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Crossing Cultures:

Analysing the Experiences of NZ Returnees from the EU (UK vs. non-UK)

Abstract

While there is growing scholarly interest in returned and cyclical migration, and on young adult cultural or adventure seeking migration, there is still a lack of systematic empirical insights into how the experiences of being abroad, and after return, are mediated by exposure to different cultural environments. Addressing this conceptual and empirical gap, the paper analyses the experiences of New Zealand return migrants, or sojourners, who lived and worked in EU countries (other than the UK) for more than one year and compares them with the experiences of NZ returnees from the UK. Drawing on 20 'non-UK' and 22 'UK' in-depth interviews, the paper revisits Rhinesmith's (1975, 1985) typology of cross-cultural, or intercultural, adjustment (largely ignored in studies of return migration) to assess sojourners' experiences throughout the migration cycle and serve as a useful tool for identifying and reporting psychological and socio-cultural elements in the returnees stories. This paper demonstrates the need to understand first that the costs and benefits of circular migration or sojourning are country-specific, and that they do not 'just happen' at a particular moment or in one phase but are forged through a veritable roller coaster of experiences of intercultural adjustment.

Key words: Returned sojourners, cross-cultural adjustment, New Zealand, UK, the EU

Introduction

New Zealand's long history of immigration, with 'one of the world's largest per capita diasporas' (Gamlen, 2005, p. 14), has been matched in recent years

by a high propensity for out-migration. This generated intense ‘brain drain’ debates about the migrants’ relatively high levels of skills and tertiary education: in 2005, 24 per cent of New Zealanders with tertiary education qualifications were living overseas (OECD, 2007). This paper addresses two significant under-researched elements of these migration flows, which are characteristically relatively short-term sojourns of one or two years. First, the need to understand their experiences across the entire cycle of migration, as much research has highlighted particular phases. Secondly, to investigate the place specific nature of their experiences. The most popular destinations are Australia and the UK, with European non-UK countries in third position (Lidgard & Gilson, 2002, p. 120). The first two, which have been investigated in several studies, are English speaking countries with strong social and cultural ties with New Zealand. This paper compares the largely neglected third ‘European non-UK stream’ and the UK stream whose experiences have been shaped by place-specific language, cultural and historical differences.

Using a qualitative approach, the paper examines the sojourners’ patterns of adaptation and identity negotiations which follow new cultural learning and intercultural communication during outbound and inbound adjustments. In its design, the study follows a two-step dichotomy of psychological and sociocultural adjustment (Searle and Ward 1990): “the former, associated with stress and coping framework, refers to psychological well-being and satisfaction in a new cultural context; the latter, based on the social learning perspective, relates to the ability of ‘fit in’ or negotiate interactive aspects of the host culture” (Ward & Kennedy, 1994, p.331). Comparison of adaptation patterns re-introduces Rhinesmith’s 10-member heuristic typology of

intercultural adjustment (1975, 1985). The findings of sojourners' possible identity shifts during intercultural transition are discussed with reference to the four-member paradigm of Cultural Identity Model (CIM) (Sussman 2010) while addressing Susman's (2002) argument that overseas adaptation and repatriation experiences are not directly associated.

Methodologically, this study undertakes a novel comparative analysis of sojourners' experiences in the UK versus other European countries, based on 42 in-depth retrospective post-return interviews. With the original research by Rhinesmith being based on qualitative methods, the typology is used as a framework for exploring the evidence, rather than as a series of propositions to be tested by quantitative methods. The research therefore addresses the need for more in-depth, qualitative studies on sojourner adaptation.

The broader goal of the study is to add to scholarship on “intercultural personhood as a constructive way of being a member of our increasingly integrated communities, both local and global” (Kim 2008, 360). Successful engagement with these issues, and maximizing the contribution of interculturally aware and globally integrated citizens, is paramount to how many small countries, such as New Zealand, survive and succeed in a globalising and increasingly mobile world.

Emigration is an important feature of NZ culture -- the long-standing tradition of the Big Overseas Experience (Big OE) operates as a “rite of passage” for young New Zealanders (Bell, 2002, p.143). Most OE migrants intend to return to their countries of origin (Inkson & Myers, 2003): for example, Lidgard

(1993) found that 76 per cent of New Zealanders going to the UK intended to be away for less than two years, compared with only 40 per cent of those going to Australia. This has been facilitated by Working Holiday Schemes which provide visa-free entry for those under 30 and the right to a Work Permit for a limited time in 18 European states.¹ Given that this mobility is mostly intended to be relatively short term, the high levels of return represent an opportunity for NZ to benefit from the migrants' economic and cultural experiences and turn potential 'brain drain' into opportunities to enhance the country's stock of human capital and knowledge (Lidgard & Gilson, 2002, p. 5).

Sojourners' experiences abroad, and after returning, are mediated by their inter-cultural adjustments in the varied cultural and linguistic environments within Europe. There have been some partial studies of Big OE flows to, and returns from, the UK and Australia (Wilson et al., 2009; Conradson & Latham, 2005; Lidgard & Gilson, 2002). In contrast, there is limited research on the increasing numbers of returnees to NZ from non-English speaking European countries, where language, culture and social networks provide different challenges.

According to Berry & Sam (1997), sojourners can be described as temporary migrants, who engage voluntarily in intercultural contact. While the first significant attempt to conceptualize return migration was in the 1960s (Cerase, 1974), a substantial body of research (e.g. King, 1986) only emerged in the 1980s, gaining momentum in recent years with the growth of temporary and circular migration (Cassarino, 2004). In terms of research on intercultural

¹ Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Norway, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom Immigration NZ, 2011

adjustment, initial studies of return mainly focused on the intercultural adjustment of US expatriates (observation by Church, 1982) and of foreign nationals in the USA. Yet, the geography of inquiry is broadening with a fairly large body of literature studying a range of countries (Japan, China, Spain, Portugal, Australia, Brazil, Singapore) and more diverse sojourners (diplomats, exchange workers, exchange students, teachers, missionaries, Peace Corps volunteers, tourists). Attention to NZ sojourners is also growing, including: recent NZ studies Daly's (2007) on outbound student exchange; Selvarajah's (2009) study of NZ expatriate managers; Chamove & Sotrik's (2006) investigation of returning NZ American Field Service (AFS) students; Walter's (2006) study of OE returnees and numerous studies by Ward (e.g. about NZ AFS students (Rogers & Ward 1993), public servants and their spouses (Ward and Kennedy 1994)). This study is original in exploring the 'European' strand in NZ repatriates through a comparative perspective on how repatriation is mediated in different cultural, linguistic and socially networked contexts.

Conceptualization

Conceptually, our focus on repatriates' identities positions this inquiry within the recent literature that examines cultural identity issues (Kim 2001, Sussman 2000, 2001, 2002, 2010). Onwumechili et al. (2003, 46) summarise the key assumption informing this research:

recognition that sojourners and immigrants are not only influenced by the host culture but that they also largely retain their cultural values or instead they develop entirely new identities different from their home and host cultures"

This study aims to evaluate possible identity shifts during outbound and inbound intercultural transitions according to the four categories of the Cultural Identity Model (Sussman 2010): (1) *Additive* (moderate affiliation with home culture, high cultural flexibility, acceptance of new values and attitudes to their identity, and distress upon return home); (2) *Subtractive* (loose identification with home country prior to sojourn, moderate cultural flexibility, smooth adaption to a new country, unhappy with return home); (3) *Affirmative* (strong affiliation with home culture, little cultural flexibility, low adaption abroad, happy upon return); (4) *Global* (loose identification to home culture, high cultural flexibility, easy adaptation to a new culture, readiness to move on to another sojourn upon return home).

The key processes contributing to identity changes are *acculturation*, or “acquisition of the new cultural practices in wide-ranging area including the learning of a new language” (Kim 2008, 363) and *reacculturation*, or “attempt to readjust upon re-entry to the homeland” (Onwumechili et al. 2003, 46). Both processes are accompanied by stress “culture shock and reverse shock” (Sussman 2002, 391): as Kim (2008, 363) argues, “each experience of a adaptive change inevitably accompanies stress in the individual psyche”. Confrontation of unfamiliar cultural realities accompanying outbound or inbound adjustments, sometimes obvious and manifest and sometimes hidden and intuitive, can result in a strong, and typically negative emotional reaction. This “psychological reaction to unfamiliar events” (Funrham & Bochner, 1986) is known as culture shock (Oberg, 1960). Fabrizio & Neill (2005, on line), consider that ‘culture shock’ encompasses “the normal and universal behavioral,

emotional, mental and physical response to the unfamiliar” and refers to a range of inter-cultural encounters, often of an unexpected nature and timing, and this is particularly likely when individuals cross cultural borders between different countries. Arguably, the intensification of information flows, via the internet in particular, has mediated the potential ‘shock’ sojourners experience when crossing cultural borders. However, there are limits to the extent to which tacit knowledge, (including cultural and institutional knowledge) can be transmitted other than through a physical presence in the destination (Williams, 2007). Consequently, inter-cultural adjustment remains a significant challenge and cultural shock remains a useful concept.

According to Furnham (2003), culture shock is considered a “temporary stress reaction in response to salient psychological and physical rewards not being readily available and therefore being difficult to control and predict”. A recent conceptualisation of stress defines it as “intrinsic to complex open systems and essential in the adaptation process – one that allows for self-(re)organisation and self-renewal” (Kim, 2008, 364). This provides the foundation for Kim’s ‘stress-adaptation-growth dynamic’ model which informs our research: “the stress-adaptation-growth process continues as long as there are new environmental challenges, with the overall forward and upward movement in the direction of greater adaptation and growth” (Kim, 2008, 262).²

Kim’s emphasis on a dynamic approach and new environmental challenges is consistent with the full cycle of out-migration and return. There has been a

² Importantly, stresses experienced during acculturation and re-acculturation differ – Onwumechili et al. (2003, 43) list the following differentials: “(a) unexpectedness of reentry problems, (b) a fixed perception of an unchanged homeland, (c) the returnee’s unawareness of his/her own changes, (d) family, friends, and colleagues, expect an unchanged returnee, and (e) general lack of interest in a returnee’s foreign experience”

tendency for researchers to compress the migration or sojourning experience into a small number of phases, or even into a single process, rather than a complex multi-staged process of cultural encounters (Sussman 2002, 391-92). Although there is a growing corpus of research on the process of return generally, and on young adult cultural or adventure seeking sojourning, there has still been little research on the full mobility cycle.

The findings of our research (see methodology section) indicated the value of re-visiting Rhinesmith's curve (Rhinesmith, 1975), and its later modification into a detailed 10-member typology, for understanding the full intercultural adjustment cycle (see Figure 1):

(1) *initial anxiety*: intercultural adjustment starts earlier than actual relocation. While making their decisions to migrate, sojourners usually face anxieties about coping with new opportunities, both exciting and challenging. Both positive and negative feelings 'peak' during this phase. Cultural challenges are assumed and expected, yet the sojourners are only partially aware of the emotional 'rollercoaster' awaiting them;

(2) *initial elation/fascination*: christened a "honeymoon stage" (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963), this is usually associated with positive (possibly elated) emotions. As Rhinesmith described, this exultant mood could 'peak' immediately before departure (sometimes clouded by anxieties) and return, or immediately upon arrival. Sojourners' expectations remain high, often being supported initially by unusual levels of attention from host country nationals. However, Ting-Toomey considers that a 'honeymoon' stage is often fleeting³ and usually accompanied by an early "severe identity shock" (1999, p.

³ Ward et al (1998) found very little empirical support for a euphoric "honeymoon" stage of

252), which can make the sojourners more “resourceful and resilient” (Ibid.);

(3) *initial culture shock*: Mestenhauser (1991, p. 1) noted that “intercultural experiences are difficult to absorb. They come rapidly, are not well-organized, [and] do not always fit well into pre-existing frames of reference and thought”. While some sojourners may enjoy a ‘honeymoon’ stage, the novelty of the destination eventually starts fading. A continuing need to function in a different language, as well as different food, habits, climate and constrained access to their accustomed support network usually leads to emotional challenge – ‘initial culture shock’. Emotional decline may be accompanied by physical dysfunctions, as well as psychological disorientation. Some return home at this stage, while some cope with the challenges despite stress and frustration, in the “hostility stage” (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963).

(4) *superficial adjustment*: The next ‘high’ on the intercultural adjustment curve happens when starting to develop patterns of meaningful functioning in a host society, acquiring improved language skills and establishing a small circle of new friends;

(5) *mental isolation/depression/frustration*: Rhinesmith argues that an emotional wave associated with the stage of “superficial adjustment” morphs into a more negative stage of “mental isolation” marked by feelings of lost novelty of place and people, yet a pervading sense of persistent old and new challenges. Continuous problems (and a deeper understanding of these) can be demotivating or cause boredom. Interpersonal conflicts and persisting linguistic difficulties can add to this negative spiral in intercultural adjustment.

(6) *integration/acceptance of host culture*: a deeper and more meaningful integration into the host society via improved language competence,

feeling comfortable at work/school/university, expanding circles of friends and colleagues, and being more reflexive about the host culture. There is also enhanced ability to understand and accept differences and enjoy the host society.

(7) *return anxiety*: the decision to return generates emotions and anxieties -- similar to their initial anxieties, sojourners are excited about their reunion with family and friends, and opportunities at home, sometimes due to newly acquired skills and experiences. Yet, they also realize that new friends and associates could be lost, and that people at home may not understand how they have changed.

(8) *return elation*: an initial surge of positive excitement upon returning to a familiar environment, after enjoying a warm welcome;

(9) *re-entry shock*: returnees often discover their friends and family are not very interested in their experiences, or unable to understand their identity shifts. Moreover, returnees are often frustrated in not being able to communicate the sheer difference of living in a different culture. The status of being an 'unusual', 'foreign' and 'unique' individual while overseas has also been lost on return. Readjustment challenges may cause particular difficulties. Being unanticipated, they can have a deeper negative emotional effect than the initial culture shock (Ting-Toomey 1999, p. 250).

(10) *reintegration*: Resolution or amelioration of *reintegration shock* happens when returnees re-integrate into their home culture, becoming involved in new activities, initiating future plans, meeting new people, and understanding their own society more sympathetically. There are three main types of experience (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 250). Some re-socialize into 'old' habits and patterns and intentionally avoid differentiating themselves from those without similar migration experiences. Others claim they can no longer belong

to the home culture, and are more likely to remigrate. And some become “agents of change” (Ibid.) infusing new knowledge, experiences and skills into their life back home.

According to Ting-Toomey (1999, p. 251), each stage could be experienced at varying degrees of intensity or length, depending on the duration of stay in a different culture, level of support, competences in communication, previous migration experiences to the host country, degree of adaptation commitment and setting realistic goals. Moreover, some individuals may ‘get stuck’ in one wave or even ‘reverse’ their progress through the cycle.

Rhinesmith’s model could be classified as an elaboration of the ‘W-curve’, itself a modification of Lysgaard’s (1955) ‘U-curve’ hypothesis. Recent works (Searle and Ward, 1990; Ward et al. 1998) critically questioned the theoretical viability of U-curve (and W-curve). Already in the 1960s, Gullahorn & Gullahorn (1966) found no in-depth and comprehensive reviews of the empirical literature related to U-curve hypothesis. Chang (1997: 152) claimed that ‘the U-curve hypothesis has received surprisingly little empirical support’.

The utility of the W-curve theory is also contested. Proposed by Gullahorn & Gullahorn (1963), the W-curve was proposed as an illustratively powerful framework for plotting emotional and psychological states against stages of the migration circle. Yet, it was noted that the W-curve lacked capacity to describe accurately the recalculations process, in terms of both motivations and structure, and failed to distinguish acculturation vs. reacculturation processes (Onwumechili, 2003, 45). Martin (1984, 119) also argued “while sojourners can usually identify points in their adjustment as

highs and lows of the curve, it is not clear whether the model accurately represents most sojourners experience". Nevertheless, the W-curve provides a functional framework for unifying research across the migration cycle and useful for identifying and reporting psychological and sociocultural elements in the sojourners' stories. It emphasises both "the holistic understanding of the psychological, affective, and identity changes in the new arrivals" and the "importance of 're-entry culture shock'" (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 252). The heuristic appeal of the 10-stage model by Rhinesmith secures its place in studies of intercultural adjustment, as well as in pre-departure and re-entry trainings. The W-curve has attracted some attention in NZ return migration studies (e.g. Walter's 2006 analysis of OE experiences amongst NZ returnees).

According to Chang (1997, p. 153), the W-curve provides a "more comprehensive description of the adjustment process" by representing the intercultural adaptation "along a temporal dimension" with sojourners going through an emotional "rollercoaster". This paper argues that Rhinesmith's ten stage model allows for even more complexity than the W-model and therefore more accurately frames the lived experiences of returnees. Rhinesmith's conceptual framework considers culture shock and adaptation in a cyclical manner, representing several waves of mental and physical adjustment and featuring multiple cultural shocks, thus providing a useful tool to assess the adaptation of NZ UK vs. non-UK European sojourners throughout the migration cycle. The 10-stage model is particularly useful as a *descriptive* framework for this paper as four out of the ten stages deal with re-adjustment on return.

Figure 1: Ten Stages of Cross-Cultural Adjustment (to be inserted here)

Methodology

The methodology chosen in this paper is qualitative. It resonates with Daly's call – specifically in relation to exchange students, but more widely applicable - for “future studies examining the processes of intercultural sojourn considering more *detailed qualitative analysis* [emphasis is ours] of ... in-country experiences to gain a deeper understanding of the time abroad and how it may cause changes within the individual”. (2007, on line)..

Participants

In the absence of reliable lists of returned migrants, purposive sampling was used to select interviewees. The research team started with a list of their known contacts living in the three principal cities of New Zealand: Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. Thereafter, snowball techniques were utilised to enlarge the purposive sampling – that is, through referrals by the interviewees. Between February and June 2008, 42 in-depth interviews, each lasting approximately 90 minutes, were conducted: 22 with returnees from the UK, and 20 from other EU Member States. Amongst the EU (non-UK) sample, France was the most popular choice, accounting for almost half (9) of the interviewees. Ireland (4) was next, followed by Germany (3), the Netherlands (2), Italy (one) and Belgium (one). All respondents had spent at least 12 months in Europe. The interviews were semi-structured, and conducted in person or by telephone, and were recorded and fully transcribed. There were, exceptionally, no refusals amongst those approached to participate in the study, reflecting both a willingness to talk about their experiences, and the importance of personal contacts and referrals.

It is important to note some caveats, other than the necessary reliance on purposive sampling. First, the total number of interviews is relatively small, given that identifying, accessing and interviewing returnees is resource intensive. Therefore the findings, while not representative, constitute insights

into the different experiences of two groups of returnees. Secondly, the respondents may also have imperfect recall, particularly those who returned several years earlier; this is compounded by the possibilities of post-rationalization and autobiographical memory distortions.

Thirdly, care is required in comparing the two sub-samples. There are some broad similarities. Most respondents (93 per cent) had been born in NZ: all were NZ citizens but four of the NZ EU-UK and three of the NZ EU (non-UK) group had dual nationality. The majority of respondents in both sub-samples were graduates or in higher education at the time of sojourn. They were also of similar ages, being dictated by the age restrictions (28 or below) in the Working Holiday Visa regime utilised by most of the sojourners. In the EU (non-UK) sample, 55 per cent (11) fell into this category with the others having lived also for a period in the UK, extended their visas, or re-migrated. In contrast, the UK sample was more likely only to have lived only in that country. NZ return migrants cluster around the age of 30 (Lidgard & Gilson, 2002, p. 106, see also Appleyard, 1962; Campbell & Johnson, 1976; Richmond, 1968). In our sample, in both samples most had left NZ in their 20s, and therefore fitted the typical OE model in which young New Zealanders seek to broaden their life experience on the European stage. The sample also contained a small number of older New Zealanders who, having missed out on the OE experience in their youth, activated a latent desire to live and work overseas in later life. Another similarity is that most of the UK returnees (19) and EU (non-UK) (18) returnees had returned from the EU after 2001: consequently, the sample reflects a bias towards recent migrant narratives. Two had returned a decade before the majority of our returning migrants but their motivations and

experiences are remarkably similar to later migrants.

There were however some differences between the two sub-samples. Those who had been to EU (non-UK) countries were more likely to have gone abroad for study purposes, including four high school students and three university students, compared with just two of the UK sample. Additionally, all but one of the UK sample had full time jobs while abroad. In contrast, only 12 of the EU (non-UK) returnees had worked full time abroad, largely reflecting differences in full time education. Another difference relates to accommodation – an important mediator of inter-cultural experiences. In the EU (non UK) sample, high-school exchange students lodged with host families to facilitate their cultural and language experiences, while university exchange students mostly lived in student hostels with other international students. Amongst those working, four rented their own apartments, four shared apartments, and five were provided with live-in accommodation by their employers. In contrast, amongst the UK sample, none lived in university accommodation or with host families, but lived instead either in their own apartments/houses, or shared ones – the latter were mostly with other English-speaking young migrants, particularly from NZ. Most of the EU (non UK) group lived in villages or rural towns with only two living in a major city (Dublin and Munich), while a high proportion of the NZ EU-UK migrants lived in London, often in small shared flats in areas where large numbers of other immigrants resided. The geography of sojourn – urban vs. rural areas, living with migrants v hosts v institutional accommodation – is an important element differentiating the experiences of the two samples, and mediates the impact of the different linguistic and cultural experiences they encountered..

Measures

The interview schedule, after first establishing some basic socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, was divided into 7 sections focussing on overall migration history, moving to Europe, living in Europe, working/studying in Europe, leaving the destination country and returning to either NZ or to a third country (but eventually to NZ), life in the home country, and identification with and links to the destination. There was also a final summing up section which included opportunities for the interviewee to comment on other aspects of their experiences, and on the interview process. Each topic was addressed through a series of specific questions, focussing on a different aspect of that topic. For example, in terms of evaluating the degree of 'permanence' in their return to NZ, they were asked the following questions:

- Did you consider leaving country X to live in a country other than your home country? If so, why? Why did you not to go there?
- Do you now intend to stay in NZ permanently?

(IF YES) Why? Do you think anything could change your mind about this?

(IF NO) How long do you intend to stay? Where do you intend to go next? Would you consider returning to country X? Why/why not?

The interview schedule broadly followed the pre, abroad, and post return phases of the migration cycle, and was not specifically informed by the 10 stage model, as is explained in the data analysis plan outlined below.

Data Analysis plan

An interpretive content analysis was followed which was multi-staged involving different personnel at different stages to provide consistency checks.

The interview schedules had been designed to elicit responses about different phases in the migration cycle, placing particular emphasis on identities and social networks, but not being informed by any particular model of inter-cultural adjustment. This, and the absence of hypotheses, was believed to be more consistent with the qualitative approach adopted for this study.

The taped interviews were fully transcribed by the interviewers, spot checked for accuracy by other team members, and were sent back to the interviewees for further verification and agreement for inclusion in the analysis (there were no refusals). The two interviewers then undertook the first interpretative content analysis, being guided by the following rubrics: a) Into the Unknown: experiences of Moving to the EU; b) First Impressions of a New Land; c) Friends, Foes and Family in the EU; d) Hard Work or Holiday – Working in the EU?; e) Passionate About Language – Studying in the EU; f) Home Sweet Home – Leaving the EU and Returning; g) A Time Warp? – Life Back in NZ; h) Identities and Links. The third fourth and fifth members of the team then read the summary reports provided by the first two analysts, checking them for consistency of interpretation and classification.

The team members then discussed the preliminary findings in relation to competing theoretical positions, as outlined earlier, leading to the decision to adopt the 10 stage models as a conceptual framework. Rhinesmith's ten-wave scheme provides a framework for a detailed analysis, incorporating the returnees' multiple emotional "peaks and dips" and how these "culture shocks" influence post-return experiences. Importantly, this analysis attributes stages without overt references to chronological time due to the complex and "messy"

nature of individuals' intercultural experiences and reflections upon them in each individual case. That was consistent with the design of the interview scheduled which had focuses not so much on precise dates as on whether a returnee's experiences, and accompanying emotions, occurred before their sojourn, after initial exposure to an unfamiliar environment, during their stay in the host culture, immediately before and after return home, or during re-entry adjustment in the home culture.

The third member of the team (lead author) then understood to produce a draft of the findings presented within this framework, and that was read and commented on by the fourth and fifth members of the team, in the process of agreeing a final version.

RESULTS SHOULD THE SUB SECTIONS BE NUMBERED?

5.1. Initial anxiety⁴

Both the EU (non-UK) and UK migrants in our study experienced an *initial anxiety* stage (Valley 1, Figure 1), but the UK group reported useful access to pre-departure information provided by those who were or had been living there. One respondent summarized how a dense network of formal and informal networks and contact points which made settling into the UK relatively easy:

⁴ This analysis is aware that concepts such as 'anxiety', 'shock' 'elation', etc. are technical ones and that they have numerous operational definitions across disciplines. In this paper, these concepts are introduced and discussed in a non-technical manner, following the rubrics and description of the stages in the original research by Rhinesmith (1975).

There are a lot of NZ organizations over there that are set up ... but there is also a lot of advice from here as well before you go, [for instance], previous friends. You get a pretty good picture before you go.

Additionally, family connections in, and previous visits to, the UK, as well as the images, from television programs or from school, contributed to positive pre-migration expectations in this group.

The UK sample had relatively strong preconceptions. Positively, these included “good people”, “a great place for travel or for partying”, an anticipated historical legacy and the countryside. Negative preconceptions included unflattering comments about a weak work ethic, football hooligans, drinking, drugs, the weather and conservative attitudes. In contrast, information on life elsewhere in Europe was relatively limited – respondents communicated with very few individuals who had lived in these destinations. Instead, their pre-departure orientation came more from non-personal sources (books, movies, travel expos, etc.) and electronic searches for information; these can significantly reduce anxiety levels (Zakaria, 2000) but cannot substitute for personal exchanges with individuals with first-hand experiences of the destination culture.

The European non-UK respondents displayed a high level of pre-departure stereotyping of their host cultures, infused by images from movies, television or magazines. One interviewee confessed to having images of French people who, “all wear stripy shirts and bike around with baguettes on their backs”. Preconceptions of Germany ranged from “cute Bavarian villages” with “lovely houses and cobbled streets” to a less friendly population. The Netherlands was expected to be “very kind of green and that they were into the environment and the outdoors and very liberal”, and also of a country that is a “very clean, very organized, very civilized place to live”. Perceptions of Ireland

were of a “really jubilant culture” with a “beautiful countryside”.

5.2. *Arrival fascination*

Both groups reported a similar surge of positive emotions at the beginning of their sojourn (*initial elation*, Peak 2 on Figure 1). For many European non-UK respondents, a leading memory of their ‘honeymoon’ stage was the novelty of being a New Zealander in Europe: “[French] really responded well to me being Kiwi and... that was a novelty that they really enjoyed”; “I was treated differently... because of being a New Zealander, in Germany...”. In the UK sample, the most common positive first impression was the sheer excitement of the UK, London in particular: it was “wonderful. Just great. A multicultural country, roads full of people, it was just so exciting”. Other positive initial impressions included it being less crowded than anticipated, and being more friendly and welcoming. There was, also, a measure of serendipity in first impressions:

I had been expecting this drizzly London but it was beautiful, hot as anything and I just loved that whole feeling of belonging and that lovely rich culture, centuries old stuff that we don't have here.

5.3. *Initial culture shock*

The ‘dip’ of *initial culture shock* (Valley 3, Figure 1) following the ‘honeymoon stage’ was common for both groups in this study, albeit for seemingly different reasons. The experiences of European non-UK respondents formed three categories. The main issue was unexpected exposure to bureaucracy or inefficiency while settling into life in a new environment: for example, “the bureaucracy [in France] is ridiculously slow and poorly organised...” or “I stayed at home for someone to come and fix our phone for three days... and they never came”.

Another frequently reported initial challenge was sharply perceived differences in every-day practices. A University student loved her studies and her friends, yet her first impressions of the hostel in France unsatisfactory: “The kitchen facilities were revolting and the toilets and showers were just foul”. Another really enjoyed the social diversity in Ireland, yet found the first encounters with homelessness distressing: “Living in the central city and not in a particularly wealthy area you had homeless people urinating on your front door...”. One of the most important contributors to the initial culture shock was insufficient language skills – a difficult barrier, especially at the beginning of a stay: “I was really excited, but when I arrived and met my family I sort of thought ‘Oh my gosh, what have I done?’ because I couldn’t understand anything, it really just sounds like Chinese”.

In contrast, the UK sample reported a supportive extended network of friends, relatives and other NZ migrants who assisted new arrivals in overcoming the challenges of adjustment. Predictably, linguistic competence contributed to reduced initial shock. Moreover, New Zealanders who go to the UK often join friends or family and rely on them for advice when dealing with bureaucracy (e.g. setting up bank accounts, obtaining National Insurance numbers, or sorting out visas and other immigration matters), as well as understanding UK tax and health systems, banks and telephone companies. New migrants often gravitated to a ready-made local network of ‘Antipodean’ (Australian, South African and other New Zealand) friends. Many EU-UK respondents even relied on friends and family for somewhere to live initially, and for help in obtaining jobs. Their more negative first impressions were often coloured by a feeling of being overwhelmed by London’s sheer scale; and especially the relentless pace of life:

Intimidated, I'm not a big-crowds person, and I did struggle at first, in London especially. Just the pace of life, the number of people, also the level of diminished social responsibility. People just don't care. The tube just seemed really scary and everything just seemed really full on.

5.4. Surface adjustment

For both groups of NZ migrants, their arrival at the *superficial adjustment* stage (Peak 4, Figure 1) was linked to forming close circles of friends but, more importantly, to having had opportunities to explore the history and culture of Europe and to travel around Europe which of course had been the initial goal of many in both groups.

The EU (non-UK) group made comments such as “That was awesome, ...to pop on a train and to be in Amsterdam in like an hour and the art galleries” or

I liked most the scenery, culture, cultural heritage, richness of everyday life, excitement of being in the heart of Europe and the ability to travel within a few hours to all the other European destinations.

There were broadly similar experiences of ‘superficial adjustment’ in the UK group. One aspect was the excitement and pace of life, viewed positively by seven individual:

You can get out and about every day of the week if you want to and do things... NZ, coming back... feels a little bit more like a retirement village at times

Another positive feature was the ease of travel from London, particularly around continental Europe: “I liked the connectedness in terms of being on a plane and being in Spain in a couple of hours.” Other positive features were making new friends, a sense of history and the cultural diversity. Finally, there were a small number of positive comments about shopping, public transport in London, higher earnings and valued work experiences.

Amongst the European non-UK cohort, both relationships to a small group of local friends and facilitated language skill were mentioned. One interviewee explained “I felt part of the French community because I [could] speak French and could go to different places and just order whatever”.

5.5. *Mental isolation*

The downward curve in the *mental isolation* stage (Valley 5, Figure 1) was typical for both UK and European non-UK NZ migrants. Challenges in job adjustment and social interaction were reported as the most intense challenges at this stage, contributing to strong negative emotions. Amongst European non-UK sojourners, many of their recollections revisited issues discussed in terms of *initial culture shock*, but perception of the issues were now deeper, darker and more pessimistic. Many European non-UK respondents recognized that they still had difficulties in fully adjusting to their professional environments (whether the office or classroom) while their language skills were still a barrier to meaningful relationships: “It is all about language because once you get the language, you really know people”. Three respondents struggled with having to speak a foreign language all the time:

You’ve been speaking German all day in class, maybe gone to some party after Uni and you’ve been speaking German there... and you just get home and you feel like you’ve hit a brick wall, and there’s no one to speak English to.

One respondent attempted to make French friends but “they were quite stand-offish when it came to interacting with a foreigner and I always wondered whether it was because my French was really bad”. Insufficient language skills were also considered by three respondents to have hampered social integration in their neighbourhoods:

I was invited to things once they knew I could understand them, because before then you are struggling all the time and I think, they think it is a chore to help you understand.

As one respondent concluded, “Language is a key and if you don’t have this key or your key doesn’t really fit, you are a lesser human being. You are simply not taken seriously”.

While 65 per cent (13) of the European non-UK respondents were affirmative when asked directly whether they felt that they belonged to their neighbourhoods, one third (7) replied negatively. Their feelings were partly due to living in relatively isolating accommodation, or to living in a big city, where there was not a “sense of neighbourhood ... you didn’t really know your neighbours”.

In contrast, UK migrants reported that other migrants (usually all English-speaking, and with broadly similar experiences as young migrants to the UK) constituted an immediate bastion against isolation. Diaspora ties served as a ‘safety net’ in relation to cultural shock in this phase of intercultural adjustment, yet simultaneously contributed to further isolation from the host community. Given the substantial community of New Zealanders in London, many with family and friends already living in the UK, it is unsurprising that a large proportion of their closest social contacts were fellow nationals. However, while having friends with shared migrant experiences was a source of comfort and fun, a few regretted lack of contact with British people:

In a sad sense most were Antipodeans of some sort, either South Africans, Australians or New Zealanders, and probably more Aussies and New Zealanders more than anyone else because we are so similar in our expectations and mindset. You sort of gravitate towards likeminded people...

Perceptions of fitting into neighbourhoods in the UK were complex, dependent

on individual attitudes and the social composition of the local population. Experiences varied within London, and between London and elsewhere. A third of the UK sample felt they did not belong to their neighbourhoods. Given the relatively short working-holiday nature of their sojourns in the UK some interviewees did not want to belong to their neighbourhood: “I didn’t necessarily want to belong. You know, I was a visitor”. The high rates of population turnover in areas of multi-occupation also militated against developing a sense of belonging or community involvement. However, some interviewees found the British “stand-offish” or “rude and arrogant”, while London was a “heartless city”.

5.6. Integration / acceptance

The absence of a Diasporic ‘safety net’ for European non-UK sojourners arguably triggered a resilient and creative response in working and personal lives. This was often accompanied by a feeling of pride in mastering a local language, allowing meaningful communication with locals. This ultimately resulted in a positive validation of this stage (Peak 6, Figure 1). For example, a NZ high-school student considered that strong cultural immersion gave her a sense of ‘German identity’:

I think because... I had German friends and German family, and they accepted me, and they felt very German, so I..., by default, took on their identity, and speaking the language, and conducting the traditions and things like that.

Identification with the host country was partly place-dependent, with smaller places being more facilitative. Many NZ European non-UK respondents reported pronounced feelings of affinity to their host countries. One respondent discussed “the voluntary nature” of feeling French as being due to wanting to

fit in as much as possible. Another respondent, based in Germany, did not feel German until after her return to New Zealand, and this feeling was manifested in mannerisms she was not aware she had developed while abroad. Other respondent felt a degree of loyalty to Germany, and found it problematic that, in NZ, academic interest in Germany is limited to its role in the war. This particular affinity to their host countries was described by one interviewee as a kind of “secondary allegiance”:

I did have second loyalty to France in that my primary loyalty would be to NZ and still now my second loyalty would be to France. ...and I do feel a lot of pride when I hear the French anthem.

In contrast, the vast majority of the UK group did not feel ‘British’ and there was a strong feeling of being transient in British society: most were in the UK for less than three years, and intended to return at the end of this time. Many shared flats with other New Zealanders, and lived in areas of transient population in London. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that most did not feel any sense of British identity. Instead, five interviewees commented that being abroad had reinforced their NZ identities: “[I] felt more like a Kiwi and more proud to be a New Zealander over there than I did here”. Others commented on how they deliberately wore clothing associated with NZ as an assertion of identity: “[I] wore black more in the UK than I did here, celebrated Waitangi day more than I did, so I think in some ways it actually makes you more proud of NZ”. Nevertheless, a third of the ‘UK’ sample felt strongly that they belonged to their neighbourhood at this stage of their sojourn. Participating in sport locally, or going regularly to the same pub or shop, could help to generate a sense of belonging. There were also good friends made through work, although there were several comments about the lack of friendliness amongst fellow workers, and the difficulties of socializing with British workers, even in

their own age group.

5.7. *Return anxieties*

Both groups experienced a *return anxiety stage* (Valley 7, Figure 1), commenting on a strong “pull home” reflecting largely positive predispositions to return. Although the main reason for this for both groups was the expiry of visas, many were ready to return for other reasons (to see families and friends, attend family celebrations, get married, break up relationships, continue their education, start their own businesses etc.). Homesickness, a lack of money and above all the return to what they understood as a more “traditional” lifestyle were also mentioned. One respondent who lived in the Netherlands noted, “I grew up in the country in NZ and having no land space around my house was just driving me crazy”. Another who stayed in Germany for ten years still missed “the Kiwi lifestyle and not being near the beach, and not having space. Our apartment was really small, no garden, no garage”. A UK sojourner similarly noted “it was a good experience from the start up until the last three months probably, when I got sick of the cars, the busyness, the concrete, you had no lawn at your house and after a while you start to miss what NZ has to offer”. To some extent, these comments reflect the comparison between their often transient life styles and accommodation, with either what they had left behind or anticipated in moving on to the home making and career development stages of the life cycle.

5.8. *Re-entry elation*

The *re-entry elation* stage (Peak 8, Figure 1) was noted in both groups. Most respondents reported that they did not have problems securing jobs at

home and that their new skills assisted their career in NZ. Respondents also reported a warm welcome from friends and family, even if they were sometime not always sufficiently understanding or interested in the repatriates' experiences. A European non-UK sojourner noted: "everyone is so excited to see you and they want to hear your story, see your photographs so you're kind of like a celebrity for a while". A UK returnee had strong positive impressions which included the lack of traffic, and just the sheer joy "because you know the boundaries". Being away had also reconciled respondents to what they had previously disliked about life in NZ (such as its remoteness and quietness): "I hated it before I left because I was bored and when I came back I just absolutely loved it".

5.9. Re-entry shock

Yet, in both groups, the re-entry elation stage was reported as a fleeting experience morphing almost immediately into *re-entry shock* (Valley 9, Figure 1). The main factor contributing to 'repatriation distress' experienced on return was in adjustment to the everyday environment. Respondents from both groups were re-learning how to deal with NZ's isolation. Indeed, 40 per cent (8) of the European non-UK sojourners missed the lack of opportunities for international travel due to the isolation of NZ, especially from Europe. One interviewee noted "you couldn't just up and travel somewhere as easily on the weekend, go off to Spain...".

The respondents from both groups who lived in large urban areas were re-learning how to adjust to living in smaller communities. There were negative impressions about the dullness of being home, in contrast with active life styles in London in particular:

Because you'd been used to the fast and frantic lifestyle and the busy nature of every night being out doing something or meeting friends in central London. It was a very busy lifestyle. Coming back to NZ, it was just dead.

Respondents also reported lacking the feeling of adventure and discovery which accompanied their time in Europe. Initial negative impressions had to do with "itchy feet" and the feeling that the adventure had ended. An UK repatriate reflected that they had realised that the lives they returned to would inevitably be different to those they had originally left behind in NZ, because they were at different stages in their life and career cycles:

I was more nervous coming back here than going over there..... For many people, it seems like the end of the adventure, you know. You've got to come back and take life seriously.

'Reverse culture shock' was noted in coping with changes in interpersonal communication. One European non-UK respondent "would always go to shake someone's hand or kiss someone which you'd never do here". Another non-UK sojourner discovered that it was "almost as if you have been in a time warp because...you just don't have the reference that people talk about so you feel like a foreigner in your own country". Another non-UK repatriate commented, "I felt like a guest star in someone else's TV show. It didn't feel quite right" and another felt "a bit alienated" from their friends. Among UK sojourners, the most frequently mentioned negative impression (6) related to loss of friends, whether those left behind, or old friends in NZ who had "moved on".

Finally, the most frequent negative impression in both groups was that the cost of living in NZ was higher than they had expected, particularly amongst those who had been away for longer periods, or who had returned at a time of sharply rising house prices. An UK repatriate noted: "Buying houses has been very expensive and the cost of living in NZ is very expensive... Just

the cost of getting out, food, housing”. A European non-UK sojourner echoed the sentiment: “the tax rate and just the costs of everything like food and petrol have all gone up...so that’s made the transition difficult”.

5.10. Reintegration

All three types – those who re-socialise and avoid differentiation, those who are ready to remigrate, and those who infuse new experiences into life upon return -- were observed in the *reintegration* stage (Peak 10, Figure 1) in both samples. First, those who re-entered the old routines, “putting on the shelf” their overseas experiences (a minority of respondents); second, those who felt they cannot “fit in” in NZ and plan to migrate again (a larger group, although a minority, in both samples); and finally, those who managed to integrate positive experiences and skills acquired in Europe into their personal and working lives in NZ (the majority in both samples). The major difference between the two cohorts in our study was a stronger feeling of affinity and loyalty to their host countries developed by the European non-UK migrants which was evident in their reintegration and attempts to keep in touch with the host communities on both personal and professional levels.

For returnees from both groups, the key to overcoming *reverse culture shock* was finding jobs. Some started work almost immediately, but some took a break. When ready to work, most found jobs relatively easily. Settling back into NZ life also meant finding their own place to live. A few moved in with family when they first returned, but almost all subsequently found their own accommodation, with several buying properties as they started families. Respondents reported that they easily slipped back into the NZ lifestyle appreciating the “space, being able to have a garden” or enjoying “quite a big

house with a big section”. Emotionally, a strengthened sense of NZ identity after return also helped individuals to move on to the reintegration stage. Five of the European non-UK sojourners reported they felt more ‘Kiwi’ after their return, for example: “more of a sense of what patriotism meant having lived somewhere else”.

Reintegration becomes complete when the returnees become immersed in a range of activities in the home society while actively maintaining links with their migration host countries. All the European non-UK returnees reported continuing to have links to host countries through correspondence, typically with friends, employers and host families (email, telephone, and Facebook). Two, who had been students in France, sustained their links through studying French at university, and joined *Alliance Française*. Others use European news channels in NZ such as *Deutsche Welle* and websites such as *Le Monde Online* to keep up to date with their former host societies.

In contrast, the UK NZ repatriates had relatively limited contact with the UK, other than sending cards or emails to friends who lived there, or an occasional holiday trip. However, most would like to have more contact with the UK, at the level of tourism or visiting family and friends – more than a third had retained bank accounts to facilitate this.

Discussion and Conclusions

Changing patterns of mobility mean there is a need to broaden research from a selective focus on the traditionally dominant return of longer term migrants, while also looking beyond labour migration (Cassarino, 2004, p. 270). This study contributes to that agenda while also, in the case of New Zealanders, embarking on the ‘Big Overseas Experience’, by extending research from the

traditional focus on Australia and the UK, via a comparative European study. For cultural, historical, linguistic and demographic reasons, the UK has been a major and distinctive destination for NZ migrants. Yet, a substantial number of New Zealanders migrate to the rest of Europe which, in most cases, presents different challenges in terms of language, social environment, and culture.

Conceptually this paper compares sojourners' outbound and inbound patterns of adaptation between UK and non-UK European destinations using Rhinesmith's W-curve for cross-cultural adjustment, while also discussing identity negotiations with the reference the four-member CIM theory (Sussman 2010). Our findings indicate that, in their intercultural adjustment in terms of psychological adaption, both UK and non-UK European sojourners experienced broadly similar emotional 'dips' and 'peaks' on this intercultural 'ride' (irrespective of the geography of their sojourn, i.e. urban areas vs. small townships and villages). The migrants first encountered a low point after initial exposure to an unfamiliar environment. This was usually followed by increasing positive feelings accompanying on-going adjustment. After returning home, adjustment again declined when sojourners re-adapted to the home culture, followed by further growth in positive emotions as adjustment progresses.

For both groups of migrants, the *re-acculturation* part of their sojourn (after deciding to return home, stages 7-10 on the W-curve) bore striking similarities in describing emotions and experiences. Amongst both groups, a sense of "New Zealand identity" increased after repatriation. However, European non-UK sojourners also reported a distinct feeling of loyalty/affinity to and regular personal/business links with, their host societies (neither is typically observed in the UK group).

In contrast, the two groups' psychological and sociocultural experiences in the *acculturation* phase of the sojourn (stages 1-6 on the W-curve) were markedly different. Specifically, the UK group reported having sufficient exposure to the pre-departure information provided by those who were or had been living in the host country; access to an extensive Diasporic 'safety net' of family members, friends, other Antipodeans and English-speaking migrants on the ground; as well as linguistic competence. All these factors partly alleviate the negative reactions among the UK migrants when the W-curve 'hit' the low points of *initial anxiety* (stage 1); *initial culture shock* (stage 3) and *mental isolation* (stage 6). On the other hand, the same factors add to the feeling of isolation from the host community among the UK sojourners – they saw themselves as temporary visitors often preferring to socialize within pre-established networks of family and friends, or with fellow migrants. For the European non-UK group, exposure to the unfamiliar at the start of their sojourn was intense, aggravated by initial lack of first-hand information, proficient language skills and local support networks. Yet, successful, persistent and creative overcoming of these challenges in professional and personal lives (intensified by improved linguistic competence) contributed to the dominant impression of 'belonging to' and 'integrating into' the host society.⁵

⁵ To highlight this finding, it is important to mention experiences of several EU (non-UK) respondents who were students at the time of their sojourn. They were less pushed by circumstances to interact intensively with locals and enjoyed a very particular form of multicultural university environment, characterised by apparent egalitarianism, with English likely to be a, if not the, language of communication. The interviewed university students predominantly lived in student halls often with a very diverse group of international students. This multicultural environment enriched their experiences: 'making friends was very, very easy... a lot of dinners, nights out, social events'. Arguably, initial adjustment for this group could be achieved faster compared with other EU (non-UK) migrants who had to more fully immerse themselves into the host culture; this however had implications for their perceived social integration. One student in an international hostel, felt 'like a foreigner. Maybe, if I had been living in

Conceptualising these findings in the four-member paradigm of the CIM identity shifts (Sussman 2010), this study argues that the non-UK European cohort re-confirmed their “New Zealand identity” early in the sojourn, not as a negative reaction to stress, but as a positive reaction to being recognised as an unusual individual, an ‘exotic New Zealander’) (*positive affirmative*) (Table 1). This identification was missing in the initial stages of adjustment in the UK group (NZ sojourners are not unusual in the UK). In contrast, these stages were characterised by relatively mild distress mainly due to small cross-cultural transitions between NZ and the UK and tendency to move into expatriate enclaves with tight pre-established networks. Arguably, this freed sojourners’ emotional and cognitive resources to enjoy and learn from new intercultural experiences earlier in their sojourn (*additive*). Typically, the UK sojourners reported preference was to live in “expatriate bubbles” (Ward et al., 1998, 281) separating themselves from the host nationals, and re-affirming their ‘Kiwi’ identity in contrast to the local ‘Other’. In this scenario, the re-affirmation of their ‘Kiwi’ identity happened later in the cycle, typically as a reaction to adjustment stresses (*negative affirmative*). The European non-UK group had greater initial sociocultural difficulties – its members were less familiar with and knowledgeable of their host environment. Yet, acquisition of sociocultural competences (including improved linguistic skills, mastering previously unfamiliar cultural realities and creating new social networks) contributed to psychological well-being and feelings of pride, achievement and personal success (*additive*).

The initial differences in identity shifts could be related to the motivation behind the sojourn: the most commonly cited reasons for sojourns

an apartment in the town or a house, I’d feel more of a local’.

to the European non-UK countries included opportunities to experience different cultures, learn a new language, study and the challenge of living outside one's comfort zone in a non-English speaking country. Employment, personal relationships and family reunification were important motivations in the UK sample. In other words they are different both culturally and in terms of social embedding. Despite these differences, stage 4 (*surface adjustment*) profiled an interesting similarity in the UK and non-UK European responses – both groups appreciated and positively validated an opportunity to discover Europe, its history, civilization and culture, and the ability to travel around the Continent (*additive*). This confirms that economic factors are only one in a long list of considerations for young New Zealanders' sojourning in Europe and the 'Big OE' can be interpreted in terms both of individuals seeking cultural exploration, adventure and self-development, as well as a culture of temporary migration (Chadee & Cutler, 1996).

After the sojourn, most non-UK NZ repatriates felt 'more' French, German, etc. (*additive*) actively supporting their personal contacts with the host country, in addition to strengthening their 'Kiwi' identity (*affirmative*). In contrast, the UK sojourners did not feel 'more' British and felt more 'Kiwi' (*affirmative*). Neither UK or non-UK NZ repatriates reported increased estrangement from NZ culture (*subtractive*) (something argued by Sussman (2010) to be the most common pattern among US Americans, European and other Anglo-country citizens). In contrast, both groups re-affirmed their NZ identity upon return. A similar finding – a sense of New Zealand identity that acts as a "secure foundation" and a "buffer against psychological distress" (Ward & Kennedy, 1994, 340) -- was discovered by Ward & Kennedy in their 1994 study of NZ citizens who are representing NZ's international interests

overseas. Remarkably, in our study none of the respondents was associated with a large organisation representing NZ's interests abroad; they could be described as members 'general public'. Our analysis also did not identify high repatriation distress – findings jobs was the key here and both cohorts were happy to return to embrace the NZ lifestyle and join their families and friends. Also, both cohorts featured respondents who were ready to move on to the next sojourn (*global*).

In summary, the findings confirm Susmasn' argument (2001) that overseas adaptation and repatriation experiences are not directly associated: despite different adaptation patterns in the cycle of sojourn, the resulting shift in identity in inbound adjustment for both UK and non-UK European cohorts was *affirmative*, as well as *global*. The similarities in the *re-acculturation* stages of sojourn could be attributed to its nature -- distinctly temporary and of relatively fixed duration for most interviewees. Returning home to NZ was planned at the outset, and most migrants return home when planned, not least because their mobility was regulated by the two year working holiday visa.

Table 1: Leading patterns in identity shifts during acculturation and re-acculturation phases

	<i>Acculturation</i> stages (outbound adjustments) (stages 1-6)	<i>Re-acculturation</i> stages (inbound adjustments) (stages 7-10)
European Non-UK group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Positive affirmative</i> ('exotic Kiwi') • <i>Additive</i> (adding new values and attitude from exposure to the host country) • <i>Additive</i> (adding new values and attitude from exposure to Europe in general) • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Additive</i> ('more' French, German, etc.) • <i>Affirmative</i> ('more' Kiwi') • <i>Global</i> (ready to move on)
UK group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Additive</i> (adding new 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Affirmative</i> ('more'

	values and attitude from exposure to the host country) • <i>Negative</i> <i>affirmative</i> (different from the local 'Other') • <i>Additive</i> (adding new values and attitude from exposure to Europe in general)	Kiwi) • <i>Global</i> (ready to move on)
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Results show that analysis of repatriates' intercultural experiences may benefit from comparative perspectives: this study intends to deepen understanding of the patterns of adaption and identity shifts among sojourners originating from the same cultural background, yet relocating to various cultural destinations. The study's in-depth qualitative approach is also useful methodologically as it adds a much needed perspective to studies on sojourner adaptation (Sussman 2002, 405). Our sample featured reasonable number of returnees and reported the richness of data that interviews provide. Yet, despite valuable findings and qualitative tools, this study has a number of limitations. First, the retrospective assessment, rather than longitudinal collection of data throughout the transition arc, has been employed. The need for longitudinal studies has been repeatedly articulated in the field of acculturation studies (see e.g. Sussman, 2002, 405; Ward et al., 1998, 289). Second, the fact that the two groups differ from each other in many dimensions other than the venue of their sojourn: degree of NZ 'embeddedness' (whether they have family there), purpose of sojourn (and a related variable, age), host embeddedness (and housing), rural vs. urban, amount of prior international experience. Therefore, outcomes from the study cannot be attributed in any simple way to UK vs. 'the rest of Europe' dichotomy. Our team is further exploring these variables (e.g. insights into significant aspects of the relational nature of places that are connected by sojourners' circulation (Williams et al., 2011)).

Finally, the study used a heuristic 10-stage model by Rhinesmith (an extension of the U-curve and a modification of the W-curve). The U-curve (and W-curve) is credited its “popular and intuitive appeal” (Ward et al 1998, 290), yet “still on trial in the intercultural court” (Ibid. 279). Despite its limited empirical support, the W-curve framework (and its 10-stage modification by Rheismith) was found useful not only for incorporating the notions of culture shock and return migration into the analysis but, as argued by Black & Stephens (1989) and Black (1990a, 1990b), is instrumental in accommodating the three facets of intercultural adjustment, namely adjustment to the general (non-work) environment, to work situations, and to interaction and interpersonal relations with host nationals. Each type of adjustments has various degrees of difficulty and features particular challenges.

Job adjustment is sometimes argued to be the “easiest of the three dimensions of adjustment” (Chang, 1997, p. 151), assuming that a sojourner enters the same professional field experienced at home. In this situation, work-related tasks are not expected to be dramatically different, and familiarity adds to the feeling of psychological comfort while abroad. However, individual organizational cultures could vary across the same profession. Moreover, cultural and national specificities could significantly modify the accustomed ways of working, leading to enhanced stress while abroad. The second dimension is adjustment to the general non-work environment (Ibid.). A different way of life – dissimilar ways of shopping, commuting, banking, health treatment, etc. – adds to the everyday stress of living in a foreign environment. While the element of novelty and surprise in the everyday routine may have a positive effect on some sojourners, it may also lead to exhaustion and irritation long term. Adjustment to interaction is recognized as the most

difficult dimension (Ibid.), depending on the circumstance of the sojourn (e.g. duration of stay or intensity of interaction with locals). In this type of adjustment, migrants have to exercise various cognitive and emotional skills in order to observe and make sense of the predominant divergent values, assumptions, beliefs, and behaviour in the host society, to navigate this environment in a productive non-conflictual way, to establish meaningful relationships and to preserve their identities. Unsurprisingly, this process is ripe with miscommunications and misperceptions, which could ultimately lead to very negative emotions and frustration.

Critics of the W-curve theory) argued that by overlooking interactions between migrants and locals, the W-curve model is under-specified (Church, 1982. Yet, if we consider the three types of adjustment discussed above, it is obvious that they are not mutually exclusive, and interaction is a fundamental feature of both job and community life. With linguistic competence being the corner stone of any interaction, this paper observed a paradox worth exploring in future research. Namely, even though the returnees from the UK moved between similar English-speaking cultures, the feeling of loyalty and affinity to their host country was significantly less pronounced (or even absent) compared to European non-UK sojourners who had a higher cultural distance to their host country (not lastly due to insufficient language skills initially). This reverse correlation between cultural distance and feelings of loyalty in both groups under investigation could be a subject to a further quantitative study (with a significantly larger sample of respondents), which could calibrate measures of variables like cultural distance and test how this factor may moderate the curve in the Rhinesmith model. A descriptive rather than an analytical instrument in this study, the W-curve provided a useful means of tracking experiences

through the entire migration cycle, highlighting those converging or diverging identity shifts among the UK and non-UK European NZ repatriates. As such, it has the advantage for circular sojourners studies of providing an organizational framework for longitudinal analysis.

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