack, which was fuelled by word-of-mouth reports of racial discrimination. It can therefore be construed that collective defensiveness and an urge to find

safety in numbers strengthened group identification; the perception of danger helped to motivate Asian students' withdrawal into the safety of the segregated ghetto. Ward (2001) is typical of many writers on interaction in the cross-cultural setting in stating that monoethnic interaction is motivated by the drive to maintain ethnic identity, but the early enthusiasm for cross-cultural contact suggested that this interaction pattern was also motivated by a bolster against threatening outgroup contact, a saddening counterpoint to students' early euphoria. Bochner's (1986) warning that cross-cultural contact can increase or create inter-group hostility would appear to be vindicated by this study, as new enmity was created as the sojourn progressed. The claim that globalisation will bring awareness and tolerance of new levels of diversity (Feathersone 1995) is undermined by the outcome of exposure to difference that this chapter documents.

Whilst I was able to observe the phenomenon of a European friendship group, I had little access to reasons for this pattern or to the feelings of the European students involved in the stand-off described by Asian students, as two of the European students in my interview sample (Slovenian and German) deviated from the norm. Both exemplified Bochner's (1986) intercultural mediator, who acts as a human bridge between cultures, and both condemned the split in the cohort. Reasons for the formation of a European friendship group were not confessed by Olga or by any other student outside the interview situation, possibly because of the difficulties associated with such sensitive disclosure. Gudykunst's (1998) theory that miscommunication is most likely between highly prejudiced majority group members and suspicious minority group members is relevant to this study in that Europeans, the majority, were cast as prejudiced and SE Asian students, the minority, were clearly suspicious; however, access to the European perspective would have permitted a fuller picture of this tension. This points to an area of research that could be targeted in future.

I must point out however that any attempt to bring both *camp*s together was made almost exclusively by European students. Furthermore, penetration of the European friendship group

was noticeable, i.e. it was not uncommon to see an intermingling of Middle Eastern, African and European students, suggesting an openness that Asian students stated was not present. This can be explained by cross-cultural differences along the lines of uncertainty avoidance and collectivism/individualism: individualists show a greater tolerance of diversity and ambiguity given an associated low score in uncertainty avoidance; they tend to be outgoing and adept at making friends (Morsbach 1977; Hofstede 2001). This contrasts with the reluctance to engage in social interaction across cultural and racial dividing lines that is typical of collectivist cultures (ibid). It occurred to me that the categorisation of Europeans as selfish and unfriendly may derive from a desire to strengthen a collective self-esteem that was threatened by discrimination, that it did not reflect an accurate picture of the whole European student body. Tension between perception and reality is captured in Natalia's observation on European students' frustrated attempts to welcome Asian students into their social life:

I was thinking about that a lot. I mean, I wanted to ask when we have these joint parties, why does no-one or just one or two come? I don't know. I was really wondering about that.

This perplexed search for answers is indicative of the gulf between the two groups. My privileged access to reasons for Asian students' reticence told me that Natalia's intuition that fear obstructed interaction was justified, but one might imagine that an invitation to socialise would offset anxiety. Rini's interaction strategy offers an example of deviance: awareness of anti-Asian discrimination did not discourage her; indeed she railed against the Asian withdrawal from cross-cultural contact:

I want them to mix; I don't know why they don't. I really want to ask my Indonesian, 'why you never want to mix with us? This is your chance!' I told them I really like the European students, but they're not interested. The masters here, they should be

open minded, I don't know the problem. I can have a relationship with another nationality, it's ok! They can do this too!

In her willingness to challenge the popular negative image of European students and to attempt to unite the two groups, Rini showcased herself to her peers as the intercultural broker in Gudykunst's (1983) model of culture contact, who is capable of integrating cultural differences and facilitating cross-cultural communication. However, the social stereotype of the unfriendly and discriminatory European, or westerner, proved difficult to deconstruct. Nevertheless, observation of the intercultural experience enjoyed by Asian students like Rini culminated in regretful reflections in the final interview on enduring interaction patterns:

Some mingled quite well with western students, but myself, no. I usually mixed up with Asian students. What really matters is your willingness to get to know others. Was I willing? I would not push myself, and at this point I don't think I've done enough.

Ning

Motivation was seen as a key factor in the formation of friendships with people from different cultures, and regret was a common theme among those who had not made efforts to mix cross-culturally, in acknowledgement of the associated maximisation of intercultural competence. I concluded from this that international students need to be placed in a position that makes ingroup bias, defined by Bochner (1986) as the inclination to mix in self-designated groups, hard to sustain. Given the growth of international education, it is perhaps time that institutions took responsibility for creating a truly international campus.

Seeking understanding and safety

Mingle with the Muslims: this was the slogan used by the university's Islamic Society to invite all students to their Eid celebrations in November 2004. That Muslims are a distinct category of a heterogeneous student population was reflected in the diverse national make-up of the Islamic Society and in the formation of a course-level friendship group whose common denominator was religious not national or cultural affiliation. As Panya revealed, Islam was the organising principle:

All nationalities, we mix around. It's a Muslim group, and we have all sorts of countries, all Muslims together.

The fellowship offered by the sharing of religious beliefs and practices in this micro setting of the university reflects a wider picture of the role increasingly played by Islam in forming the basis for self-understanding and self-organisation among Muslims in the UK and elsewhere in the world (Channel 4 2006). Esack (1993) explains that Islam is a world community; therefore Muslims often prioritise religious identity, which is shared with people in other countries, over nationality. It follows that Muslim students would continue this practice whilst abroad: this study is one of the few to document the force of religious belief in uniting international students. Beers' (1999 in Martin and Harrell 2004) unpublished doctoral thesis on Christian students focused on the integrity of faith rather than its power to unite.

However, it was observed that identity was based on membership of many different and simultaneously overlapping demographic categories such as religion, culture and nationality; this was indicated in Muslim students' simultaneous affiliation to different friendship groups. This reflects a common phenomenon in modern society, in which different and often clashing sub-groups have to be negotiated (Barker 2000). To illustrate, Panya belonged to three

groups, all of which brought her a sense of belonging and security: Indonesian (shared language, religion and culture), Asian (shared culture), and Muslim (shared religion). Mohamed gravitated to a mostly Middle Eastern group based on the principle of a shared commitment to Islam, to a conational Jordanian group whose nationality (but not religion) he shared, and to a mixed-nationality, mostly European group which he sought out for the chance it offered him to practise his English and to learn about other cultures. Huntington (1993) comments that when people identify themselves in religious terms, they tend to see an 'us and them' relationship emerging: furthermore, according to Esack (1993), Muslims are often threatened by pluralism. However, this study did not find consistent evidence for these arguments, as Muslim students' interaction strategies varied according to personality and motivation rather than level of devotion.

The emic explanation for gravitating towards fellow Muslims was sought, and it was discovered that being together was important especially during times of religious significance. The obstacle posed by English language use, the lingua franca in this cross-cultural setting, was outweighed by the sustenance obtained from the collective practice of Islamic rituals, such as the Ramadan fast, when the Muslim friendship group was cemented:

You have to do something to make you feel close to your culture, but it's hard to do this on your own. You would be hungry and thinking all the time of your family.

Mohamed

The joint enactment of ritual served three purposes: it helped to alleviate homesickness, it brought a comforting reminder of home, and it consolidated cultural identity. This reminded me of Featherstone's (1995) allusion to ritual as a battery that recharges the sense of community for displaced people.

Not having to explain themselves was another important reason for interacting with fellow Muslims: this was particularly important when displacement from the parent culture highlighted their difference from mainstream secular British society and from the rest of the international student body in which Islam was a minority religion. This was reflected in the relief that Panya felt on managing to find accommodation with a Muslim student from Bangladesh:

I'm just lucky enough to meet her, so I just moved in with her after just one day meeting her. It's important to share your religion, to be with someone who knows what it's all about.

Feeling understood brought a feeling of ease that would not be found with a non-Muslim friend. Indeed, Panya's description of her circle of *true friends* as Muslim might be indicative of withdrawal into a ghetto of mutual understanding in the face of a chaos of beliefs. Peace of mind was brought by an implicit knowledge that important boundaries would not be transgressed. A simple example refers to the consumption of meat: living with a Muslim flatmate guaranteed the avoidance of non-halal meat, whereas an Indonesian student living in a mixed-faith house described himself as *always tense in case I eat the wrong thing*. Such a state of tension would have implications for both emotional and physical health that would decrease in line with the extent of contact with other Muslims students whose cocoon of shared values and practices offered reassurance and safety.

Feeling safe was also important: acting to bind Muslim students were incidences of Islamophobic abuse visited by the host community, which affirmed and never challenged their self-designation as members of a Muslim friendship group. When an Egyptian student was verbally and physically attacked in the street (her religious affiliation was revealed in the wearing of the hijab), her commitment to interacting primarily with fellow Muslims grew, i.e.

she was pushed further into the comfort and protection of the ingroup by the hostility of the larger community. Students concluded that they were subject to harassment because of international tension over Islamic terrorism. By documenting this relationship, I have tried to avoid the common tendency to view the international student experience in isolation from the macro context: the connection made between international student vulnerability and immigration politics by Reed et al. (1978) and Ward (2001) is noted as unusual. The link between a visible manifestation of affiliation and vulnerability to attack allows us to draw a parallel with the experience of the Asian cohort whose physical dissimilarity made them targets; this was evidenced in relief that faith was not always detected by the host community. In a climate of Islamophobia, it was felt that their safety was guaranteed by mistaken identity: an external appearance that allied them with the host, or with the Christian world, allowed them to relax their vigilance. This supports the claim made by Honeyford (1988) that visitors are less vulnerable if their separateness isn't reflected outwardly. Fear of disclosing religious faith to others and feeling vulnerable upon disclosure were understandably common, as confessed by Panya:

You do fear if someone asks you if you're a Muslim, especially with the war. I mean, my friends in America, they're not so secure anymore, and they worried in case something happens. You have to be strong and hope that nothing bad happens. During Ramadan, people ask why you aren't eating, and then you have to explain 'I am a Muslim', and it doesn't feel safe.

Geopolitical tension impacted on the everyday life of Muslim students, who saw a clear link between their safety and the September 11 terrorist attack, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the growth in Islamic fundamentalist terrorism. Having studied the rise in statistics on the verbal and physical abuse of Muslims in the UK since September 11 (see Bunting 2006; Castle 2006; Muslim Council of Britain 2007), I concluded that students' concerns were

justified, and my awareness of the precariousness of their position in a western, pro-war country grew. Furthermore, Omar (2006) identified a growing suspicion of the British Muslim community deriving in part from the radicalisation of young British Muslims, which would intensify students' real and imagined fears. Tension between a suspicious non-Muslim population and a vilified and vulnerable Muslim community makes for an insecure living environment for those visitors caught up in this unresolved struggle. Indeed, interrogation of British attitudes towards Islam was common, as was revealed in a conversation with a Turkish student who poignantly asked me:

Why don't you like Muslims? What are you afraid of? Why are you so afraid of Islam?

In the same way that international students can become associated with immigrants, that Muslim students can become linked with terrorism, I suddenly found myself answerable for Islamophobic discrimination, for the western position in global politics. I found it hard to shake off the unsettling feeling that I had been tainted by the brush of English racism: there was a blurred boundary between the individual and the state. As Brewer (2000) observes, small-scale micro settings can have common features with the broader social world, with the effect in this study that individuals (including myself) reluctantly come to represent greater social and national forces. Indeed, the impact of global tension on Muslim students in a western country is an area of research that is largely untapped; this study is unusual in the perspective it offers on the Muslim section of the international student body. Further research is necessary on the impact of faith and foreign policy on the experience of the sojourn, and on the consequences for international education.

Fear of exposing religious affiliation also applied initially to the international student community but the tolerance for diversity shown by most students in this setting acted to

dispel apprehension. A twin willingness to learn about Islam and to communicate Islamic traditions was observed during Ramadan, as the following excerpts reveal:

It was really good because some people they don't know about your culture, but you share with them, give them a clear idea. Maybe next time in your country Ramadan month, they know they have to respect this culture, or if they get visitors to their country, they will know. I was thinking Ramadan is very famous, but they didn't know, so now they know. Mohamed

I just try to respect them because if we eat in front of them it makes them more hungry or something. Chinese student

Receptivity was accompanied by mindfulness during the Ramadan period: but equally important in the maintenance of harmonious relations between those of different faith was the lack of religious fundamentalism on the part of the Muslim cohort. This was commented on by Rini:

Here, the Muslim is moderate, not fundamental. One guy, he is a little bit fanatic; sometimes I feel I have to make a little bit distance. But most are ok.

The acceptance of diversity was key to the creation of an inclusive and including community, which would be obstructed by both fundamentalism and intolerance. Such an observation has relevance for larger British society, and is a topic of contemporary debate: tension between the Muslim and non-Muslim British population would be alleviated by the cultivation of tolerance on both sides.

It is important to record deviance from the general response of equanimity to the display of faith. The creation of a sub-culture based on religion was for Kiana both repulsive and

oppressive in its reminder of home and of the Islamic government she had been glad to leave behind. It is common for sojourners to put subtle or explicit forms of social pressure on each other to conform to the ethnic rather than the host culture (Schmitz, 1994), but conformity pressure outside Iran provoked hostility and defiance:

I don't want to speak about the religion. I don't want somebody say to me advice. I don't want to say I'm Muslim! I don't want people think she's my friend (Omani student) and we have the same opinion, you know. When I walk with her, people think I am Muslim, but I am not!

The expression of anger can be seen to as a way to assert distance from the Islamic group that welcomed her; rejecting this source of friendship pushed Kiana into a position of marginalisation. In models of adjustment strategy, this is described by the renunciation of heritage and the absence of a relationship with the dominant group (Piontkowski et al. 2000; Ward et al. 2001). However, loneliness was chosen over friendship; it was the price she was willing to pay for the dizzying new-found freedom to articulate her rejection of Islamic control, the welcome product of liberation from tyranny. Torbiorn (1994) states that the sojourn should not permanently marginalise the sojourner, but he perhaps does not take into account the wishes of those students for whom the sojourn represents a chance to escape conformity.

This study found that religious affiliation and behaviour were not challenged by the sojourn, except when religion was associated negatively with political oppression. The importance attached to the Islamic friendship group reflected a determination to maintain and protect faith. To end this section, I will pose the following question: if religion is a universal provider of comfort and support as Hofstede (2001) claims, why was it mentioned only by Muslim students as an influence on interaction patterns? A possible reason is offered by Esack (1993): for Muslims, faith is at the heart of their identity, therefore a profound sense of alienation is

common when they are immersed in a secular country, in which there is a reduced opportunity for religious observance and practices. By creating a sub-group based on Islam, students thus provided themselves with a source of stability and coherence, but it must not be forgotten that this thereby also offered a defence against the threat of Islamophobia.

Recreating the comfort of home

This study reveals that conational friendship networks were established within days of students' arrival. The phenomenon of conational interaction has been well documented by writers on the international student sojourn, from Bochner et al. (1977) to Ward (2001), and is confirmed in this research; however the speed of its establishment was surprising, and is not often noted in studies of interaction patterns. This implies a clash between the stated need and desire to practise spoken English and the panic created by immersion in a new culture, as illustrated in Rini's typical comment:

I think in the first week we always together with Indonesian, so all speak a lot of Indonesian. That's not good. We need to practise English more, but we need to be together.

First pointed out by interviewees, conational interaction was subsequently observed in class and in common areas such as the canteen and coffee bar. It also extended beyond the university setting; Kyoung's comment that all her social activities outside the university revolved around the Korean community was representative of most SE Asian students:

We have social meetings with Korean community, we have party. Every Sunday, we make a Korean meal. We take in turns cooking, and we eat all together.

Conational interaction was universally noted as an inevitable and regrettable consequence of transition:

Well, you know, people come from the same country, they will stay together.

Especially the Chinese students, actually that's not very good. Ning

I think it's not so good to mix with the Chinese a lot of time, but it's necessary. Xia

Gravitation towards compatriots occurred despite universal acknowledgement of the implicit disadvantages; it seemed that students felt unable to resist the pull towards the reassurance of sameness in a diverse community. Where there were pockets of same nationality members, the phenomenon of conational interaction could be observed, and it was particularly entrenched in the South East Asian cohort whose urge to form a primary network of mono-national bonds is said to relate to their socialisation in a collectivist culture that enjoys the company of an extended family (Hofstede 1991). It was unsurprising then that SE Asian students were perceived to be close to the point of exclusivity, even among those students who themselves had formed conational bonds:

They are very close to each other, they stay with each other, you know the Thai, the Chinese, the Koreans; you always find them together in small groups. So it's difficult to get in this group, they always speaking their own language. And if they leave each other for one day, they feel 'oh my god!' Mohamed

Outsiders perceived an intimacy among South East Asian students that encouraged overdependence and discouraged approach: the external view of such unity was usually disparaging. Though a perception of impenetrability and dependence is typical of collectivist culture (Wheeler et al. 1989), it was clear that there was a continuum between multinational

and conational interaction, and student opinion on the acceptable level of the latter varied among those from individualist and collectivist cultures alike. If there was a hierarchy of intransigence, Thai students were seen to be the most entrenched and the most unapproachable:

I would say Thai students will stick together too. Even thicker. Because the Thai students usually come to the class in groups, I don't. I can sit where I like. Ning

Thai students don't mix. I didn't know that before. I don't really know them. Natalia

These statements represent the common view of the Thai cohort, and alert us to cross-national differences among collectivist cultures: Hofstede's cultural dimensions can be used to identify broad cultural features, but it is important to remember that countries will vary in their rating in each dimension. A high score in collectivism might infer unwillingness to step outside the conational friendship group; this was certainly the case for Thai students whose culture shows a high score in both collectivism and uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005), both of which were shown to inhibit cross-national interaction. Indeed, withdrawal in the face of inaccessibility was the common response to Thai segregation, with negative implications for the development of understanding between the Thai and non-Thai cohorts.

The emic explanation offered for the widespread phenomenon of conational interaction identified the following three factors: linguistic ease, emotional succour and instrumental support. As already detailed in Chapter 4, speaking the native language was a mobilising force, providing a physical break from the stress of communicating in a foreign language as well as an emotionally comforting reminder of home: this explains the feeling of relief that met the sound of the native language.

The contribution to emotional well-being was equally important; an important force in the gravitation towards compatriots was the assumption of mutual understanding:

Sometimes it's more comfortable. You can communicate because you know each other. You know what they think. Paranee

I come from a different culture, and I like to do different things. One of my flatmate is from China and the other is from India. The Indian girl has an Indian boy next door, so they stay together, I and my friend stay together. I think there is some reason related to the culture, that's the fact. We know each other better. Ning

Shared ethnicity in this instance referred to shared national heritage, which eased communication: a sense of intimacy was created by the assumption of sameness, of known-ness, and this contrasted a setting of often unnerving diversity. It can be inferred that exposure to difference drove the urge to find belonging to a group of previously unknown and disparate individuals. Often puzzled by the strength of their attachment to the conational group, students tried to identify specific aspects of their heritage that could explain their inclination towards compatriots: food, language, sense of humour, music and football were often mentioned, but the overriding consensus was that the binding tie was the feeling of oneness generated by shared national culture.

An associated alleviation of homesickness was also important, as Rini indicated:

This is very helpful that I met Indonesian because you know I can speak more intense with them, I mean, compared with another nationality, because maybe we have the same homesick feeling. And because we are from Indonesia so we are more closer.

Sometimes we miss our country so if we met another Indonesian it's helpful.

Home was recaptured through interaction with compatriots, as indicated in the recurrence of the words *family* and *home* to describe the conational group they had formed. Time spent with the 'family' varied, with some students sticking close to their 'siblings' and others using the conational group regularly but not exclusively, seeing it as a resource to use when they wanted to access the comfort of home:

All my Indonesian friends live in the same flat! That's why I always go there, if I want to meet my Indonesian friends. When I think of home, that is where I go. Rini

Combating homesickness did not take the form of trying to forget home; rather, compatriots were seen as a vehicle for remembering and recreating what was missing. This was most evident during times of national festival in the home country, as Mohamed reveals:

In England, I've got to know two Jordanian students who are my friends, but both of them are Christians. I asked them to come to celebrate Ramadan. I cooked some typical Jordanian food and we celebrate together. It's like home for them. Yeah, we are like family.

Nationality rather than religion was the unifying bond in this instance: the shifting of ethnic ties was a notable phenomenon in this study in which homesickness meant that national, cultural and religious bonds were all important in recreating family and home. It occurred to me that the urge to find coherence in chaos informed both the drive to identify points of similarity and the changing priority of such similarity: this would explain dynamic attitudes to English language use. Finding belonging was paramount, offering relief from the existential anxiety that transition could bring.

Access to practical support in everyday life was the final explanation for the formation of conational groups, as the following typical comments reveal:

I can talk to somebody when I have some problem, and they can give some advice.

We Chinese students can have to depend on each other, we can share our knowledge, and maybe we will be less alone.

Xia

It's better to stay with people from your home country. Yes. ' For living in the UK, they can give tips for me. 'Where shall I do the shopping? Which shop is the cheapest? How do they think the local people? What should I learn about the university? There is very much information I can get. Always they are ready to help me, it feels very comforting.

Ning

I met many good friends from China...I can adapt quickly. Chinese student

Mutual assistance, including the pooling of information, alleviated adjustment problems in the early weeks. Solidarity during a time of upheaval is reflected in the recurring use of the words *together, share* and *depend* in students' reference to their support network and to the implicit access to instrumental support which allowed them to feel supported both practically and emotionally. Dependability was all-important; this source of stability was a powerfully reassuring antidote to the stressors involved in transition:

I think I should know them, as whenever I got a problem or they got a problem, I still have a friend, and they still have me.

Paranee

I just call if I need something or if they need something they just call; we feel the same.

Rini

These declarations of loyalty were explained by reference to cultural differences between the collectivist East and the individualist West, and student interpretations are supported by theory. According to Wheeler et al. (1989), interdependence is correlated with collectivist culture, in which group needs are prioritised over personal interests. This is reflected in the prevalent use of the pronoun 'we', which students themselves commented on. According to Gudykunst (1998), this personal pronoun is symbolic of the collectivist's affiliation to the group rather than the individual. It can be inferred that students were driven to create interdependent relationships by the need to replicate the comforting reliability of group membership associated with home and by a tendency among uncertainty avoiding cultures (describing most Asian countries) to avoid the unknown and look for stability from their community (Hofstede 2001). The popular image of an unhelpful host community did little to encourage departure from the conational cocoon, as Ning explains:

When you turn to local people with a problem, they might seem so nice, but they don't help you, so finally it's the Chinese students who can offer you help. You don't know that?

It seems that segregation was a tool of survival in a new culture that was widely perceived to be unforthcoming. Indeed, my efforts to showcase an alternative image of a helpful host national failed to challenge students' negative stereotype: I was often told that I was *not like most British people*; I became their example of deviance. However, this perception could be understood as a result of a clash of cultures: the tendency towards self-reliance in an individualist society that is low in power distance and uncertainty avoidance contrasts the need for direction and support that is typical of a country that scores highly in these dimensions (SE Asian students typically come from countries that are not only high in collectivism but which also score medium to high in PD). Divergence in the approach to

responsibility and autonomy reflects diverse cultural norms, and influences styles of relating. The image of an unsupportive host community might therefore be a function of cultural difference.

The contribution made by conational interaction to emotional well-being has been acknowledged thus far, however, it came at the cost of the associated erection of barriers to intercultural contact. A common complaint was that students felt they had not left home; that life in England was too similar to that in the origin culture, so great was their exposure to compatriots:

At first, I thought it was good to be with Chinese, but not now. Why come here to stay all the time with Chinese? Chinese student

It's good to have some Thai friends, but you don't speak English. I feel I'm in Thailand still. Paranee

Ghettos had formed, and they felt inescapable. Deviance is represented by only a few 'exceptional students' like Richard whose awareness of the negative connection between segregation and language ability drove them to break away from the confines of the conational group:

Richard said that he is here to mix with the British or other nationalities, not speak his mother tongue, so he avoids such contact if possible. He said that the rest of his Chinese class mates don't like him, because he doesn't hang around with them. But he cannot see the point of being in England and speaking Chinese.

Perhaps the avoidance of contact with compatriots posed a challenge to the group's cohesiveness, provoking their censure: indeed, Triandis et al. (1988) describe the major themes of collectivism as self-definition as part of the group, subordination of personal goals to in-group goals, concern for the integrity of the in-group, and intense emotional attachment and loyalty to the group. Moreover, those from a collectivist culture view avoidance of the in-group as selfish, and will impose sanctions for deviant, non-conformist behaviour.

Conformity pressure usually derives from the host environment (Zajonc 1952), but in this context, it derived from students' own ethnic groups. Hall (1976) explains this phenomenon by reference to the identification process: identification refers to those feelings that one has about parts of the self that have been dissociated; it is one of the strongest cements that bind cultures into cohesive wholes, and it is normally out of awareness or unconscious. It is for this reason that people are so insistent that others conform to the mores of the group, and why they are made to feel uncomfortable and anxious if they don't. In cross-cultural difficulty, people are usually in the grip of cultural identification; without knowing it they experience the other person as an uncontrollable and unpredictable part of themselves. The desire to escape the confines of the ghetto was outweighed by fear of negative judgement as well as retribution upon re-entry: future consequences of present actions could not be overlooked.

This was explained by Paranee:

If I broke with them much, they would not like it. In this society, it isn't good to make yourself separate. They might look at you as strange or something like that. One day I have to go back and I have to meet them eventually so it's quite bad. 'Oh when you were at UK, you pretend that you don't know me' or something like that. You cannot...I think it's quite sensitive.

Students were well aware that their sojourn in a culture with different values was only temporary; thus conformity pressure derived from a faraway culture to which they were set to return. This is an important finding: whilst the detrimental effect of conational friendships for

intercultural contact has been well documented, the internal pressure on students who seek out and yet resist the demands of the ingroup has not been widely acknowledged.

Reactions to conformity pressure are dictated, according to Triandis et al. (1985), by personality differences in the dimension of allocentrism/idiocentrism, the personality equivalent of the collectivism/individualism dimension. General cultural patterns are modified by individual differences so that allocentric people in collectivist cultures feel positive about accepting in-group norms and do not challenge the unstated assumptions of the culture, whereas idiocentric people feel ambivalent and even bitter about accepting in-group norms. I would suggest that this personality dimension could partly explain instances of deviation from notable cultural patterns in this research. The manifestation of resentment of conformity pressure varied among students: Richard's reaction was complete withdrawal; Paranee chose complete segregation; Rini adopted the multicultural approach. Intermittent reliance on her compatriots meant that Rini trod a thin line between conformity and wider cross-national interaction, disguising from her compatriots both the extent of her social life with non-Indonesians as well as her dislike of their chauvinistic segregation approach:

I think there are thirty or more Indonesian this year but only three of us who don't want to mix a lot. They always stick together. Sometimes it's good, but sometimes you want to run from them. Sometimes they make joke, 'ah you never come with us'. But I don't want to be tied! I have the whole of the rest of my life to be with them!

We might wonder whether the Indonesian friendship group was more tolerant of deviance than the Thai, given Paranee's fear of being ostracised: the view that the Thai group was the most segregated suggests this to be true. On the other hand, personality difference between the two students might account for the varying reactions to demands placed on them by their compatriots.

The literature on international student interaction patterns points to a tendency towards ghettoisation: this trend was reinforced in this study, particularly among South East Asian students. Bochner's (1986) similarity-attraction hypothesis is helpful in explaining this interaction pattern: using a process of social categorisation, people group together on the basis of perceived similarity, represented in this instance by conational bonds. The importance of individual characteristics such as motivation and self-confidence in the interaction strategy adopted by sojourners was noted, as only a few '*exceptional students*' broke away from or reduced interaction with conational friends. Conflicting with the desire to adopt a multicultural response to the mixed-nationality setting was this simultaneous formation of conational friendship groups, leading me to question the common notion of a link between globalisation and increased cross-cultural understanding. Esack (1993) argues that multiculturalism implies a weakening of the hold of the collective over the individual, suggesting that those from collectivist cultures might struggle to embrace their own desired multicultural response, and that individualist society may well facilitate multiculturalism, given its de-emphasis on the collective. And yet I must concede that the fragmentation of the international student group into distinct ethnic groups offers an uncanny mirror of an increasingly multicultural and yet ghettoised British society (Jackson 1998; Gilroy 2007). Anxiety/uncertainty management theory suggests that effectiveness of communication is a function of the ability to tolerate anxiety (Gudykunst and Nishida 2001), and this offers a useful way to understand this *détente*: people tend to have negative expectations of interacting with strangers, so there is greater uncertainty in initial interactions than with people from their in-groups; meanwhile, cultural identification grows in proportion to increases in communication difficulties.

Reaching out

All students expressed the aim in Interview 1 to mix with host nationals (the terms British and English were used interchangeably); there was a universal equation of the local community with improved linguistic and intercultural competence that is supported in theories of culture learning (see Schild 1962; Kim 1988; Gudykunst 1998; Ward et al. 2001). Host national friends were viewed as the best source of information about host cultural norms, as Kiana indicated in Interview 1:

I need to know what they like, don't like, do I put a foot wrong?

Students understood that host contact offered the way to acquire the necessary social skills which are crucial for adjustment. The important role played by members of the host community in helping the sojourner to navigate host cultural norms is illustrated in the following vignette:

I was in a bar and I was looking at this girl and I must have been staring at her because she looked at me and said, 'what?!' And I thought to myself, 'what a strange question, isn't it clear why I'm looking at her?' She was a little bit, what's the word, uncomfortable with my looking at her.

(Antonio continued to stare, and was hit by one of her friends.)

When he recounted the incident to an English student, he learned that:

You shouldn't look at a woman in a straightforward way or you will get slapped.

When I said 'oh why?' he said 'because you're not expected to, you don't do that.'

He was English, talking about English women, you see. I didn't know that before!

Socialisation in a culture with different rules of etiquette for social situations lies at the heart of this miscommunication episode; enculturated views on acceptable public behaviour placed an obstacle in the way of interpretation of the cues on display. Indeed, cross-cultural communication theory places interpretation skills in a central position: communication is seen as an interactive process involving the exchange of messages and the creation of meaning (Geertz 1973; Gudykunst and Nishida 2001). To interact successfully in a social situation it is necessary to be able to understand and predict others' behaviour (Detweiler 1975); however, if the culture is unfamiliar, inaccurate predictions and interpretations of behaviour are likely, as strangers' messages are interpreted using original cultural norms (Gudykunst 1983). By alerting Antonio to the rules of operation in the new culture, the host national acted as a mediator between the two cultures; it can be inferred that in this he played a vital role in Antonio's adjustment process, easing his integration into mainstream society. However, this study showed that host contact was limited: given the international make-up of the course (out of a cohort of 150 students, there were only five British students), not many opportunities were provided by the immediate academic environment to mix with British people and most students did not take the initiative needed to venture into the local community or the wider student population. This carried the negative implication that culture learning could only be fulfilled through observation of local behaviour rather than active engagement with the host. This represents a departure from the various models of adjustment, as the observation stage does not, according to Liu (2001), usually outlast the initial stage of the sojourn.

The second negative impact of a lack of host contact was that access was barred to improving conversational skills, which was a source of disappointment:

I don't know why but I can't find a lot of British friends. Sometimes I want to practise my English more. Only slowly I make progress, very slow! Rini

I don't get the chance to communicate that much. I'm sad about that. Paranee

Language skills were improved mostly through contact with other international students; this represented a long delay in improving linguistic competence that served to sustain a widespread sense of inferiority over language status, and acted as a deterrent to speaking with locals. As Ryan (2005a) indicates, some local people may not be willing to make the effort to befriend international students if conversation is difficult, they may be unwilling and unused to adapting their communication patterns. Carroll (2005a, b) states that patience, adaptability and plain language are important when conversing with non-native speakers, but this indicates perhaps a facility that is not widely enjoyed by the host. Indeed, this was suggested in the common nervousness over engaging in conversation with locals, and in the contrasting ease reported by native and near-native speakers; fluency permitted a feeling of being at home, of being accepted:

I think that language is very important, I don't feel I'm abroad, I don't feel an outsider.

Brigitte

People tell me, 'how come you speak so well?' Well, I have become fluent so that I can be part of the British society. I think the language is my strongest link with the English culture.

Antonio

Good language skills diminished the distance between students and the host society; they removed the discomfort of foreignness. In the extreme case of Brigitte, they allowed her to avoid the host's physical and verbal reaction of dislike that disclosure of her nationality brought:

Sometimes when I say I'm German, the reaction is negative, and people start to talk about the war, or you can see they go like this (shrinks back). It's definitely not an advantage to say I'm German. So I try to avoid it.

Linguistic proficiency facilitated the assumption of native status that was driven by a desire to avoid the display of host intolerance: this reflects an assimilation attitude, defined by Bochner (1986) as a willingness to be indistinct from the dominant group. Set against the widespread attribution of importance by students to good language skills in adjustment is this study's paradoxical observation that though low language level is an impediment to host contact, penetration of and acceptance by the host community is not the logical result of linguistic fluency. This contradiction is reflected in the literature on adjustment, with many writers such as Ward and Kennedy (1993, 1999) and Hall (1992) agreeing that linguistic ability alone does not mean there will be interaction with hosts. This is an important finding: a good grasp of the host language is an important precondition to but no guarantee of host-visitor contact.

A lack of host contact was a source of deep disillusionment for students. Inapproachability was one of the commonly cited obstacles to interaction with local people and British students, as revealed in Xia's cry of frustration:

We cannot reach them, we don't know how!

It was felt that the British had withdrawn into a segregated group in an attempt to avoid cross-national interaction:

I don't have feeling that they have need to make interaction with us. I think they are trying to be more by themselves.

Natalia

They look at you and they either say 'good morning' or they smile, or if you've got a question, they're willing to help you, but no more. When you approach someone to talk, they look at you as thinking 'what does he want?' I notice that people have their groups of friends and they act as if they wouldn't let anybody into their groups.

Antonio

Exclusivity and disinterest acted as a powerful deterrent. It is difficult to counter the image of an alienating and indifferent host as there has been little research into the views and perspectives of either the UK student body or the host community on international education (Steer's 2006 and Aggarwahl's 2007 postgraduate dissertations are rare but superficial examples; some collaborative studies are underway). A literature search shows only a few studies of non-UK domestic students (Volet and Ang 1998; Spencer-Rodgers 2001; Ward et al. 2005), which similarly conclude that host-visitor contact is rare and that home students demonstrate a low inclination to interact with their international peers. This mirroring in the Australian context of an aloof and disinterested host might suggest that all outsiders in all societies are objects of indifference; on the other hand, both the UK and Australia are individualist cultures and a lack of interest in others might be a response borne of cultural programming. A further common denominator is western economic superiority, which might inform the neglect of international students from Less Developed Countries, as Althen (1994) also suggests.

There was a strong emotional reaction to the host's unfriendliness, as indicated in Rini's exclamatory tone:

The British are weird! So cold! They don't want to talk at all. International students don't like the people here. They do not match with their expectation. The British is

not friendly; they never mix with us! We have to be proactive, but I think here the students, they are not like, 'hey come here!' I want to ask, is this typical? It doesn't mean they don't want to accept us? Are they shy? Sometimes it makes me worry, is it the culture, don't they like me?

Firstly, students were puzzled; they had arrived with high expectations of a positive reception and were disenchanted and bemused by the reception they met. Secondly, they were apprehensive: what could the host attitude mean? Finally they felt vulnerable in a climate that was perceived to be cold and unresponsive. Little wonder that they sought the company of conationals. Okorochoa (1996b) cautions against accepting international students' version of their encounter with the host: culture fatigue, defined by Guthrie (1979) as a mood of disappointment with the host that encourages sojourners to make negative interpretations of the motives and character of host nationals, might distort their perceptions. Nevertheless, the finding that difficulty in achieving host contact was experienced by socially adept and outgoing individuals, i.e. those who fell into the category of '*exceptional student*', tends to support the observation of a reluctance to engage on the part of local people. Such students were highly motivated to establish host contact, but pointed out that this was not reciprocated. The emphasis placed in theories of host-visitor contact (e.g. Berry 1994; Furnham and Erdmann 1995) on the sojourner's motivation to interact with the host was shared by these students, but it was shown that motivation alone did not ensure that contact was made. Indeed, a common complaint was that British students did not often respond to friendly overtures; the image of the friendly host member as deviant was clear, and finds an echo in studies of host-international student contact conducted by Furnham and Erdman (1995) and Ward (2005). Using Schild's (1962) typology of the host attitude to strangers shows that in this study the host community conforms to the closed group: the open group accepts and initiates contact with and encourages absorption of the stranger; the indifferent group accepts the stranger if they take the initiative; and the closed group is disinclined to accept the

stranger. Furthermore, this contradicts Hofstede's classification (1991) of the host's psychological reaction cycle by three phases of curiosity, ethnocentrism and finally polycentrism if regularly exposed to foreigners, particularly as the UK, and the case study town in particular, has a history of receiving foreign visitors.

Students interpreted the host's behaviour as aloofness. Lifestyle was commonly held responsible for a general lack of interest; finding time for others was not prioritised in a hectic daily schedule:

People are very busy all the time, rushing and running here and there. The impression I have is that British people are always busy, they have a full diary, and they have to try to fit you in their schedule, it's so strange. Antonio

They are too busy to be close. And they are settled; they don't want to know you.

Cecilia

The gaze of the outsider revealed a frenetic approach to life in England, for which there was some justification. The compartmentalization of time is a feature of individualist society (Hall 1976; Hofstede 2001); furthermore, the 'hurry syndrome', which is associated with physical and psychological illness, is on the increase in modern western society (Furnham 1997). The UK is classed as a neo-individualist society by Hofstede (2001), marked by intense competition and diminished leisure time: interaction is often confined to those inside the close network of friends and family. It is understandable that the resulting impression of detachment or indifference may alienate outsiders, and in this study, it represented a stark contrast with the collectivist lifestyle that most students were used to. Kiana's comment reveals the direct result of immersion in an individualist society to be loneliness:

You care about yourself much more than us. Iran is completely different with here. I'm isolated because in this country, people are really individualist. It's not like my

country, in my country, you always belong to something, your family, your friends, but here, to me, the level of individual is really high. They care very, really care about themselves, then the others.

Displacement from the home culture revealed dissonance in attitudes to community, between a collectivist and caring home and an individualist society in which the self has primacy over the group (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005). And yet, there was an empathetic view that excessive individualism also victimised the host population; this was manifested, according to Antonio, in an extreme withdrawal from the community into the self-world:

Many times I have seen people sitting at a bus stop or somewhere, looking straight ahead, not looking around and noticing other people. I think people are dissatisfied, they are unhappy with something in their lives. I don't know what, I don't know why, it's just a feeling I have, you know. I don't see many people smiling in the streets over here and that's something I noticed. Why do they have to walk in the street like that, not smiling?

This portrait of negativity was striking, and unknowingly echoed Bennett's (2001) description of a shift towards pessimism in British society, caused by an increase in capitalism and self-interest. One might wonder whether or not Antonio's judgement is indicative of the anomie and despair that are characteristic of neo-individualist society (Triandis et al. 1988), or merely a reflection of his disillusionment over his inability to make meaningful (i.e. non-superficial) connections with the host community. Or are the two inevitably intertwined?

Racism was also feared to lie behind the lack of host contact. This was inferred from the incidents of racial abuse experienced by a large number of students at the hands of British

teenagers and drunks, details of which were quickly passed around the international student community:

Ah, the teenagers! I think they quite rude to international people, they shouting, they, what, annoying sometimes. One day I walk around the road, they on bicycle, they shout at me. Very scary. Another time I'm walking in a shop and they come in after me and make a noise like 'ooh'. Because I'm Asian. Many times, when I walk on the road, and shouting from the cars. It's like you're not welcome. Paranee

I heard from some of my friend, they didn't have good experience, they say they had the teenagers threw the bottle of soda at the Chinese people. Oh that's terrible! Xia

That abuse was visited by local teenagers might not be surprising; this section of the British population is also feared by the vulnerable in the host community itself, cast regularly in the media as a social problem. However, negative inferences were inevitably drawn from this form of host contact, and a fear of verbal or physical abuse became widespread, particularly among Asian students, whose physically distinguishing appearance increased their vulnerability. A study by Brown (2003) supports this association, as she found that their whiteness protected Polish economic migrants from attack in the UK. My study noted widespread apprehension among Asian students towards strangers; in the following accounts, hysterical fear meant that students ran from perceived danger:

I saw some young, maybe teenagers, on the subway and they are drinking. It's terrible for me, I'm a little nervous. So I walk quickly! A little run. When they are drunk, they may do something bad to me. It make me feel bad. Xia

One night I walked home quite late, and I saw one British cycling, he asked me for a light, and I was worried. Did he intend something, or did he want to check if I was ok or not? I was trying to reach my home, running walking running walking, like I was running away from something!

Paranee

Being alone was a source of apprehension; being outwardly distinct from mainstream society intensified students' fear, especially at night, when danger was amplified by the chance of meeting drunks. Indeed, drunkenness was associated with aggression until the end of the sojourn, to the degree that many students adopted a strategy of withdrawal from society at night:

I don't think it's wise to go outside at night because I always heard about, well people talking about the drunk men. I feel the place is quite dark so makes you feel insecure.

Ning

Darkness, the outdoors and drunkenness were negatively linked, and I was minded that a similar strategy of avoidance is also undertaken by an increasingly nervous host community in reaction to a rise in alcohol-fuelled aggression. This is pointed out, not to diminish the especially vulnerable status of the foreign visitor, but to offer confirmation for students' fears. Anti-social behaviour is feared by both the host and visiting student population: lawless teenagers and alcohol-related crime have increasingly become subjects of media attention and government intervention policies. Though international students perceive themselves to be targeted for abuse for reasons of race, and this cannot be discounted, it can be argued that any point of difference and vulnerability would be sought out by those on the look-out for violence. The outsider, the international student in this case, thus offered a glimpse of crisis in the social fabric that might not be not without foundation.

Suspicion and apprehension were prevalent: even if they had not suffered racial abuse directly, students were disturbed by stories of mistreatment. This is revealed in Rini's uncharacteristic apprehension about moving into a house full of British students at the end of the academic year:

Maybe I am the only Asian. Maybe I am the first Asian who will live there. I don't think they mix. My friend says, 'British are like this, like this'. Maybe something could happen?

Repetition of the word *maybe* betrays fear of the unknown, which along with suspicion, constituted an obstacle to host contact: this finding is reflected in the theory of intergroup contact developed by Stephan and Stephan (1992, 2001), which interlinks anxiety and suspicion with communication breakdown. Indeed, distrust of local people became commonplace; encounters with the host were scrutinised for hints of discrimination; comments and behaviour were questioned and vetted. This is reflected in a Chinese student's explanation for a bus driver's offhandedness:

We are international so they don't care!

It can be surmised that anger over the experience of explicit racism fed suspicion that discrimination by nationality was routine; level of suspicion was a function of mistreatment. There was a consequent resentment of their decision to study in the UK, as Ning's exclamation shows:

Why? Why I came here? I paid a lot for my education and I contributed to the economy here. We contribute a lot of money, aren't locals aware of this?

The PMI initiatives (1 and 2) reflect government awareness of the contribution of international students to the local and HE economy (see The British Council 2002; Blair 2006), but education on the benefits of international education is clearly lacking. Making these explicit might secure a better welcome for international students and it might also diminish their confusion in the mind of the host with the larger immigrant population. Indeed, sympathy with the host resentment of immigration and the consequent pressure placed on local resources was an interesting finding, expressed by many students, including Ning:

If I was a local resident, I wouldn't like it. They feel uncomfortable because their facilities are shared. I become more understanding now. I try to think from their position.

Confusion over British immigration policy was also common: I was often told that 'we' were good to take in so many immigrants (Antonio), and Kiana was not alone in putting the following type of question to me: *Why do you take so many rubbish immigrants?*

Perhaps siding with the host diminished students' sense of vulnerability; by distinguishing themselves from unwanted immigrants, they could assert their superiority over those sojourners whose contribution to British society was felt to be questionable and they could reaffirm their right to be in the UK. This supports the model created by Crocker and Luhtanen (1990) which links outgroup derogation and enhanced self-esteem. The perceived mistreatment of the international student as an unwanted immigrant points to both intracultural tension in British society and to a clash between the politics of immigration and public attitudes to multiculturalism and diversity. My ethnography thus shone a light on the

paradoxical and yet recognisable portrait of British society as simultaneously accepting and unwelcoming. EU expansion and the growth in migrant workers from EU member states make this an increasingly important and contemporary topic. As long as host-visitor relations are fraught with tension, all outsiders to British society might be impacted; the macro context is therefore an important factor in our understanding of adjustment.

Exposure to accounts of racism, which are rarely reported by students or in studies of the international sojourn, had a profound impact on me; I felt disappointed in my own culture and it became hard for me to recognise the UK as the tolerant multicultural society portrayed by Bassnett (1997) and Jackson (1998). I felt guilt and shame that 'we', the host, were perceived to be unwelcoming and uncaring. I started to question the oft-claimed automatic link between international education and increased cultural awareness in the host. Furthermore, I was often placed in the uncomfortable position of being accountable for host behaviour, and my discomfort was exacerbated by awareness of the topicality of immigration and of the rise in violent crime against foreign visitors (see Gaine and Lamley 2003; Russell 2006) and against international and Asian students in particular (Bradley 2002; Pai 2006). These reports suggest a growing antipathy towards the outsider that justified the prevalence of fear, which was therefore hard to assuage. I take encouragement from Gilroy (2007) who argues that Britain is the safest place for immigrants in the western world, given its comparatively high level of tolerance. However, I also heed his Ghandi-inspired response to the question of British multiculturalism: *It would be a good idea*. This study offers support for the implication that multiculturalism has not yet been achieved: only when outsiders can sojourn in a country without risk of aggression can this statement be reversed.

Summary

As this chapter shows, social interaction was a major research category: the ability to make meaningful connections with others had a powerful influence on students' wellbeing, reducing loneliness and homesickness and helping them to cope with the stresses inherent in the move to a new culture. Different friendship groups emerged in this study, with the major patterns of interaction denoting monocultural bonds, evidenced in conational friendships and in bonds with same culture members. This suggests that the gravitation to sameness was key to combating loneliness, which signified not only a lack of human contact but also a lack of common identification. It was observed that identifying features of similarity shifted according to the group's unifying theme, and that prioritisation of common bonds was dynamic, depending on the purpose of group interaction. The discovery of the importance of sameness in a multicultural setting undermines the contrasting claims that cultural uniformity is the product of globalisation and increased culture contact (see Ritzer 1999), and that globalisation will lead to an embracing of cultural diversity (Featherstone 1995). Interaction across national and cultural boundaries was not the norm; it was noted only among those individuals who were determined to realise the universally stated aim of increasing intercultural knowledge. The pursuit of diversity was deviant and stimulated the creation of a special category, known as the '*exceptional student*'. This is an important finding: it is widely claimed that that the international sojourn carries the power to produce the intercultural mediator, but this study found that this potential was fulfilled by only a handful of exceptionally motivated students.

The bicultural bond with the host was valued for its fostering of cultural and linguistic learning; this understanding informed students' disappointment over their inability to form friendships with host nationals. Difficulty was attributed to host indifference and racist and Islamophobic abuse, which fuelled suspicion and acted to entrench segregation. This study highlights the need for research into host attitudes to international education. The common claim that the presence of international visitors can foster cultural awareness in the host society was not upheld in this research; instead the local community was portrayed as

unfriendly and at times threatening. The credibility of this portrait is strengthened by testimony from those students who fell into the *exceptional* category produced by this research. Extending understanding to the experience of other sojourners, it became easy to see how traumatic immersion in British society could be. By documenting informants' exposure to racism, this study asks questions about the receptivity offered by the UK to its growing number of international visitors.

My study shows that interaction strategy is of great significance to the experience and outcome of the sojourn, as it has a direct connection with the level of adjustment students reach. Indeed, interaction was the most important category of analysis, influencing almost every aspect of life for students in this research. Adjustment is both a process and an outcome: the process is influenced by the sojourner's friendship network, therefore outcome is influenced too. Interaction strategies similarly describe action and outcome: if a sojourner pursues a multicultural interaction strategy, the outcome of adjustment should be a pluralist attitude of mind. Conversely, the adoption of the withdrawal or segregation approach to interaction will have negative implications for intercultural and linguistic competence, as this and study has shown. It is therefore important that HEI address both the friendship patterns of their international students and the extent of integration between the host and international student community so that diverse interaction opportunities are maximised. Only this will ensure that intercultural competence, the desired outcome of the international sojourn, is maximised in both host and visitor.

Chapter Eight: Confronting the self

Introduction

This qualitative study offers an account of students' emotional response to the sensitive subject of identity, access to which was really only permitted by the in-depth interview situation. Baumann (1999) distinguishes between personal identity, which gives meaning to the 'I' and social identity, which gives meaning to the 'we'. Individual and collective identity assumed much importance for students in this research, as feelings about their self-image were stimulated by their immersion in a new culture and a new life world. This vindicates Rex's (1991) claim that the self is shaped in social interaction, as students' self-understanding was challenged by a change in role and an unexpected mirror on national culture. Students were sensitive to threats to collective identity, betraying the important overlap between personal and group self-esteem, defined by Giddens (1991) as a confidence in the integrity and value of the narrative of self-identity. Furthermore, personal identity was called into question by changes in domestic status; the move into a distinctly different role during the sojourn often conflicted with that adopted at home, causing discomfort or liberation, and sometimes both. This chapter will examine what happens during transition, when sojourners meet situations that undermine their previously understood and valued self-identity, which is defined by Becker (1968, p. 194) as 'the essential core of the individual, the part that calls itself I, the part that feels, thinks and originates action.'

Dismantling the old role

The process of socialisation is key in understanding what happened to students upon immersion in a new life setting. Biddle (1979) states that most human behaviour is described by role concepts: roles are learned through socialisation, which involves conditioning and

programming in the basic social processes of communication, providing individuals with an understanding of the world and culturally patterned ways of responding to it. Moving into a new role demands a process of resocialisation, which can bring a conflict between the desire to retain old customs and to adopt new patterns in keeping with the changed situation (Gudykunst 1983). Assuming the role of student held many challenges. Firstly, living on restricted means in a shockingly expensive country necessitated a drop in living standards. The return to education marked an unwelcome contrast with the affluent lifestyle students had left behind, as Natalia revealed:

You have to get used to more modest living conditions, you are more aware of what you buy. I did not have to think like that before.

Frugality was key to economic survival. The traditional Higher Education student population may be used to living frugally, but the international postgraduate is challenged, as Smith (2006b) points out, by their contrasting experience of living on a good salary in a country with a lower cost of living. It is often suggested that the transfer to the low economic status associated with the student position can negatively affect the self-esteem of international students used to a more elevated socioeconomic status (see McKintosh and Kubena 1999); however this was not borne out by this study. The high cost of living in the UK imposed only a change in living standards; self-worth remained intact. Undertaking low paid, low skilled jobs that did not require the use of academic or industry expertise did however pose a challenge to the internalised competent self:

I am an employee in a job that doesn't require too much. I do mind the fact that I'm being told what to do by people who have no idea what they're saying. But I need the money!

Antonio

Lack of recognition at work was a source of irritation and demoralisation. However, awareness of the impermanence of their position as low-skilled workers mediated the threat to personal self-esteem posed by the link between professional status and self-worth. It can be construed that the transient nature of the sojourn enabled students to withstand the stress associated with a drop in status and living standards that has been noted among economic migrants from Eastern European countries who tend despite a university education to occupy posts in the low paying hospitality industry (Drinkwater et al. 2006). Returning to an improved socioeconomic status was an aspect of re-entry that many students looked forward to, but this was motivated by the desire to be free of financial restriction rather than to re-establish their self-worth.

Similarly, no link was found between low self-esteem and the subordinate student role, despite the claim by Ballard and Clanchy (1997) and Gudykunst (1998) that the professionally established postgraduate student might resent a loss of power and prestige. It is true that some students observed a move from a position of respect to one of anonymity; but again acknowledgement of the transience of their situation proved useful in offsetting stress:

One minute you're a manager with all this responsibility and then the next day you are something completely different. You're a student now; you get somehow into the role, but you know all the time that you will come back. Natalia

The student role was not a source of demoralisation; on the contrary, studying for a Masters degree in England had been a long-held dream, its fulfilment representing personal and financial sacrifices and being a source of individual and collective pride. As Ryan (2005a) states, an international academic qualification will often elevate social standing at home. This explains why being a student abroad was viewed as a source of prestige. Furthermore, the

rekindling of their intellectual self was greeted with enthusiasm by the more mature students; the academic sojourn represented a reclaiming of their younger self; it offered a therapeutic hiatus in a stressful professional 'adult' life:

I was working, working, working. I worked very hard before. For sure, it's nice to be student again! I think the amount of work is here also very hard, but it's less stress.

It's nice to read and think; I never had time for that.

Natalia

Becoming a university student was rejuvenating, it allowed re-discovery of the authentic self that the burden of work had suppressed: this explains why the return to a hectic life in the home country often constituted a source of dread. By using the term authentic, I am adopting the existentialist understanding of the concept to describe the pursuit of a life that is of one's own choosing, that is unbound by social convention (see Sartre 1943). It can be inferred that the temporary removal from the home world was revealing of just how distanced students had become from the life they had once envisaged for themselves.

Initially unsettling however for the four married interviewees was the move represented by the academic sojourn from a position of dependence at home to self-sufficiency in the new country; this shift in both power and responsibility was grasped immediately, as Xia pointed out:

The difference will be we have to live more independent; that makes me nervous. I have to be strong.

All had left behind a life in which decision-making was predominantly the male domain: assuming power in the new country was unnerving, as they were left bereft of direction. Key

in the transition in self-image from dependent wife to independent woman was taking responsibility for everyday mundane tasks. As Giddens (1991) explains, self-identity is created and sustained through daily activities, the stability of which serves to provide existential security: the anxiety students experienced over the disruption of daily routine can be understood as a predictable reaction to their confrontation with the meaninglessness and fragility of the life they had previously led. The dynamic interplay between external and internal life meant that the establishment of a new daily routine forced a challenge to self-identity. The self was fragile, just a function of the stability of everyday life, reflecting the emphasis placed in Kinch's (1972) theory of self-concept on the power of external responses to effect changes in role and self-image. Feelings of incongruence and anxiety were the initial reactions to the assumption of a new daily regime: however, holding the prominent role led for Xia and Kyoung to a gradual shift in their self-narrative, as they grew to reject the old role of passive wife. The sojourn held transformative potential for those who managed to overcome stress and develop a new self-understanding: Taylor (1994) is one of many cross-cultural theorists to describe disequilibrium as the necessary catalyst of positive change; Gudykunst (1998) goes further in arguing that a temporary disintegration of the self is the basis for personal growth. It seemed to me that Merrill's (1999) observation of the life-changing character of education for mature female students was amplified for women studying abroad. Studying in the home culture may involve regularly moving between the roles of wife and student, but the transfer to a new country meant that for a long period of their life, a distinctly different self had to emerge in order for students to survive: the challenging or comforting return to the domestic role at the end of the academic day was not an option. The new self would have time to become embedded in their personality, which might pose problems for their marriage upon their return: this was revealed in an Egyptian student's reference to her husband's complaint that the sojourn had made her too independent. It became clear that the academic sojourn could have an emancipating influence on female students that might not be brooked at home.

It is important to record that domestic role change was *not* felt to be empowering by Kiana or Cecilia whose experience illustrates how the enduring strain associated with transition can inhibit the opportunity for personal growth. For these two students, independent life was associated with loneliness and isolation, even with grief: removal of the role of wife provoked feelings of personal meaninglessness. In Kim's (1988) model of the stress-adaptation dynamic, such a reaction falls into the definition of chronic role strain, defined as enduring or recurrent problems associated with a role that has the capacity for arousing stress. Similarly, Giddens' (1991) reference to the power of a new role to make an individual's life seem suddenly questionable helped me to understand students' feelings of loss and bereavement. It was possible that the sojourn challenged the durability and continuity of the version of life that they had lived with and trusted for so long. Indeed, Kiana described the sojourn as a frightening portrait of life as a divorcee: this was a subject of recurrent nightmares. What distinguished the life circumstances of these four students was the friendship network to which they belonged: perhaps Xia and Kyoung were more open to the personal benefits of role change because they were sustained by close conational friends, who cushioned them from the emptiness that single life brought.

The most dramatic difference in daily life was noted by those who had left in their home country both husband and children, reflecting how a woman can be further defined by the domestic role when she is a mother. Displacement from the maternal role meant that free time became a common theme:

In Korea, I have many things to do but after I came here I had a lot of time for myself because no children and no husband and no cooking. So every morning, I walked for my health. I think that it's not difficult for me to study in England alone because I have no family, I have no other things. Because I can spend much time only for me, so I feel somewhat happy, yeah!

A detailed description of the daily chores of a working mother who assumed most of the domestic burden was often contrasted with the peacefulness of academic life; years of self-sacrifice set against a new world at which they were the centre. There was a juxtaposition of the pre- and post-children self that might be common to all parents removed from the family, but this was arguably more pronounced among students from cultures where the social division of domestic labour is very traditional. Indeed, observations of gender inequality were frequently made and in the cases of Taiwan, South Africa and Iran, are borne out in studies by (respectively) by Evans et al. (2002), Myakayaka-Manzini (2002); and Mahdi (2001). Furthermore, envious comparisons between home and the British allocation of domestic chores were common:

Usually in Korea even though the woman has a job husband they don't help. Usually woman has much things to do than man. But in UK many man help the woman

Kyoung

In the African culture, if you are a wife, you are a wife. So you have to cook, do the washing, cleaning. In South Africa, women do everything, but here it is easier for a woman.

Cecilia

Exposure to a different culture's approach to gender roles and experience of a life unconstrained by familial obligations combined to offer insight into their own gendered behaviour. The emancipating influence of the sojourn was again revealed, but whether new insight would be beneficial upon their return would be determined by the husband's receptivity to change. There are cross-cultural differences in the distribution of power

between men and women (Hofstede 1991) whose scrutiny by students distanced from the product of socialisation might challenge the norms of both sojourner and significant others.

The pain caused by the absence of children was also a common theme. Students described a difficult internal debate as to whether or not to bring their children to England, as is common among international students who are also parents (Wright 1997). For Cecilia, the stress of managing domestic and academic life motivated her decision not to bring her children; nevertheless, she was disoriented outside her family role. The pull between parental responsibility and academic demands was not resolvable, as stress was created by both the pressures of and liberation from parenthood. This highlights the special place occupied by parenthood in the adjustment process, and lends support to the call made in 2003 by Bowl for research into this growing section of the home and international student community.

Vindication of the decision not to bring children to the new country was offered in the stress suffered by those who assumed the role of single parent during the sojourn. For Kiana and Kyoung, taking sole responsibility for their children was emotionally taxing, and furthermore, it was perceived to lead to a decline in marks, suggesting that the role of parent is an inhibitor of academic performance. Life as a single parent was pressured and harried; this was summed up in one phrase by Kiana: *I have rush every day!* There was conflict between the domestic and academic self which was experienced as an incessant demand on time and attention, as Kiana's comment shows:

Sometimes she wanted to speak with me and I want to just concentrate. But I have to give her time, but then I need to study! I have the hardest time. It is very hard, being on my own, the responsibility, the demands. But I can't be without her.

Failure to dedicate time to either the familial or the academic world provoked feelings of guilt: there was tension over the need to pass the course and to facilitate their children's adjustment to their new life. The pressure exerted by single parenthood was shown to be intensified for international students far away from their traditional support network; still more for those without access to conational friends. Taking responsibility for both self and children called upon reserves of strength informants had not needed to access before; it was a test of but also a means of improving self-efficacy: the word *strong* was often used to refer to a newly acquired character trait. Surmounting the obstacles imposed by childcare in a foreign country paved the way for a new stronger self whose coping abilities had increased: the transformative potential of the encounter with stress was revealed again. Kim's (2001) theory of adaptive transformation is pertinent here: the resolution of temporary crisis promises the transformation of a person toward a new identity which sees a greater capacity to cope with varied environmental conditions.

The opportunity for self-exploration, defined by Giddens (1991) as the unlearning or revising of the constitution of self, was also grasped by the younger students in the cohort whose life with their parents at home contrasted with and left them unprepared for living independently. Consequently, apprehension and excitement were rife in the beginning; as Sartre (1943) observed, anxiety is often the companion of freedom of choice:

I was excited and a bit worried, how am I going to survive here by myself? But I think it's good to live on my own. That's fine; it's OK for me, in charge of myself.

Paranee

Going to the UK to study is like independence. I am nervous, but I have to be strong.

Panya

One may point out that the need to cultivate self-sufficiency is challenging for all students away from home for the first time, but it must be acknowledged that in individualist culture, self-reliance is encouraged from an early age (Hofstede 1991). International students from collectivist cultures may not be used to assuming responsibility for managing their life and are likely to be daunted by role change which sees a shift in the location of power. However, gradually, students felt liberated from parental restriction:

It is nice to choose when to eat; when to go to bed; what to wear. Chinese student

I have control. Here I became young. (Laughter) Olga

Outside the confines of home, students could assume a new persona, one that might not be tolerated in the origin culture. Olga, Ning and Paranee referred to this new identity as *the real me*: again, freedom from conformity permitted the emergence of the authentic self.

Nevertheless, awareness of the temporary nature of the sojourn, noted earlier on as a source of comfort, provoked apprehension over returning to a more constrictive home environment. As Madison (2006) states, development of the self in the face of a new environment is common in all sojourners, but this study suggests that retention of their new identity at home can be problematic. The altered self that is so esteemed in the literature on transition may not be as acceptable at home as it is in a culture with different norms and values. This is reflected in the attention to re-entry that is increasingly paid by researchers.

To sum up, this study shows that adapting to new living circumstances entailed behavioural change and the assumption of unfamiliar self-responsibility. Adult socialisation is a term used by many foundational writers including Becker (1968) to refer to such a process of change in response to new environmental conditions. This effected a gradual modification in self-

construal; the private self was revealed to be a dynamic entity, but the necessary precursor to change was the disruption of routine. Identity was therefore shown to be influenced and modified by social reality. Associated with a change in role were anxiety and stress which, once surmounted, provided the opportunity for self-actualisation, for the emergence of a stronger and often different self.

Protecting national identity

According to Ward et al. (2001), national identification involves people's recognition, categorisation and self-identification as members of a national group, which induces a sense of affirmation and pride, and serves to differentiate them from other groups. Goulbourne (1991) describes nationality as intrinsic to an individual's self-definition and self-evaluation, and Ward et al (2001) link positive self-perception and integrity of the national group, which helps to explain why perceived attacks on national identity provoked intense emotion in informants. In this study, resistance was shown to any challenge to national sense of self, thereby undermining the claims made by Rex (1991) and Barker (2000) that national identity is a dynamic entity, subject to modification. Or perhaps, as Ward et al. (2001) point out, the tendency among sojourners to resist the redefinition of national identity is due to the temporary nature of their sojourn which allows them to retain a stronger identity with their culture of origin. Cecilia's reaction of pride to a rare example of affirmation of a student's national heritage demonstrates the link between national and personal self-worth:

By mistake I typed a small letter for Mandela, and the computer changed it; this made me so proud and happy.

This not only highlights the emotional component of national belonging but also serves to contrast others' reactions of distress to pejorative comments made about their nationality.

This section will show how interpersonal contact in a mixed-nationality setting called into question students' sense of worth, and it will reveal their emotional and behavioural responses to challenges to the national self. Students under discussion in this section are from China, Iran, Russia, Slovenia and Indonesia, all non-western countries. Identity confusion is seen as a predictable feature of transition, caused by the sojourner's confrontation with a new cultural system and an alternative world view (Ward et al. 2001). This is perhaps exacerbated when international students meet disturbing and distorted perceptions of their national self that derive not only from a rival country's interpretation of history and politics but also from a specifically western perspective. It will be shown that students had a unique experience of and reaction to real or perceived questioning of their collective identity, and it is for this reason that their stories are presented separately; however some common themes emerge.

Fighting back

During Ning's first month in the host town, three incidents of discrimination occurred that caused her to reflect on the British image of China: during Orientation Week, a British lecturer derided the shortness of Chinese people; she was shouted at by local teenagers; and she was told to go home by a man in a local shop. Ning's disturbance was manifested in tears and halting, stumbling speech: so intense was her distress that I had to stop the interview twice to comfort her. Unprepared for racism in England, shock was her first response to unexpected attacks on her nationality. Subsequently, Ning reported an increased level of patriotism, which Ward et al. (2001) describe as a common defence against discrimination, a strategy that would allow Ning to preserve a sense of inner assurance:

Impression is I love my country more. I feel more comfortable back home; I used to take my city for granted. I didn't know it's so good.

This was followed by anger directed on the part of the collective, the Chinese, to the source of threat, the British. Mistreatment was attributed to the differential economic status between the UK and China, which shaped public attitudes and instilled in the host a condescending attitude:

I think it's something I guess to do with the propaganda or the media because in maybe many local people's mind, Chinese are very poor, backward, underdeveloped country.

Awareness of China's status as a Less Developed Country, generally defined as any country whose per capita income is low by world standards (The EU-LDC Network 2006), had never been equated with inferiority. A previously robust self-esteem was now challenged by a perceived link in the developed world between poverty and national self-worth. This was a disturbing association perceived by other LDC nationals who suspected that the state of their national economy dictated their reception in the West. This connection between economic power and social standing was also observed by Althen (1994) and Ward et al. (2001) who report that in a cross-cultural situation, differentials in economic and political power mean that a student from a poor country is often perceived differently and treated less respectfully than a student from a wealthy country, by both the host and international student community. Indeed, a clear appreciation of the association between national wealth and deference was illustrated in Ning's gratification over the announcement in 2004 that the British Prime Minister was to visit China in 2005. The growing global acknowledgement of China's economic importance (DFES 2006; Watts 2005a) translated into vindication of the Chinese, strengthening a threatened collective identity. The shift in China's position on the world stage was frequently mentioned by Chinese students in individual and group conversations; Ning's comment is typical:

I know China is developing at a very fast pace. The economic development in the past decade is quite phenomenal; continents will not ignore this market.

The sub-text was clear that the world should not overlook China's significance or mistreat Chinese nationals: as Goulbourne (1991) states, nationalistic sentiment is often transmitted through subtle lines of communication. The use by the Chinese cohort of China's evolution into a global superpower as a defence against perceived derogation made me reflect however on the experience of students from more economically deprived countries.

An attack on the collective self-esteem of Chinese students was further represented in this study by widespread confusion over the national status of Taiwan and the dissociation of Taiwanese students from China; their disparaging attitude towards China provoked much resentment:

This afternoon, the lecturer asked who's coming from China, then who comes from Taiwan. Well, when they talk about China, Taiwanese students don't raise their hand, they don't think they belong to China. They do belong to China! But they don't think so.

Ning

How can they claim not to be part of China? They are all from China! Why wouldn't they want to belong to such a big country? We would not destroy Taiwan, we would help it!

Chinese student

Anger over the denial of political reality and the implicit rejection of Chinese patronage was complemented by disbelief over the notion that China was a threat to Taiwan. Investigation into the British classification of the two states shows that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (2006) does not recognise Taiwan as a separate country, but as a province of China. However, this is not widely understood in Britain, even among university staff - *they are*

educated, they should know! (Ning) - and the paradoxical inclusion of Taiwan in the FCO's profile of countries adds to the confusion (ibid). Indeed, disquiet over the British popular and political distinction between China and Taiwan was exacerbated upon discovery that Chinese students had to register with the police, whereas those from Taiwan did not:

Why? Not Taiwanese, not Hong Kong people, not Pakistanis, not Indians, not Japanese! Yes, I can only find Chinese! Ning

Incensed over the insult to China, Ning asked me to find out the reason for this policy; I was informed by the local police that registration policy was politically-motivated, decided by national government: this was verified by the Home Office (2003). This did little to reassure Ning and her compatriots, and was awkward for me too, as I felt somehow implicated: the complicated link between a country's nationals and government policy was again revealed. Indeed, the impact of British national policy on the sojourn experience cannot be underestimated: this was particularly noticeable in the area of visa and immigration policy, decisions on which often negatively affected non-EU students' self-image.

The Taiwanese perspective on intergroup tension, which served as a microcosm of the larger hostility between Taiwan and China was revealed in conversation with Richard:

There is a real split; Taiwan belongs to China, and the Taiwanese don't want to acknowledge it, which makes the Chinese annoyed.

Denial of political reality was a self-protective mechanism, manifested by all of the Taiwanese students I spoke to: wilfully avoiding recognition of unpalatable information safeguarded their sense of security. They were clearly nervous about both their political future

and the current academic environment: by questioning their right to sovereignty, Chinese students perhaps represented a destabilising force. As Brewer (2000) argues, ethnography often reflects larger social and political realities, and indeed Taiwanese-Chinese tension reflected growing and intense speculation over reunification between Taiwan and China after more than half a century of Taiwanese independence (McCurry 2005). Anxiety was high among Taiwanese students who were particularly unsettled by the announcement of Tony Blair's impending visit to China: concern that Taiwan would soon cease to be protected by the West, given the potential income from China, was not without justification, according to an article by Watts (2005b). Whilst Chinese students' self-esteem was buoyed by the world recognition increasingly shown to China, Taiwanese students' anxiety over the return to Chinese control was perhaps a glimpse of the challenge to identity that a change in national statehood would bring. As Baumann (1999) points out, group identity offers confirmation of the self, but changes in what constitutes that identity can be destabilising.

This study reveals a tendency to react to demoralisation by denigrating the source of threat to national self in order to maintain a positive social identity: this is described by Branscombe and Wann (1994) as out-group derogation, a defensive strategy which is used to protect a threatened self-esteem. Indeed, the models of intergroup conflict put forward by Crocker and Luhtanen (1990) and Branscome and Wann (1994) helped me to understand the behaviour of students in this research: collective identity is portrayed as an important aspect of an individual's self-concept, and as the desire to see the self favourably is powerful. When another group represents an esteem threat to identity, out-group derogation is used to repair and improve self-esteem; maintaining or restoring a positive social identity is seen as essential to the integrity of the in-group. According to Gudykunst (1998), the tendency towards derogation rises in proportion to level of collective self-esteem, which was illustrated in Ning's negative stereotyping of the British as cold and unreceptive and of the Taiwanese as condescending and exploitative:

The Taiwanese tend to look down upon the Chinese, yes, they think they are better.

(Ning whispers) We don't like the Taiwanese, especially the businessmen, because they tend to bully our workers when they invest in China- low wages... no health insurance.

The Taiwanese tendency to cast the Chinese as bullies with whom contact should be avoided can meanwhile be understood as a way to assert both difference and distance from China. In both cases, a positive self-concept was maintained through group-enhancing social comparisons. This study therefore offers support for Gudykunst's (1998) claim for a link between favourable comparisons between the in group and out-group and the development of ethnocentric attitudes, which confers superiority on the origin culture and excludes the notion that all cultures are equally valid (Althen 1994).

Culture learning is universally credited with improving cross-cultural communication, and yet my growing awareness of tension between Taiwanese and Chinese students meant that I became less confident with either group, censorious of the vocabulary I used in class and in conversation when mentioning nationality. Vocabulary that hinted at Taiwanese sovereignty could be offensive to Chinese students, and the blanket use of the term Chinese for both groups also felt inadequate. My confusion was exacerbated by the universal paradoxical habit among Taiwanese students of describing their ethnic heritage as Chinese (customs, proverbs, names, medicine and food), whilst their national and political status was unquestionably Taiwanese. This tension remains unresolved, just as (and maybe because) the larger political tension between Taiwan and China lies unresolved. I realised that a complex task faces those working in an international environment if they wish to be sensitive to the nuances surrounding the sojourn experience which is mediated by political and economic realities as well as historic factors.

Feeling stigmatised

The following account of suffering endured by Kiana over challenges to her Iranian and Islamic heritage sheds a light on the experience of sojourners from countries with a questionable global standing. Rebuttal of inferiority characterised the Chinese response to challenges to national identity, standing in stark contrast with Kiana's acquiescence with negative perceptions of Iran. Self-categorisation as a *bad, rubbish nationality* began on the first day of arrival in the UK as Kiana waited to pass through Immigration at Heathrow Airport:

For a good nationality, there was one queue, but we have to wait with Pakistan, Afghanistan, lots of poor, bad nationality, same queue, and I was thinking 'oh, look at him; we are the same, the same situation.'

Intense self-denigration characterised Kiana's reference to her nationality; self-loathing vocabulary was matched by scowls and grimaces, sighs and tearfulness. Fear of disclosing her nationality was unremitting, caused by a perception that people shrank away from her when she did:

I feel it here (pointing at her throat). Really difficult. I say I am Iranian. But after that I'm embarrassed. I know I am Iranian, and it's a shame for me.

As Quarantelli and Cooper (1972) argue, it is the perceived rather than the actual response from others that more often determines self-concept. Cooley (1972) describes this perceived response as the self-idea, the imagined effect on another's mind that can stimulate feelings of pride or mortification. Indeed, feelings of anxiety and shame accompanied Kiana throughout

the sojourn, deriving in this instance from an international association between Iran and Islamic terrorism:

At the moment, we are a big question. People in Europe think bad about our government, and they don't know about the people. We don't want our government, but everybody think we want. So they think we are very fanatic. So really I don't want to say I am Iranian because to be honest with you, everybody thinks we support terrorism.

Revealing her national identity was full of risk; Kiana felt she was treated as the representative of Iran, responsible for and tarnished by its shortcomings. According to Briggs (2001), this confusion of foreign nationals with the activities of their country is commonplace, sometimes taking the form of punishment of individuals for their country's perceived crimes. The fear that Iran enjoyed a poor standing in global politics is justified by its inclusion in Bush's axis of evil (Amanpour 2001), but internalising the attribution of menace to and consequent vilification of Iran had severe consequences for Kiana's self-esteem. This study therefore indicates a link between a country's global status and personal self-worth that was also observed by Stephan and Stephan (1992) and Paige (1993), making us particularly aware of the psychological impact on Muslims of Islamophobia, now the main source of bigotry in the UK (Bunting 2006; The Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding 2007).

Giddens (1991) argues that self-esteem is continually vulnerable to the reaction of others, and indeed confidence in the integrity of self-identity was threatened by an observable link in the British media between Islam and terrorism. The increasing association in western countries between Islam and terrorism (Freedland 2005; Omar 2006) had an impact on both security and self-image. Fear of negative judgement intensified following terrorist acts such as the

Madrid train bombing (March 11 2004) and the Beslan School bombing (September 1 2004) when Islamophobia was at its height. Indeed, Olga's confession to antipathy towards her Muslim peers following the latter incident tended to justify Kiana's unease:

Maybe they could be terrorists or they could support them because it's part of their religion, maybe deep in themselves they do.

Frequent exposure to such sentiment has led Omar (2006) to claim that being Muslim in a Western country is characterised by inner turmoil and a drive to protect a vulnerable self-esteem, an assertion that is supported by the Muslim Council of Britain (2007). Branscombe and Wann (1994) however identify a connection between such a drive and the extent of identification with the threatened group. The rejection of Islamic rule in Iran implied a low cultural identification, with the effect that Kiana showed complicity with slights against her nationality and religion:

When I go to some place and there are lots of English people, I feel they look at me. I think I am bad, I am extra, maybe they don't like me. I don't blame them; I am Iranian.

This study therefore reveals that world politics and degree of patriotism influence sojourners' well-being and response to injury. It is possible that access to a conational friendship group might have helped to stabilise and bolster self-esteem; yet Kiana rejected offers of friendships that would have performed this function.

So common in Kiana's self-description were the words *rubbish*, *bad*, *useless* that one felt that her national identity had become stigmatising: indeed, Sobal (1999) states that it is common for stigmatised people to have a negative social identity, for stigma to be incorporated into

their self-evaluation. Using Goffman's (1963) definition of stigma as attributes that disqualify a person from social acceptance, including physical deformities, character blemishes and group stigma, we can see that the latter is relevant to Kiana who perceived Iranian nationality to be shameful. Frable et al. (1990) argue that society can make an individual culturally valued or stigmatised, but it was Kiana who cast herself as unwanted in England. Frable et al. state that sometimes the variation from the norm is so significant that everything about the person is understood in terms of a master status condition. Those with such a condition are likely to be mindful in social exchanges, paying close attention to how interaction develops and trying to negotiate and manipulate unpredictable social environments to help them to avoid the pitfalls associated with social contact. Indeed, to cope with the group stigma of being Iranian in a Western country, Kiana closely monitored her behaviour in public in an attempt to ward off 'stigmatising acts' (ibid), such as staring or disapproval, as the following fearful comment reveals:

Just I try to be careful, to not be rude, and just sit in the corner some place, not talk too much because of the accent. Keep away, be polite. Just I try to be good, don't make trouble for them. I keep out of their way, not to bother them, you know.

Such attempts to minimise the impact of her presence on host society must have been, as Frable et al. point out, exhausting. However, according to Goffman (1972), manipulation of the communication process is key in reducing anxiety, as it allows the stigmatised individual to control and shape the reactions and perceptions of others. More mindful still was Kiana's pressure on her daughter to assimilate English norms, including the food eaten, religion practised and the language spoken at home: this sits at odds with the dedication of most immigrants to the retention of national heritage in their children (Kim 1988). Losing their Iranian identity was the route to acceptance, which Sobal (1999) describes as the central aim of a stigmatised person's life. Furnham (1993) and Hofstede (2001) link the assimilationist

approach to adjustment with host intolerance of diversity; however, Kiana's case indicates a need to acknowledge that sojourners may be driven by the need to lose a tarnished heritage.

Setting the story straight

By following the individual experiences of Natalia and Olga, this section shows what can happen to an individual's self-esteem when they confront an unrecognisable reflection of their collective identity. Derogation of Slovenian and Russian identity took the form of misperceptions of historical and economic conditions; restoring national pride meant rejecting and correcting inaccurate judgements. Natalia's awareness of a widespread and unsettling ignorance of Slovenia was raised upon disclosure of her nationality; this was reinforced by misperception in the British media:

I have learned that Slovenia is rather an unknown country. Emotionally, I don't like this, it is sad.

It was mirrored to Natalia that Slovenia did not exist, and this caused feelings of disorientation and insignificance, underlining the central position of nationality in proving an individual's self-worth. When the national status of Slovenia was acknowledged, it was commonly reduced by the media to a former Soviet satellite, to an East European country with a low GDP, which was further unsettling:

Slovenia has this issue that we are always put to this Eastern Europe, and we don't like it! Slovenia was never under the Russian East block. We look to ourselves more like being part of central Europe in terms of culture, mentality, and also the level of development. You are aware of that, being seen as this really Eastern Europe. It's not nice to see how others see you. It's not how we are.

Natalia's observation was right: newspaper reports on EU accession clearly placed Slovenia among Eastern European states (The Times, 29-4-04; The Guardian, 28-4-04), and in 2006, the BBC was still referring to Slovenia as a former Communist bloc country (BBC 2006). Misrepresentation of historical and current economic conditions was a source of irritation, resulting in Natalia feeling misunderstood and devalued. It is possible that linking Slovenia with the former USSR reminded her of a colonial past, of a subservient role that she and her compatriots wanted to forget. Her reaction to distortion was to adopt group-enhancing behaviour, raising the profile of Slovenia and allying it to the West, thereby restoring her country's integrity. Reflecting a common tendency among immigrants and sojourners (Furnham and Bochner 1986; Cushner and Karim 2004), she saw herself as a national ambassador, informing people as often as she could of her country's assets. Such patriotic behaviour was permitted by a high degree of identification with her country; however, it was not accompanied by derogation of the source of the threat to social identity, which tends to be commonplace (Crocker and Luhtanen 1990; Branscombe and Wann 1994).

Natalia wasn't to know that rebranding Slovenia as a western country constituted for Olga a slight on Russian national pride to which she in turn reacted defensively:

I know that Slovenia is part of East Europe, but she doesn't like this. She would like to show people that Slovenia is a western country, and they have a lot of influence from Germany, and nothing in common with Russia. And she always highlights this; I don't like! I wanted to say, 'of course you have something from the Eastern Bloc!'

Olga's exclamatory speech reflects a protective reaction to misinformation about the USSR that was not unlike Natalia's patriotic response. As Rex (1991) points out, identity is highly charged emotionally: "the individual who has achieved identity does not merely know himself

or herself. He or she also has a positive emotional attitude towards that which he or she knows.” (p.6). Perhaps rewriting Soviet history reminded Olga of Russia’s once-powerful position, which has slowly been eroded (Page 2005): attachment to historical truth might be construed as a way to hang onto former regional dominance. Olga’s response was to research the position of Slovenia in the history of the Soviet Union:

I went to the library and I checked the reference books, just to make sure myself.

Maybe I am wrong? It’s like fun for me, when people try to deny, or they forget about the Second World War. We are not so bad! And I was right. I didn’t say. It’s enough for me to know.

My own research tells me that Slovenia joined Yugoslavia in 1929, became a socialist republic in 1945, and won independence in 1989. Olga was right; it appeared that Natalia had engaged in wilful denial of historical facts; perhaps this was an attempt to assert independence in the face of a powerful regional force. In contrast, Olga’s self-esteem was sufficiently intact that she didn’t feel the need to broadcast her research findings; her own sense of affirmation was sufficient. This could be attributed to an unassailable sense of national self-worth that derived from Russia’s position as a former world superpower and member of the G8: the link between global standing and individual self-esteem was further underlined.

Manipulation of reality as a way to maintain the integrity of a group’s narrative was a common theme in this research, also evidenced in Taiwanese students’ self-denial of the truth of their relationship with China. Boski (1994) states that cultural identity is anchored in self-definitions based on knowledge of cultural heritage; however, this study shows that self-definition can be based on differing and apparently selective interpretations of cultural and political history. As Mechanis (1974) argues, misperceptions of reality can aid coping and alleviate discomfort: reality is therefore a social construction; perspectives are shared and

socially reinforced. By questioning received historical and political 'truth', students might feel that they were posing a challenge to the integrity of their ethnic group. Hence, there were conflicting views of the same situation, with similarity shown in students' patriotic and protective stance. The urge to protect the national self dictated a coping strategy that did not always involve an accurate perception of reality; White (1974) explains that avoidance of accurate information can contribute to keeping the internal structure constant and maintaining a sense of worth. Avoidance of unexpected discrediting of national self was paramount; an undesirable image mirrored in interaction with others could not be entertained.

Refusing stigma

This study shows that the threat to collective self-esteem is not always external: for Rini, the source of derogation of Indonesian integrity was her own compatriots, manifested in their euphoric reaction to success in finding a European boyfriend. By defending her country's right to equal status with the West and rejecting a judgement of Indonesian or Asian inferiority, Rini repudiated the status-enhancing power attached to association with westerners, and thereby revealed the uniqueness of response to attacks on national integrity:

They think that foreigner, European or American, are better than Indonesian. They feel very, very proud if they got boyfriend from foreign. But, hey, come on! I mean, you can be happy, it's ok, but don't make them too high. Because if you make them too high, they will look at you lower. They think that foreigners, I mean western people, are higher than them, I don't know, they smarter, they clever, but no! No way!

Althen (1994) links GDP with power in personal relationships, but for Rini, the notion of inequality was intolerable; her defiance shown in tone and vocabulary. Self-validation

through the attraction of a western boyfriend implied that being Asian was stigmatising. Byrne (2001) defines stigma as a mark of disgrace or discredit that sets a person aside from others; it signifies prejudice based on negative stereotyping, the labelling of a person as inferior. However, Rini refused to accept that the West's economic power conferred superiority. Nevertheless, Kiana observed a trend among Asian students to adopt western fashion that she interpreted as a desire to assimilate western characteristics:

If you come from Asia, you have lots of complex inside. That's why you will see Asian people, they try to colour their hair, wear your clothes, because they want to be similar to you western people. They want to be just same as Europe. They have complex like me!

The discrediting label of being non-western might be lessened through the assumption of a different outer appearance: choice of dress could communicate distance from the origin culture. As Geertz (1973) explains, symbols are extrinsic sources of information that are deliberately chosen. But clearly, Kiana couldn't know what purpose Asian students had in mind when choosing their clothes and it would be predictable that she would attribute to all non-westerners the desire to lose their heritage, given her urge to distance herself from her origins. Meanwhile, Rini's refusal to correlate self-worth with economic level could be attributed to many factors, including high collective and/or personal self-esteem and a high attachment to the home country. Rejecting low status appeared to be essential to the preservation of personal and national integrity, and it seemed to act as a mirror on a growing global movement to obstruct western domination of the world economy and ideology (see Todres 2002).

This section demonstrates that the international sojourn often involves encounters with images of national identity that can be unsettling. In this study, responses to assaults on the

national self included self-defence and attack; the integrity of the self appeared key to emotional well-being. Deviance is shown in the person of Kiana who was motivated by dislike of the Iranian government to reject her nationality and assert her difference: it can also be construed that intense emotion was expressed in a setting that permitted a freedom of speech that was punishable in Iran and that had therefore been long suppressed. This is a correlation supported by Mahdi (2001). Collective self-esteem had an important influence on relations with others. Kiana's acceptance of inferior social standing meant that she pursued a marginalisation strategy; Ning's experience of racial abuse increased her identification with her country and led to an interaction strategy of segregation; those students (Rini and Natalia) who sought to protect national identity without derogating the out-group usually pursued a multicultural strategy of interaction. This observation helps to answer the questions posed by Ward et al. (2001) at the end of their thesis on culture shock:

- do positive in-group perceptions always entail negative out-group judgements;
- is self-esteem dependent upon out-group denigration;
- is it possible for ethnic groups to retain their heritage and maintain a harmonious relationship with other groups?

This study notes that rejection of denigration and affirmation of national identity did *not* automatically dictate retaliation: the maintenance of a positive self-concept was *not* necessarily ensured through favourable comparisons between the ingroup and the derogating outgroup. Thus, the maintenance of a secure national identity was *not* incompatible with acceptance of others. On the other hand, even among those students who pursued a multicultural strategy of interaction, national identity was seen to be a fixed part of the self, to be protected from challenge or threat. The notion that the national self is open to qualification during the international sojourn was not supported; the dynamism suggested in attitudes to the personal self was not established with regard to the collective self.

Reflections on faith

Though a number of faiths were represented in this study's homogeneous sample, under discussion in this section are Muslim students, whose devotion was either robust enough to endure transition or whose expression of faith underwent modification. Christian, Hindu and Buddhist identity is not discussed because these faiths were not topics of conversation either in or outside the interview situation: this reflects the findings of a small study of religious devotion in the international student context made by Lee and Bradley (2000). Geertz (1973) describes people as meaning-seeking animals who use religion to make sense of life. This made me question whether Muslim students sought more existential comfort from Islam during the sojourn than did students of other faiths. Finally, however, I heeded Baumann's argument (1999, p. xxx) that identity only assumes importance when it is challenged: 'no thoughts are given to identity when 'belonging'; comes naturally, when it does not need to be fought for, earned, claimed and defended.' Perhaps religious identity became preoccupying for Muslim students in an era of global tension between Islam and Christianity, particularly in a Western country that Omar (2006) describes as being obsessed with Islamic terrorism. On the other hand, in its groundbreaking survey of British Muslims, Channel 4 (2006) found that 93% of respondents said that religion was important, therefore it is possible that informants would mention their faith at some point over the course of a year.

Ramadan was the vehicle through which Muslim students spoke about and reinforced their faith; its completion seemed central to the integrity of their religious self:

I'm so used to it from when I was small. It's part of life, you get used to it. Like you brush your teeth, every day you do it, and if you don't do this, you feel (grimaces). It is tradition.

Kiana

So intertwined was Ramadan with the self that cheating was not contemplated despite being far away from home and from conformity pressure. Nevertheless, fasting for a month in a Christian country was challenging:

It is hard without the support of the atmosphere around you in your country and the Islamic world.

Mohamed

Furnham and Alibhai (1985) claim that the sojourner is usually attuned to similarities as a source of validation of their own cultural identity; however, a reassuring mirroring of students' values and behaviour was not offered by the host town whose population of 170,000 is 98% white Anglo-Saxon origin (ONS 2001). Jacobson-Widding (1983) argues that confrontation with a new social structure can call into question and invalidate a person's own moral universe, but this was not true of religious identity, as despite many differences in devotion and practise of ritual, confirmation of the self was sought out from the Islamic community created in the immediate student environment.

Kiana represents the only case of deviance: observation of a deterioration of life in Iran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution meant that she was keen to exorcise her religious self. Rex's (1991) comment that religious values are deeply embedded in social institutions is likely to be more pertinent in fundamentalist society, making it hard to distinguish religion from culture. Indeed, Kiana's conversation made it clear that no aspect of home life was untainted by politico-religious corruption. Though her faith pre-dated the Revolution, the perception that Iran was under foreign occupation by corrupt Islamic fundamentalists acted to disrupt Kiana's affiliation with Islam:

We lost our tradition, our country, and our freedom, because of this Islam. Something bad happened to my country! When I hear the voice of Koran, it makes me really sad. At the moment, Islam is killing people.

Loss of faith was a source of sadness, but the abandonment of a formerly intrinsic part of her identity represented defiance of and distancing from an unwanted regime: the integration of belief and dissent was impossible. The first way in which dissent was manifested was in rejection of wearing the hijab, which symbolised simultaneously freedom and oppression:

I'm happy here! I feel I am a person; I am a real person, not animal. I have my freedom. I can put anything I want. You can't imagine. I think here I exist as a person, as a human, not as animal! I can show to my hair sunshine! When you put a scarf, you think, I'm really sorry to say this word, but you think you as an animal! When I go to my country, I am equal an animal. Exactly after I put my scarf, I will be angry.

Taking off the hijab in the UK liberated Kiana from servitude; it restored her humanity. Compulsion to wear a headdress that symbolised allegiance to Islam took away her self-control; it made her feel insignificant. Giddens' (1991) link between freedom of choice and disembodiment is reflected in Kiana's likening of life in Iran to non-existence and in England to rebirth. In the UK, Kiana could voice her feelings of anger and revulsion; indeed, integral to the assertion of her separate self was the rejection of Islam and of the conformity pressure exerted by her Muslim peers:

The Omani girl, she say to me, why you don't put a scarf, why you put this way, why you change your hairstyle, why you laughing with the man?' I say, 'I want do this, that's it!'

Muslim students become associated for Kiana with oppression, and with the imposition on Iran of an Islamic state by the Arab world. Indeed the confusion of Iranians with Arabs was a constant source of irritation:

They are Arab, we are not. We are different. We don't want to speak Arabic; we don't want to have similarity with them. Nobody likes Arabs. At school, we have to learn Arabic, but after that, just forget it. It is a symbol you are religious. Fortunately I forget it.

Antipathy towards Arab students enabled Kiana to preserve her integrity but it also consolidated her isolation: apparently vilified by westerners she nevertheless withdrew from the immediate representatives of Islam. Preservation of her distance from Islam was prized more highly however than the sense of fellowship and belonging that she could derive from shared religious identity. According to Becker (1968), it is important to psychological health that people maintain their self-identity, the essential core of their self. This study shows that students' understanding of this essential core varied greatly; in this instance, Kiana was driven by what she was *not*.

Self-validation also derived from distancing herself from the association between religion and the economic backwardness of impoverished Muslim countries:

I'm sure she (Omani student) think I am wicked because I don't want to do fast, I am western, I am not Muslim. And I will be happy if she think this way about me. I think, here is developed country, and everybody eat, so I eat. Undeveloped country, poor country, like Bangladesh, they don't even have water. When you don't have anything, you want to put something in your gap to make you feel strong, to show to another

people 'we are exist.' Me, I don't need to tell somebody 'I am exist', I don't need to show I am a Muslim. I am something.

Rejection of the balm of religion signalled a new-found confidence in her rightful place in the world; it also indicated a proud dissociation from the helpless state that poverty brings. The view that faith helps people to cope with the despair created by poverty is not new: according to Hofstede (2001), people use religion as a way to cope with life difficulties. However, the link Kiana made between poverty and delusion was not symptomatic of empathy with the dispossessed, or of affiliation with Marx's (1844) exhortation to people to replace the opium of religion with affirmative action, but a declaration of distance and superiority. As previously observed, derogation of others is often the route to preserving or raising self-esteem. Kiana embraced the association of Less Developed Countries with low status, which other students fought, but this was surely the result of differing identification with the home country and government.

Finally, an evolution in attitudes towards religious heritage emerged from my own confrontation with England as a Christian society, an unforeseen product of this research. This was first revealed to me when students marked the Easter holiday by sending me a card: the attribution of importance to Easter was a rational conclusion drawn from students' observation of shop displays, media coverage, institutional holidays and community and church events. This gave me pause to consider how far British life is governed by religious history and symbolism. It was disorienting to realise that I was a prisoner of my heritage in a way I had not hitherto acknowledged. This encounter with the self is usually the product of travel (Taylor 1994), but in this case was the gift brought from cultural outsiders:

Tomorrow is Good Friday, and I am struck by the number of students wishing me 'Happy Easter', as if it is a really special occasion. I probably think it isn't special to

me, yet would I feel odd if at this time of the year I didn't celebrate? Am I so caught up in my culture that I don't perceive the uniqueness of this time of the year, and do I need the students to reflect back to me its significance?

April 8

Suddenly I was face to face with my own culture, bringing home to me Spradley's (1979) reference to the revelatory power of ethnography at home for the researcher. The Institute of Public Policy Research (2007) reports that most British people no longer consider the UK to be a Christian country; however I came to realise that religious culture was imprinted in British rituals and institutions, and was therefore part of how we see ourselves. The UK might be the most secular country in the world (Rex 1991; Channel 4 2006; Institute of Public Policy Research 2007), but it would be wrong to assume that religious influence is minimal; it was with surprise that Britain was revealed to be more Christian than I had supposed. I realised that I was clearly at home in what I would now think of as a Christian country, and that part of my sense of self was inextricably linked with Christianity.

Summary

This study shows the self to be constituted by social, religious and cultural influences, which were revealed to and sometimes questioned by students during the sojourn. Personal identity was shown to be pliable, probably because the impact of change in daily routine could not be avoided. The assumption of a new role in life in England provoked feelings of stress and rootlessness, but these were the preconditions for the establishment of a new, usually stronger self-understanding. However, the maintenance of collective self-esteem was found to be an important driver among students whose defensive and emotional responses to challenges to national identity undermine the common view that identity is dynamic, that it is redefined in response to new situations: instead it was mostly found to be fixed and unchanging, to be

protected in the face of change. Like Gilroy (1997) and Woodward (1997), I found that group identity was treasured as a static entity, marking difference and offering stability. Perhaps the explanation for this lies in the fact that group identity is sustained by group sameness; that deviation from commonly shared perceptions undermines the integrity of the group; the group survives only if consensus is maintained. Particularly challenging for students appeared to be their immersion in a western country; the term 'western' was recurrent in discussions of identity. Consistent with a growing movement to question the economic and cultural hegemony of the West, there was evidence of a rejection of superiority based on wealth and power. This sat alongside attempts to borrow the status conferred by economic strength that betrayed little insight into the global power struggle. Such inconsistency can be seen to reflect the conflict of opinion in larger society and an unresolved ideological battle.

Chapter Nine: The end of the journey

Introduction

I had an experience, not completely good, what I got is experience, that's what is important, it is experience. It is something that others cannot take away from you, and it changes you.

Ning

Chapter Three presented the reader with a picture of students' experience at the start of their academic sojourn. The feelings they described are recognisable as the product of culture shock, and are symptoms that are well documented in the literature on transition. The following chapters took the reader through different aspects of the journey through life in the new country, with the inductive approach capturing issues of importance to students. This chapter presents the end stage of this journey; it offers an insight into how adjusted students felt by the end of their year-long stay, and presents their reflections on their evolution over the year and their feelings about going home.

Reaching a place of ease

A temporal relationship between length of stay and a feeling of adjustment was observed in this study, as students generally described themselves as more and more settled in their new environment as time went by. When I asked in the final interview how they felt after living in England for a full year, the answers point to the picture painted in the models of adjustment: all had negotiated their everyday life in England so that the anxiety they had initially experienced had largely disappeared. In interview 4, the following oft-used vocabulary conveys students' calm state of mind: *calm, at home, peaceful, okay, comfortable*. I highlight

here the emotional aspect of the term 'adjustment' to refer to a subjective feeling of peace, of fit between self and the environment; the level of fitness objectively realised might clash with self-perception. Kiana, for example, remained marginalised throughout the sojourn, and yet she uses evocative language to capture the sense of ease that time spent in the new culture allowed:

I didn't have enough confidence, always I was telling her (her daughter) don't do this, it's going to be rude, don't do that. Now I know better your traditions, your culture, what I have to do and what I don't have to do. Before I didn't know if I put a foot wrong but now I know everything, I can walk with confidence.

Gradual acquisition of cultural knowledge alleviated difference and discomfort; it permitted a feeling of both ease and mobility: this is a telling metaphor, as many students described themselves in the early stage of feeling paralysed by unfamiliarity with local norms. There was variability in their judgment of how long it had taken to feel adjusted and of the factors that eased their adjustment: most commonly mentioned were personality, cultural distance and friendship groups. Speed and breadth of adjustment also varied across different aspects of life in England: there was a significant difference between psychological and sociocultural adjustment. The argument made by Brislin et al. (1986), Furnham (1993) and Ward and Kennedy (1999) for a culture learning, informational approach found some support, but this did not mediate every difficulty faced by students during the year. Nevertheless, the picture of distress painted in Chapter 3, at the start of the journey in September 2003, had changed significantly by the time Interview 4 was conducted in September 2004. The decision to follow students over the period of a year was informed by circumstance (the Masters Course lasts a year), but this is now judged long enough for adjustive changes to have been detected.

Learning about other cultures

Change is at the heart of this section on the evolution in students' attitudes towards other cultures. Asked to reflect on their year away from home, all students highlighted a growth in intercultural competence that carried implications for their future professional and interpersonal relationships. Taylor's (1994) transformative learning theory illustrates the learning process of becoming interculturally competent: when a sojourner moves to another culture to live for an extended period, they often experience a transformation out of a necessity for survival and a need to relieve stress and anxiety. This requires the sojourner to look at their world from a different point of view, which is often in conflict with personal values and beliefs: when they have an experience that cannot be assimilated into their original meaning perspective, the experience is rejected or the perspective changes to accommodate the new experience. The reader will recall from Interview 1 that learning about other cultures was understood to be an important opportunity for educational, professional and personal growth, as Antonio commented:

I think I will learn more about myself, I will learn how to approach people. I can learn how to deal with the different situations that I will eventually come across.

Berry (1994) argues that the sojourner's interaction strategy influences the outcome of adjustment, yet notwithstanding previous comments about limited interaction across national groups, *all* students spoke extensively in Interview 4 about their increased cultural knowledge. This is simply articulated by Cecilia:

I think I learned to understand: there were things I didn't know which I now know.

This was a surprise to me; I had expected those who pursued a segregation or marginalisation strategy to complain that they had not maximised the potential of the sojourn to increase their cultural competence. However, the consensus was that mononational friendships limited but did not preclude cultural learning. Gilroy's (2007) work on interethnic understanding offers an explanation for this phenomenon: Gilroy argues that the term *conviviality* can be applied to the harmonious co-existence of different ethnic groups which may not interact more than superficially on a daily basis and yet through routine and regular exposure to diversity they acquire tolerance and sensitivity. The concept of *conviviality* suggests that integration is not the only route to a pluralist society; this is supported by Arora (2005) who defines pluralism as the co-existence, not the integration, of different groups with diverse features. The evidence of this study would appear to support this view.

Exposure to other cultures led to a growth in tolerance and acceptance of new practices and values: the words *open*, *open-minded*, *understand* and *tolerant* were used often to describe how students felt their outlook had changed. Ward's (2001) concern that the sojourn outcome of increased tolerance is hypothesised rather than grounded in empirical evidence was therefore not founded. Tolerance and cultural relativism, defined as the recognition that no single culture has the absolute criteria for judging another (Hofstede 1991), were linked, as the following common refrains illustrate:

I think now I am more open-minded.

Cecilia

I think if I know more about that I will have a more wide mind to accept different things. That's why we say in Chinese, when we travel it's better than reading.

Xia

Love your country, but be open to others' culture, and try to understand them.

Ning

I believe that this multicultural experience teaches us that people are as unique and right in their values, beliefs or behaviours as we ourselves are. Indonesian student

Nowhere else was tolerance more exhibited than in the widespread deconstruction of negative stereotypes and long-held prejudice: in this the role of first-hand experience was key. This was particularly striking in the Taiwan-China dynamic as the two contrasting interview excerpts with Ning reveal:

I don't think we both will treat us as very close good friends. Interview 1

I would correct my statement cos my best friend is Taiwanese. She was very open about the situation in Taiwan and me too. I didn't expect that. In fact it was quite nice. Interview 4

It can be seen that the suspension of hostility demanded by the immediate environment paved the way for the dissipation of national prejudice; contact preceded and stimulated change:

I learned that we don't know enough of each other and because of that perception from both sides might be either wrong or based on a stereotype, perceived different from the other people. Ning

Furthermore, it was understood that such rapprochement could have long-term consequences for intergroup relations. The dynamic link between individual and society was appreciated: if

social stereotypes are shared with other members of our ingroups (Gudykunst 1998), it follows that individual deviation from group perceptions could have a ripple effect. Indeed, that cultural learning influences both sojourner and their immediate social circle was widely acknowledged. Many writers, from Bock in 1970 to Gudykunst in 1998 to Cushner and Karim in 2004, state that increased tolerance transforms sojourners into human bridges between cultures upon their return home: the theory is that the development of a nonethnocentric value system enables the sojourner to go on to become a mediator between cultures (Bochner 1981, 1986). This study points to this potential but has no way of tracking the future impact of such cultural development.

Contrary occurrences, or deviance, must be recorded however: this study shows that the international sojourn does not always produce individuals who are open to and tolerant of difference. External events and larger political realities can impinge on an individual's capacity for flexibility: Olga's Islamophobic attitude was not challenged by exposure to Muslim students, and Kiana did not challenge her stereotypes of Arabs. Moreover, a new stereotype was created with regard to the British which was not undermined by the end of students' stay: as Otten (2003) points out, this can be an unexpected outcome of cross-cultural contact.

Extended contact with other cultures also led to the development of an internationalised perspective. This was voiced enthusiastically by Antonio:

I've learned a lot about life, about the world, it's amazing. I see life in a different way now!

The mononational perspective that students had arrived with had shifted, and this was a particularly poignant change in outlook for Cecilia, who contrasted her increasingly internationalised view of the world with the isolation of South Africa during apartheid (until 1994):

I think I have changed; I like to know what's happening around the world, more interested. The course is international and so I'm more familiar with what's happening and I want to know more. I think that will continue, like when I listen to the news, or newspaper I don't only concentrate on what's happening in my country. I am more aware of things.

Becoming attuned to world events denotes a multinational frame of reference, which is according to Bochner (1986), a common product of both tourism and international education. I would argue that the year-long academic sojourn holds more power than short-stay tourism to effect such a change. Having said that, there is a small but slowly growing body of research into the impact of long-stay tourism on the tourist with which there are many parallels, largely unexplored, with the sojourner adjustment literature.

The mixed nationality context meant that students were inevitably faced with the extent of their own cultural programming: self-awareness was an unforeseen outcome of cross-cultural contact, at once exciting and unsettling. I was put in mind of Adler's (1975) reference to the international sojourn as an encounter with another culture that evolves into an encounter with the self. Removal from the familiar home environment and confrontation with diversity brought cultural habits into sharp focus. The willingness to subject the self to scrutiny is according to Louie (2005) central to the cultivation of meta-cultural awareness, which highlights not the accumulation of knowledge, but the understanding and acceptance of

cultural difference. To illustrate, exposure to differences in accepted levels of physical contact bred awareness and a gradual acceptance of diversity, as the following comments show:

I think Asia is very closed. We don't touch, not hug, not kiss. We are cold. One of the Portugal students is really touching, and I'm like 'oh come on! Don't do that!' But I have to be careful, because I think I offended him. Rini

The problem for me is men. For example, I know somebody, when he saw me, and he kissed me, it was strange for me. I felt shocked. We don't do that, kiss the man. They kiss me without I don't have time to reaction and if I do maybe they think I'm impolite. Kiana

Initial reactions of shock or repugnance to the transgression of physical boundaries were informed by students' socialisation in a culture with differing tolerance for contact: as Gudykunst (1998) indicates, there is a continuum between high and low contact, of which students were unaware before their immersion in a multicultural setting. Learning that there was no absolute right or wrong saw a modification of students' external reaction to difference.

Attitudinal change was irrevocable; it would outlast the sojourn, and would carry implications for future business and interpersonal relationships, its impact extending beyond the individual concerned. Indeed, cross-cultural contact had not only transformed students into global citizens but the acquisition of culture-specific skills had enhanced their employability, equipping them to operate in an increasingly globalised working environment. This is vindicated by the increasing emphasis placed by international companies on intercultural competence as a key management attribute (Cushner and Karim 2004). Furthermore, networking with students from a wide range of national and cultural backgrounds, who may go on to assume high status jobs later on in their country was also frequently mentioned, with

acquaintance with Chinese students cited as an important advantage in a changing world economy:

You would get to know how they think, how they react, how they do certain things in their countries. You can use this later. And I was thinking, perhaps from a professional point of view, that China is now a big market.

Natalia

The maintenance of links established by students during their year abroad has not received much research attention; however anecdotal evidence suggests that some relationships are upheld, with known consequences for collaborative work. This strengthens the notion that the consequences of the international sojourn for professional life can outlast the actual stay (see Cushner and Mahon 2002).

The positive outcomes of the sojourn are queried by Ward et al. (2001), but this study offers evidence of cultural changes that contribute to the formation of a culturally relativist attitude, a non-judgemental mindset that is essential for operating in multicultural society and in multinational business (Hofstede 2001). Gudykunst (1998) developed the term *mindful* to describe the change brought by the multinational context: the development of mindfulness involves the creation of new categories, openness to new information and an awareness of more than one perspective. These are among the developments to have taken place in this study's informants. Taylor's (1994) theory of perspective transformation explains this phenomenon: Taylor argues that old assumptions and expectations are challenged by the new culture, forcing awareness of the cultural component of presuppositions that directly influence the meaning an individual derives from their experiences. The new environment forces a realisation that cultural disequilibrium will only diminish if intercultural competence is developed. Students' interaction strategy influenced the extent of exposure to opportunities for learning and therefore those who pursued a multiculturalist strategy of interaction realised the most change. The call made in Chapter 7 to both students and institutions to maximise the

opportunities for intercultural interaction offered by the international sojourn can be construed as a way not to increase not only student satisfaction with their stay but also the positive outcomes of culture contact for individual and society.

Changing perspectives on life

Reflection on the past year led students to comment extensively on changes in their personal attitudes to life. This common theme of conversation in Interview 4 vindicates the widespread emphasis in the literature on transition on the power of the sojourn to effect changes in outlook. From the earliest to the most recent texts, from Adler (1975) to Thomas and Harrell (1994) and to Ward et al. (2001), the international sojourn is cast as a major life event which carries transformative potential: the findings of this study support this view as all interviewees confessed to life-changing developments in philosophy and behaviour. The term perspective transformation was used by Taylor (1994) to refer to change in cultural outlook, but as this study shows, it can also be related to change in personal and professional attitudes. It must be emphasised that change in personal rather than cultural outlook was the more preoccupying; this is possibly because of the implications of discovery of a new self for personal and professional relationships, and for its potential impact on everyday life. In order to understand the process of change that students underwent, it is useful to think of the sojourn as a therapeutic pause in the life they had thus far constructed. Indeed, Todres (2002) states that psychotherapy involves reviewing and revising the self as previously understood, whilst Giddens (1991) argues that the anxiety provoked by transition threatens existential security and demands the exploration and reconstruction of the self. Away from the routines and rituals associated with home and security, individuals come face to face with 'disturbing existential questions' and the threat of personal meaninglessness (ibid). The challenge posed to self-understanding by the sojourn has been the subject of some attention by psychoanalysts (including David 1971; Garza-Guerrero 1974; Alexander et al. 1976; Golden 1976; Yeh 1976;

Yeh et al. 1981) who have used psychoanalytic theory to understand the confrontation with the self that is implicit in transition. Both the sojourn and psychotherapeutic treatment involve the ‘deconstruction/dismantling of the self’ (Yalom 2001): it is worth considering that the host country acts as a kind of metaphorical therapist, holding up a mirror to the self.

Achieving autonomy was one of the many changes discussed by students, particularly among those who had been under parental control at home and who contrasted freedom of control in the UK with restriction in the home environment:

I have to meet my family every day, sometimes every meal, because we live in the same house. Sometimes, I have to have lunch with them, and then I have to come back home and have dinner again. It's boring. Here, it's freedom. I think I can control more here.

Paranee

Being in control had become important; it was liberating and empowering. An initial source of stress, self-reliance culminated in a growth in self-confidence, as Panya's typical comment reveals:

You don't depend so much on people cos you live alone. Everything you do yourself. I would say now I can depend on myself. You are comfortable to go out there. I could go away again.

Early feelings of disorientation were replaced by new-found strength; fear of being alone contrasted a new capacity to withstand stress. Self-efficacy was therefore the product of the confrontation with hardship: this was the necessary precursor of a universal growth in self-belief. This echoes Kim's (1988; 2001) conceptualisation of the adjustment process as a

dynamic interplay between degeneration and regeneration: the resolution of internal tension leads to a greater pliability and resistance to stress.

Improved self-mastery is cast in the literature on transition as a positive outcome, reflecting ignorance of the fact that international students face re-entry to a culture which might not prize the development of autonomy: this might indicate an ethnocentric attitude to collectivist cultural values. Indeed students' awareness of the transience of their situation led to a widespread apprehension over the imminent return to stricter control, as Olga reflected:

I'm just relaxed. I prefer life more, I'm independent. I don't need permissions. Here, I'm alone, I have to organise myself. I like that. How can I go back?

Aged 21, this was the first time in her life that Olga did not need to defer to parental authority: the freedom afforded by the sojourn could therefore be viewed as a product of removal from family life as well as the immersion in a culture, where individuality is prized over conformity. Indeed, the cultivation of an individualistic outlook, which was elsewhere described as selfish (Paranee, Ning and Kiana), was commonly observed. As previously noted, independence and self-reliance are themes of individualism, as is priority of the self. Could it be that a society high in individualism gave students the freedom to do as they pleased:

I feel I accept something in your culture, which I didn't like before, I think the distance between me and my culture is a bit bigger now, and between me and English culture a bit more closer. I don't bother myself now.

Kiana

I don't care what people think now. I am reluctant now to please someone.

Ning

The elevation of self-direction over public opinion was a new development; however, such an attitude would be met with hostility in collectivist society, where expression of individuality is not so widely accepted (Triandis et al. 1988). Though the end of this study is the last month in England, for students, the journey was not over until they had negotiated the return to their old home world.

Personal autonomy was not just cultivated among young, single students; indeed, the older, married students in the cohort described a similar shift from reliance on their husband to self-direction, and a consequent rise in self-belief and confidence:

I think I can do things better than I did before. I don't need company. Before, I always want people with me. It make me stronger and more independent. Xia

Independence, stress and strength were positively linked; the word *strong* was frequently used to describe changes in the self that had resulted from the resolution of stress. The sojourn was viewed as a testing but life-changing event; it was common to hear students say they would be better wives and mothers because of their improved capacity to bear stress. This was articulated by Kyoung and Kiana (respectively) who overcame the challenge of balancing motherhood and academic life:

Yeah, I can do it, first my kids and study! If I get over it, I become stronger.

I am stronger than before. I am better than before.

This study therefore supports the claims made for the mastery of crisis that is inherent in transition to increase resilience and coping capability (e.g. Kim 1988; Giddens 1991). There is a thin line between an experience that threatens and strengthens the self, however, and on the other hand, Kiana confessed that the life of a single parent student was too hard, that it had almost broken her, proving that the sojourn has the capacity to undermine as well as build character:

I don't want to do it again. I don't want to go through these things again. I have had enough, it was too much to tolerate.

Painful life events might provide the foundation for personal growth, but neither Cecilia nor Kiana felt that this justified the personal cost. According to Giddens (1991), loss and self-actualisation are intertwined; if an individual risks entering a transition in life, they will face stress, but they will develop internal strength as a result. This delicate balance is reflected in this study as students veered between debilitation and pride in their ability to cope, and some would swap a strengthened internal capacity for a less stressful emotional life.

The opportunity for testing and building character was not provided solely by the challenges inherent in transition; this study reveals the unpredictability of life events as unforeseen personal crises compounded the stress imposed by immersion in a new culture. A number of personal and medical problems beset many of the 150-strong cohort of students (physical and psychological illness in self or others, financial problems, political or economic crisis, natural disaster in the home country, accidents and injury, family troubles): distress was exacerbated by their distance from home and their inability to access or offer support. A seemingly high incidence of trauma made me wonder whether the sojourn was the trigger, or whether significant life events are universally experienced in life but are highlighted during the

sojourn and compounded by isolation. For Kiana, such an event was the crisis in her marriage which started in May 2004 and led her to comment:

Now my future is over. That is just my life, it is terrible. My life has a bad taste.

Marital problems were short-lived, but were intensely distressing. If suffering a crisis can improve resistance to stress (e.g. Kim 2001), this did not compensate the temporary deterioration in her relationship. Yet again I came face to face with the personal sacrifices involved in international education, as informants were faced with problems unrelated to and yet intensified by their status as international student.

The most distressing event of personal significance to occur during the sojourn was faced by Xia, whose father became critically ill in April 2004. This was recorded in the field journal on April 19:

Xia says her dad is ill with an immune deficiency, he is having tests, but the doctors don't know what's wrong with him.

Subsequent entries track Xia's concern and stress, which was manifested every time I met her in tears. In May, she found out that her father was dying of cancer. Finding herself far away from home, not being able to support her parents and not knowing whether or not her father would survive until she returned to Taiwan was agonising:

(Crying.) It hurts his body, so he's weak now. I feel I am useless because I can't do anything for them. If I could just stay with him, I would feel better. June 12

Xia told me that her dad has deteriorated badly, the doctors don't know if it's treatable. She was crying as she spoke, streams of tears down her face, had to fetch

toilet paper for her. Said it's the hardest time of her life, she feels helpless, as her parent don't keep her informed, they don't want her to worry. I feel helpless in front of her grief.

June 30

Powerlessness and anxiety are common reactions to serious illness in a loved one (Kritek 1997), but these emotions were understandably magnified by geographical distance.

Sacrificing her study was not an option, given the financial sacrifices already made, but her absence was a heavy burden. At the end of Interview 4 (in August before Xia's return home following dissertation submission), I asked how she thought this event had affected her experience of the sojourn. Through a veil of tears, Xia said that it had instilled in her awareness of her strength of character, as well as a renewed appreciation of the gift of life:

Never remember bad things. Nothing is more important than the life. Life is more important than everything.

We may note and wonder at the differing reactions to personal problems manifested by Xia and Kiana: though terminal illness is arguably more serious than a marital crisis, it was nevertheless Xia who showed more equanimity. Perhaps this is explained by the access Xia had to a conational friendship network which was credited with the alleviation of stress. It might also be a function of personality differences, whose influence has been noted throughout the thesis.

A change in philosophy on life is a common reaction to the confrontation with mortality (Lloyd 1996), but such a reordering of priorities was frequently reported in the final interview, revealing the potential of the international sojourn to alter the future. Removal from familiar routines and the imminence of re-entry prompted an exploration of old

attitudes, and professional life received much attention as quality of life became a priority.

This was acknowledged by Ning as *quite a big change*:

My philosophy is, the most important thing is I have to enjoy what I do. Now if I don't want to do it at all, no matter how high the salary is, I will not get involved. I still want to find a decent job, to be a manager, but it doesn't matter what kind of job, so far as I enjoy it.

The elevation of happiness above financial reward was interpreted as a direct result of freedom from conformity pressure during the sojourn:

Going back means pressure. Here I feel more relaxed. There is no pressure at all. I think if I could stay here I could do whatever I like.

Freedom of choice in individualist culture served to contrast the demands of the ingroup in collectivist society. How sustainable the prioritisation of life satisfaction over career success would be in China was a source of misgiving, and this raises a concern that was preoccupying for those who proposed to change their old life: their evaluation had taken place under conditions that prevailed in the host not the origin culture; there might be a mismatch between their expectations and the receptivity of their home society.

Natalia made a similar critique of her former work ethic, making a commitment to achieve a work/life balance that derived from the period of reflection that the sojourn had afforded:

On your year abroad you have to ask yourself what is not right. I think I appreciate this free time, so now I think I can make a perspective on work. When I go back, I hope I change this so that I will be clever enough not to repeat this mistake again of spending hours, unpaid hours, for no-one to really appreciate. I worked really hard in every job I get. Now I've had time to reflect on that.

Breaking a negative pattern of behaviour would be a significant step, and it would not have occurred without the objective view on her former life that was provided by distance.

Depending on reactions in the professional community, such transformation could have important implications for emotional and physical well-being: it is for this reason that I echo the call made by Martin and Harrell (2004) for research on the attitudes of colleagues of returning professionals.

A similar change in outlook between the beginning and end of the sojourn was Paranee's rejection of a career choice dictated by her family, one that she had initially, albeit reluctantly, accepted. To a home student, the following simple statement would be a common expression of uncertainty over their future career:

I still keep thinking about what I'm going to do after I finish the course.

This statement was qualified however by reference to a pull between the individual and the family that would not be so common in individualist culture:

I know that my family need me to help them but I need to go on my way.

The willingness to prioritise the individual over the group marked a fundamental shift, representing a break from the norm for obedience in collectivist society to family (Hofstede 1991). This was reflected in the contrasting emotional reactions of depression at the start of the sojourn over a feeling of inescapability and elation towards the end when she started to talk about finding *my own path*:

Making decisions and planning things yourself, deciding yourself what is going to come next. If I can change, I will. I cannot figure it out right now.

Previously she had felt a prisoner of *destiny*, a word she used frequently to refer to a life she had no control over; one year later, she was using language that reflected an evolution towards autonomy, thereby calling into question not only family loyalty but also a concept that is fundamental to eastern religion. According to Giddens (1991), belief in preordained determinism offers comfort in a world of seeming chaos, but rejection of the notion of a mapped-out future was liberating rather than unnerving. The positive relationship between self-control and life satisfaction lends support to the argument by Ward and Kennedy (1992, 1993) that an internal locus of control (LOC) has a positive impact on people's happiness level. Locus of control theory posits that internal LOC refers to the perception that events are under personal control whereas external LOC implies the view that events are reliant on fate, luck or chance. Asia and Africa are associated with a more external orientation than Europe, where an internal LOC is more common and is seen as a defining feature of mental health (ibid). The notion that externality has a stress-diminishing influence is described by Ward and Kennedy as a hypothetical generalisation; indeed, their study found that depression was dependent upon an external LOC and this is supported in the person of Paranee. Nevertheless, there was apprehension over her family's reaction to her new-found assumption of control over her own future. It is worth considering that re-entry problems might be greater among those students who, having developed individualist tendencies, must return to life in a highly conformist society.

Re-evaluation of home life was another outcome of distance from the familiar home world. For Kyoung, this involved painful reflection on her mothering style, afforded by a cherished hiatus in a stressful working life:

Study make me very, very refreshed, very happy. First time in a long time. I feel so happy. In Korea, I got so much stress dealing with my housework and my work so I cannot do well for my kids. I didn't intend it to stay like that, but because of my stress, I complained and scold, 'do this, do this, don't do this'. I thought about my attitude to my kids, and I regret it.

Distance from ingrained habits and routines had engineered a new perspective that would have life-long implications for her children: thus the sojourn could be life-changing not just for the sojourner, but also for those around them.

This was also pertinent to the spouse left behind in the home country; removal from the domestic sphere led Xia to review the way she communicated with her husband:

I think meeting different culture will help our relationship. I think some people here, they will do whatever they want, not only what husband want her to do. But before that, I usually do what my husband wants me to do. Although I have my opinions, I will put his first priority because in our culture, it's better to respect. We usually say your husband is the sky and you are the ground.

Observation of culturally different communication styles made way for reflection on changes in her married self, which had been imposed by national culture. The desire to assume new behavioural habits is referred to in the tourism literature as the demonstration effect, which usually describes the emulation by residents of the behaviour of incoming tourists (Seaton 1999). Xia's observation of equality in other relationships reminded her of her single self; suppression of her voice was an aspect of her married persona that she did not want to resume, and indeed by the end of the sojourn, she had reverted to her younger, more authentic self:

Usually if I give him my opinion, he will think about it and he will respect my opinion. And I think that is good. This is mental change. I think I know more about how to get along with my husband. Sometimes if I do what he wants, it is not really me. And I don't like that feeling that I do that. I think at the beginning, he loves me for what I am but I changed for him, maybe that is not what he really wants. I think if I can keep growing, I think it's very good for both of us, we can have more mental communication. It's just like when we fall in love.

Brown (2006) states that a new discourse of intimacy is commonly catalysed by transition, including war and displacement. Indeed, separation had acted to return the couple to a time in life when they viewed and valued the other as separate beings. The ability to express long-withheld opinion restored Xia's image of her true self, bringing closeness and restoring intimacy. However, the concept of assertiveness, which Furnham (1979) defines as the proper expression of any emotion other than anxiety toward another person, is a culture bound and specifically North American attribute. In many other cultures, asserting oneself in the way that is normative in the US and parts of Europe is neither encouraged nor tolerated, especially in women (Martin and Harrell 2004). Therefore, a change in culturally-defined wifely behaviour would not necessarily meet approval, and Xia was perhaps fortunate in her

husband's positive reception to communication differences. Indeed, it might be more common that female sojourners have to lose the mantle of emancipation if they want to avoid marital tension.

Posing a further challenge to traditional norms was the vow made by married students to renegotiate their domestic role and the allocation of tasks upon their return. Reluctance to resume the demanding role of wife (and mother) was attributed to a change in expectations following observation of equality in the UK and reflection on their domestic workload before the sojourn started. Indeed, according to Martin and Harrell (2004), female returnees tend to experience more stress upon re-entry than men, especially if the sojourn has been in a country whose gender roles are less restrictive (Al-Qateee 1984). As Hofstede (2001) points out, the masculinity-femininity dimension affects how families develop role differences between boys and girls, and the gap varies by country. Nevertheless, students were hopeful that their absence might have provoked some evolution in attitude towards domestic labour, as Xia explained:

In Chinese society, usually women do everything. But I think it's different here. I always compare like that. When I come to study here, everything he does alone, so when I go back, maybe there will be some progress. He says he appreciates what I have to do for him.

This hope is not naïve; indeed Bamber (2007) has coined the term 'transformation by proxy' to describe the changes in attitude and behaviour effected in or imposed on immediate friends and family in the origin culture (his study refers to VSO returnees). Given that resocialisation had also taken place at home, involving their husband's assumption of the domestic role in their wife's absence, there might be a willingness to accept shared responsibility: as

previously observed, there is a link between mundane activities and attitudinal change. As Atkins and Bowler (2001) state, gender roles and definitions are flexible and dynamic, and therefore open to change: a new approach to domestic life was not out of the question.

In summary, this study reveals that prolonged absence from the home environment carries the potential to transform sojourners' perspectives on many aspects of personal and professional life that would have long-term implications for life in the home country. The transformative power of the sojourn is established, though the nature and degree of change are unpredictable and are dependent on individual circumstances. The findings of this study undermine the claim made by Ward et al. (2001) and Ryan (2005a) that change is more evident among younger sojourners, whose socialisation is incomplete, as all informants, regardless of age, underwent sometimes fundamental personal change. It also contradicts the link made by Sussman (2002) between cultural identification and change: even those who were highly identified with their nationality and culture experienced a movement in attitudes. It can be construed that during transition, sojourners are faced with the fundamental existential question about what constitutes the self. Todres (2002) argues that although this existential question is affected by culture and exposure to cultural differences, it is essentially transcultural. Given the apparent absence of a link between cultural origin and change in self, I would agree with this claim; change appeared to result from removal from routine and transfer to a new role. The self was shown to be developmental, but there was no clear association between type of change and nationality or culture. Transition offered the foundation for re-evaluation, for freedom from cultural and familial expectations and for self-discovery that routine tends to prohibit. Students became independent, confident, assertive and demonstrative: the self as previously understood was deconstructed and modified.

Going home: a new beginning

Receptivity of the origin culture was seen as an important variable in the durability of change, thus this section will consider the challenges students would face upon re-entry. The vow that life would be different after their return home was dulled by awareness that realigning their new self with the home culture might be problematic. It is often stated that sojourners have to undergo a stage of reverse culture shock when re-adapting to life at home (Kiley 2000; Ward et al. 2001; Martin and Harrell 1996 2004; Cushner and Karim 2004). Re-entry is represented in the second curve in the old W-Curve model of adjustment which Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) developed: this suggests that sojourners experience problems on return to the home country before finally readjusting. Findings from this study confirm that re-entry is indeed a source of strain, with concern expressed over the process of re-engaging with professional, peer and family networks, which may not be prepared for changes in the newly-returned sojourner. According to Martin and Harrell (2004), a distinguishing feature of ‘re-entry shock’ is that it is unexpected; this was revealed to Brigitte on a visit home at Easter:

When I went back to Germany, I realised that I had become a foreigner, and I found that a big shock. Because I am German I thought it would be easy for me to go back and fit in. In fact I never even thought about it, but I had a lot of problems. I felt like a foreigner, in my own country.

In the final interview however, all informants expressed concerns over implementing changes in a freshly evaluated personal and professional life. To illustrate, Rini understood that her reconstructed attitude to authority following experience of an egalitarian relationship with her dissertation supervisor might not survive re-entry to Indonesian society:

In Indonesia, we are formal, not too relaxed. I like this relationship here, it's more equal. When I go back to Indonesia, if I work as a manager, I will do this to my staff. I will not say, 'you have to do this and that and see me as a very high position'. I don't know if it will work.

This is a key point, as a deferential approach to authority is associated with a country high in power distance like Indonesia. According to Hofstede (2001), PDI decreases with education improvements, yet on the other hand, the creation of the EU and free trade areas and the activities of globalised industries could see an increase in power distances and the amount of formal structure to which people will be exposed. A culturally relativist attitude would include awareness that her conationals have not experienced similar cultural learning; Rini might have to train staff to adopt new behaviour, or she may have to accept that they are not receptive to change, and that she must get used to the task common to returnees of 'living on the cultural borderlines', to borrow Featherstone's (1995) description of the outcome of cross-cultural contact.

Similarly, Panya was aware that her newly-found relaxed attitudes towards personal disclosure in friendships might not meet approval in Malaysia:

My friends don't talk openly in my country. Here you can just talk about anything. Some nationalities they do change a bit; some of my Indonesian friends are more open now. You say what you think here, and people accept. But in my country, people might not like what you say.

Confessional intimacy might well be unacceptable in Malaysia; however, Panya was reluctant to return to a more guarded way of speaking with friends, to a world in which the avoidance

of taboo dominated. As Martin and Harrell (2004) point out, a lack of conformity to group norms could isolate the 'returnee' from mainstream society.

A more dramatic illustration of potential re-entry problems is manifested in the person of Kiana whose adoption of culturally unacceptable behaviour at home could lead to her imprisonment. The open defiance of Islamic conventions or the expression of anti-Islamic sentiment that was permitted in the UK would not be countenanced at home:

If you go to protest, they arrest you, they put you in a very horrible prison, they rape you, you have to pay a lot, then they register your name, and you have no right to get a job nowhere, isolated. No chance. I don't want to ruin my life.

Anti-state activity was dangerous; therefore Kiana's choice was between returning to Iran and to her conformist self and retaining her integrity by living in exile until Iran was free. It would be hard to sacrifice the freedom of expression she had grown to enjoy in the UK, which contrasted the suppression of her voice at home, but her uncertain future was a source of stress and depression:

I don't know what I'm going to do. Sometimes I can't sleep, it's very hard. I cannot enjoy myself when I don't know where I'm going. I have got really complicated situation. I feel empty, you can hear my voice. I feel depressed. I am not happy with my life at all, really, honestly because I don't know what's the future.

Re-entry did not represent resumption of a happy life or a challenge to bring about ways to improve the old life; it signified a non-negotiable return to a position of compliance. It is

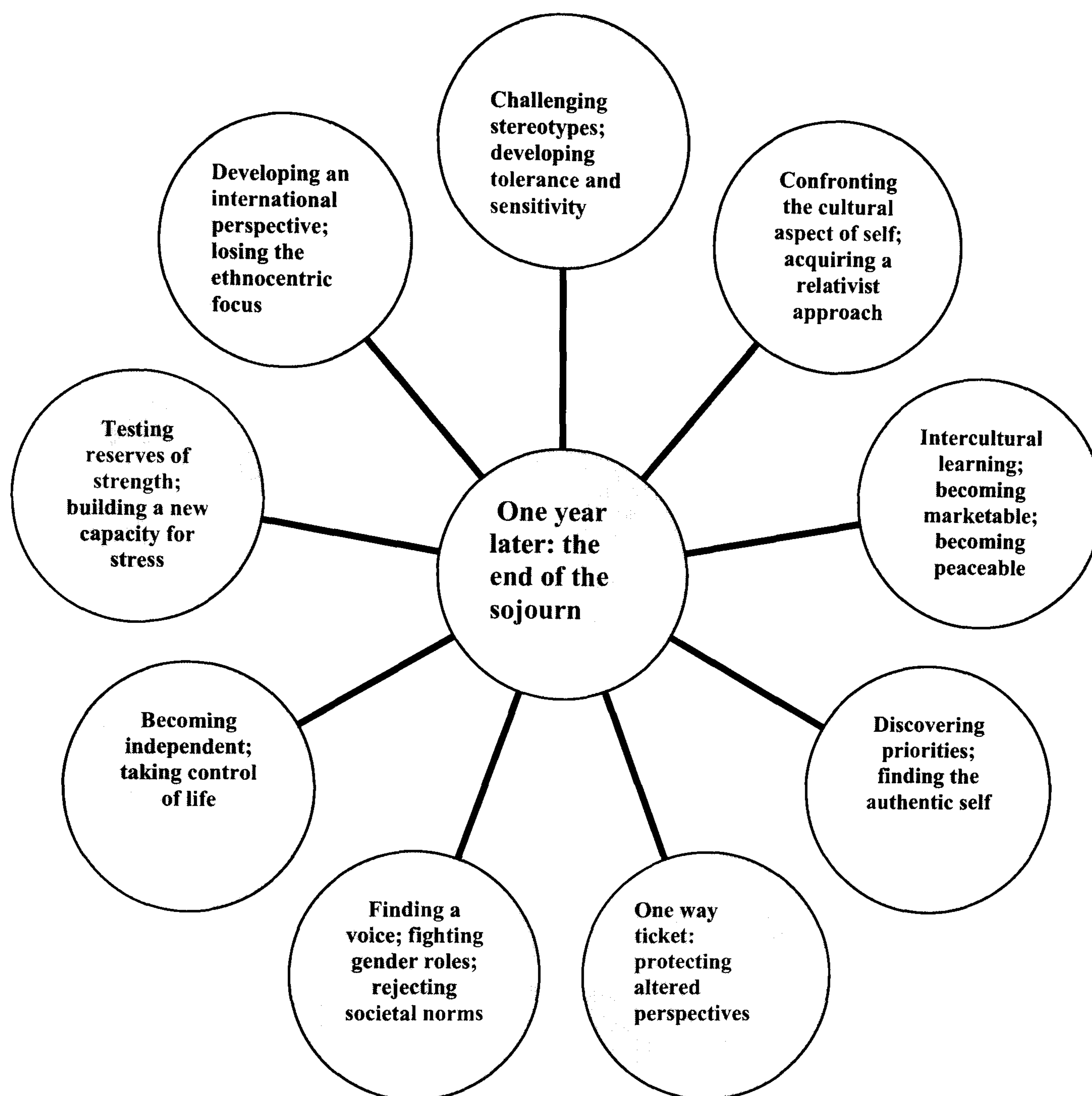
worth considering that the temporary access to freedom from oppression might be a cruel taste of life without fear of punishment for articulating difference, making the return to such a world hard if not impossible to bear. Using Seeman's (1959) thesis on alienation, we can see that in Iran, Kiana felt powerless (she had no sense of control over socio-political events) and isolated (she felt an apartness from a society whose values and goals she did not share): it was easy to understand that she would not want to swap the freedom of choice gained during the sojourn for a life over which she felt she had no control. An internal LOC was again associated with improved emotional well-being.

This poignant vignette serves to indicate how evolution in attitudes and behaviour will not necessarily be accommodated at home, how it may not be the prelude to life-enhancing change. The anxiety among returning students over the accommodation of their new values and behaviours points to conflict between the new and the origin culture. Unless sojourners become successful in moving fluidly between different life worlds, they might be compelled to undergo the painful and conflicting process of unlearning the new norms and values absorbed during their journey through a new culture. International students are in the unique position that the outcome of the sojourn is only life-enhancing if positive change can be maintained at home. A change in attitudes may not be easily tolerated if it implies a threat to others' understanding of the world and by extension, to their existential security. If the newly constructed self is not sustainable, we might wonder how sojourners will react; it is possible that the international experience could finish by disabling returnees: they may be unable or unwilling to assume their old role, to forget the journey of self-discovery they have travelled. Todres (2002) states that psychotherapy involves the undoing of identity which helps people to navigate a plurality of contexts: this has some relevance to this study in that the sojourn acted as a catalyst for self-exploration. However, the parallel between the psychotherapeutic and the international student journey ends at the point of re-entry, when the response to sojourners' new self-understanding is unknown. Having said that, as Brown (2006) points out,

the impacts of the psychotherapeutic encounter are also often felt beyond the ‘treatment room’.

Summary

At the end of the sojourn, the emic view was that students had seen an increase in their intercultural awareness and tolerance; for all writers on the international sojourn, this is the desired end-product of culture contact, as mutual understanding has the capacity to improve international business and political relations (e.g. Ryan 2005a). This chapter has shown that the sojourn also has the power to effect changes in the sojourner’s personal life and self-understanding, which might have long-term implications. Nearly all students described changes in themselves in positive terms, and this supports the view in the literature on transition that stress has positive transformative potential. The evolution in attitudes to the personal and public spheres of life is captured in the following diagram. I have aimed to portray the movement that took place in ways of viewing other cultures as well as the altered perspectives on issues of personal significance. Such change was found to be a result of the exposure to difference brought by the multicultural setting and of the geographical and emotional distance from the home environment.



It has been shown that the sojourn has the capacity to produce life-enhancing change among returnees. However, if the home culture environment does not tolerate these changes, unbearable frustration may result. This clash between the altered self and the origin culture is an important area of research, given the likelihood of increased cross-cultural contact. Claims of the homogenising influence of globalisation are weakened by the universal allusion to re-entry as a stressful experience, and it would be helpful to isolate contributory factors to successful readjustment.

Chapter Ten: Conclusion

The aim of this research was to explore the adjustment process of a heterogeneous group of international postgraduate students at a university in the South of England. I hope that my findings will contribute to filling some of the gaps in knowledge about transition to a different culture and the international student sojourn. On the basis of what I learnt through my research, I have attempted to build a model of adjustment whose creation is informed by a holistic study of the entire adjustment journey, from arrival to departure. This chapter will offer conclusions and discuss the implications of my findings for international students in British Higher Education, and it will indicate the possible direction of future research projects that my study alerted me to.

A model of adjustment for international students

This study found the initial stage of the sojourn to be a time of vulnerability and anxiety: stress was at its most intense at the beginning of the stay, suggesting a link between the move to a new environment and emotional and physical disturbance. This was the time when the symptoms of culture shock were experienced: homesickness, sleeplessness, tearfulness, loneliness, fear, disorientation, depression and worry characterised the first stage of the adjustment journey. Culture shock was not a universal phenomenon however: the prevalence and intensity of emotional and sociocultural difficulties varied among informants as a function of a host of factors, including motivation, personality, previous experience, pre-arrival preparation, interaction strategy and cultural similarity. During this time of upheaval, the drive was to regain a sense of equilibrium; particularly consuming was the struggle to establish communicative competence in academic and everyday life and to diminish

loneliness and thoughts of home. Herein lies a key understanding of the adjustment process: the route to restoring balance in emotional life often undermined the ability to achieve success, or adjustive fitness, in sociocultural life. Interaction played a key, often conflicting, role: the alleviation of loneliness through segregated friendship groups was usually at the cost of linguistic and intercultural learning. It can be argued that sojourner adjustment is a function of the capacity to withstand the anxiety inherent in transition, and that the sojourner's reaction to stress in the early stage dictates the level of adjustment reached during the sojourn.

This study observes an association between the passage of time and a gradual decrease in acculturative stress. However, this was not a generalisable process; there was not only fluctuation in experience across the student body but also in the individual's subjective sense of success across different aspects of life in the new country. The stress induced by the academic setting slowly decreased in line with the development of academic cultural competence; this suggests a correlation between the acquisition of well-being and adjustment to the demands of the new surroundings. However, feelings of homesickness and depression were more variable, indicating that psychological adjustment was less predictable.

Adjustment, understood as fitness to the new environment, was found to be a continuum: sojourners will not only vary in their adjustment experience and outcome, but there will also be variation in the amount of fitness reached in each facet of life. Adjustment is therefore not a generic term that can be applied to the whole sojourn experience. The tolerance for anxiety and difference was found to be a key driver of the adjustive strategy adopted and of the outcome consequently reached: to illustrate, the stress of foreign language use informed the segregation approach, and the outcome of poor linguistic progress. Nevertheless, this study can establish a clear link between transition and an evolution in personal and intercultural perspectives: this was a universal feature of the final stage of the academic sojourn. Hailed as a positive development, it was simultaneously an object of disquiet: the apprehension of returning students suggests that the adjustment journey is not over until re-entry is negotiated, and the self cultivated during the sojourn is tested yet again for fitness of purpose in the origin

culture.

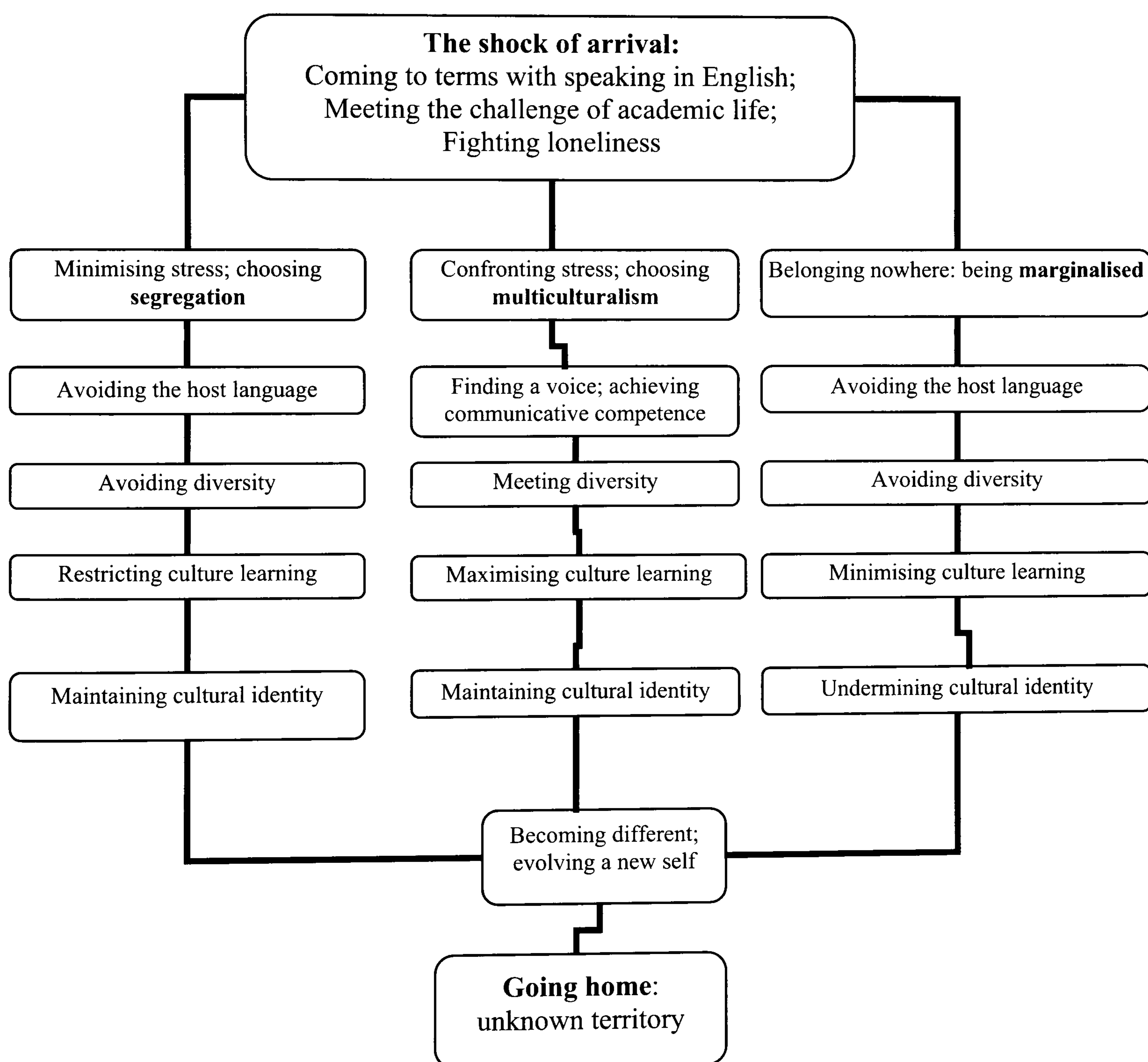
This study offers the view of adjustment as a curvilinear, dynamic and multifaceted process, fluctuating throughout the sojourn as a result of a host of individual, cultural and external factors. The power of individual and sociopolitical circumstances, of personality and of cultural forces to influence the way informants experienced the sojourn brought me to the understanding that few models can adequately explain or predict human behaviour. The postmodern perspective on researcher access to truth and interpretation of data informs my equivocation in offering a binding view of an inherently subjectively-lived experience. I hesitate to offer a model that is applicable to all sojourners in all situations: I simply provide a realistic articulation of adjustment as an initially painful and testing process, that is experienced varyingly by sojourners depending on various factors and whose outcome is usually positive. However, my study allows me to make the following observations:

- The problems associated with the move into a new sociocultural environment are greatest upon arrival;
- The symptoms attributed to culture shock are evident in the first stage, but there is variance in their experience and duration;
- Stress is caused by cultural distance, language problems, academic demands, loneliness, homesickness, identity confusion, personal difficulties and racial or religious discrimination;
- The capacity for the tolerance of stress drives the formation of mononational friendship networks, which are an impediment to a growth in linguistic and intercultural progression;
- Though there is generally a gradual lessening of stress, the unpredictability of life events can upset this calm;

- The impact of the larger political, economic and social context of both the home and host countries on the adjustment journey cannot be underestimated;
- The segregation approach is common, but this does not indicate a failure of cross-cultural communication, nor does it imply a lack of respect or tolerance for other cultures;
- The adoption of adjustment strategies varies across different aspects of life in the new country, influencing both process and outcome;
- Personal motivation is the key determinant of the interaction strategy adopted by sojourners;
- The end-product of the international sojourn is a life-enhancing challenge to old ways of thinking and behaving. Intercultural competence is acquired, and is greatest among those who adopt a multicultural approach to interaction;
- Apprehension over re-entry is a common feature during the last few months of the sojourn.

The following figure presents a graphic illustration of how I made sense of the adjustment process. There is a deliberate suppression of prescribed time patterns, underlining the mostly unpredictable nature of the adjustment journey. There are *three* central components to the diagram, which reflect universal experience. The first denotes arrival; the first stage of the sojourn sees students beset by the disturbing feelings associated with culture shock. What follows is a struggle to hold onto an inner sense of competence; this influences the interaction strategy adopted by sojourners, which in turn influences the adjustive outcome (the important relationship between friendship patterns and outcome occupies a special place in the model). It is observed that academic adjustment does not figure in the model; this is because industriousness was the key determinant of success, overriding cultural background or friendship networks. Despite the widespread elevation of emotional ease over sociocultural fitness, removal from the origin culture is shown to be sufficient to stimulate self-exploration.

This is shown in the second central component to the diagram which depicts the final stage of the sojourn as a universally positive development. Though the segregation approach limited adjustment to the host language and restricted cultural learning, it did not bar a new self-understanding that distance from the familiar can bring. The third aspect of universal experience is represented in the tip of the diagram, which refers us to apprehension over re-entry.



As the above figure shows, my understanding of the adjustment process is driven by awareness that the interaction strategy chosen by sojourners influences their opportunity to maximize cultural learning. This study found that the segregation strategy, associated with positive outcomes for belonging and security and negative outcomes for language dexterity and intercultural competence, was the most common. In the absence of host contact, the multicultural strategy offered the best route to optimising language and culture learning: the central role played by personality differences in the adjustment process is reflected in the observation that this strategy was chosen by those informants who were highly motivated to achieve their aim of making cross-cultural contact. Interaction strategy drives the process and outcome of adjustment; personal motivation and the individual tolerance for change drive the choice of strategy.

Addressing the whole adjustment experience, from arrival to re-entry, has helped me to deconstruct familiar conceptualizations of the process of change that occurs during an extended stay abroad. My model bears some similarities with and marks some departures from models found in the adjustment literature. Although there was a mood of excitement about the new life experience in the initial stage, this was overwhelmed by more negative feelings associated with acculturative stress. Therefore the notion that the first stage is characterized by feelings of euphoria was not supported: the U-Curve models were not confirmed. A second departure from such models is the avoidance of their tendency to present each stage as a generalisable experience. The relationship between time and adjustment is found in all models of adjustment, however the linearity suggested in the U-Curve models is also not supported. It is for this reason that time is not often specified in this thesis. The refusal to indicate a fixed duration for each stage or symptom reflects the variability in personal experience and a reluctance to impose order on a time of mutability and subjectivity. The universal acknowledgement in the final weeks of positive self evolution led me to highlight this stage as the culmination of such development, but of course change started earlier than this and was an ongoing and variable process amongst informants. The validity

of the culture learning models is reflected in the relationship between the development of sociocultural competence and a decrease in stress, however the unpredictability of emotional stability underlines the usefulness of those models that distinguish between psychological and sociocultural adjustment. Nevertheless, I found these two aspects of adjustment to be intertwined; I discovered that the phenomenon of segregation, though driven by an *emotional* need for security and belonging, impacted on *sociocultural* competence: the two are not easily separable. Finally, this study alerted me to the close relationship between anxiety and transition; I therefore felt that this study has most in common with the stress resolution models of adjustment: understanding how students cope with stress might inform institutions' policies for international education.

The contributory themes

The above model of adjustment emerged from the findings in my research, and the major themes that contributed to this are reflected in the content of the main findings chapters: language, study, food, interaction, identity and outcome of the sojourn. The superordinate influence of interaction strategy is noted throughout, as is the *exceptional student* category, who, in deviating from established norms of interaction, came to embody the intercultural mediator. These themes will now be considered.

In my study it is shown that **language ability plays a major role in adjustment**. This qualitative research captures the emotional component of foreign language use, and highlights the causal link between the desire to avoid associated negative feelings and the formation of segregated groups. This shows that emotional adjustment was prioritised over improving linguistic and sociocultural competence. Monoethnic contact was at once nurturing and restricting, permitting a feeling of ease but allowing avoidance of the discomfort that is integral to improving linguistic competence, thereby impeding adjustment to the multicultural

setting. This demonstrates an association between ghettoised communication patterns and a failure to achieve host language competence, a phenomenon also observed in the larger migrant community in the UK.

The stress imposed by students' non-native speaker status was intensified by their confrontation with the **demands of academic life**; this was manifested in self-reported physical and psychological illness. Academic cultural dissonance lies at the heart of the experience of difficulty: the western education system posed a challenge to students' indoctrination in a different academic culture; there was a clash between cultural systems that was not easily resolved. Adjustment to educational differences between the origin and host culture was required in order to achieve success, and assimilation to host norms was the only viable adjustment strategy. However, there was resistance to change, deriving from culturally distinct attitudes towards the location of power in education. This resistance applied equally to the receiving institution, where western academic cultural norms were not modified or even explained, indicating a failure to accommodate academic cultural diversity that is widespread. Countering claims for an increasingly internationalised British Higher Education, I suspect that the stress inherent in moving from the education system of the home world to a new academic culture will remain an enduring feature of the academic sojourn.

This study offers a unique insight into the **role of food in shaping the adjustive experience** among international students. It was found that the experience of cultural dissonance informed the prevalent adoption of the segregation approach to eating. The centrality of food to self-definition and to emotional and physical well-being is revealed in the observation that food habits were challenged by fewer students than any other feature of life in the new country. Eating was about more than nutritional value and taste; ethnic food held symbolic power, offering a means of consolidating and celebrating an identity that was diluted in a mixed-nationality setting. It can be argued that ethnic food provided stability during a period of transition, that eating ethnic food was a comforting reminder of home, helping to

compensate for and to bear the unavoidable stressors associated with the sojourn. This study also reveals a link between the personal act of eating and the adjustment reached in the multicultural setting, as the sociability around food helps to shape the sojourner's friendship networks. Studies on the eating habits of migrants, which helped me to understand the place of food in the life of the sojourner, point to a similar pattern of segregation and maintenance of ethnic identity through food.

The importance of companionship in the experience of transition is reflected in the fact that Chapter Seven was the longest chapter of the thesis and the most important research category, influencing all other research categories. This thesis devotes much attention to social life and identifies different, often overlapping, friendship patterns in the international student body: the sub-culture created was multilayered, consisting of five identifiable social networks. These can be seen to reflect the macro context of multicultural society, in which affiliation is often offered simultaneously to different social groups: the postmodern response to an increasingly diversified and complex world. First, a multinational grouping emerged, which offered the comfort of solidarity in shared foreignness and the opportunity to improve cultural knowledge. This friendship group was frequented on a day-to-day basis, and usually though not exclusively in the academic setting: the bond was a functional one. Secondly, and somewhat paradoxically, was the formation of two opposing groupings of students who were distinguished by their regional cultural differences. It was observed that Asian and European students gathered in distinct groups, separated by heritage, culture and prejudice. The third friendship group that emerged was united by a common faith in Islam, offering mutual understanding and safety and the consolidation of religious identity. A literature search has yielded no evidence of similar findings on the experience of Muslim international students. Fourthly, a network of compatriot friends was formed upon arrival, suggesting a conflict between the desire for cross-national interaction and the benefits associated with the mononational group of linguistic ease, emotional succour and instrumental support. Finally,

the bicultural relationship between the host and the sojourner received much attention in terms of its absence and the consequences for students' acquaintance with the host culture.

In this study interaction patterns were able to point to greater social and political forces. The Islamic friendship group offers a reflection of the larger national and global picture of a bond sealed by shared religion and increasingly by a fear of Islamophobic acts of abuse.

Furthermore, Muslim students' vulnerability supports the notion that Islam has become the new target for bigotry, and suggests a conflict between governmental statements on tolerance of diversity of faith and public attitudes towards Muslims. This conflict is intensified by both Islamophobic media and a growth of Islamic fundamentalism among the younger strata of the British Muslim population. A Muslim sojourner cannot help but become embroiled in the contemporary tension between growing Muslim resentment of American and British foreign policy towards the Middle East and domestic fear of a resentful and vengeful minority of the Islamic community; their faith makes them vulnerable to emotional and physical attack, defense from which is only guaranteed by non-disclosure. This clearly shows up in my findings.

Still associated with the host tolerance of difference is the detection of a lack of host contact. The common assertion that the presence of international students can enrich campuses and enhance international understanding was not supported by this study: without host receptivity, this appears a naïve and idealistic assumption. Furthermore, physical dissimilarity from the host community enhanced vulnerability to racial abuse, and suspicion and fear hastened or consolidated the move into ghettos. This study reflects a trend towards ghettoisation that has been long practised by migrants to the UK: it might be pertinent to wonder whether the drive to find sameness is common among all strangers to society, or whether it is felt particularly acutely in a culture deemed to be unreceptive.

However, it is important not to fall into the trap of simplistically attributing ghettoized behaviour to environmental receptivity; communication is a dynamic process and motivation to achieve intercultural contact is a powerful determinant of interaction patterns. This study points to a conflicted desire to adjust fully to the multinational context and to obtain group reassurance. Furthermore, observation of a tendency towards conformity pressure and censure for deviance from the group contributes to our understanding of the phenomenon of ghettoisation. The oft-claimed benefit of globalisation and of increasingly culturally diverse society is that multiculturalism will grow. However, my study suggests that people gravitate away from diversity, that the drive to find belonging outweighs the professional, societal and personal benefits of intercultural interaction. Perhaps globalization, rather than eliminating cultural borders, will intensify the need to find coherence, to escape the chaos of diversity by pursuing the comfort of sameness. Finding belonging can be seen to offer relief from the existential anxiety that exposure to difference occasions.

Deviance from the pattern of segregation was embodied in the category of the '*exceptional student*' whose pursuit of diversity depended on forgoing the comfort of the conational ghetto and tolerating the anxiety inherent in cross-national communication. This study notes that the power of the sojourn to produce the cultural mediator is realized *only* exceptionally: displacement from the home culture is not automatically correlated with the acquisition of mediating skills. The *exceptional student* is used throughout this thesis to exemplify deviance from cultural patterns, and deserves attention: we cannot use culture to explain this phenomenon as the national origin of these students varied. Instead, we can refer to the emic identification of the personality attribute that facilitates cross-cultural contact: being 'open' was key. A disposition towards cognitive flexibility and a motivation to explore difference distinguished *exceptional students* from the main body. Importantly, cultural distinction was not sacrificed; this study therefore refutes the common claim of a link between pluralist society and the dilution of ethnic identity. The notion that cultural diversity will lead to the homogenization of culture was not supported.

This study also paid attention to **the protection and construction of identity** in the new life setting. An important distinction was made between the private and the collective self, between informants' reactions to the challenge implicit in the cross-cultural world. Suggesting that diversity increases cultural identification, there was a retreat into segregated groups that helped to mirror and reinforce ethnic identity: this reflects the domestic picture of ethnic divisions. The question arises, whether the entrenchment of identity is a predictable response to cultural diversity: if so, this undermines the claim that globalization will dilute the strength of and attachment to ethnic ties. It also challenges the notion that identity is dynamic and open to qualification: the claim that globalization will lead to the creation of a unified culture appears exaggerated. Attacks on collective identity could be understood as a challenge to the durability of the group narrative, to existential security, which explains the deployment of strategies to protect collective self-esteem. The need to keep the collective self intact helps us to understand the separatist approach to the sojourn, pointing to a link between the maintenance of self-worth and interaction strategy. I wondered whether the temporary nature of the sojourn facilitated and encouraged attitudes of patriotism and pride, but the attachment of permanent migrant communities in the UK to national identity undermines this theory. It seemed that it was the uncomfortable experience of the glance from the Other that informed the drive to gather strength in numbers.

This study notes the impact of the macro economic and political context on the sojourn experience. It firstly observes a link between economic status and self-esteem, between derogation and a low GDP: the majority of the international student body originated from the Less Developed World, and there was a high incidence of perceived prejudice on the part of a more economically powerful host community. The subsequent rebuttal of western superiority based on economic strength and its domination of the global economy can be viewed as integral to the maintenance of self-worth, mirroring and perhaps informed by contemporary debate over the locus of global economic power and the ethics of free trade promulgated by

the western superpowers. Secondly, the precarious relationship between a sojourner's self-esteem and their country's political standing on the world stage was documented, particularly where there was divergence between host and home country political positioning. The impact of global politics on daily life was never more revealing than in the experience of Muslim students in a western country, in particular if their country was associated with Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism. This study showed that level of cultural identification informed reactions to vulnerability to attack on emotional and physical security: a strong identification with both faith and nationality drove the affirmation of group identity through monoethnic interaction; the culturally disenfranchised were confined to marginal status, with reinforcement and belonging found in neither the home nor the host culture.

This study makes an important distinction between personal and group identity. The collective self was not found to be the dynamic, responsive entity it is often claimed to be, perhaps because sharing and upholding common perceptions are key to the integrity of the self. Self-exploration was practiced only in the private sphere; the personal self, made up of the personae adopted at home, at work and during leisure time, was shown to be flexible and fluid. This is because the move into a distinctly different role during the sojourn was unavoidable: stasis was not an option. Moreover, a change in self-perception brought the benefits of increased confidence and self-mastery whereas a challenge to the collective self was rarely seen to be life-enhancing. The adoption of unfamiliar behavioural routines was found to be the driver of change: the assumption of self-responsibility forced a revision of self-construal; irrevocable change followed. The self was therefore shown to evolve as new situations and tasks were confronted and reconstructed over time in response to external exigencies. Self-efficacy was called for and tested by the sojourn; a universal sense of empowerment derived from the ability to overcome stress, which was the necessary precursor of positive change and improved self-image.

As might be expected in a study of human experience, there was variation in the level of adjustment reached among informants and across different aspects of life. The important link between strategy and **outcome** was revealed in the emic and etic observation that intercultural and linguistic competence was maximised through the adoption of a multicultural approach. Nevertheless, this study reveals a connection between transition and cultural learning that was considered irrevocable and life-changing. This suggests that ethnic groups can simultaneously retain their own language, customs and values and maintain a harmonious relationship with other groups; the segregation approach was not shown to be incompatible with intergroup acceptance and tolerance. The maintenance of ethnic identity sat side by side with mutual tolerance and respect: this study documents simultaneously a trend towards ghettoisation and the acquisition of mindfulness, and provides a counterpoint to the common condemnation of self-separation.

The capacity of the academic sojourn to effect transformation in perspectives on domestic, social and professional life also received much attention; this study offers a portrait not only of the evolution in self-perception afforded by the international sojourn, but also of the anxiety surrounding the durability of such life-affirming change: indeed, the new self might be a source of torment rather than pleasure, as conformity pressure might dictate a return to the pre-sojourn self. Though a comparison can be made between the international sojourn and the confrontation with the self afforded by the therapeutic journey, international students are in the unique position that they have to return home to a place where they may no longer fit in; the herald of a new life may be short-lived. It is sometimes stated that the gift of insight cannot be withdrawn, yet this is the scenario faced by returning sojourners. Perhaps increased intercultural contact will increase the flexibility of the dominant culture, but this is yet to be established.

Implications and recommendations for Higher Education Institutions

The findings of this research will be communicated to those involved in making policy decisions in Higher Education, in the hope that appropriate policy choices might help not only to alleviate the stress inherent in transition but also to address the challenges involved in creating a truly internationalized campus (see Appendix 5 for a list of publications that have emerged from this study).

This study highlights the difficulty in adapting to western educational norms; it is therefore recommended that academic orientation addresses the major differences between the host and the home educational culture, ensuring that students are familiar with new requirements from the outset. As this study found, *information* is key in helping students to acquire sociocultural competence and in alleviating the distress associated with academic culture shock. This is all the more pertinent for those studying on a one-year Masters course; accredited assessment is faced in the first term. An example is a pre-arrival website to which access is secured through payment of a deposit. In order to ease transition to a new academic culture, academic orientation should also be incorporated into induction programmes.

The finding that learning shock was most severe at the start of the academic sojourn informs the call for the provision of academic support upon students' arrival. A suggested formula is the delivery of a weekly two-hour academic support class alongside access to tutorial and email support: this will help to alleviate anxiety and to support students in fulfilling their academic duties. I would argue that it is the ethical duty of HE institutions to adequately support students from educationally different cultures: their interest should go beyond the recruitment stage.

This study alerts us to the anxiety surrounding participation in class and the inhibiting force of cultural differences and linguistic inadequacy. Furthermore, the tension observed inside the international student group is indicative of a failure of understanding among students, and of staff to address this common problem. Training for academic staff should be offered, and should include awareness of the emotional component of speaking publicly and of the cultural aspect of the norm of class debate as well as offering practical strategies for dealing sensitively with non-participation.

This study hints at the pressure placed by international education on those working with international students. My experience as study support tutor illustrates a common frustration over the tension between the help students seek out and the time that is available to meet their needs. Support for international students often depends on an individual staff member's sense of responsibility and a commitment to a duty of care; however this is not appropriate, instead there needs to be a rethinking of the allocation of additional time by line managers in HE for student support.

High anxiety over language ability points to the need to uphold and even increase minimum language admission criteria for entry to HE. The acknowledged relationship between international student recruitment and the financial health of HEI in tandem with the government-imposed targets for increased recruitment suggests a conflict between the quality of applicants and economic realities. This is not easily resolved, and there is little likelihood that warnings about the problems caused by inadequate language skills will be heeded. The least institutions can do is provide pre- and in-session language support, which, if advertised effectively, will not only influence students' choice of institution but also improve their reputation for maintaining quality.

The portrait of a curvilinear adjustment journey with acculturative stress suffered at the start of and throughout the sojourn carries the implication that pastoral support structures must be

in place throughout all stages of the academic year. An introduction to university services such as Counselling, the Student Union and Chaplaincy during induction week would raise awareness of support and reduce students' reluctance to seek help. Recognition of the re-entry stage as a traumatic part of the international sojourn should also be reflected in the provision of pre-departure support. Furthermore, understanding the complexity of the adjustment process will help to determine the intervention strategies used by those offering or psychological support to international students. It may be appropriate at times to recommend an informational, culture learning approach, focusing on the acquisition of appropriate behaviour and skills. However, this might be an inappropriate course of action when faced with a student suffering low self-esteem or depression; this situation may call for a therapeutic approach to lessen students' sense of loss.

Staff training should be offered on a regular basis for all strata of HE to equip staff with an understanding of the various problems faced by international students. This should improve both empathy and responsiveness to signs of distress and requests for help, thereby alleviating students' sense of isolation, particularly but not exclusively during the initial stage. Training would cover issues such as language problems, culture shock, cultural differences, the variation in academic cultural norms, the national contextualization and the consequent de-homogenisation of the international student population and awareness of the impact of world tension on the experience of everyday life.

This study shows that loneliness and homesickness are intertwined with transition, and that they are alleviated by social contact: the university should take responsibility for organizing social gatherings at both central and department level in order to promote a sense of belonging. These should not be isolated events but should take place on a regular basis. A lack of host contact was documented in this study: this could be addressed by ensuring that both the home and the international student populations are invited. If the International Office

and the Student Union share the organization of such events, both elements of the population will feel engaged.

Disappointment over a lack of host national friends and a pattern of segregation reveal a failure of the promise of the international campus to promote integration. Institutions need to adopt interventionist strategies to tackle this problem and to provide the required impetus for cross-national interaction: situations must be structured to foster dialogue, and HEI need to take responsibility for realizing the oft-stated potential of the international campus to generate intercultural understanding.

Students felt that racial abuse was in part triggered by a lack of awareness of the economic contribution of international education to the local economy. There is clearly room for better links to be established between the university and the local community: making explicit the benefits brought by international students might secure a better welcome and it might also diminish their confusion in the mind of the host with the larger immigrant population.

However, the larger social problem of racism in the host community lies outside the influence of HE, its roots being cultural, economic and historical.

Recommendations for future research

Research is lacking on the views of *academic staff* towards the challenge brought by the international classroom at the same time as the recruitment of international students is being targeted for increase. To help inform decisions on training and resource allocation, areas of investigation include: implications for workload, changes in the curriculum, host-visitor integration, dissertation supervision, and the acquisition of intercultural competence in staff.

Much has been written about the impetus offered by international students to internationalise the curriculum, but an *institutional audit* of the impact of the international campus has not been conducted. Such a study of British HEI should record and evaluate changes in syllabus, assessment, instruction methods, staff training, academic and language support, and measures to stimulate cross-national and cross-cultural interaction.

By alerting us to the pressure placed by *parenthood* on international students, this study points to a need for research into this growing section of the international student community. Topics for investigation include: the impact of separation from children on well-being, the influence of single parenthood in the new country on adjustment and academic success, and the adjustment experience of the children of sojourners.

This study observed a stand-off between Asian and European students, which has not been fully explained as it was not possible to document the reasons for the formation of a European friendship group. It would be interesting to discover whether this was an isolated pattern by observing interaction patterns in a similar setting, and to access the *European perspective* in order to permit a fuller picture of this tension.

A widespread disenchantment with a lack of host contact indicates a need to obtain the perspective of both home students and the host community on the presence of international students on the university campus and in the community. Findings from such research would help us to understand *host attitudes* towards the outsider, and should help to inform university and local government policy.

The experience of *Muslim international students* deserves more attention: further research could target the application process to detect a possible link between choice of institution and the country's reputation for treatment of Muslims as well as its foreign policy. A study of the impact of life in a western country might also be revealing: do students become radicalised?

do they become silenced? do they confront the difference between foreign policy and popular feeling? are they demoralized by the association between Islam and the domestic terrorist threat?

The impact of the *macro political context* on sojourner adjustment requires further investigation: suggested topics include the link between self-esteem and a country's global standing and the impact of visa and immigration policy on the well-being of non-EU students.

Finally, the power of the media to influence the sojourn experience was noted among those who detected a negative image of their nationality or religion. A *discourse analysis* approach to the study of the content of news reports is therefore recommended, to illuminate the host attitude to immigrants. A further study would investigate in more detail the reactions of sojourners to the portrait of their culture in the British media.

Reflections on the research process

In terms of topic, I am reassured that the focus of research was appropriate, given its relevance to most HEI. Research is needed on the international sojourn in order to guide policy development and professional training in an area of education that is unlikely to decrease in size or economic importance. Furthermore, this study has produced findings that have relevance to other categories of sojourners in the UK and improve our understanding of the link between the macro political and economic context and the individual adjustment experience. The issue of credibility must not be neglected: echoes of these findings in the literature on sojourner adjustment and evidence gathered through professional networks suggest that a trustworthy though individualized account of the international sojourn has been offered. Trustworthiness has been further established through the willingness to cite deviance from patterns and to concede bias in interpretation.

The use of an ethnographic approach to investigate the experience of adjustment was chosen for the sustained access it offered to the whole postgraduate student body over a long period and for the opportunity to extend conversations beyond the interview situation. I found that observational and interview data complemented each other, often capturing different aspects of the sojourn, and producing a more rounded picture of the phenomenon of adjustment. It is my feeling that I have been allowed access through the qualitative approach to sensitive issues (such as identity and depression) that could not have been adequately assessed through quantitative approaches. Though exhausting and time-consuming, I have no doubt that this was the only approach that could yield similar insights and a similar breadth of data, enabling me to draw conclusions about the adjustment journey of international students without losing the emphasis on the individual. The inductive approach - which meant setting aside but acknowledging previous assumptions - meant that I could work unhindered by prior views of adjustment and that unexpected themes emerged, which filled gaps in the literature as well as pointing to further areas that I did not have time to address. Indeed, a challenge of this research was that a huge amount of primary and secondary data was collected, necessitating a rigorous selection process that proved demanding.

In 1998, Fetterman argued that ethnography should be:

Phenomenological – the emic view should be prioritised. I feel that this was achieved by my use of the student perspective to drive the discussion of adjustment. However, despite the revelatory power of the interview, I clearly cannot know what aspects of the inner world were missed or suppressed from the account. Perhaps my position as a host national inhibited some students from disclosing sensitive information: is it possible that informants censored negative comments about the host community? My commitment to obtaining the emic view was real, but my success could be limited by factors beyond my control.

Non-judgemental – in a study revealing cultural differences in attitudes and behaviour, it has been difficult to suspend judgement during the process of interpreting data. I have addressed

this by recording personal bias (where I have been aware of it) and by encouraging myself to document a variety of often conflicting perspectives, particularly when my interpretation has been influenced by personal politics. Nevertheless, there might be evidence of subjectivity and cultural bias. Qualitative researchers are warned that the process of analyzing and interpreting data is influenced by individual inclinations, and indeed, I noted that my interpretation of emergent themes was powerfully influenced by my personality and political conviction. These inform, for example, a guilty reaction to the allusion to the power of the English language and to an unwelcoming and disinterested host, and they influence a tendency to find fault with British culture, from its food supply to the cultivation of self-interest. Awareness of such bias was used to push myself to consider alternative evidence, and this is shown in my commentaries on the tendency towards segregation: I had to urge myself to consider other reasons than host intransigence.

Holistic – The reader should be moved from the detail of thick description to the ‘bigger picture’; the whole cultural system should be conveyed. This was challenging: making sense of students’ experience involved consideration of host cultural norms, the origin culture, the larger sociopolitical context and individual circumstances. In hindsight, I acknowledge that the incorporation of the perspectives of the host community and of academic staff would have enriched the study further, offering a fuller picture of the scene.

Contextualised– the data should not be set apart from the larger societal and political framework: I have attempted throughout every chapter to locate the study in its contemporary academic and sociocultural context.

Meanwhile, I have tried to heed the complaint made by Hammersley (1995) that the principle of *reflexivity* is not generally embraced by ethnographers, by offering a reflexive account of methods and interpretation throughout the thesis. I have also tried to redress the common complaint aimed at ethnographers and researchers on international student adjustment that they lack *theoretical sophistication* (ibid; Leonard et al. 2002) – this study attempts to walk

the tight line of staying close to informants' reality, i.e. the emic view, whilst using theory and the etic perspective to explain cultural patterns.

This thesis will end on my journey of self-discovery through the conduct of this study. Like all ethnographers, I was immersed in the world I was studying, therefore it is to be expected that my personal and cultural perspectives would be subject to change. Prolonged reflection on cultural differences and students' reactions to these as well as exposure to their emotional and behavioural response to the life experience that the sojourn represented saw an evolution in my views and feelings. This would have consequences for my professional life and the sector in which I work as well as my approach to intercultural relationships and to newcomers to British society. Thus the power of ethnography to effect change beyond the study setting was fulfilled, as personal change would lead to some institutional reform.

Interest in how international students experience the adjustment process stimulated this research project. Although I had worked for several years with international students, with whom I had conversations about their welfare, it was the privileged access through several hours of interviews that alerted me to the challenging and debilitating nature of the sojourn. This led me to effect changes in pre- and post-arrival orientation and to improve the support offered to students throughout the sojourn. I also used the knowledge gained on the emotional reaction to transition to inform my contribution to university and community groups dealing with the outsider experience.

Secondly, I saw a growth in my own cultural knowledge. Despite extensive contact with international students over the last 20 years, it was this five-year period of intensive exposure to and research into differing cultural, historical and political contexts that made me increasingly aware of and sensitive to the complexity of the international and intercultural student community. My world view had become internationalised, and I became embarrassed

over my previously limited political and cultural knowledge. Echoing student comments, this was an irrevocable change: I now saw students and other sojourners in their rightful context.

Exposure to my own cultural programming was a further gift of conducting this research. I had to beware constantly of using culturally-ingrained attitudes to interpret the data collected. I often found that I censored evaluations deriving from my socialisation as an English person. This surprised me; I had considered myself to be non-judgemental, and yet I discovered a tendency to judge situations and people from a western or British perspective. I had to maintain constant vigilance, and like many interviewees, battle to change deep-seated values. Consequently I learned that I was much more influenced by my national culture than I presumed at the outset of the study. I was confronted with my own culture, not upon immersion in a new culture, but on home ground. Familiar values were suddenly called into question, provoking the budding development of a culturally relativist attitude of mind.

An outsider's perspective on my own country was a further privilege of conducting this ethnographic study, which was surprisingly revealing of the society in which it is located. A mirror on British society was held up that often made uncomfortable viewing, but which served to provoke debate on what constitutes English or British culture. Though it is outside my sphere of influence to change the attitudes and behaviour of local people, still acquaintance with students' disenchantment with their reception in England informed my contribution to university and community debates on host-visitor relations and to casual conversations with colleagues, family and friends. I found myself sensitised to Islamophobia and racial discrimination, the prevalence of which justified students' fear and suspicion.

It can be observed that the changes I detected in myself echo those described by students: we all improved our understanding of other cultures and we all learned the depth of our own cultural programming. However, students' perspectives on their personal lives evolved, whereas mine did not; conversely, I acquired evermore understanding of the international

student journey. This is understandable: I had not seen a revolution in the living of my daily life, which forced reflection on former existence; meanwhile, it was my quest, not theirs, to gain insight into what the adjustment journey consisted of.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

The incidence of ill health in interviewees

Name	Physical illness	Psychological complaints
Panya	Cold	Homesickness, stress
Natalia	Cold	Stress
Kyoung	Cold	Stress, anxiety, homesickness, worry
Cecilia	Cold	Loneliness, homesickness, worry, depression
Antonio	Cold	Loneliness, homesickness, worry, sleeplessness, depression,
Paranee	Cold	Loneliness, stress, anxiety, depression, homesickness
Ning	Cold	Homesickness, hostility, low self-esteem, stress
Xia	Cold	Homesickness, worry, stress, anxiety
Mohamed	Cold	Stress, homesickness
Olga	None	Loneliness, homesickness, stress, anxiety
Rini	Cold	Stress, anxiety, disorientation
Kiana	Cold	Appetite loss, depression, anxiety, stress, homesickness, low self-esteem

Appendix 2

Developments in spoken English

Interviewee	My observations on linguistic prowess
Mohamed	Confidence grown, fast delivery. Says he can communicate in all situations.
Xia	More fluent, improved vocabulary.
Ning	Excellent vocabulary and aural ability. Says she can communicate in all situations.
Paranee	Speaking more quickly now, but not confident.
Olga	Improved vocabulary and speed
Rini	Speaking fluently and quickly. Says she's completely confident.
Kiana	Speed and vocabulary much improved
Natalia	Fluent – even better than when she first arrived
Antonio	Fluent – even better than when he first arrived
Brigitte	Fluent – even better than when she first arrived
Kyoung	Little confidence, improved speed and vocabulary, but I have to repeat a lot.

Appendix 3

Changes in contribution to class noted in my journal

Date	Comment
October 27	Class of Asian students, very tiring, barely any interaction.
October 29	Students sit passively until I pick on them, very tiring.
November 14	Students becoming more outspoken, Thais noticeably so.
November 21	Korean students speaking more often.
November 26	Thai students answered questions, albeit in a very low voice, almost a whisper, and with shy smiles, blushing, eyes downcast.
December 4	Thai students surprisingly vocal, trust is clearly developing.

Appendix 4

Interviewees' academic progression

Name	Achievement
Antonio	Distinction
Natalia	Distinction
Ning	Distinction
Brigitte	Distinction
Rini	Merit
Xia	Merit
Kyoung	Merit
Mohamed	Merit
Olga	Merit
Kiana	Merit (distinction in dissertation)
Cecilia	Merit
Paranee	Pass
Panya	Fail (resubmit dissertation)

Appendix 5

List of publications

Brown, L. The Incidence of Study-Related Stress in International Students in the Initial Stage of the International Sojourn *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 11, 4

Brown, L. 2006 A consideration of the problems faced by international students in English Language acquisition *LINK*, 16

Brown, L. 2007 A consideration of the challenges involved in supervising international masters students *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 31, 3, 239-248

Shipway, R. and Brown, L. 2007 Challenges for a Regional Cultural Programme of the 2012 Games *Culture at the Olympics*, 9, 21-35

Brown, L. 2008 Language and Anxiety: An Ethnographic Study of International Postgraduate Students *Evaluation and Research in Education* 2, 3

Shipway R., Brown, L. 2007 Future challenges for the Cultural Programme of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games: Achieving an authentic representation of culture through regional devolution
CAUTHE AUSTRALIA

Brown, L. and Peacock, N. 2007 Crisis of cross cultural communication on our campuses
Education for Sustainable Development: Graduates as Global Citizens 10-11 September
Bournemouth University

REFERENCES

- Ackers, J. 1997 Evaluating UK courses: the perspective of the overseas student In: McNamara, D. and Harris, R. Eds. *Overseas students in HE: issues in teaching and learning* London, Routledge
- Adelegan, F. and Parks, D. 1985 Problems of transition for African students in an American University *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 6, 504-508
- Adler, P. 1975 The transitional experience: an alternative view of culture shock *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 15, 3, 13-23
- Agar, M. 1986 *Speaking of ethnography* London, Sage
- Aggarwal, V. 2007 *An investigation into the non-participation of British students in International office events.* Bournemouth University
- Alexander, A., Workneh, F., Klein, M., Miller, M. 1976 Psychotherapy and the foreign student In: Pedersen, P., Lonner, W. and Draguns, J. Eds. *Counselling across cultures* Honolulu, UHP
- Allen, F. and Cole, J. 1987 Foreign student syndrome: fact or fable? *Journal of American College Health*, 35, 182-186
- Al-Qatei, A. 1984 The effect of exposure to Western cultures on the sex-role identity of Saudi Arabians *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 9, 303-312
- Altbach, P. 1989 The new internationalism: foreign students and scholars *Studies in Higher Education*, 14, 2, 125-136
- Altbach, P. 1991 Impact and adjustment: foreign students in comparative perspective *Higher Education*, 21, 305-323
- Althen, G. 1994 Recurring issues in intercultural communication In: Althen, G. Ed. *Learning across cultures* New York, NAFSA
- Amanpour, C. 2001 *Two governments in Iran*
Available from: <http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/05/30/otsc.amanpour/>
- Anumonye, A. 1967 Psychological stresses among African students in Britain *Scottish Medical Journal*, 12, September, 314-319
- Appleton, M. 2005 The political attitudes of Muslims studying at British Universities in the post-9/11 world (Part I) *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 25, 2, 171 - 191
- Archer, C. 1994 Managing a multicultural classroom In: Althen, G. Ed. *Learning across cultures* New York, NAFSA
- Argyle, M. and Henderson, M. 1986 Cross-cultural variations in relationship rules *International Journal of Psychology*, 21, 287-315
- Arora, R. 2005 *Race and ethnicity in education* Aldershot, Ashgate
- Atkins, P and Bowler, I. 2001 *Food in society* London, Arnold
- Atkinson, P. 1990 *The ethnographic imagination* London, Routledge

- Atkinson, P., Coffey, A., Delamaont, S., Lofland, J., Lofland, L. 2001 *Handbook of ethnography* London, Sage
- Baddassam, M. and Feller, S. 1975 Cultural variation in personal space: theory, methods and evidence *Ethos*, 3, 481-503
- Ball, S 1983 Case study research in education In: Hammersley, M. Ed. *Educational research: current issues* London, Chapman / Open University
- Ball, M. and Mahony, M. 1987 Foreign students, libraries, and culture *College and Research Libraries*, 48, 2, 160-166
- Ballard, B. 1987 Academic adjustment: the other side of the export dollar *Higher Education Research and Development*, 6, 2, 109-119
- Ballard, B. 1995 How critical is critical thinking? A generic issue for language in development In: Crookes, T. and Crewes, G. Eds. *Language and development* Bali, Australia Language Foundation
- Ballard, B. and Clanchy, J. 1991 Assessment by misconception: cultural influences and intellectual traditions In: Hamp-Lyons, L. Ed. *Assessing second language writing in academic contexts* New Jersey, Ablex
- Ballard, B. and Clanchy, J. 1997 *Teaching international students* Deakin, IDP
- Bamber, P. 2007 The Impact of Student Participation in International Service-Learning programs *Education for Sustainable Development: Graduates as Global Citizens* 10-11 September Bournemouth University
- Barkema, H., Pennings, J., Bell, J. 1996 Foreign entry, cultural barriers and learning *Strategic Management Journal*, 17, 151-166
- Barker, C. 2000 *Cultural studies: theory and practice* London, Sage
- Barker, J. 1997 The purpose of study, attitudes to study and staff-student relationships In: McNamara, D. and Harris, R. Eds. *Overseas students in HE: issues in teaching and learning* London, Routledge
- Barker, M., Child, C., Gallois, C., Jones, E., Callan, V. 1991 Difficulties of overseas students in social and academic situations *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 43, 2, 79-84
- Barley, N. 1983 *The innocent anthropologist* London, Penguin
- Bassnett, S. Ed. 1997 *Studying British cultures* London, Routledge
- Bauman, Z. 1999 *Culture as praxis* London, Sage
- BBC 2006 *Country profile: Slovenia*
Available from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/country_profiles/1097296.stm
- Beardsworth, A. and Keil, T. 1997 *Sociology on the menu: an invitation to the study of food and society* London, Routledge
- Becker, C. 1992 *Living and relating* London, Sage
- Becker, H. 1968 The self and adult socialisation In: Norbeck, E., Price-Williams, D., McCord, W. Eds. *The study of personality* New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston
- Beer, S. 2001 The future of the food supply chain: a perspective looking up the chain In: Eastham, J., Sharples, L., Ball, S. Eds. *Food supply chain management* Oxford, Butterworth Heineman

- Bennett, O. 2001 *Cultural pessimism: Narratives of decline in the post-modern world* Edinburgh, EUP
- Berg, S., Mellstrom, D., Persson, G. and Svanborg, A. 1981 Loneliness in the Swedish Aged. *Journal of Gerontology*, 36, 3, 342-49
- Berry, J. W. 1994 Acculturation and psychological adaptation: an overview. In: A. Bouvy, R. R. Van de Vijver, P. Boski and P. Schmitz Eds. *Journeys into Cross-cultural Psychology: Selected papers from the Eleventh International conference of the International Association for Cross-cultural Psychology* Leige, Swets and Zeitlinger
- Berry, J.W. 1997 Immigration, acculturation and adaptation *Applied Psychology*, 46, 5-68
- Berry, J.W. and Kim, U. 1988 Acculturation and mental health In: P.R. Dasen, J.W. Berry & N. Sarorius Eds. *Health and Cross-Cultural Psychology: Toward Applications* London, Sage.
- Beykont, Z and Daiute, C. 2002 Inclusiveness in Higher Education Courses: International Student perspectives *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 35, 1, 35-42
- Biddle, B. 1979 *Role theory: expectations, identities, and behaviors* New York, Academic Press
- Biggs, J. 1996 Approaches to learning of Asian students: a multiple paradox In: Pandey, J., Sinha, D., Bhawuk, D. Eds. *Asian contributions to cross-cultural psychology* New Delhi, Sage
- Biggs, J. and Watkins, D. 2002 Teaching the Chinese learner: psychological and pedagogical perspectives *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 26, 5, 595-599
- Bilal, D. 1989 International students' acquisition of library research skills: relationship with their English language proficiency *Reference Librarian*, 24, 129-145
- Blair, T. 2006 Why we must attract more students from overseas *The Guardian*, April 18
Available from: <http://education.guardian.co.uk/students/overseasstudents/story/0,,1755500,00.html>
- Bloor, M. 1994 English language proficiency in British universities: monitoring quality and raising standards *Journal of International Education*, 5, 1, 22-32
- Blue, G. 1991 Language learning within academic constraints In: Adams, P., Heaton, B., Howarth, A. Eds. *Socio-cultural issues in English for Academic Purposes* Vol. 1, 2 London, Macmillan
- Blue, G. 1993 Nothing succeeds like linguistic competence: the role of language in academic success In: Blue, G. Ed. *Language, learning and success: studying through English* Vol. 3, 1 London, Macmillan
- Blythman, J. 2003 Lord of the aisles *The Guardian*, May 17
Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/food/focus/story/0,,956562,00.html>
- Bochner, S. 1981 The Social Psychology of Cultural mediation In: Bochner, S. Ed. *The mediating person: bridges between cultures* Massachusetts, Schenkman
- Bochner, S. 1986 Coping with unfamiliar cultures: adjustment or culture learning? *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 38, 3, 347-358
- Bochner, S. 1994 Cross-cultural differences in the self-concept *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology*, 25, 2, 273-283
- Bochner, S., Hutnik, N., Furnham, A. 1985 The friendship patterns of overseas and host students in an Oxford student residence *Journal of Social Psychology*, 125, 6, 689-694

- Bochner, S., Lin, A., McLeod, B. 1979 Cross-cultural contact and the development of an international perspective *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 107, 29-41
- Bochner, S., Lin, A. and McLeod, B. 1980 Anticipated role conflict of returning overseas students *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 110, 265-272
- Bochner, S., McLeod, B. and Lin, A. 1977 Friendship patterns of overseas students *International Journal of Psychology*, 12, 277-294
- Bochner, S. and Orr, F. 1979 Race and academic status as determinants of friendship formation: a field study *International Journal of Psychology*, 14, 37-46
- Bock, P. 1970 *Culture shock* New York, Alfred Knopf
- Bohannan, P. 1969 *Social anthropology* London, Holt
- Boski, P. 1994 Psychological acculturation via identity dynamics: consequences for subjective well-being In: Bouvy, A-M., van de Vijver, F., Boski, P. and Schmitz, P. Eds. *Journeys into cross-cultural psychology* Amsterdam, S&Z
- Bourgeois, T. 2002 Respect at work: going legit In: Taylor, S. Ed. *Ethnographic research* London, Sage
- Bourne, P. 1975 The Chinese student – acculturation and mental illness *Psychiatry*, 38, 269-277
- Bowl, M. 2003 *Non-traditional entrants to Higher Education: they talk about people like me* Stoke on Trent, Trentham
- Bradley, G. 2000 Responding effectively to the mental health needs of international students *Higher Education*, 39, 417-433
- Branscombe, N. and Wann, D. 1994 Collective self-esteem consequences of outgroup derogation when a valued social identity is on trial *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 24, 641-657
- Brewer, J. 2000 *Ethnography* Buckingham, OUP
- Briggs, R. 2001 *The kidnapping business* London Foreign Policy Centre
Available from: <http://fpc.org.uk/publications/111>
- Brislin, R., Cushner, K., Cherrie, C., Mahealani, Y. 1986 *Intercultural interactions: a practical guide* London, Sage
- Brown B. 2003 *White Immigrants: A portrait of the Polish Community in London* Institute of Community Studies, Working Paper No 5, July
Available from: <http://www.youngfoundation.org.uk/files/content/WhiteImmigrants.pdf>
- Brown, H.D. 1980 The optimal distance model of second language acquisition *TESOL Quarterly*, 14, 2, 157-164
- Brown, J. 2006 *A psychosocial exploration of love and intimacy* Basingstoke, Palgrave
- Bruyn, S. 1966 *The human perspective in sociology: the methodology of participant observation* New Jersey, Prentice Hall
- Brumfit, C. 1993 *Culture and success: a general model, and its applicability for EAP learners* In: Blue, G. Ed. *Language, learning and success: studying through English* Vol. 3, 1 London, Macmillan
- Bruner, J. 1957 On perceptual readiness *Psychological Review*, 64, 2, 123-152

- Bulmer, M. Ed. 1982 *Social research ethics* London, Macmillan
- Bunting, M. 2006 It takes more than tea and biscuits to overcome indifference and fear
The Guardian February 27
Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Columnists/Column/0,,1718632,00.html>
- Burgess, R. 1984 *In the field* London Routledge
- Burns, C. 2004 Effect of migration on food habits of Somali women living as refugees in Australia
Ecology of food and nutrition, 43, 3, 213-229
- Byrne, P. 2001 Psychiatric stigma *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 178, 281-284
- Calder, J. 1995 Aral Sea Loss and Environmental and Economic Repercussions *The TED Case Studies*, 4, 1, January
Available from: <http://www.american.edu/TED/aral.htm>
- Cammish, N. 1997 Through a looking glass darkly: problems of studying at advanced level through the medium of English In: McNamara, D. and Harris, R. Eds. *Overseas students in HE: issues in teaching and learning* London, Routledge
- Carroll, J. 2004 *Deterring, detecting and dealing with plagiarism: a brief paper for Brookes staff for Academic Integrity Week* Available from:
http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsd/2_learnth/plagiarism.html
- Carroll, J. 2005a 'Lightening the load': teaching in English, learning in English In: Carroll, J. and Ryan, J. Eds. *Teaching international students: Improving learning for all* Abingdon, Routledge
- Carroll, J. 2005b Strategies for becoming more explicit In: Carroll, J. and Ryan, J. Eds. *Teaching international students: Improving learning for all* Abingdon, Routledge
- Case, P. and Selvester, K. 2000 Close encounters: ideological invasion and complicity on an international management Masters' Programme *Management Learning*, 31, 1, 11-23
- Castle, S. 2005 Muslims on front line as racism rises across EU *The Independent*, 26 July
Available from: news.independent.co.uk/europe/article1197272.ece
- Chadley, O. 1992 Addressing cultural diversity in academic and research libraries *College and Research Libraries*, 53, 3, 206-214
- Chan, D. and Drover, G. 1997 Teaching and learning for overseas students: the Hong Kong connection In: McNamara, D. and Harris, R. Eds. *Overseas students in HE: issues in teaching and learning* London, Routledge
- Channell, J. 1990 The student-tutor relationship In: Kinnell, M. Ed. *The learning experiences of overseas students* Buckingham, OUP/SRHE
- Channel 4 2006 *What Muslims want* TV, 7 August, 8pm
- Charmaz, K. 1983 Loss of self: a fundamental form of suffering in the chronically ill
Sociology of health and illness, 5, 2, 168-195
- Charmaz, K. and Mitchell, R. 1997 The myth of silent authorship In: Hertz, R. Ed. *Reflexivity and voice* London, Sage
- Cheater, A.P. 1987 The anthropologist as citizen: the diffracted self? In: Jackson, A. Ed. *Anthropology at home* London, Tavistock
- Cheung, F.M. 1984 Chinese values and the search for culture-free dimensions of culture

- Journal of Cross-cultural psychology*, 18, 143-164
- Church, A. 1982 Sojourner adjustment *Psychological Bulletin*, 91, 3, 540-572
- Civitello, L. 2004 *Cuisine and Culture: a history of food and people* New Jersey, Wiley
- Clifford, J. 1983 On ethnographic authority *Representations* 1, 2, 118-46
- Clifford, J. 1986 Partial truths In: Clifford, J. and Marcus, G. Eds. *Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography* California, UCP
- Coates, N. 2004 The 'Stranger', the 'Sojourner' and the International Student 2nd Education in a changing environment conference, University of Salford, Sept 13-14 2004
- Cobb, S. 1976 Social support as a moderator of life stress *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 38, 5, 300-314
- Cochrane, R. 1977 Mental health in immigrants to England and Wales: an analysis of mental hospital admissions, 1971 *Social Psychiatry*, 12, 25-35
- Coelho, G.; Hamburg, D. and Adams, J. Eds. 1974 *Coping and adaptation* New York, Basic Books
- Cohen, S. and Hoberman, H. 1983 Positive events and social supports as buffers of life change stress *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 13, 2, 99-125
- Cole, J., Allen, F., and Green, J. 1980 Survey of health problems of overseas students *Social Science and Medicine*, 14, 627-631
- Cooley, C. 1972 Looking glass self In: Manis, J. and Meltzer, B. Eds *Symbolic Interaction: a reader in social psychology* Boston, Allyn and Bacon
- Cope, W. and Kalantzis, M. 1997 *Productive diversity* Annandale, Pluto Press
- Cortazzi, M. and Jin, L. 1997 Learning across cultures In: McNamara, D. and Harris, R. Eds. *Overseas students in HE: issues in teaching and learning* London, Routledge
- Counihan, C. and Van Esterik, P. Eds. 1997 *Food and Culture: A Reader* London, Routledge
- Crano, S. and Crano, W. 1993 A measure of adjustment strain in international students *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology*, 24, 3, 267-283
- Cray, D. and Mallory, G. 1998 *Making Sense of Managing Culture* London, International Thompson Business Press.
- Crocker, J. and Luhtanen, R. 1990 Collective self-esteem and in-group bias *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 58, 1, 60-67
- Curtis, P. 2005 Market 'forces universities to recruit overseas' *The Guardian*, February 8 Available from: <http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/news/story/0,,1408490,00.html>
- Cushner, K. and Karim, A. 2004 Study abroad at university level In: D. Landis, J. Bennett and M. Bennett, Eds. *Intercultural training* London, Sage
- Cushner, K. and Mahon, J. 2002 Overseas student teaching: affecting personal, professional and global competencies in an age of globalisation *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 6, 1, 44-58
- D'Andrade, R. 1981 The cultural part of cognition *Cognitive Science*, 5, 179-195

- David, K. 1971 Effect of intercultural contact and international stance in attitude change toward host nationals *Psychologia*, 14, 153-157
- David, K. 1976 The use of social learning theory in preventing intercultural adjustment problems In: Pedersen, P., Lonner, W., and Draguns, J. Eds. *Counselling across cultures* Honolulu, UHP
- Davidson, A. 1979 Culture and attitude structure and change In: Marsella, A., Tharp, R., Ciborowski, T. Eds. *Perspectives on cross-cultural psychology* New York, Academic Press
- Davies, C. A. 1999 *Reflexive ethnography* London, Routledge
- Daymon, C. and Holloway, I. 2002 *Qualitative research methods in Public Relations and Marketing Communications* London, Routledge
- Deal, C. 2002 Teaching the Chinese learner and pedagogical perspectives (book review) *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 26, 5, 595-599
- Denzin, N. Ed. 1991 *Studies in symbolic interaction* (Vol. 12) Connecticut, JAI
- Denzin, N. 1997 *Interpretive ethnography: ethnographic practices for the 21st century* London, Sage
- Denzin, N. and Erikson, K. 1982 On the ethics of disguised observation: an exchange In: Bulmer, M. Ed. *Social research ethics* London, Macmillan
- Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. 1998 *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* London, Sage
- Derrida, J. 1976 *Of grammatology* Baltimore, JHUP
- DFES 2006 *Innovation in languages teaching and learning* London, DFES
Available from: www.dfes.gov.uk/research
- Detweiler, R. 1975 On inferring the intentions of a person from another culture *Journal of Personality*, 42, 591-611
- Detweiler, R. 1980 Intercultural interaction and the categorisation process: a conceptual analysis and behavioural outcome *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 4, 275-293
- De Vita, G. 2000 Inclusive approaches to effective communication and active participation in the multicultural classroom *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 1, 2, 168-180
- De Vita, G. 2001 Learning styles, culture and inclusive instruction in the multicultural classroom *Innovations in Education and Teaching*, 38, 2, 165-174
- De Vita, G. 2002 Does assessed multicultural group work really pull UK students' average down? *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 27, 2, 153-161
- De Vita, G. 2005 Fostering intercultural learning through multicultural group work In: Carroll, J. and Ryan, J. Eds. *Teaching international students: Improving learning for all* Abingdon, Routledge
- De Vos, G. 1968 Achievement and innovation in culture and personality In: Norbeck, E., Price-Williams, D., McCord, W. Eds. *The study of personality* New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston
- De Wit, H. and Callan, H. 1995 Internationalisation of HE in Europe In: De Wit, H. Ed. *Strategies for internationalisation of HE* Amsterdam, European Association for International Education

- De Wit, H. and Knight, J. 1995 Strategies for internationalisation of HE: historical and conceptual perspectives In: De Wit, H. Ed. *Strategies for internationalisation of HE* Amsterdam, EAIE
- Dickinson, J. 1993 The management of higher degrees undertaken by overseas students *Journal of International Education* 4, 1, 41-44
- Di Marco, N. 1974 Stress and adaptation in cross-cultural transition *Psychological Reports* 35, 279-285
- Dissanayake, W. and Nichter, M. 1987 Native sensibility and literary discourse In: Smith, L. Ed. *Discourse across cultures: strategies in world Englishes* New York, Prentice Hall
- Draguns, J. 1979 Culture and personality In: Marsella, A., Tharp, R., Ciborowski, T. Eds. *Perspectives on cross-cultural psychology* New York, Academic Press
- Drinkwater, S. Eade J., Garapich. M. 2006 *Poles apart? EU Enlargement and the Labour market Outcomes of Immigrants in the UK* IZA (Institute for the Study of Labour), Discussion Paper 2410
- Durant, A. 1997 Facts and meanings in British Cultural Studies In: Bassnett, S. Ed. *Studying British cultures* London, Routledge
- Durjaiye, S. and Donald, G. 1984 Students, wives and mothers: mature women overseas students *Higher Education Review*, 16, Summer, 57-69
- Durkin, K. 2004 *Challenges Chinese students face in adapting to academic expectations and teaching and learning styles of UK Masters courses* British Council
Available from: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/china-education-scholarships-china-studies-grant-awardlist-kathydurkin.pdf>
- Durkin, K. and Main, A. 2002 Discipline-based study skills support for first-year undergraduate students *Higher Education* 3, 1, 24-39
- Dyal, J. and Dyal, R. 1981 Acculturation stress and coping: some implications for research and education *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 5, 301-328
- Ebbin, A. and Blankenship, E. 1986 A longitudinal health case study: international versus domestic students *Journal of American College Health*, 34, February, 177-182
- Edwards, J. 1994 *Multilingualism* London, Routledge
- Edwards, J.S.A., Engstrom, K., Hartwell, H. 2005 Overweight, obesity and the food service industry *Food Service Technology*, 5, 85-94
- Edwards, J.S.A. and Meiselman, H. 2003 Changes in dietary habits during the first year at university *British Nutrition Foundation Nutritional Bulletin*, 28, 21-34
- Ehrhardt, J. 2006 Towards Queering Food Studies: Foodways, Heteronormativity, and Hungry Women in Chicana Lesbian Writing *Food and Foodways*, 14, 2, 91-109
- Ekman, P. and Friesen, W. 1971 Constants across cultures in the face and emotion *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 17, 2, 124-129
- Eland, A.J. 2001 *Intersection of academics and culture: the academic experience of international graduate students* University of Minnesota
- Ellingsworth, H. 1977 Conceptualising intercultural communication In: Ruben, B. Ed. *Communication Yearbook 1* New Jersey, Transaction Books

- Ellis, C. (Vol. 12) 1991 Emotional sociology In: Denzin, N. Ed. *Studies in symbolic interaction* Connecticut, JAI
- Ellis, C. and Flaherty, M. Eds. 1992 *Investigating subjectivity* California, Sage
- Esack, F. 1993 Pebbles in our shoes *Journal of International Education*, 4, 1, 67-73
- Evans, J. 1983 Criteria of validity in social research In: Hammersley, M. Ed. *Educational research: current issues* London, Chapman / Open University
- Evans, M., Schweingruber, H. and Stevenson, H. 2002 Gender differences in interest and knowledge acquisition: the United States, Taiwan and Japan *Sex roles*, 47,3/4
Available from: <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~evansem/SexRoles.pdf>
- Featherstone, M. 1995 *Undoing culture: globalisation, postmodernism and identity*. London, Sage
- FCO 2006 *Country Profiles Foreign & Commonwealth Office: Taiwan* Available from: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountryProfile&aid=1018965313021>
- Fetterman, D. 1982 Ethnography in educational research: the dynamics of diffusion *Educational Researcher* 11, 3, 17-22
- Fetterman, D. 1998 *Ethnography* London, Sage
- Fielding, N. 1993 Ethnography In: Gilbert, N. Ed. *Researching social life* London, Sage
- Finkelstein, J. 1999 Rich food: McDonalds and modern life In: Smart, B. Ed. *Resisting McDonaldisation* London, Sage
- Forgas, J. and Bond, M. 1985 Central influences on the perception of interaction episodes *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 11, 75-88
- Frable, D., Blackstone, T., Scherbaum, C. 1990 Marginal and mindful: deviants in social interactions *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 59, 1, 140-149
- Freedland, J. 2005 In the grip of panic *The Guardian* January 22
Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/islam/story/0,15568,1396175,00.html>
- French, J., Rodgers, W., Cobb, S. 1974 Adjustment as person-environment fit In: Coelho, G., Hamburg, D. and Adams, J. Eds. *Coping and adaptation* New York, Basic Books
- Friends of the Earth 2004 *Real Food* Available from: http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/press_releases/government_must_do_more_to_01122004.html
- Furneaux, C., Locke, C., Robinson, P., Tonkyn, A. 1991 Talking heads and shifting bottoms: the ethnography of academic seminars In: Adams, P., Heaton, B., Howarth, A. Eds. *Socio-cultural issues in English for Academic Purposes* Vol. 1, 2 London, Macmillan
- Furnham, A. 1979 Assertiveness in three cultures: multidimensionality and cultural differences *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 35, 3, 522-527
- Furnham, A. 1993 Communication in foreign lands: the cause, consequences and cures of culture shock *Language Culture and Curriculum*, 6, 1, 91-109
- Furnham, A. 1995 Psychological and socio-cultural variables as predictors of adjustment in cross-cultural transitions *Psychologia*, 38, 238-251

- Furnham, A. 1997 The experience of being an overseas student In McNamara, D. and Harris, R. Eds. *Overseas students in HE: issues in teaching and learning* London, Routledge
- Furnham, A. and Alibhai, N. 1985 Value differences in foreign students *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 9, 365-375
- Furnham, A. and Bochner, S. 1986 *Culture shock* New York, Methuen
- Furnham, A. and Erdmann, S. 1995 Psychological and sociocultural variables as predictors of adjustment in cross-cultural transitions *Psychologia*, 38, 4, 238-251
- Furnham, A. and Trezise, L. 1983 The mental health of foreign students *Social Science and Medicine*, 17, 6, 365-370
- Furukawa, T. 1997 Sojourner readjustment: mental health of international students after one year's foreign sojourn and its psychosocial correlates *Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases*, 185, 4, 263-8
- Gaine, C. and Lamley, K. 2003 *Racism and the Dorset idyll: a report of the experiences of Black and minority ethnic people in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole* Bournemouth, Dorset Race Equality Council
- Gao, G. and Gudykunst, W. 1990 Uncertainty, anxiety, and adaptation *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 14, 3, 301-317
- Garza-Guerrero, A. 1974 Culture shock: its mourning and the vicissitudes of identity *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 22, 408-429
- Geertz, C. 1973 *The interpretation of cultures* New York, Basic Books
- Geertz, C. 1988 *Works and lives* California, SUP
- Germov, J. and Williams, L. 1999 Introducing the social appetite: why do we need a sociology of food and nutrition? In: Germov, J. and Williams, L. Eds. *A sociology of food and nutrition* Oxford, OUP
- Giddens, A. 1991 *Modernity and self-identity: self and society in the late modern age* Cambridge, Blackwell
- Gilbert, N. Ed. 1993 *Researching social life* London, Sage
- Gilroy, P. 1997 Diaspora and the detours of identity In: Woodward, K. Ed. *Identity and difference* London, Sage
- Gilroy, P. 2007 *Multiculturalism and post-colonial London* Seminar, South Bank University, London, June 20
- Glaser, B. 1978 *Theoretical sensitivity* California, Sociology Press
- Glaser, B. and Strauss, A. 1967 *The discovery of grounded theory* New York, Aldine de Gruyter
- Goffman, E. 1963 *Stigma: notes on the management of spoiled identity* New Jersey, Prentice-Hall
- Goffman, E. 1972 The presentation of self to others In: Manis, J. and Meltzer, B. Eds. *Symbolic Interaction: a reader in social psychology* Boston, Allyn and Bacon
- Goldblatt, J. 2007 Designing and co-creating memorable experiences *Extraordinary Experiences Conference* Bournemouth University 3,4 September 2007

- Golden, J. 1973 Student adjustment abroad: a psychiatrist's view *International Education and cultural exchange*, 8, 28-36
- Gosden, C. 1999 Food: where biology meets culture In: Gosden, C. and Hather, J., Eds. *The prehistory of food: appetites for change* London, Routledge
- Goulbourne, H. 1991 *Ethnicity and nationalism in post-imperial Britain* Cambridge, Polity Press
- Greenaway, D. and Tuck, J. 1995 *Economic impact of international students in UK HE* London, CVCP
- Gronow, J. 1997 *The sociology of taste* London, Routledge
- Gu, Q. 2005 Enjoy loneliness *Humanising Language*, 7, 6
- Gudykunst, W. 1983 Toward a typology of stranger-host relationships *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 7, 401-13
- Gudykunst, W. 1985 An exploratory comparison of close intracultural and intercultural friendships *Communication Quarterly*, 33, 4, 270-283
- Gudykunst, W. 1998 *Bridging differences: effective intergroup communication* London, Sage
- Gudykunst, W. and Kim, Y. 1984 *Communicating with strangers: an approach to intercultural communication* London, Addison-Wesley
- Gudykunst, W. and Nishida, T. 2001 Anxiety, uncertainty, and perceived effectiveness of communication across relationships and cultures *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 25, 55-71
- Gullahorn, J. and Gullahorn, J. 1963 The role of the academic man as a cross-cultural mediator *American Sociological Review*, 25, 3, 414-417
- Gumperz, J. and Cook-Gumperz, J. 1982 Introduction: language and the communication of social identity In: Gumperz, J. Ed. *Language and social identity* Cambridge, UCP
- Guthrie, G. 1979 A cross-cultural odyssey: some personal reflections In: Marsella, A., Tharp, R., Ciborowski, T. Eds. *Perspectives on cross-cultural psychology* New York, Academic Press
- Guthrie, G. 1981 What you need is continuity In: Bochner, S. Ed. *The mediating person: bridges between cultures* Massachusetts, Schenkman
- Hall, C. and O'Connell, H. 2006 Critical issues in research supervision – supervising Thai students in the UK and Thailand *The Asian Forum on Business Education conference*, Hanoi, Vietnam Available from: http://www.afbe.info/component/option,com_docman/task,doc_details/gid,48/
- Hall, E. 1959 *The silent language* New York, Double Day
- Hall, E. 1976 *Beyond culture* New York, Double Day
- Hall, E. 1980 *The hidden dimension* New York, Double Day
- Hall, E. and Whyte, W. 1963 Intercultural communication: a guide to men of action *Practical Anthropology*, 10, 216-229
- Hall, J. 1995 Food and dietary requirements for international students *Journal of International Education* 6, 1, 53-60

- Hall, P. 1992 Peanuts: a note on intercultural communication *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 18, 4, 211-213
- Hamburg, D. and Adams, J. 1967 A perspective on coping behaviour: seeking and utilising information in major transitions *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 17, 277-284
- Hamburg, D., Coelho, G., Adams, J. 1974 Coping and adaptation: steps toward a synthesis of biological and social perspectives In: Coelho, G., Hamburg, D. and Adams, J. Eds. *Coping and adaptation* New York, Basic Books
- Harris-Shapiro, C. 2006 Bloody Shank bones and Braided Bread: The Food Voice and the Fashioning of American Jewish Identities *Food and Foodways*, 14, 2, 67-90
- Hammersley, M. Ed. 1983 *Educational research: current issues* London, Chapman / OU
- Hammersley, M. 1990 *Reading ethnographic research* New York, Longman
- Hammersley, M. 1992 *What's wrong with ethnography?* London, Routledge
- Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. 1995 *Ethnography Principles in practice* London, Tavistock
- Helson, H. 1964 *Adaptation-level theory* New York, Harper & Row
- Henry, C. and Wheeler, E. 1980 Dietary patterns among overseas students in London *The Nutrition Society*, 39, 2, A47
- HEPI 2007 *The Academic Experience of Students in English Universities*
Available from: <http://www.hepi.ac.uk/pubs.asp?DOC=Reports>
- Herskovits, F. 1972 *Cultural relativism* New York, Random House
- Hertz, R. Ed. 1993 *Reflexivity and voice* London, Sage
- Himmelgreen, D., Bretnall, R., Peng, Y., Bermudez, A. 2005 Birthplace, length of time in the US, and language are associated with diet among inner-city Puerto Rican women *Ecology of food and nutrition*, 44, 2, 105-122
- Hofman, J. and Zak, I. 1969 Interpersonal and attitude change in a cross-cultural situation *Journal of Social Psychology*, 78, 165-171
- Hofstede, G. 1986 Cultural differences in teaching and learning *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 10, 301-320
- Hofstede, G. 1991 *Cultures and organisation: software of the mind* London, HarperCollins
- Hofstede, G. 2001 *Culture's consequences Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations across Nations* London, Sage
- Hofstede, G. 2002 Dimensions do not exist: a reply to Brian McSweeney *Human Relations*, 55, 11
- Hofstede, G. and Hofstede, G. J. 2005 *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, 3rd Edition New York, McGraw-Hill
- Holland, S.F. 2005 Challenges in a cross-cultural university setting: students' and teachers' adaptive strategies *The idea of education conference*, Prague, 1-13 August

- Holloway, I., Sofaer-Bennett, B. and Walker, J. 2007 The stigmatisation of people with chronic back pain *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 29, 18, 1456-1464
- Hollway, W. and Jefferson, T. 2000 *Doing qualitative research differently* London, Sage
- Honeyford, R. 1988 *Integration or disintegration? Towards a non-racist society* London, Claridge Press
- Home Office 2006 *Immigration and Nationality Directorate*
Available from: <http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/lawandpolicy/immigrationrules/appendix1>
- Houghton, C. and Dickinson, J. 1995 The Social and cultural dimensions of international study *Journal of International Education*, 3, 2, 31-52
- Hsu, L., Hailey, B., Range, I. 1987 Cultural and emotional components of loneliness and depression *The Journal of Psychology*, 12, 1, 61-70
- Hullett, C.R. and Witte, K. 2001 Predicting intercultural adaptation and isolation: using the extended parallel process model to test anxiety/uncertainty management theory *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 25, 2, 125-139
- Huntingdon, S. 1993 The clash of civilisations? *Foreign Affairs*, 72, 3, 22-49
- I-Barometer 2006 *International Students in the UK (internal report)* Bournemouth University
- I-Barometer 2007 *International Students in the UK (internal report)* Bournemouth University
- Ikeda, J. *Culture, food, and nutrition in increasingly culturally diverse societies*
In: Germov, J. and Williams, L. Eds. *A sociology of food and nutrition* Oxford, OUP
- Institute of Public Policy Research 2007 *BBC News* TV, BBC1, November 2
- Jackson, M. 1989 *Paths toward a clearing* Indiana, IUP
- Jackson, S. 1998 *Britain's population: demographic issues in contemporary society* London, Routledge
- Jacobson-Widding, A. 1983 *Identity: personal and socio-cultural* Uppsala, HSRF
- Jandt, F. 2001 *Intercultural communication*, 3rd edn London, Sage
- Kedia, S. 2004 Changing food production strategies among Garhwali resettlers in the Himalayas *Ecology of food and nutrition*, 43, 6, 421-442
- Kember, D. and Gow, L. 1990 Cultural specificity of approaches to study *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 60, 356-363
- Kember, D and Gow, L. 1991 A challenge to the anecdotal stereotype of the Asian student *Studies in Higher Education*, 16, 117-128
- Kemp, N. 2001 When opportunity knocks *The Guardian*, November 6, p. 14
- Kiley, M. 2000 Providing timely and appropriate support for international postgraduate students
In: G. Wisker, Ed. *Good practice working with international students* Anglia Polytechnic University
- Killick, D. 2007 Curriculum Development for Global Citizenship *Education for Sustainable Development: Graduates as Global Citizens* 10-11 September Bournemouth University

- Kinch, J. 1972 A formalised theory of the self-concept In: Manis, J. and Meltzer, B. Eds. *Symbolic Interaction: a reader in social psychology* Boston, Allyn and Bacon
- Kim, Y. Y. 1988 *Communication and cross-cultural adaptation* Clevedon, Multilingual Matters
- Kim, Y.Y. 2001 *Becoming intercultural: an integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- King, G. A. and Sorenson, R. M. 1983 Psychological dimensions of goal-oriented interpersonal situations *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 44, 140-162
- Kirchmeyer, C. 1993 Multicultural task groups: an account of the low contribution level of minorities *Small Group Research*, 24, 1, 127-148
- Klineberg, O. 1981 The role of international university exchanges In: Bochner, S. Ed. *The mediating person: bridges between cultures* Massachusetts, Schenkman
- Klineberg, O. and Hull, W. 1979 *At a foreign university; an international study of adaptation and coping* New York, Praeger
- Kluckhohn, C and Murray, H. 1949 *Personality in nature, society and culture* London, Cape
- Knochenmus, J. 1986 University studies abroad – their contribution to international understanding and co-operation *Higher Education in Europe*, 11, 1, 62-67
- Ko, Y. 1978 Mental health of the overseas Chinese students in the new environment *Acta Psychologica Taiwanica*, 20, 2, 1-7
- Koester, J. and Lustig, M. 2003 *Intercultural competence: interpersonal communication across cultures*, 4th edn Boston, Allyn and Bacon
- Kramsch, C. 1993 *Context and culture in language teaching* Oxford, OUP
- Kritek, P. 1997 *Reflections on Healing: A Central Nursing Construct* London, Jones and Bartlett
- Kroeber, A. and Kluckhohn, C. 1952 *Culture* Cambridge, The Museum
- Ladd, P. and Ruby, R. 1999 Learning style and adjustment issues of international students *Journal of Education for Business*, 74, 6, 1-9
- Lago, C. 1992 Some complexities in counselling international students *Journal of International Education*, 3, 1, 21-34
- Lang, T. and Gabriel, Y. 1995 *The unmanageable consumer* London, Sage
- Lawson, C. 1993 Religion and overseas students *Journal of International Education* 4, 1, 67
- Lazarus, R., Averill, J., Opton, E. 1974 The psychology of coping: issues of research and assessment In: Coelho, G., Hamburg, D. and Adams, J. Eds. *Coping and adaptation* New York, Basic Books
- Leask, B. 2005 Internationalisation of the curriculum: teaching and learning In: Carroll, J. and Ryan, J. Eds. *Teaching international students: Improving learning for all* Abingdon, Routledge
- Leask, B. 2007 A holistic approach to internationalisation – connecting institutional policy and the curriculum with the everyday reality of student life *Education for Sustainable Development: Graduates as Global Citizens* 10-11 September Bournemouth University

- Ledwith, S. and Seymour, D. 2001 Home and away: preparing students for multicultural management *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 12, 8, 1292-1312
- Lee, S and Bradley, K 2002 Relation between general self-efficacy, assertiveness and spirituality and acculturative stress among international students *Self-efficacy, assertiveness and spirituality*, 1, 1-25
- Leonard, M. 1997 *Britain TM: renewing our identity* London, Demos
- Leonard, D., Pelletier, C. and Morley, L. 2002 *The Experiences of International Students in UK Higher Education: a review of unpublished research* London, UKCOSA
- Levin, J. 2001 *International education in Nepal: a qualitative study of efforts to educate across cultural contexts*. University of Colorado at Boulder (PhD)
- Lewins, H. 1990 Living needs In: Kinnell, M. Ed. *The learning experiences of overseas students* Buckingham, OUP/SRHE
- Liu, M-C. 2001 *The adaptation and experience of foreign-born faculty members in the US* The Claremont Graduate University
- Lloyd, M. 1996 Philosophy and religion in the face of death and bereavement *Journal of Religion and Health*, 35, 4, 295-310
Available from: <http://www.springerlink.com/content/p037860717678401/>
- Locher J., Yoels, W., Maurer, D., van Ells, J. 2005 Comfort Foods: An Exploratory Journey Into The Social and Emotional Significance of Food *Food and Foodways*, 13, 4, 273-297
- Logue, A. 2004 *The psychology of eating and drinking* New York, Brunner-Routledge
- Lord, P. and Dawson, C. 2002 *The Induction needs of international students at postgraduate level* London, TVU
- Louie, K. 2005 Gathering cultural knowledge: useful or use with care? In: Carroll, J. and Ryan, J. Eds. *Teaching international students: Improving learning for all* Abingdon, Routledge
- Lu, L. 1990 Adaptation to British universities: home sickness and mental health of Chinese students *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 3, 3, 252-232
- Lynch, T. and Anderson, K. 1991 Do you mind if I come in here? In: Adams, P., Heaton, B., Howarth, A. Eds. *Socio-cultural issues in English for Academic Purposes* Vol. 1, 2 London, Macmillan
- Lysgaard, S. 1955 Adjustment in a foreign society: Norwegian Fulbright grantees visiting the United States *International Social Science Bulletin*, 7, 1, 45-51
- Macdonald, K. and Tipton, C. 1993 Using documents In: Gilbert, N. Ed. *Researching social life* London, Sage
- MacLeod, D. 2005 Universities warned to maintain teaching standards *The Guardian*, March 17
Available from: <http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/news/story/0,,1440166,00.html>
- MacLeod, D. 2006 International rescue *The Guardian* April 18
Available from: <http://education.guardian.co.uk/egweekly/story/0,,1755401,00.html>
- Macrae, M. 1997 The induction of international students to academic life in the UK In: McNamara, D. and Harris, R. Eds. *Overseas students in HE: issues in teaching and learning* London, Routledge

- Madison, G. 2006 Existential migration *Existential analysis*, 17, 2, 238-260
- Mahdi, A. 2001 Perceptions of gender roles among female Iranian immigrants in the United States In: S. Ansari and V. Martin, Eds *Women, Religion and Culture in Iran* London, Curzon Press
- Marcus, G. 1986 Afterword: ethnographic writing and anthropological careers In: Clifford, J. and Marcus, G. Eds. *Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography* California, UCP
- Marshall, D. 2000 British meals and food choice In: Meiselman H. Ed. *Dimensions of the Meal: the science, culture, business and art of eating* Maryland, Aspen
- Martin, J. 1987 The relationship between student sojourner perceptions of intercultural competencies and previous sojourn experience *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 11, 337-355
- Martin, J. and Harrell, T. 1996 Reentry training for intercultural sojourners. In: D. Landis and R. Bhagat Eds. *Handbook of intercultural training* Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage
- Martin, J. and Harrell, T. 2004 Intercultural reentry of students and professionals: theory and practice In: D. Landis, Bennett, J. and Bennett, M. Eds. *Intercultural training* London, Sage
- Marx, K. 1844 *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* Available from: http://www3.baylor.edu/~Scott_Moore/texts/Marx_Opium.html
- Mascarenhas-Keyes, S. 1987 The native anthropologist: constraints and strategies in research In: Jackson, A. Ed. *Anthropology at home* London, Tavistock
- Mason, J. 2002 *Qualitative researching* London, Sage
- Maundeni, T. 2001 The role of social networks in the adjustment of African students to British society: students' perceptions *Race, ethnicity and education*, 4, 3, 253-276
- May, M. and Bartlett, A. 1995 "They've got a problem with English": perceptions of the difficulties of international postgraduate students In: McNamara, D. and Harris, R. Eds. *Overseas students in HE: issues in teaching and learning* London, Routledge
- McCurry, J. 2005 Hand of welcome as China's old enemies end 60-year standoff *The Guardian* April 30 Available from: http://www.guardian.co.uk/taiwan/Story/0,,1473793,00.html#article_
- McIntosh, A. and Kubena, K. 1999 Food and Ageing In: Germov, J. and Williams, L. Eds. *A sociology of food and nutrition* Oxford, OUP
- McLean, P. and Ransom, L. 2005 Building intercultural competencies: implications for academic skills development In: Carroll, J. and Ryan, J. Eds. *Teaching international students: Improving learning for all* Abingdon, Routledge
- McLeod, B. 1981 The mediating person and cultural identity In: Bochner, S. Ed. *The mediating person: bridges between cultures* Massachusetts, Schenkman
- Measor, L. and Woods, P. 1983 The interpretation of pupil myths In: Hammersley, M. Ed. *Educational research: current issues* London, Chapman / Open University
- Mechanis, D. 1974 Social structure and personal adaptation: some neglected dimensions In: Coelho, G., Hamburg, D. and Adams, J. Eds. *Coping and adaptation* New York, Basic Books
- Meiselman, H., Mastroianni, G., Buller, M., Edwards, J.S.A. 1999 Longitudinal measurement of three eating behaviour scales during a period of change *Food quality and preference*, 10, 1-8

- Merrill, B. 1999 *Gender, change and identity: mature women students in universities* Aldershot, Ashgate
- Miller, D. and Harwell, D. 1983 International students at an American university: health problems and status *The Journal of School Health*, 53, January, 45-49
- Milligan, C., Gatrell, A.C., and Bingley, A.F. 2004 Cultivating health: therapeutic landscapes and older people in Northern England *Social Science and Medicine*, 58, 2, 1781-1793
- Mir, D. and Jalali, E. 1980 The failure of language to communicate: a US-Iranian comparative study *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 4, 307-328
- Mohamed, O. 1997 Counselling for excellence: adjustment development of Southeast Asian students In: McNamara, D. and Harris, R. Eds. *Overseas students in HE: issues in teaching and learning* London, Routledge
- Monneuse, M., Bellisle, F. and Koppert, G. 1997 Eating habits, food and health related attitudes and beliefs reported by French students *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 51, 1, 46-53
- Mori, S. 2000 Addressing the mental health concerns of international students *Journal of Counselling and Development*, 78, 2, 137-144
- Morrison, J. Merrick, B., Higgs, S. and Le Metais, J. 2005 Researching the performance of international students in the UK *Studies in Higher Education*, 30, 3, 327-337
- Morsbach, H. 1977 The psychological importance of ritualised gift exchange in modern Japan *Annals-New York Academy of Sciences*, 293, 98-113
- Muslim Council of Britain 2007 *British Muslims marginalised* TV, BBC News, BBC 1, 10pm
- Myakayaka-Manzini, M. 2002 *Women empowered: women in parliament in South Africa* Available from: http://www.idea.int/publications/wip/upload/CS_South-Africa.pdf
- NUS 2006 *UKCOSA international students' survey results* Available from: <http://www.nusonline.co.uk/campaigns/InternationalStudents/pressreleases/270189.aspx>
- Oberg, K. 1960 Cultural shock: adjustment to new cultural environments *Practical Anthropology*, 7, 177-82
- Okorochoa, E. 1996a Some cultural and communication issues in working with international students *Journal of International Education*, 7, 2 31-38
- Okorochoa, E. 1996b The international student experience *Journal of Graduate Education*, 2, 3, 80-84
- Olliffe, B. and Stuhmcke, A. 2007 A National University Grievance Handler? Transporting the UK Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) to Australia *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 29, 2 , 203-215
- Oliver, J. 2006 *The great escape* TV, Channel 4, July 13, 8.30pm
- Omar, R. 2006 *Being Muslim in Britain* London, Penguin
- ONS (Office for National Statistics) 2001 *Neighbourhood Statistics* London. Available from <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census/default.asp>
- O'Reilly, K. 2005 *Ethnographic Methods* Abingdon, Routledge

- Otten, M. 2003 Intercultural learning and diversity in Higher Education *Journal of studies in international education*, 7, 12-26
- Owie, I. 1982 Social alienation among foreign students *College Student Journal*, 16, 2, 163-165
- Page, J. 2005 Is Russia fit to become the next G8 leader? *The Times* December 28
Available from: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,13509-1960806,00.html>
- Pai, H. 2006 Overseas aid *The Guardian* August 29
Available from: <http://education.guardian.co.uk/students/overseasstudents>
- Paige, R. M. (Ed.) 1993 *Education for the intercultural experience* Yarmouth, Maine, Intercultural Press.
- Pedersen, P. 1991 Counselling international students *The Counselling Psychologist*, 19, 1, 10-58
- Persaud, R. 1993 The loneliness of the long-distance student *Journal of International Education*, 4, 1, 45-51
- Persaud R. 1994 Stress and the sojourning student *Journal of International Education* 4, 2. 27-37
- Peshkin, A. 1982 The researcher and subjectivity: reflections on ethnography of school and the community. In: Spindler, G. Ed. *Doing the ethnography of schooling* New York, CBS
- Potter, W.J. 1996 An analysis of thinking and research about qualitative methods New Jersey, LEA
- Piontkowski, U., Florack, A., Helker, P., Obdrzalek, P. 2000 Predicting acculturation attitudes of dominant and non-dominant groups *International Journal of intercultural relations*, 24, 1, 1-26
- Pratt, M. 1986 Fieldwork in common places In: Clifford, J. and Marcus, G. Eds. *Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography* California, UCP
- Price-Williams 1968 The philosophy of science and the study of personality In: Norbeck, E., Price-Williams, D., McCord, W. Eds. *The study of personality* New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston
- Primrose, C. 1993 English as a foreign library In: Blue, G. Ed. *Language, learning and success: studying through English* Vol. 3, 1 London, Macmillan
- Pruitt, F. 1978 The adaptation of African students to American society *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 21, 90-118
- Quarantelli, E. and Cooper, J. Self-conceptions and others: a further test of meadian hypotheses In: Manis, J. and Meltzer, B. Eds *Symbolic Interaction: a reader in social psychology* Boston, Allyn and Bacon
- Ramburuth, P. and McCormick, J. 2001 Learning diversity in Higher Education: a comparative study of Asian international and Australian students *Higher Education*, 42, 333-350
- Ramesh, R. 2006 The Indians aren't coming *The Guardian*, February 14
Available from: <http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/news/story/0,,1709245,00.html>
- Reagan, T. 1996 *Non-western educational traditions* New Jersey, LEA
- Redmond, M. and Bunyi, J. 1993 The relationship of intercultural communication competence with stress and the handling of stress as reported by international students *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 17, 235-254
- Redmond, M. 2000 Cultural distance as a mediating factor between stress and intercultural communication competence. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 24, 1, 151-159

- Reed, B., Hutton, J., Bazalgette, J. 1978 *Freedom to study: requirements of overseas students in the UK* London, Overseas Student Trust
- Rex, J. 1991 *Ethnic identity and ethnic mobilisation in Britain* Coventry, ESRC
- Richardson, D. 1991 *Can we help with the washing-up?: Internationalising the British* London, UKCOSA
- Richardson, J. 1994 Cultural specificity of approaches to studying in HE *Higher Education*, 27, 4, 449-468
- Ritzer, G. 1999 Assessing the resistance In: Smart, B. Ed. *Resisting McDonaldisation* London, Sage
- Rogers, C. and Smith, P. 1992 Identifying the needs of overseas students: a monitoring exercise at the University of Southampton *Journal of International Education* 3, 3 7-24
- Russell, B. 2006 Race hate charges rise by 28% *The Independent*, 28 December
Available from: news.independent.co.uk/uk/crime/article2040133.ece
- Ryan, J. 2005a The student experience: challenges and rewards In: Carroll, J. and Ryan, J. Eds. *Teaching international students: Improving learning for all* Abingdon, Routledge
- Ryan, J. 2005b Postgraduate supervision In: Carroll, J. and Ryan, J. Eds. *Teaching international students: Improving learning for all* Abingdon, Routledge
- Ryan, J. 2005c Improving teaching and learning practices for international students: implications for curriculum, pedagogy and assessment In: Carroll, J. and Ryan, J. Eds. *Teaching international students: Improving learning for all* Abingdon, Routledge
- Ryan, J. and Carroll, J. 2005 'Canaries in the coalmine': international students in Western universities In: Carroll, J. and Ryan, J. Eds. *Teaching international students: Improving learning for all* Abingdon, Routledge
- Ryan, J. and Hellmundt, S. 2005 Maximising international students' 'cultural capital' In: Carroll, J. and Ryan, J. Eds. *Teaching international students: Improving learning for all* Abingdon, Routledge
- Ryan, M. and Twibell, R. 2000 Concerns, values, stress, coping, health and educational outcomes of college students who studied abroad *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 24, 409-435
- Ryan, Y. and Zuber-Skerritt, O. 1999 *Supervising postgraduates from Non-English speaking backgrounds* Buckingham, OUP
- Saleh, A., Amanatidis, S., Samman, S. 2002 The effect of migration on dietary intake, type 2 diabetes and obesity: the Ghanaian health and nutrition analysis in Sydney, Australia *Ecology of food and nutrition*, 41, 3, 255-270
- Sam, D. and Eide, R. 1991 Survey of mental health of foreign students *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 32, 22-30
- Sarkodie-Mensah, K. 1992 Dealing with international students in a multicultural era *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 18, 4, 214-216
- Sartre, J-P. 1943 *L'Être et le néant: Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique (Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology)* Paris, Gallimard
- Sazberger-Wittenber, I., Henry, G. and Osborne, E. 1983 *The Emotional experience of learning and teaching* London, Routledge

- Schatzman, L. and Strauss, A. 1973 *Field research: strategies for a natural sociology* New Jersey, Prentice Hall
- Schild, E. 1962 The foreign student, as stranger, learning the norms of the host culture *Journal of Social Issues*, 18, 1, 41-54
- Schlosser, E. 2002 *Fast food nation: the dark side of the all-American meal* New York, Perennial
- Schmitt, D. 2005 Writing in the international classroom In: Carroll, J. and Ryan, J. Eds. *Teaching international students: Improving learning for all* Abingdon, Routledge
- Schmitz, P. 1994 Acculturation and adaptation processes among immigrants in Germany In: Bouvy, A-M., van de Vijver, F., Boski, P. and Schmitz, P. Eds. *Journeys into cross-cultural psychology* Amsterdam, S&Z
- Scollon, R. and Scollon, S. 1995 *Intercultural communication* Massachussets, Blackwell
- Seale, C. 1999 *The quality of qualitative research* London, Sage
- Searle, W. and Ward, C. 1990 The prediction of psychological and sociocultural adjustment during cross-cultural transitions *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 14, 4, 449-464
- Seaton, A. 1999 Demonstration effects or relative deprivation? The counter-revolutionary pressures of tourism in Cuba *Progress in Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 3, 4, 307-320
Available from:
<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/abstract/5001599/ABSTRACT?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0>
- Seeman, M. 1959 On the meaning of alienation *American Sociological Review*, 24, 783-91
- Seymour, D. 2002. University education: a case of wasted opportunities *JOHLSTE*, 1, 2 1-11
- Shack 1979 Open Systems and Closed Boundaries: The Ritual Process of Stranger Relations in New African States In: W. A. Shack and E. P. Skinner Eds. *Strangers in African Societies* Berkeley, UCP
- Sharples, S. 1995 In defence of cultural orientation: a rejoinder to McKinaly and Stephenson *Journal of International Education*, 6, 1, 43-52
- Sherlock, M. and Sharples, S. 1998 In search of the international campus *Journal of International Education*, 9, 1, 45-53
- Simmel, G. 1910 *The stranger* In: Wolff, K. 1950 *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* London, Free Press
- Singelis, T. and Sharkey, W. 1995 Culture, self-construal and embarassability *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology*, 26, 6, 622-644
- Skelton, J. and Richards, K. 1991 How critical can you get? In: Adams, P., Heaton, B., Howarth, A. Eds. *Socio-cultural issues in English for Academic Purposes* Vol. 1, 2 London, Macmillan
- Smalley, W. 1963 Culture shock, language shock, and the shock of self-discovery *Practical Anthropology*, 10, 49-56
- Smart, J., Huang, C., Pang, C., Kuah, K., Smart, A. 2006 Negotiating Chinese Immigrant Food *Culture in a Global Setting* ILAS newsletter online, 19 Available from: <http://www.iias.nl/iiasn/19/>
- Smith, A 2006a Improve student experience, Rammell warns *The Guardian*, March 23
Available from: <http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/news/story/0,,1738188,00.html>

- Smith, A. 2006b Money a concern for overseas students, poll finds *Education Guardian* July 12
Available from: <http://education.guardian.co.uk/students/overseasstudents/story/0,,1818751,00.html>
- Smith, L Ed. 1987 *Discourse across cultures: strategies in world Englishes* New York, Prentice Hall
- Smith, M. 2000 *Culture: reinventing the social sciences* Buckingham, OUP
- Sobal, J. 1999 Sociological Analysis of the stigmatisation of obesity In: Germov, J. and Williams, L. Eds. *A sociology of food and nutrition* Oxford, OUP
- Sodowsky, G. and Plake, B. 1992 A study of acculturation differences among international people and suggestions for sensitivity to within-group differences *Journal of Counselling and Development*, 71, October/November, 53-59
- Spencer-Rodgers, J. 2001 Consensual and individual stereotypic beliefs about international students among American host nationals. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 25, 639-657
- Spindler, G. Ed. 1982 *Doing the ethnography of schooling* New York, CBS
- Spradley, J. 1979 *The ethnographic interview* New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston
- Spradley, J. 1980 *Participant observation* New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston
- Stanley, L. 1990 Doing ethnography, writing ethnography: a comment on Hammersley *Sociology*, 24, 4, 617-627
- Steer, J. 2006 *An investigation into why British students do not participate in Bournemouth University Diversity Day* Bournemouth University
- Stephan W. and Stephan, C. 1992 Reducing intercultural anxiety through intercultural contact *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 16, 89-106
- Stephan, W. and Stephan, C. 2001 *Improving intergroup relations* Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.
- Stevenson, J. 1991 Information concepts: recruitment and pre-arrival information for overseas students *Journal of International Education*, 2, 1, 57-62
- Storti, C. 1990 *The art of crossing cultures* Maine, Intercultural Press
- Strevens, P. 1987 Cultural barriers to language learning In: Smith, L. Ed. *Discourse across cultures: strategies in world Englishes* New York, Prentice Hall
- Sundberg, N. 1976 Toward research evaluating intercultural counselling In: Pedersen, P., Lonner, W., and Draguns, J. Eds. *Counselling across cultures* Honolulu, UHP
- Sussman, N. M. 2002 Sojourners to another country: The psychological roller-coaster of cultural transitions. In: W. J. Lonner, D. L. Dinnel, S. A. Hayes, & D. N. Sattler Eds. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture* Available from: <http://www.ac.wvu.edu/~culture/sussman.htm>
- Sykes, I. and Eden, D. 1985 Transitional stress, social support and psychological strain *Journal of Occupational Behaviour*, 6, Oct., 293-298
- Taft, R. 1981 The role and personality of the mediator In: Bochner, S. Ed. *The mediating person: bridges between cultures* Massachusetts, Schenkman
- Tafarodi, R. and Smith, A. 2001 Individualism–collectivism and depressive sensitivity to life events: the case of Malaysian sojourners *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 25, 1, 73-88

- Tarone, E. and Yule, G. 1987 Communication strategies in East-West interactions In: Smith, L. Ed. *Discourse across cultures: strategies in world Englishes* New York, Prentice Hall
- Taylor, E. 1994 Intercultural competency: a transformative learning process *Adult Education Quarterly*, 44, 3, 154-174
- Taylor, M. 2005 Catch 'em while you can *The Guardian*, February 8
Available from: <http://education.guardian.co.uk/egweekly/story/0,,1407537,00.html>
- Taylor, M. 2006 Don't rely on foreign student fees, universities warned *The Guardian*, March 30
Available from: <http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/news/story/0,,1742863,00.html>
- Taylor, S. Ed. 2002 *Ethnographic research* London, Sage
- Teoh, J. 1974 Psychological problems among university students in an area of rapid socio-cultural change *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 8, 2, 109-120
- Tester, K. 1999 The moral malaise of McDonaldisation: the values of vegetarianism
In: Smart, B. Ed. *Resisting McDonaldisation* London, Sage
- The British Council 1999 *Studying and living in the UK: a guide for international students and visitors* Plymouth, The British Council
- The British Council 2002 *UK Higher Education and China: Managing the success of the Prime Minister's international student initiative* London, The British Council
- The Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding 2007 *CAABU briefings*
Available from: www.caabu.org/index.asp?homepage=resources&article=briefings
- The EU-LDC Network 2006 *Glossary of Trade Terms - G to L*
Available from: http://www.eu-ldc.org/src/glossary_g-l.php
- Thomas, K. and Harrell, T. 1994 Counselling student sojourners: revisiting the U-curve of adjustment
In: Althen, G. Ed. *Learning across cultures* New York, NAFSA
- Thorstensson, L. 2001 This business of internationalisation: the academic experiences of 6 Asian MBA international students at the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management
Journal of Studies in International Education, 5, 4, 317-340
- Ting-Toomey, S. 1999 *Communicating across cultures* New York, Guilford Press
- Todd, E. 1997 Supervising overseas students: problem or opportunity? In: McNamara, D. and Harris, R. Eds. *Overseas students in HE: issues in teaching and learning* London, Routledge
- Todres, L. 2002 Globalisation and the complexity of the self: the relevance of psychotherapy
Existential analysis, 13, 1, 98-105
- Torbiorn, I. 1994 Dynamics of cross-cultural adaptation
In: Althen, G. Ed. *Learning across cultures* New York, NAFSA
- Townsend, M. and Asthana, A. 2004 Britain's organic appetite grows by £1.7m a week *The Observer*, July 4, 18
- Toyokawa, T. and Toyokawa, N. 2002 Extracurricular activities and the adjustment of Asian international students: a study of Japanese students *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 26, 4, 363-379
- Trafford, F. 1993 Buddhist students in the UK *Journal of International Education* 4, 1, 74-76

- Triandis, H. 1972 *The analysis of subjective culture* London, Wiley
- Triandis, H. 1979 The future of cross-cultural psychology In: Marsella, A., Tharp, R., Ciborowski, T. Eds. *Perspectives on cross-cultural psychology* New York, Academic Press
- Triandis, H. 1989 The self and social behaviour in differing cultural contexts *Psychological Review*, 96, 3, 506-520
- Triandis, H., Bontempo, R. and Villareal, M. 1988 Individualism and collectivism: cross-cultural perspectives on self-ingroup relationships *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54, 2, 323-338
- Triandis, H., Leung, K., Villareal, M., Clack, F. 1985 Allocentric versus idiocentric tendencies: convergent and discriminant validation *Journal of Research in Personality*, 19, 395-415
- Tunstall, H. V. Z., Shaw, M., Dorling, D. 2004 Places and health. *Journal of Epidemiological Community Health*, 58, 6-10
- Tyler, A. 2006 *Digging to America* New York, Knopf
- Tyler, S. 1986 Post-modern ethnography: from document of the occult to occult document In: Clifford, J. and Marcus, G. Eds. *Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography* California, UCP
- Tysome, T. 2003 Campuses adapt to overseas influx *Times Higher*, Jan. 24, 15
- UKCOSA 1992 *Meeting religious need: the role of chaplaincies for overseas students* London, UKCOSA
- UKCOSA 2004 *Broadening our horizons* London, UKCOSA
- UKCOSA 2006 *Student statistics*
Available from: <http://www.ukcosa.org.uk/student> statistics
- Van de Vijver, F. and Leung, K. 1997 *Methods and data analysis for cross-cultural research* London, Sage
- Van der Wende, M. 1996 Internationalising the curriculum in HE In: OECD *Internationalisation of HE* Paris, OECD
- Van Maanen, J. 1988 *Tales of the field: on writing ethnography* Chicago, UCP
- Verna, G. 1990 Pluralism: some theoretical and practical implications In: CRE *Britain: a plural society* London, CRE
- Volet, S. and Ang, G. 1998 Culturally-mixed groups on international campuses: an opportunity for inter-cultural learning *Higher Education Research and Development*, 17, 1, 5-23
- Vontress, C. 1976 Racial and ethnic barriers in counselling In: Pedersen, P., Lonner, W., and Draguns, J. Eds. *Counselling across cultures* Honolulu, UHP
- Ward, C. 2001 *The impact of international students on domestic students and host institutions* New Zealand Ministry of Education Available from:
<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=index&indexID=2107&indexparentid=1000>
- Ward, C., Masgoret, A., Ho, E., Holmes, P., Cooper, J., Newton, J. and Crabbe, D. 2005 *Interactions with International Students: Report prepared for Education New Zealand*, Center for Applied Cross-cultural Research, Victoria University of Wellington
Available from: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/cacr/reports/docs/A6-final-report.pdf>

- Ward, C., Bochner, S., Furnham, A. 2001 *The psychology of culture shock* Hove, Routledge
- Ward, C. and Chang, W. 1997 'Cultural fit': a new perspective on personality and sojourner adjustment *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 21, 4, 525-533
- Ward, C. and Kennedy, A. 1992 Locus of control, mood disturbance, and social difficulty during cross-cultural transitions *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 16, 175-194
- Ward, C. and Kennedy, A. 1993 Where's the culture in cross-cultural transition? Comparative studies of sojourner adjustment *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology*, 24, 2, 221-249
- Ward, C. and Kennedy, A. 1996 Crossing cultures: the relationship between psychological and sociocultural dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment In: J. Pandey, D. Sinha, and D.P.S. Bhawuk Eds. *Asian contributions to cross-cultural psychology* New Delhi, Sage
- Ward, C. and Kennedy, A. 1999 The measurement of socio-cultural adaptation *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 23, 4, 659-677
- Ward, C. and Rana-Deuba, A. 1999 Acculturation and adaptation revisited *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology*, 30, 372-392
- Warde, A. 1997 *Consumption, food and taste* London, Sage
- Warren, C. and Hackney, J. 2000 *Gender issues in ethnography*, 2nd edition London, Sage
- Watts, J. 2005a Taiwan marches for freedom from China *The Observer* March 27
Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/taiwan/Story/0,,1446535,00.html>
- Watts, J. 2005b Taiwanese to rally against Chinese law *The Guardian* March 15
Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/taiwan/Story/0,,1437831,00.html>
- Wax, M., Diamond, S., Gearing, F. Eds. 1971 *Anthropological perspectives on education* New York, Basic Books
- Weil, S. 1987 Anthropology becomes home; home becomes anthropology In: Jackson, A. Ed. *Anthropology at home* London, Tavistock
- Weller, P. 1992 Religion and equal opportunities in HE *Journal of International Education* 3, 3 53-65
- Westwood, M. and Barker, M. 1999 Academic achievement and social adaptation among international students: a comparison groups study of the peer-pairing program *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 14, 251-263
- Wheeler, L., Reis, H., Bond, M. 1989 Collectivism-individualism in everyday social life: the Middle Kingdom and the melting pot *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57, 1, 79-86
- White, R. 1974 Strategies of adaptation: an attempt at systematic description In: Coelho, G., Hamburg, D. and Adams, J. Eds. *Coping and adaptation* New York, Basic Books
- Wilcox, K. 1982 Ethnography as methodology and its application to the study of schooling: a review In: Spindler, G. Ed. *Doing the ethnography of schooling* New York, CBS
- Wilder, D. and Shapiro, P. 1989 Effects of anxiety on impression formation in a group context: an anxiety-assimilation hypothesis *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 25, 481-499
- Williams, M. 2003 *Making sense of social research* London, Sage
- Williams, R. 1981 *Culture* Glasgow, Fontana

- Wilson, S. 1977 The Use of ethnographic techniques in educational research *Review of educational research*, 47, 1, 245-265
- Wisemann, H. 1997 Far away from home: the loneliness experience of overseas students *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 16, 3, 277-298
- Wittkower, E. and Dubreuil, G. 1968 Cultural factors in mental illness In: Norbeck, E., Price-Williams, D., McCord, W. Eds. *The study of personality* New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston
- Wolcott F, 1982 Mirrors, Models, and monitors: educator adaptations of the ethnographic innovation In: Spindler, G. Ed. *Doing the ethnography of schooling* New York, CBS
- Wolcott, H. 2001 *Writing up qualitative research* California, Sage
- Woodward, K. Ed. 1997 *Identity and difference* London, Sage
- Wright, C. 1997 *Gender matters: access, welfare, teaching and learning* In: McNamara, D. and Harris, R. Eds. *Overseas students in HE: issues in teaching and learning* London, Routledge
- Wright, S. and Lander, D. 2003 Collaborative group interactions of students from two ethnic backgrounds *Higher Education Research and Development*, 22, 237-252
- Yalom, I. 1980 *Existential psychotherapy* New York, Basic Books
- Yalom, I. 2001 *The Gift of Therapy: Reflections on Being a Therapist* London, Piatkus Books
- Yang, K. and Clum, G. 1995 Measures of life stress and social support specific to an Asian student population *Journal of Psychopathology, and Behavioural Assessment*, 17, 1, 51-67
- Yeh, E. 1976 Cross-cultural adaptation and personal growth: the case of Chinese students *Acta Psychologica Taiwanica*, 18, 95-104
- Yeh, E., Chu, H., Klein, M., Miller, M., Alexander, A. 1981 Psychiatric implications of cross-cultural education: Chinese students in the United States In: Bochner, S. Ed. *The mediating person: bridges between cultures* Massachusetts, Schenkman
- Zajonc, R. 1952 Aggressive attitudes of the stranger as a function of conformity pressures *Human Relations* 5, 2, 205-216
- Zajonc, R. 1980 Feeling and thinking: preferences need no inferences *American Psychologist*, 35, 2, 151-175
- Zheng, X. and Berry, J. 1991 Psychological adaptation of Chinese sojourners in Canada *International Journal of Psychology*, 26, 4, 451-470
- Zuniga X, Nagada, B. and Sevig, T. 2002 Intergroup dialogues: an educational model for cultivating engagement across differences *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 35, 1, 7-17
- Zwingmann, C. and Gunn, A. 1983 *Uprooting and health: psychosocial problems of students from abroad* Geneva, WHO