

Tuula Siljanen

# Narratives of Expatriates in the Middle East

Adaptation, Identity and Learning  
in Non-Profit Organizations









## ABSTRACT

Siljanen, Tuula

Narratives of Expatriates in the Middle East. Adaptation, Identity and Learning in Non-Profit Organizations

Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2007, 250 p.

(Jyväskylä Studies in Business and Economics

ISSN 1457-1986; 54)

ISBN 978-951-39-2770-7 (PDF), 978-951-39-2709-7 (nid.)

Finnish Summary

Diss.

Organizations face increasing challenges in turbulent environments. Changes in the nature of expatriation have an impact upon Human Resource Management and Development. This research focuses on exploring the international career and expatriate experience in the context of the non-profit sector, which has been overlooked in the previous research.

The study elaborates on international career and expatriate experience. The aim of this study is to enhance the understanding of cross-cultural adaptation, identity transformation and learning during international assignments. The international actors of the research worked and lived in the Israeli-Palestinian cultural context, which provided a transforming cultural setting of the Middle East crisis. The research questions were: (1) How do expatriates in the Middle East narrate their work and life? (2) How can cross-cultural expatriate experience be understood from the perspectives of cross-cultural adaptation, identity transformation and learning?

The empirical research was conducted during 2001-2002 in the Middle East. Based on the transcribed data, life stories of the expatriates were constructed by the help of narrative analysis. The life stories provided a comparable narration of expatriate experiences. Further analysis classified the life stories into different categories. Then a composite narrative profile of each category was constructed. Finally, cross-cultural adaptation, learning and identity transformation were discussed in the frame of narrative profiles.

The analysis of the data produced four different categories of narrative profiles of international actors: global careerists, balanced experts, idealizer and drifters. The findings suggest that successful expatriation requires different approaches to strengthen the attachment anchors of different categories of international actors during their international assignment. The study enhanced the previous approaches of cross-cultural adaptation indicating that adaptation of expatriates occurs in relation to various cultural contexts. It suggests that expatriates have different frames of reference, which play a vital role in their adaptation. The findings of this study argue that identity transformation and transformative learning take place during the international assignment.

Key words: expatriates, non-profit organizations, cross-cultural adaptation, identity, learning, narrativity

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My research interest in international career and expatriate experience has taken up the last ten years of my life. Throughout these years, numerous people have been involved in the study process and contributed to this research. Because of the limited space, the people included in this part, are those, who have directly contributed and related to my doctoral studies and to this dissertation.

First of all, I would like to thank Professor Anna-Maija Lämsä for her support and encouragement since 2004, when we started the research cooperation, and she became my supervisor. Her persistence and questions on my theoretical focus and methodological choices have helped me define my position and statements more clearly. Anna-Maija's positive attitude has pushed me to work forward and proceed systematically even in the dark moments of being lost in the jungle of my own ideas and too many choices. I am also grateful to Professor Juha Näsi, who presently works at the University of Tampere. I started this research process in 1996 with Juha. Without his encouragement I would not have had the courage to begin the doctoral studies at the University of Jyväskylä. Juha encouraged me to start the path of growing to become an academic researcher.

Secondly, I would like to thank all the cross-cultural travelers in the Middle East, with whom I have been able to rethink this research and who have provided the network for the entire study process. It gives me great pleasure to thank those expatriates who were ready to devote their time and to share with me their work and life experiences. Your knowledge and experiences provided a rich data for this study and helped me to understand the complexities of international career and cross-cultural adaptation.

Next, I would like to thank my reviewers Professor Rebecca Piekari from Helsinki School of Economics and PhD Nurit Zaidman, Head of Strategy and International Management Division from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel. Your comments have been valuable and have clarified the dissertation.

I am grateful to Professor Sinikka Vanhala from Helsinki School of Economics. Her wise advice opened a way for me to involve non-profit organizations in this study. It gives me pleasure to thank Ms. Nili Zayat who revised the English language. I am also very grateful to my good friend Marjatta Tolvanen, who at present works as Head of Health and Nutrition in UNICEF Somalia Support Center. Marjatta supported my studies in Jerusalem and provided great amount of encouragement and valuable comments based on her life-long international career. I also want to express my gratitude to my "old Kauppi friends" for their friendship and encouragement on the way.

Having written the research most of the time along a full time job, makes me very grateful to the Finnish church-related organization, the SEKL, for enabling me to work half time and use the other half in the research during the years 2000-2003. I was enrolled to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem as a visiting research fellow and accordingly, was able to use its excellent library. I



also want to thank my present place of work, Mikkeli Vocational Institution, for enabling me to use their IT facilities and the Max Qda program for analyzing the qualitative data.

I express special thanks to following foundations: Jenny ja Antti Wihurin rahasto, Liikesivistysrahasto, the University of Jyväskylä and Suomen Konkordialiitto for the financial support, which I received throughout the study process. Their support has enabled periods of full-time intensive research work during the study process and helped me to participate in KATAJA courses and provided revision of the English language.

This research process would never have been completed without the strong support of my husband Esko and our children Eeva-Maria, Samuel and Mikael. I want to thank my children for their contribution in improving the English language and for their fresh comments, encouragement and help at home. Eeva-Maria, I admire your persistency and academic touch! Esko, you encouraged me to start and not to give up on the way. Your prayers and positive attitude helped me to complete the dissertation. Thank you for your patience and love! Eeva-Maria, Samuel and Mikael, during this research process you have grown from children to international young people. Thank you for allowing me to be occupied with this research! Last but not least, I would like to express my gratitude to my parents. My father passed away before completing this process. Both my father Toimi and my mother Ilona always placed a high value on learning and education. They encouraged us children to study although they had to struggle with the financial burdens in raising a large family. Thank you for all that you have done for me!

Mikkeli January, 2007

Tuula Siljanen

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# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Background of the research**

The modern world has changed into a global and borderless arena. The internationalization of the world's markets has led to many significant changes: customers have become global, and markets have expanded; knowledge (ideas, information, and technology) is transferred as a global product; business organizations have been reorganized into worldwide alliances and global corporations; jobs have become global, and lifelong employment has changed into flexible, innovative employment arrangements (O'Hara-Deveraux & Johansen 1994, 6-7, Black, Mendenhall & Oddou, 1991).

The new situation has many implications in management and organizational processes. Cultural diversity has increased, and cultural competence is recognized as one of the key management skills. Cultural knowledge and appreciation combined with technological professionalism have become the keystones of intercultural business activity (O'Hara-Deveraux & Johansen 1994). Hofstede (1991) and Trompenaars (1994) claim that management theory and practices are constrained by national cultures. However, cultural reality is changing, and national cultures are in the process of transformation (Hofstede 1991). Sparrow and Hiltrop (1998) suggest that a more dynamic framework of International Human Resource Management (HRM) is needed. It should incorporate a broader cultural understanding, an appreciation of international competitive forces and the role of multinational corporations. Similarly, Harris, Brewster and Sparrow write that the HRM has to develop a more global mindset, where the significance of cultural factors is integrated to global HRM processes (2003).

Individual employees as a part of the global system are being increasingly transferred and are traveling from one place to another. International assignments challenge the HRM practices by the number of expatriate failures and poor performance and require critical approach in all the stages of international assignment (Harris, Brewster & Sparrow 2003, Hiltrop & Janssens 1995). Many studies on expatriate careers, overseas effectiveness and expatriate

failure confirm these challenges (Storey 1996; Kauhanen 1997; Gudykunst & Hammer 1984; Suutari 2003; Harris, Brewster, Sparrow 2003).

I have personally been one of these cross-cultural travelers for more than thirty years. As a young business student in 1973, I got a summer job in Stockholm, Sweden. I had set two goals for this job: to earn money for financing my studies and to improve my Swedish language skills. The work itself was far from the field of business, but my personal knowledge expanded through practical experiences gained from working in a multicultural team, which was not yet so common in Finland at the time. During that summer I achieved my goals, and my personality was enriched by such experiences that I had not been able to set conscientiously as goals. I continued my international career in 1979, and since then I have worked in international non-profit organizations for almost twenty years in Tanzania and in Israel.

During my own border-crossing path, I have experienced many transfers between Finland, Tanzania and Israel and have gone through various stages in my professional career. Working abroad also had implications on my personal life as well as on my family. My personal experiences and observations together with discussions with other expatriates and members of the host society motivated me to explore the complex situation of international careers. They also raised questions concerning expatriate adjustment, success and failure, preparation and training as well as family issues e.g. adjustment of spouse and children. The same questions seemed to concern both business organizations and non-profit organizations. When I returned to Finland, I found that Finland had become more multicultural. The questions of multicultural teams and diversity in Finnish organizations were brought up for discussion. Even in my daily work in vocational education, international cooperation has become part of every day work. At that time I began to study intercultural matters more systematically.

## **1.2 Focus of the research**

HRM has become very complex in the global world. The challenges facing the organizations increase in turbulent environments. People communicate increasingly across different cultures. Many professions have become transcultural. Individual careers have become opportunities to create a personal path for developing a person's own skills and to enhance chances to continue in the chosen path. It is important to understand these challenges from the management perspective in order to increase effectiveness in international interactions (Burnes 1992; Harris & Moran 1979).

Understanding adjustment and performance on international assignments requires new approaches. Direct and indirect costs caused by expatriate failure are considerably high. Reported expatriate failure rates fluctuate between 10-40%. Expatriate failure is mostly defined as premature return, but it also

includes under-performance. Previous studies show that the failures are mostly related to problems of adjustment of the person himself/herself or the family instead of work itself (Hendry 1994; Storey 1996; Kauhanen 1997; Tahvanainen 1998). There is a need for comprehensive theoretical and empirical research on cross-cultural adaptation (Black, Mendenhall & Oddou 1991). Simultaneously, diversity management has become more crucial in all organizations, even those restricted to a national level (Ståhle & Grönroos 2000). The aim of this study is to elaborate international career and expatriate experience and to enhance the understanding of cross-cultural adaptation, identity transformation and learning during international assignments. The study will contribute novel approaches and tools for Human Resources Development (HRD). In addition, deeper understanding of the complex process of adjustment and international effectiveness will expand the understanding of organizations in developing HRM practices in response to the requirements of multicultural and diverse workforce.

International HRM has been criticized for being too narrow and for focusing mainly on functional activities (Kochan et al. 1992; Edwards et al. 1993). This study attempts to find a more holistic and dynamic approach. Another source for criticism is that much of the research in international HRM has been conducted by American researches, and the main concern has been on questions relating to American expatriates. A further limitation of many cross-cultural studies is that the empirical data has been based on representatives of one country of origin, usually that of the researcher or on employees of one organization only. Moreover, the research on expatriation has mostly concentrated on expatriate managers in multinational enterprises and it has been quantitative rather than qualitative (Mendenhall et al. 2002). The study broadens the previous studies by collecting data from people representing different nationalities who work in various organizations. The study is attached to the questions of HRD in the field of international HRM and its changing role along the changes in the society and culture. The dynamics of an international career will be analyzed through the concepts of culture, cross-cultural adaptation, identity transformation and learning.

The study of Harris et al. (2003) points out that the international HRM excludes the non-profit sector. Brewster and Lee (2006) call these organizations not-for-profit organizations. I use the terms not-for profit and non-profit interchangeably. These organizations include Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Many of these organizations have a long history of international activities. They operate in various countries and employ hundreds of people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. IGOs include many intergovernmental "civil service" organizations such as the EU Commission, the NATO and the UN Agencies. These organizations are funded and governed by governments. NGOs include a wide range of heterogeneous organizations. They are governed independent of governments but subject to national laws of their location. IGOs and NGOs are more and more overlapping in mutual cooperation and partnership (Brewster



& Lee, 2006, 131-132). Managing non-profit organizations faces many challenges from performance of their mission to leadership, commitment and development of their paid employees and volunteers (Drucker 1990). This research focuses on exploring the international career and expatriate experience in the context of the non-profit sector.

### **1.3 A brief review of the research on expatriation**

Cross-cultural management literature has increased since the 1970s. The research has focused on cultural differences and cross-cultural adaptation from the point of view of culture shock (Holden 2002; Mendenhall et al. 2002). The recent approach to expatriation emphasizes the perspectives of career and personal development (Peltonen 1998). Before introducing a brief review on the focus of the research areas in the field, it is important to have a look at the term "expatriate".

The traditional definition of expatriate "refers to employees who are transferred out of their home base into some area of the firm's international operations" (Dowling & Welch, 2004, 7). Traditionally, expatriates work in the subsidiaries of multinational enterprises (Inkson 1997; Brewster & Scullion 1997; Suutari & Brewster 2000). Inkson et al. (1997) discuss two models of expatriation: (1) Expatriate Assignment (EA) and (2) Overseas Experience (OE). They claim that the initiative for leaving originates from the employer in the case of expatriation in EA (Inkson, 1997; Suutari & Brewster 2000). In EA the goals for the international assignment are derived from the objectives of the company, e.g. to work in the subsidiary or in a special project of the company. EA is funded by the company, and it is usually part of a person's organizational career (Inkson et al 1997).

When the initiative for international assignment originates from the individual, Inkson et al. (1997) refer to it as Overseas Experience (OE). They see OE as a personal development project, which may include diffused goals, even just seeing the world. OE may be funded by the individual, and the assignment is seen as part of a person's global or boundaryless career. Inkson et al. (1997, 358) see OE as "recreational and social rather than career-oriented". The characteristics which are linked to OE are "cultural experience, geographical mobility, curiosity, motivation for personal learning and weak company attachment" (Ibid., 358). Inkson et al. (1997) also suggest that OE is built on inter-company transfers and EA on intra-company transfers.

Suutari and Brewster (2000, 417) introduce the term "self-initiated foreign work experience" (SFE), which they prefer to use in the European context instead of OE, because international assignments are possible without "crossing seas" as is the case in the USA. From this point onwards, I will use the term SFE when I refer to OE and conventional or traditional expatriate experience when I refer to EA. Suutari and Brewster (2000) conducted a research on 400 Finnish

people working outside Finland. From this sample, 67% were conventional expatriates and 33% SFEs. Suutari and Brewster (2000, 434) were able to define six subgroups among the SFEs: young opportunists, job seekers, officials, localized professionals, international professionals and dual career couples. This finding challenges the perhaps too oversimplified description of OE by Inkson et al. (1997) and develops further the concept of expatriate experience. The studies of Inkson et al. and Suutari and Brewster are the only few studies which broaden the expatriate experience from its traditional form.

### **1.3.1 Current challenges of expatriation to HRM**

Brewster and Scullion (1997, 33) claim that the current research on expatriation is built and developed from the perspective of the traditional expatriate cycle, which includes recruitment, selection, training, relocation and adjustment, benefits and pay, performance and repatriation. The nature of expatriation has undergone significant changes: (1) The external context of expatriation has changed and become borderless, politically and culturally complex as presented in the previous chapters. (2) Corporate structures and traditional hierarchical careers inside the organization are changing (Inkson et al., 1997; Larsen & Funck 2000). (3) The host locations have undergone changes (Brewster & Scullion 1997, 36). The pattern of traditional expatriation has been transfer from developed countries to underdeveloped countries. This pattern has changed to include an increasing number of transfers to a variety of directions. Thus a growth in expatriation has led to more heterogeneous patterns. (4) Expatriation seems to be growing more in various types of new international commercial and non-commercial organizations in comparison with multinational companies (Brewster & Scullion 1997, 36). (5) The above changes in expatriation have impact on expatriates themselves. Expatriate assignments have changed from organizational career plans to personal decisions and individual career plans (Brewster & Scullion, 1997; Larsen & Funck, 2000, Inkson et al., 1997).

Changes in the nature of expatriation have an impact on management in general, and specifically on HRM. The current approaches of HRD are inadequate to face the heterogeneity of international assignments and expatriate management in multinationals and in the variety of other organizations. There is a need to enhance the meaning and practices of HRM in order to understand and to manage conventional and unconventional expatriation in changing external and organizational contexts. As the research on the expatriation in the non-profit sector and on SFEs is very scarce, the applicability of the traditional research on expatriation and HRM to non-profit organizations may raise some problems. There are differences and similarities between non-profit organizations and the private sector (Brewster & Lee, 2006, 146). As the research on the HRM in the non-profit sector and on the SFEs is almost nonexistent, the following review is based on the traditional view on the expatriate. This research attempts to extend the traditional definition of expatriate and enhance understanding of the wide range of international assignments.

### 1.3.2 Cross-cultural issues in expatriation

#### Cultural distance

A great part of previous research on the influence of culture in international HRM has focused on understanding similarities and differences across cultures. Various dimensions in which cultures are different or similar have been found to explain cross-cultural communication and adaptation. Studies have shown general patterns of behavior which are consistent in some cultures and which emphasize some features of interactions with people. Many scholars have presented their own lists of cultural dimensions. These dimensions have been studied mostly in survey-type quantitative studies and have been used to explain and describe difficulties of communication between people from different cultures.

Hofstede (1984) carried out the most comprehensive study in the field of cultural distances and dimensions. He and other researches (Mendenhall, Punnett & Ricks 1995) claim that the bigger the cultural distance between the expatriate's home culture and the culture of the host society, the more difficult the adaptation. Concerns have been expressed regarding the survey instruments and the validity of his study (Ward, Bochner, Furnham 2001). The concern arises from the fact that Hofstede's results are based on employees within one big multinational company. The critics claim that it is possible that a certain type of an organization or industry attracts certain individuals with similar value systems, suitable to the organizational culture and the specific type of industry. One source of criticism arises from the fact that national, geographically framed cultures have transformed enormously since Hofstede's study (Holden 2002).

Hofstede (1991) defines the dimension of culture as an aspect of culture that can be measured relative to other cultures. He based the definition of cultural dimensions on a survey of American sociologist Alex Inkeles and psychologist Daniel Levinson (1954, in Hofstede 1991). Hofstede based his dimensions of culture on the General Theory of Action by Parsons and Shils (1951, 77). According to their definition, a pattern variable is a dichotomy, where the actor has to choose one side before determining the meaning of the situation so that the actor can act with respect to the situation. They claimed that pattern variables enter the action frame of reference on different levels: on cultural, personality and social system levels. Hofstede clarified Parson's and Shil's pattern variables and constructed his own model on them. Hofstede later conducted a large survey regarding the values of people in over 50 countries working for IBM. On the basis of his data, he formed a four-dimensional model and later identified a fifth dimension to this model. Hofstede's (Hofstede 1991) five dimensions of culture include: individualism- collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity -femininity and long-term orientation – short-term orientation.

Adler (1991), Trompenaars (1994) and Mary O'Hara Deveraux et al. (1994) broaden the approach on cultural similarities and differences by taking into

consideration the criticism and concerns regarding Hofstede's study. They base their dimensions on the anthropological explanation of cultural similarities and differences by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961). They explain cultural similarities and differences in terms of five basic problems that all societies face: relationship to nature, time orientation, basic human nature, activity orientation and human relationship. Different societies adopt different solutions and ways of coping with these problems. These ways of coping represent the central tendency in a society, although individuals may deviate from the general preference. According to Trompenaars (1994), every organization in every country faces dilemmas, which arise from the above-mentioned dimensions. These dilemmas can be seen in relationships with people, in relations between people and the natural environment and in relation to time. Trompenaars (1994) viewed culture as a way in which groups of people solve problems. He goes even further claiming that culture is the manner in which the dilemmas are reconciled. The success of an organization is measured by the extent of the reconciliation. The important guideline for my own research from Trompenaars' study is his conclusion (1994 Ibid.) that the reconciliation in international and transnational operations only comes after difficulties, mistakes and confusion. It requires humility, a sense of humor and readiness to enter into the unknown. The starting point is that there are no universal answers but there are universal questions or dilemmas. To say it in Trompenaars' own words "*World culture is a myriad of different ways of creating the integrity without which life and business cannot be conducted*" (Ibid., 177)

### **Cross-cultural adaptation**

The earliest research on cross-cultural adaptation arose from studies on migration and mental health. In the beginning, the research was clinically oriented. This type of research was later questioned for its data collection and assumptions and consequently broader theoretical perspectives such as stress, coping and adaptation, emerged. As the number of foreign exchange programs increased in international education, student adjustment became an important field of study. Studies on students were clinically oriented and highlighted the problems arising from intercultural contact. Culture shock was seen as a medical problem and difficulties and failures in adaptation as an inability to cope or a weakness in personality, requiring therapy or counseling (Ward, Bochner & Furnham 2001). In this research, culture shock itself has no negative or positive connotations. Although many people experience culture shock during their international career, culture shock is not however a prerequisite for successful cross-cultural adaptation (Harris & Moran 1979). The entire concept of culture shock has been questioned in research and a broader approach for cultural transitions has been suggested to replace it. In this study culture shock will be analyzed only as a possible but not necessary stage in cross-cultural adaptation. Its theoretical foundations will be discussed in chapter three under cross-cultural adaptation.

Different approaches emerged in the 1980's, and they link cross-cultural adaptation to intercultural learning and psychological models of stress and coping. Since they are of more significance to my study, they will be discussed in more detail in chapter three. Recent approaches on adaptation are linked to social identification and communication theories. They provide a more comprehensive framework. This study will emphasize on adaptation as a comprehensive process consisting of intercultural transformation and intercultural learning.

Coping with cross-cultural anxiety and disturbance as well as questions on adaptation are vital in the light of expatriate failure rates and expatriate performance. However, it seems that cultural distances are diminishing and subsequently it is difficult to apply previous theories emphasizing cultural differences and similarities to modern transitions. New directions in expatriate research attempt to combine cross-cultural adjustment with career perspective (Peltonen 1995; Peltonen 1998; Derr & Laurent 1989).

#### **1.4 Research process and the structure of the study**

My interest and involvement in this area of study has been long standing. Since I started the research, my approach has broadened, and the research questions have been clarified and focused many times. The research area has remained the same: the complex international career and expatriate experience. My understanding of the phenomenon has grown, and I have developed new perspectives for the academic approach. I have been an observant and cross-cultural actor since 1979. My journey from following the initial clues all the way to solving the riddle in a systematic way has been an enriching process. The setting of international assignments and cross-cultural interactions has been troubling my mind, inspiring and raising new questions. It started with personal experience and observation, which lead to a search for conceptual understanding, empirical research, interpretation and conclusions. Time has brought new dimensions and enriched this study. The chronological research process is shown in the next figure:

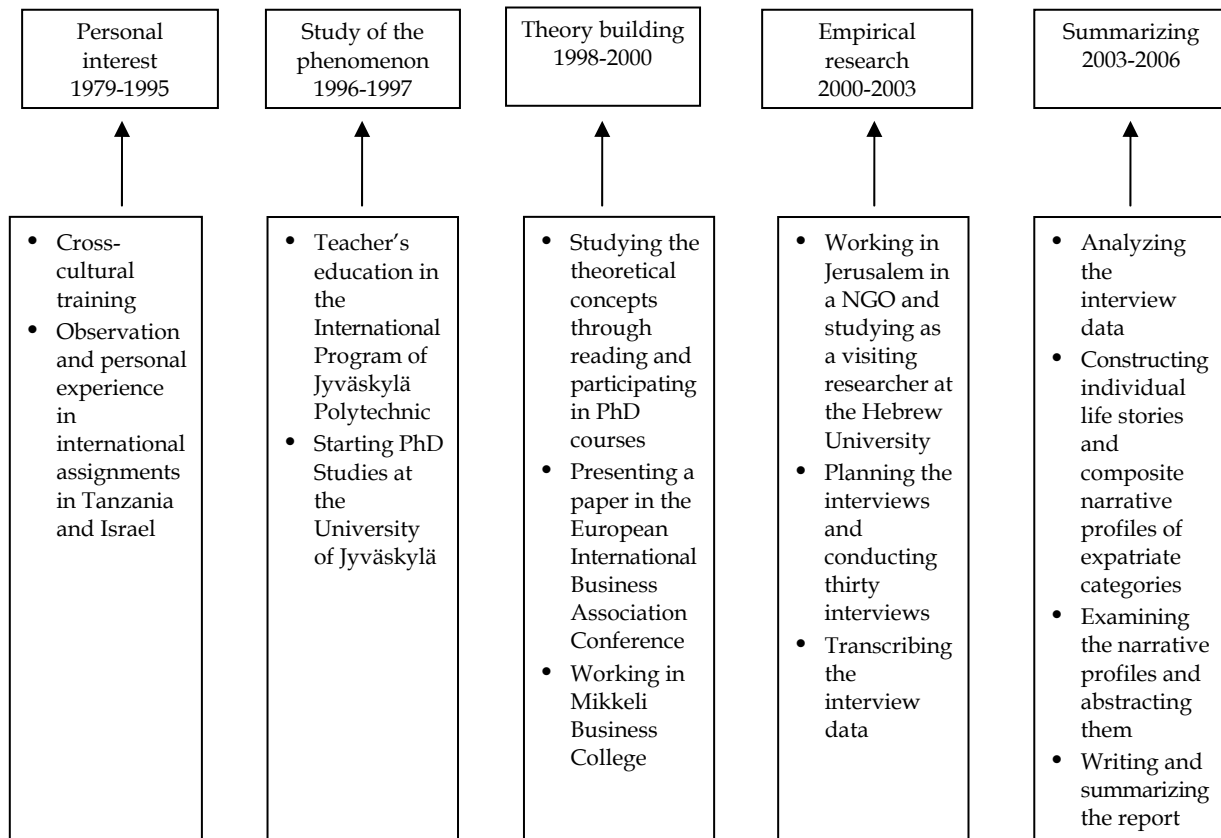


FIGURE 1 The research process

This study process has been a long standing commitment as shown in the figure above. I became familiar with the phenomenon of expatriate work through my own experience. The systematic study of the phenomenon has taken about ten years. It began as part of my international teacher's education and continued at the University of Jyväskylä and later at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. In the start-up phase my interest was focused on learning and mentoring during an international assignment, and I presented a paper on the subject at the European Business Academy (EIBA) Conference in Jerusalem in 1998. My focus started to be directed towards expatriate experience and cross-cultural adaptation. My stay in Jerusalem during 2000-2003 strengthened the theoretical understanding a great deal due to excellent library facilities at the Hebrew University. During that time, I also planned and conducted the interviews for the research. All of them had been transcribed when we moved back to Finland in 2003.

During 2003-2006 I took part in two Ph.D. courses: one on international career and HRM and the second on qualitative methodology. In the beginning of 2005, I coded my interview data by using the MAXqda program. The process of coding was at that phase more an experimental approach rather than a final decision of proceeding with the analysis of the data. The question that arose was whether coding itself would fragment the data, and thus diminish the value of the units of analysis, which was the individual interview data of each interviewee. At that stage, I did not have an answer to that question, and, thus, I

left the coded data aside for more than one year. During the first months of 2005, I had an intensive period of reading and reflecting between the transcribed interview data and current literature. At that time I read about the possibilities of narrativity as a method of analysis for qualitative research. At the same time I had come to understand that narrative ontology would be the link that combined the wide theoretical concepts around the phenomenon of international assignments and expatriate career. I spent a great amount of time in order to gain a thorough understanding about how narrativity could be applied as a method of analysis in my study.

The main phase of my research was during the spring and summer of 2006. It was a time of hard and intensive work, struggle and joy of accomplishment, new findings and inventions. The narrative approach established a turning point in completing this research. It also enabled me to apply the previously coded interview data in an appropriate way. This phase included writing the main chapters of analysis and interpretations as well as reflections of the findings of this research with previous studies and theories.

The research report consists of eight chapters. The first chapter introduces the topic and examines its relevance in international HRM. It also describes the overall research process as well as the contents and structure of the report. The second chapter presents the purpose of the study and the research questions. It introduces narrativity as an ontological research approach. The third chapter introduces the main theoretical concepts of the study. It also constructs an integrated research frame to help conduct the empirical research in a systematic yet open way. Chapter four describes the research context of Israeli and Palestinian societies. Chapter five introduces the data collection and analysis. It discusses the criteria and the conditions of the data collection and the guidelines of the analysis. In addition, it describes the analysis process in general and narrativity as a method of analysis in more detail. Chapter six presents the life stories of the interviewees. Chapter seven continues the analysis and interpretation of the interview data. It introduces the rules for categorization and the categories of expatriate profiles in the Middle East as findings of this research. Narrative profiles of each category are presented and analyzed in relation to the subjective experiences of the interviewees and compared to current theoretical understanding. Finally, chapter eight discusses the conclusions of the study. It considers the implications of the study and evaluates the trustworthiness of the research. Suggestions for further research are also presented and discussed.

## **2 RESEARCH TASK**

### **2.1 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to increase and expand understanding on experiences of cross-cultural transitions and intercultural interactions of expatriates during their international career. To achieve this I will present a profound theoretical and empirical analysis. The theoretical background of the phenomenon rests on current concepts of culture, cross-cultural adaptation, identity transformation and learning. Kim (1984; 2001) introduces a comprehensive theoretical approach by including cultural context, learning and identity transformation in her model of cross-cultural adaptation. This study aims to extend Kim's model by narrative approach. The empirical analysis of the study is established through the study of individual experiences of thirty expatriates from different nationalities and cultural background in the Israeli-Palestinian context.

Professional and personal development and the question of identity are the central aspects associated with an international career. Often organizational training programs do not match the personal learning process of the employees. Problems in personal cross-cultural adaptation can become an obstacle for effective work performance and lead to premature return and extra costs. This research aims to offer a more holistic way of approaching the questions of identity transformation, learning and cross-cultural adaptation during international assignment. Kauppinen (1994) and Hendry (1994) point out that the contexts of work and personal life interweave in international assignments. This is why work and personal life are not separated in the research. In addition to career transition, the study is related to human resource development and individual learning. The narrative stories of expatriate experiences will enhance theoretical and practical approaches in the field of international HRM.

The individual international actors of the research work and live in Israeli-Palestinian cultural context. This small area in the Middle East has a long history of being a scene to international operations (media, politics, peace-keeping, academic research, business, humanitarian aid and development etc.).



People from different cultural, ethnic and professional backgrounds can be found in a geographically small area. The Israeli and Palestinian societies themselves are international and multicultural. People from diverse backgrounds are constantly moving in and out. The families may be spread out all over the world. It is like a microcosm of global cultural transformation and offers an ideal setting to explore the phenomenon of cross-cultural adaptation in the current understanding of transnational cultures. In the hectic speed of life in Israeli-Palestinian context the questions concerning space and time as well as questions of uncertainty versus security become an everyday reality. Traditional cross-cultural research, in general, has paid little attention to the transforming cultural contexts and has rather focused on specific geographical or ethnic entities of culture. The political crisis in the Middle East provides a setting to explore the individual experiences towards uncertainty, which Bauman (2001) claims to be one of the striking characteristics of our era.

The research task in this study is to explore the personal work and life-related experiences of expatriates working in the Middle Eastern area of Israel-Palestine. By this the study aims to increase and deepen the understanding of experiences of cross-cultural transitions and intercultural interactions of expatriates in non-profit organizations. International experience is approached from the perspectives of cross-cultural adaptation, identity transformation and learning. Based on the research task the specified research questions can be formulated as

1. *How do expatriates in the Middle East narrate their work and life?*
2. *How can cross-cultural expatriate experience be understood from the perspectives of cross-cultural adaptation, identity transformation and learning?*

I will begin my investigation by providing an overall historical review of the research and discussing the theoretical concepts involved. My aim is to extend the current models of cross-cultural adaptation and to evaluate them. I will present a synthesis of the theoretical background to support my empirical research. The empirical research was conducted during 2001-2002, and it provided me with almost six hundred pages of transcribed data. I continue by constructing life stories of the expatriates during their international careers. I will do this by the help of narrative analysis. The stories will be more comprehensive than pure career or identity stories because of the complexity of the international career and the difficulty of separating professional and personal issues or work and non-work issues (Kauppinen 1994; Neovius 1997). The life stories are based on the interview data and are constructed by using exact data segments from the interview situations. They provide a comparable narration of expatriate experiences.

Further analysis will proceed by the classification of the life stories into different categories. Then a composite narrative profile of each category will be constructed and the processes of cross-cultural adaptation, identity transformation and learning will be analyzed through different narrative

profiles. Finally, I will discuss the findings of this study in relation to current theories.

The data of the study is constructed and presented in three different forms. Therefore, it is important to define these three forms: *"life story"*, *"narrative abstract"* and *"narrative profile"*, which will be used in the presentation. The concept *"life story"* in this research is based on a schematic structure evaluating the personal narratives of the interviewees. The life stories are constructed with the help of a frame presented by Vilkkio (1992) and established on a story structure first developed by Labov and Waletzky (1967). Each life story is based strictly on the interview data. Therefore, it can be seen as being constructed by the interviewee herself/himself. The schematic structure facilitates the evaluation of thirty narratives giving them a comparable structure. The principles for constructing the life stories will be presented in detail in chapter 6.1. *"Narrative abstracts"* are compact stories, which I have constructed. They are based on the interview data and my personal observations from the interview. These abstracts are built in relation to the main conceptual aspects in the integrated research frame: cultural context, adaptation, learning, and identity transformation. The narrative abstracts are presented in the appendix number 3, and they provide a brief description of each interviewee and will help in the classification of the life stories. A *"narrative profile"* is a composite story, which represents a category of classified stories. The classification of the life stories is established on the internal and external life-management of the interviewees. It will be presented as a fictional personal story of one person although it is a synthesis of all the stories in the category and represents the entire category. Chapter seven explores different experiences of cross-cultural adaptation, learning and identity transformation in the frame of narrative profiles.

## 2.2 Narrativity as a research approach

This study is built on abductive philosophical reasoning. Peirce divides scientific reasoning into three main factors: speculative grammar, critical logic and speculative rhetoric (Peirce 1931-1958, 96-97; Grönfors 1985). These define the frame and lead the decision-making process and conclusions in the research. Abductive reasoning is connected to discovery (Kyrö 2003). I take the liberty of connecting it with the process of unriddling, presented by Alasuutari (1995). Abductive reasoning gives the researcher a clue, which helps to discover how to proceed next. It is even possible to follow various clues during the research process. My initial clue, which has been driving my search, has been, that there is some connection between learning and cross-cultural adaptation. In the beginning, I was not sure of the nature of the learning. The second clue was that some kind of personal development or change is connected with an effective and successful international career. This clue was strengthened during the years, in which I was personally involved with the phenomenon of

international assignments. These clues meant that I did not begin my research from scratch. Rather, I had some pre-understanding and clues about the topic. During my own international career, even before beginning any systematic research, I had also become familiar with some of the literature on this matter. Therefore, even the theoretical concepts were not completely new to me and were, thus, consciously or unconsciously affecting my research steps. Abduction allows continuous interplay between a theory and the empirical data. It even allows me to reject my initial clues and discover new ones. The first clue of a connection between learning and cross-cultural adaptation strengthened along the way and became an important perspective to my research. The second clue of personal development changed to describe identity transformation in my study. The theoretical concepts that I found relevant for this research were culture, cross-cultural adaptation, identity and learning. These concepts guided me in building a loose integrated frame, which helped to hold the entire study together. I made use of this frame in order to make sure that all the possible areas, which could influence the adaptation process, were covered. Thus I arranged my interview plan under broad themes, which were based on the theory frame. This frame was kept broad in order to increase the credibility of the research so that my own constructions of the phenomenon would not form a limitation in the actual interviews (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002).

The interplay between the theories and my personal position of being one of these international actors or expatriates while conducting my interviews with other international actors helped me proceed and define the focus of my study. It also made it easy to get in contact with the interviewees. There were times when I felt lost in all the theoretical concepts around the phenomenon. Each one seemed to be a topic for research in itself. When simultaneously the political environment in the Middle East became chaotic with exceeding violence, there were times that I was about to give up and found the challenges of the research too overwhelming for me. However, step-by-step I found new ways to solve the problems and to make the required decisions.

The ontological and the epistemological approaches of this study are based on constructivism. It is in accordance with my understanding of the theoretical concepts and my way of collecting and analyzing the research data. The approach used in this study is the constructivist approach. Constructivism has many applications in different fields. Piaget and Vygotsky (Piaget 1985; Vygotsky (1997) developed the constructivist theory in education by expressing that learning is a constructive process. Piaget (1985) emphasizes the learning process from the individual learner's point of view. Vygotsky (1997) on the other hand emphasizes the dialectical process and the interaction between the learner and the environment. Constructivism has different trends: individual constructivism, social constructivism, radical constructivism, cultural constructivism and critical constructivism. Nevertheless, there are certain basic ideas that are common in all theories. Knowing or knowledge is created by interaction with the environment (Piaget 1985; Vygotsky 1997; Gergen 1991;

Berger & Luckman 1966). The environment includes the intimate social environment as well as the broader, sometimes more tacit cultural environment.

From the ontological point of view, constructivism represents a holistic approach of understanding the world and a human being. Individuals are seen as part of their organic, social and symbolic systems. Bruner (1986, 127) argues that learning is a communal activity, which includes sharing and constant remaking of culture. People are active and self-guided individuals, who organize their new experiences through their personal and emotional schemas or meaning-making processes (Rauste von Wright 1998). New experiences and knowledge are mirrored through personal goals into a person's future or lifepath. An individual is goal-oriented. When applied to learning, this means that new learning is possible only through the active process of the learner. Learning is situational and goal-oriented, it is based on the existing schemas and meaning systems of the person (Tynjälä, Heikkinen & Huttunen 2005). The constructivist view on knowing and reality is adaptive, active and pluralistic (Goodman 1978; Guba & Lincoln 1989; Schwandt 1994). For the radical constructivist, knowledge and reality cannot be objective and have no absolute value. The researcher or the inquirer interprets and constructs a reality. The findings and conclusions are the researcher's own constructions based on his/her experiences and on various interactions with the environment. A joint construction with other participants, e.g. respondents, can be reached through the dialectics of analyzing and criticizing the constructions. These constructions are examined and modified according to new experiences. This leads to narrative construction of reality. Bruner (1991) claims narratives to be versions of reality that operate as instruments of the mind in the construction of reality.

The constructivist approach in this study means that the interviewees organize their experience and knowledge through their own meaning systems by interaction with the Israeli-Palestinian context and the intimate expatriate community. Furthermore, it includes an assumption that the interviewees are active and adapting to the surrounding world. The reality, which they express and construct, is subjective, and in this study, I, as a researcher, take part in the construction. Chapter three will discuss the constructivist approach in relation to the theoretical background of the study.

Dealing with the life stories of expatriates in the Middle East leads to a more exact definition of the approach of this study: narrativity. According to Ricoeur (in Wood 1991) and Bruner (1991), social reality is the construction of a human being. Ricoeur says that narratives mediate our relation to the world. Bruner speaks about narrative accrual or the process of joint narrative accrual, by which the stories are put together (Bruner 1991, 18). This level of narrativity is linked to the worldview. Narratives also mediate between people. They are the core of communication and interaction between human beings. Human beings act intentionally in a certain setting, thus the narratives are diachronic and intentional and form a basis for interpretation (Bruner 1991, 6-7). A personal narrative of a human being is related to questions of individual identity. This will be discussed more in chapter three. The narrative approach

offers a metatheoretical framework (Lämsä & Ekonen 2005) for this research. It is related to the constructivist approach in many fundamental decisions that are made along the research process. Heikkinen (2002) refers to narrativity “as a process of knowing and as the nature of knowledge” (Heikkinen, 16). According to Heikkinen, narrativity, in this regard, is associated with the constructivist theoretical and cultural perspectives. Bruner (1987, 11-13) says that constructivism is world making and narratives are life making. According to Heikkinen (2002, 15), narrativity does not refer solely to the research material or research method. It does not refer either to the pragmatic or practical application only, but it can rather be seen as a “loose frame of reference” for producing and transmitting reality. Narrativity is also related to a means of analysis in qualitative research (Ibid.). The methodological choice will be discussed further in chapter five. Accordingly, narrativity offers me a metatheoretical frame of reference for this research. It is associated or rooted in the constructivist research approach. Inside this frame of reference, narrativity will be also used as a method of analysis.

### 3 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The phenomenon of intercultural transitions is still not completely understood. In recent years it has been studied extensively from different aspects. The central issues in the studies have been culture, cross-cultural adaptation and learning or training. Questions of identity and self-narrative have also become an important aspect in relation to intercultural transitions. This chapter gives a brief review of the current conceptual research in the area. To achieve a more holistic view a synthesis of the theoretical background is introduced in section 3.5.

#### 3.1 Definitions of culture

##### 3.1.1 Traditional views on culture

Kluckhohn (1962) collected and analyzed several hundred definitions and statements about culture by anthropologists and others. He formulated his concept of culture as follows: *"Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other hand, as conditioning influences upon further action "* (1962, 73).

Hall (1969) defines culture from an anthropologist's point of view. The central themes of his approach are social and personal space and man's perception of it. Hall sees cultural systems deeply rooted in biology and physiology. Hall sees man as an organism, which has elaborated his/her extensions to such a degree that they replace their nature. In the cultural dimension both man and his/her environment are molding each other. According to Hall people can act and interact only through the medium of culture. Hall emphasizes man's sense of space as a complex system achieved by

the synthesis of many sensory inputs. This can be seen in literature, language, houses, offices, cities, and technology as well as in social relationships.

The traditional definitions of culture emphasize the anthropological, biological and some psychological features of a given culture. The common factor is that culture is a way of life that is followed by the majority of a group of people and that it tends to persist over generations. It contains values that are expressed through language, skills, rules, norms, attitudes, fears, hopes, beliefs as well as physical things like buildings, towns etc (Segall, Dasen, Berry & Poortinga 1990).

### 3.1.2 Socio-psychological views on culture

Hofstede (1991) offers a detailed definition of culture. He continues from Hall's standpoint. Hofstede claims that every person carries patterns of thinking, feeling and potential acting. These patterns are learned throughout a person's lifetime. He calls these patterns *"mental programs"* or *"software of mind"*. Hofstede defines culture as *the collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another* (1991, 5). Hofstede states that culture has to be distinguished from human nature and from an individual personality. He claims that culture is not inherited but learned and derives from the social environment. People who live within the same social environment share the same culture.

Adler (1991) builds her definition of culture on Kluckhohn's definition and determines it in modern words: According to Adler culture is:

- *Something that is shared by all or almost all members of some social group*
- *Something that the older members of the group try to pass on to the younger members*
- *Something (as in the case of morals, laws and customs) that shapes behavior, or structures one's perception of the world* (1991, 15)

Culture influences human behavior through reflection on values and attitudes. Values and attitudes make a certain form of behavior appropriate in given situations (Adler 1991).

Trompenaars (1994, 6) is more pragmatic and says that *"Culture is the way in which a group of people solves problems"*. He divides culture into three layers: the Outer Layer, the Middle Layer and the Core. The Outer Layer is the reality that can be observed in language, food, houses, monuments, agriculture, markets, fashion etc. This reality is a symbol of deeper levels of culture. The Middle Layer consists of norms and values of an individual group. Norms express the mutual understanding of what is right and wrong. They can develop formally as written laws or informally as a social control. Values determine what is good and bad and are related to the ideals of the group. When there is tension between the values and norms of the group, e.g. in the case of great political and ideological changes in the society, it can lead to the

disintegration of the group and will affect the culture. The Core of the culture is the assumptions of existence. Trompenaars claims that changes in culture take place because people realize that certain ways of doing things do not work anymore. Furthermore, groups of people organize themselves in a way that they can increase the effectiveness of their problem-solving processes.

Triandis (1994) establishes his approach on culture on the definition of culture given by Herskovits (1955, 305) "*culture is the human-made part of the environment*". Triandis (1994, 22) suggests that most of the definitions of culture are limited, and it is optimal to adopt one or more of them depending on the aims as well as the methodological approach of the study. He summarizes his definition as follows: "*Culture is a set of human-made objective and subjective elements that in the past have increased the probability of survival and resulted in satisfactions for the participants in an ecological niche, and thus became shared among those who could communicate with each other because they had a common language and they lived in the same time and place.*"

### 3.1.3 Current views on culture

In the era of globalization cultural connections reach throughout the world. A post-modern approach to culture is discussed. Traditional approaches to culture as a "*shared way of life*", being bound to certain place and time seem not to be able to describe the culturally complex situation in the world (Holden, 2002, 34-35). The global arena of culture has become a world where space and time horizons have collapsed (Robin and Hennessy 1991). Two aspects of culture have become significant: the mobility of people and the mobility of meanings and meaningful forms through the media (Hannerz, 1996). Hannerz claims that people, meanings and meaningful forms that travel fit badly with what have been conventional units of social and cultural thought (Ibid., 20). He continues to explain how cultures have been almost mirror images to societies or nation-states. Even languages have usually been bound to cultural or national boundaries. He argues that the idea of cultures (in the plural) is complex and problematic. At the same time the idea of culture (in the singular) may become more important in the global world (Ibid.). Giddens (1990, 16) continues by examining the same phenomena in modern societies. For him, the dynamism of modernity derives from (1) the separation of time and space and their recombination, (2) disembedding mechanisms of social systems by creating symbolic tokens and establishing expert systems and (3) reflexivity of social life by examining and reforming the social practices.

Culture can also be seen as "*the information and identities available from the global cultural supermarket*" (Matthews, 2000, 5). It is claimed that culture has become more a matter of choice, naturally conditioned by age, class, gender, national culture and by the social world that we live in. Past and present are displayed together as a historical blurred bricolage (Barker, 2000, 154). Our modern era with its rapidly changing economic, social and cultural patterns brings a set of cultural practices and a "*postmodern structure of feeling*", which has the following core: a sense of the fragmentary, ambiguous and uncertain nature



of living, an awareness of the centrality of contingency, a recognition of cultural difference and an acceleration in the pace of living (Ibid.) The global world is becoming smaller, and it is claimed that cultural differences are diminishing. At the same time there are tensions towards stronger national or local cultures, which help people to create meaning and togetherness.

Globalization creates tension between sameness and difference, between homogenization and heterogenization and tension between local and global cultures. Two opposite approaches to culture are associated with these tensions: The first one sees culture to be territorial or linked to a particular society or group. The second sees culture as a translocal learning process (Ashcroft, 2001). Clifford (1997) writes critically about globalization and its effects on people and cultures. He suggests that hybrid adaptation is a sign of constructive cultural evolution. He speaks about traveling cultures. He uses the term translation in global comparisons, also connected to culture. Rushdie (1991) also uses the term translation. This refers to people who have been obliged to leave their home countries forever. These people have strong links to their original cultures and places, but they have to find their way of coping with the new culture. They belong to cultures of hybridity and have lost the "cultural purity". According to Rushdie and Clifford, the word translation means "*bearing across*" (Rushdie 1991; Clifford 1997). Rushdie claims that these people belong to two worlds at once and are called "*translated men*". They must learn new things related to the new culture and translate and negotiate between them. The outcome is cultural hybridity, and its counterforce is tradition. Clifford (1997, 30) explains the importance of translation by saying: "*you learn a lot about peoples, cultures, and histories different from your own, enough to begin to know what you are missing.*" Banerjee and Linstead (2001) deny one global and uniform mass culture rather speaking about transnational processes, which affect the globalization of culture with a multitude of cultural flows.

### 3.1.4 The view on culture applied in this study

Ferdman and Horenczyk (2000) see culture as dynamic and in a continuous state of transformation. The elements of culture are transforming and take on new functions, meanings and expressions during intra- and inter- group contacts. It remains to be seen whether transformation leads to more uniform, homogenized and universalistic constructions of culture or to more fragmented, traditional and locally based constructions. Globalization has weakened the importance of a nation-state and strengthened global interdependence (Wallerstein 1974; Hall 1992). On the other hand, tradition and origins linked with ethnicity have been awoken or invented anew. This oscillation affects the construction and deconstruction of cultures as well as identities.

Hannerz (1996) speaks about a one-world culture and at the same time about survival of cultural diversity. He claims that all structures of meaning are becoming interrelated, and it will be more and more difficult to define local roots. All people have a shared interest in the survival of the cultural diversity (Hannerz 1996, 111). According to Hannerz, the approach to survival may be

different for cosmopolitans and locals. Bauman (1999) supports this idea by stating that traditional concepts of cultural analysis will not be enough in the cultural stance of motility, non-rootedness and diffusion of cultural patterns, where time-span and speed have accelerated.

I assume that cultures are transforming and geographical borders of ethnic groups do not bind cultural influence. The cultural contexts of Israeli and Palestinian societies will be introduced in chapter four. The significance of national or ethnic cultures will be presented as related to by the interviewees.

### 3.2 Cross-cultural adaptation during international assignment

Anthropologists and sociologists have extensively studied cross-cultural adaptation. The same concepts are often used with slightly different meanings. Therefore, it is important to present the concepts associated with the adaptation process. This study approaches adaptation on an individual, or on a micro-level. Micro-level research includes studies of immigrants or refugees living more or less permanently in a new culture and students and expatriates living temporarily in a new culture. In long-term adaptation, a concept of *acculturation* is generally used. Acculturation has been usually defined as “*the change or process of individuals whose primary learning has been in one culture and who take over traits from another culture*” (Marden & Meyer, G. 1962, 35). Marden and Meyer use the term acculturation as an alternative mode of adaptation. They apply it to both individuals and groups. On a group level, acculturation is defined as a culture change that results from continuous contact between two different culture groups.

On the individual level, changes that may occur in acculturation may be physical, biological, political, and economical as well as cultural, sociological and psychological. Researchers have defined different acculturation strategies, through which an individual relates to the dominant society. Four main strategies are presented: assimilation, separation, integration and marginalization. The meaning of assimilation is that an acculturating individual does not wish to maintain his/her own culture and identity anymore but wants to identify with the dominant culture. In contrast, when the individual wishes to avoid contacts with others and to stick to his original culture, he uses the separation strategy. In the integration strategy the individual's interest is to maintain his original culture by interaction with others and being an integral part of the larger social network. Marginalization strategy is seen where there is little interest or possibility in neither cultural maintenance nor relations with others (Berry, Poortinga, Segall & Dasen 1992; Berry & Kim 1987).

Berry defines adaptation as a more generic term referring to both the acculturation process and the outcome of the acculturation. He identifies three different strategies of adaptation: adjustment, reaction and withdrawal. In the case of adjustment, the individual changes are on a course of reducing conflict.

In the case of reaction, the changes are on a course of retaliating against the environment. And finally, in the case of withdrawal, the changes are on a course of reducing the pressures from the environment. Usually the adjustment strategy is the only realistic strategy for the individual. In cross-cultural literature the concepts of “adaptation and adjustment” are used many times with similar meanings, although adaptation is a broader concept and process. When emphasizing the area of intercultural encounters, the term is more precisely defined as cross-cultural adaptation. Cross-cultural adaptation refers to adjustment, which takes place when in contact with a new culture. Various scholars have developed and applied different models of cross-cultural adaptation. The models represent slightly different emphasis on learning, stress-coping and personal development and identity transformation during the adaptation.

### **3.2.1 Black et al. model on cross-cultural adaptation and its applications**

Black, Mendenhall and Oddou present a comprehensive theoretical framework for international adaptation, referred to as the BMO model in this research (1991). They see adjustment as a multifaceted combination of work, interaction with host nationals and adjustment to the general environment. The BMO framework is presented in the following chapters as a combination of their own articles and the work of Kauppinen (1994). Black et al. define adjustment into anticipatory adjustment and in-country adjustment. They claim that when anticipatory adjustments are made, the actual in-country adjustment is easier. Anticipatory adjustment is dealt with by individual and organizational points of view. Organizational influence on the anticipatory adjustment comes mainly from the selection of its employees as well as their training. The individual point of view of anticipatory adjustment refers to previous international experience and pre-departure cross-cultural training. They emphasize that three situational factors are important in choosing the appropriate training methods. These include culture novelty, degree of interaction between the host culture and job novelty. The content of training is determined as a direct function of the three dimensions and is rather mechanistic.

The factors connected to in-country adjustment are divided into different categories: individual, job, organizational and non-work. Black, Mendenhall and Oddou present three categories of individual factors. The first category is skills related to self-efficacy or self-orientation. Self-orientation is understood as an ability to believe in oneself and to deal effectively within the foreign surroundings. It is related to stress reduction and technical competence. The second category consists of skills related to interacting with host nationals. This category is composed of different skills for relationship development and willingness to communicate. The third category is related to cognitive skills that help the individual to create a correct perception of the host environment and its social systems as well as to select, organize and evaluate the environment and turn this to meaningful experiences for him (Black, Mendenhall, Oddou 1991; Kauppinen 1994).

The job related in-country factors include role clarity, role discretion, role novelty and role conflict. Role clarity refers to certainty about what the expatriate is supposed to do in his/her job. This reduces the amount of uncertainty in work situations. Role discretion refers to the individual's opportunities or autonomy in defining goals, means and influencing various components of a role. The discussion in the BMO framework presents negative and positive aspects of this factor. Role novelty is likely to increase the uncertainty in the job when the demands of the job are not familiar to the individual from his former job roles. Role conflict occurs when there are contradictory or conflicting expectations for the role of the individual. Role conflict has proved in making the work adjustment process more difficult (Black, Mendenhall, Oddou 1991; Kauppinen 1994).

The organizational factors related to in-country adjustment are organization culture novelty, social support and logistical help from the organization. As role novelty, organizational culture novelty also tends to increase the uncertainty associated with the work environment and the organization. The host culture has an influence on the organizational culture even if the organization itself might be familiar to the individual. In the BMO framework the source for organizational social support refers to the support of people working in the host organization. Logistical help refers to support from the organization regarding housing, schooling and other practical things that help the individual to settle down in the new environment (Black, Mendenhall, Oddou 1991; Kauppinen 1994).

The non-work factors in the BMO are culture novelty and family-spouse adjustment. Culture novelty refers to the cultural distance between the home and host cultures of the individual. Many empirical studies suggest a negative relationship between the cultural distance and general adjustment of the newcomer. Family -spouse adjustment is also given importance in the BMO framework (Black, Mendenhall, Oddou 1991).

Kauppinen (1994) revised the original BMO model in her study on the adjustment of Finnish expatriates in the USA. An important factor, which was not part of the BMO and came out from Kauppinen's study, is the individual factor of motivation. Her study shows that motivation seems to affect adjustment as an anticipatory as well as an in-country factor. In the BMO framework social support was mentioned as an organizational factor meaning the support from the co-workers and supervisors from the host company. However, from the findings of Kauppinen concerning the Finnish expatriate managers in the USA, they mentioned the support from the home organization as important. The BMO framework emphasized selection mechanism and criteria as an organizational anticipatory factor. Instead of this factor Kauppinen suggested issues relating to foreign assignment contracts to be the main organizational anticipatory factor for the adjustment of the employee. Another non-work factor, which was omitted from the BMO framework but was pointed out in the study of Kauppinen was the importance of non-work social relationships. The expatriates regarded social relationships with other

expatriates from their home countries or other countries in addition to relationships with host nationals and work contacts important for their general adjustment. Kauppinen also raises the importance of housing as a specified, important non-work factor although in the BMO framework it was included in the logistical help as an organizational factor. Other factors contributing to the expatriate adjustment, added by Kauppinen include two organizational factors: a perceived need in the host company for the expatriate and preparations for repatriation (Black, Mendenhall, Oddou 1991; Kauppinen 1994).

Kauppinen (1994) suggests revision of the factors of relation skills, family-spouse adjustment and pre-departure training. Kauppinen emphasizes the importance of language, which was mentioned as the most important relation skill by her interviewees. In Kauppinen's study the family-spouse adjustment factor was mentioned as a factor facilitating the expatriate's adjustment. This was seen in the BMO framework as connected with adjustment difficulties. Kauppinen perceives pre-departure training to emphasize self-initiated training. Kauppinen (1994) also revised the BMO approach to adjustment as a multifaceted concept. She claims that interviewees did not explicitly separate their adjustment experiences into three precise categories or facets. Kauppinen (1994) questions two factors from the original BMO: (1) role conflict related to the job and (2) culture novelty as being adjustment connected. Only one of her participants mentioned them. According to Kauppinen, culture novelty was not mentioned, because the participants were Finnish expatriates in the USA. The cultural distance between the two countries was not as big as it would have been in some Asian or African countries.

Aycan (in Ward et al. 2001, 181) presents a more recent and comprehensive model of cross-cultural adaptation. He distinguishes three forms of adjustment: psychological, sociocultural and work adjustment. In most studies only two types of adjustment are specified; psychological and sociocultural. Work adjustment is usually included in these two types. Psychological adjustment includes maintaining mental and physical well-being. Sociocultural adjustment means that a sojourner becomes effective in the new host environment, is able to handle non-work problems and maintain interpersonal relationships with members of the host society. Work adjustment includes competent work performance, commitment to organizational and work goals and the ability to reach the goals. Compared to the BMO framework and the modified BMO framework by Kauppinen, Aycan's model includes the same elements, only grouped in a different way.

### **3.2.2 Developmental process models on cross-cultural adaptation**

Anderson (1994) clarifies the distinction between the terms "adjustment and adaptation" as follows: Adjustment refers to the reduction or satisfaction of short-term drives and adaptation refers to long-term individual or racial survival. She claims that there is no single outcome or endpoint of the adaptation process. For Anderson, the cross-cultural adaptation is a dynamic process that can be either positive or negative, and it is a continuum. The

identity building and rebuilding that is involved in adaptation is also unceasing. In an unfamiliar culture the individual's sense of self and self-esteem as well as the individual identity can be shaken, and for this reason, adaptation is essentially viewed also as a process of rebuilding personal identity.

Bennet (1998) and Bennett & Bennett (2004) present a developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. It is based on cognitive psychology and radical constructivism (Bennet 1998, 26). According to the model, the personal experience of difference in cross-cultural transitions develops from ethnocentric stages to ethnorelative stages. The three stages of ethnocentrism in the model are defined as denial, defense and minimization. In the ethnocentric stages a person approaches the unfamiliar culture from the point of view and according to the standards of his own culture. In the ethno relative stages a person feels comfortable and is able to adapt to different cross-cultural settings. The adaptation is linked to intercultural sensitivity and reconciliation of personal cultural frames that may be conflicting in cross-cultural transitions. Bennett & Bennett claim that in the stage of integration during the adaptation, the developmental emphasis will be on the cultural identity (Bennett 2004, 157).

Kim (1984) has searched for an integrative model of cross-cultural adaptation. Kim (2001) emphasizes the significance of intercultural communication and broadens the approach to cross-cultural adaptation. Kim (2001, 32) defines communication *"to include all activities of message exchange between an individual and the environment"*. Kim claims that neither cross-cultural communication patterns and comparisons nor cross-cultural differences in psychological constructs are enough to describe what happens in an intercultural encounter. Cross-cultural study has generally followed the analytic-reductionist-quantitative approach, which, according to Kim fails to understand the complex and transactional nature of this phenomenon. Kim's suggestion for a definition is *"cross cultural adaptation is a dynamic process by which individuals, upon relocating to new, unfamiliar, or changed cultural environments, establish (or re-establish) and maintain relatively stable, reciprocal and functional relationships with those environments"* (2001, 31). This study builds upon the foundation of Kim's approach to increase understanding of expatriate experience and adaptation. This is the reason why Kim's model is presented in more detail.

Kim's model has many advantages. It is based on an open-system approach, which places the individual and the environment into one frame. Kim moves from previous linear cause-effect variables to a broad-based theoretical framework. In addition, she brings together many existing conceptions and factors operating simultaneously and interactively in the process of cross-cultural adaptation of an individual in a new cultural environment. Kim's open and dynamic model offers a good way to look for answers for my second research question, how can cross-cultural expatriate experience be understood from the perspectives of cross-cultural adaptation, identity transformation and learning. Kim's model is presented and examined in detail in the following chapter.

### 3.2.3 Kim's open-system model

Kim's model is based on the approach of seeing a person as a dynamic and self-reflexive system that observes itself and renews itself as it continuously interacts with the environment. This person is referred to in Kim's model as a stranger. According to the open-system approach Kim presents her basic assumptions as follows:

1. Humans have an innate self-organizing drive and a capacity to adapt to environmental changes.
2. Adaptation of an individual to a given cultural environment occurs in and through communication.
3. Adaptation is a complex and dynamic process that brings about a qualitative transformation of the individual. (Kim 2001, 35-38)

Kim's theoretical model has three boundary conditions:

1. The strangers have had a primary socialization in one culture (or subculture) and have moved into a different and unfamiliar culture.
2. The strangers are at least minimally dependent on the host environment for meeting their personal and social needs.
3. The strangers are at least minimally engaged in firsthand communication experiences with that environment. (Kim 2001, 34)

The above boundary conditions restrict applying Kim's model to children who have been born when their parents have moved to a new cultural environment or young children accompanying their parents who have not had primary socialization in their own culture. Likewise, the model cannot be applied to host culture natives interacting with people from different cultures because their primary socialization has taken place in the same culture, although some adaptation takes place in the interaction with strangers.

Kim presents the operating principles of her model in the form of 10 axioms. These axioms demonstrate how the cross-cultural adaptation process takes place. These axioms are:

1. Cross-cultural adaptation involves both acculturation and deculturation, an eventual possible outcome of which is assimilation.
2. Underlying the cross-cultural adaptation process is the stress-adaptation-growth dynamic.
3. The stress-adaptation-growth dynamic brings about an intercultural transformation in the stranger.
4. As the stranger undergoes intercultural transformation, the severity of fluctuation in his or her stress-adaptation-growth dynamic subsides.
5. Intercultural transformation is manifested in increased functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural identity.
6. Intercultural transformation facilitates, and is facilitated by, host communication competence.

7. Intercultural transformation facilitates and is facilitated by participation in the host social (interpersonal and mass) communication activities. Interpersonal communication is referred as IC and mass communication as MC in figure number two, which integrates the different elements in Kim's model.
8. Extensive and prolonged participation in ethnic social (interpersonal and mass) communication activities deters, and is deterred by, intercultural transformation.
9. Environmental conditions (host receptivity, host conformity pressure and ethnic group strength) influence, and are influenced by, the stranger's intercultural transformation.
10. The strangers predispositional conditions (preparedness for change, ethnic proximity and adaptive personality) influence, and are influenced by, his or her intercultural transformation. (Kim 2001, 90)

The concepts, acculturation and assimilation, were already defined in previous chapters. The concept deculturation means that during the adaptation process of a stranger to a new cultural environment unlearning of some elements of the old and familiar culture occurs while new learning proceeds. The above-mentioned 10 axioms describe how the different dimensions in Kim's structural model operate. Kim also defined theorems to serve as statements, which specify the positive or negative connection of different constructs. I will not go into detail about these statements because it is not my intention to test Kim's model in detail but to give an overview of the current theoretical understanding of the concept cross-cultural adaptation.

Compared to former models, Kim offers a more dynamic and holistic approach to cross-cultural adaptation. According to Kim (2001), cross-cultural adaptation contributes to intercultural transformation. Unlike the BMO framework and the conceptual model of Ayman, Kim does not distinguish between different types or forms of adjustment. Psychological, sociocultural and work adjustment takes place within communication and identity transformation processes. In comparison with the BMO and Ayman's model, Kim's model offers a more dynamic approach to adaptation. The former are more skill-oriented and mechanistic. In addition, Kim's model is based on a more comprehensive relation with the host environment. In the BMO and Ayman's model, learning is referred to in the stage of anticipatory adjustment (BMO) or pre-departure period (Ayman). Kim's model includes a holistic approach of learning as individual transformation, which takes place through different communication processes inside the host environment and through interaction with its different actors. Individual transformation is the core of the learning process. The elements of Kim's model are presented in the following figure:



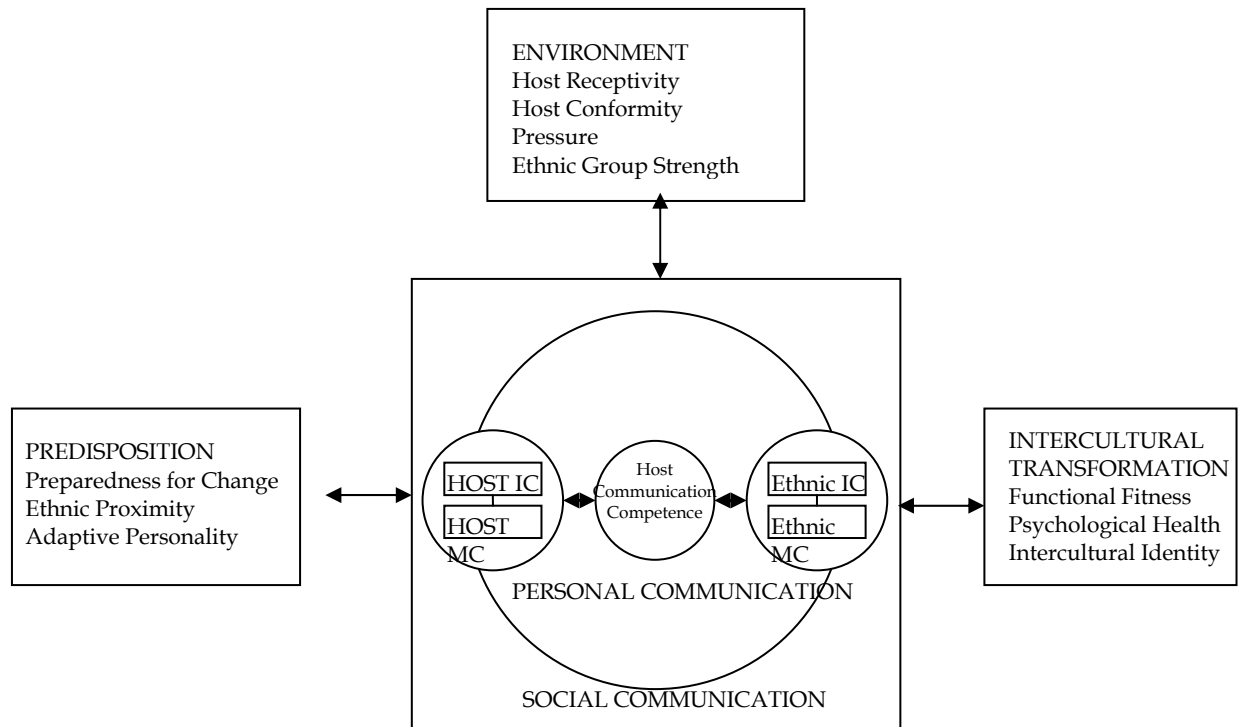


FIGURE 2 Kim's model of cross-cultural adaptation (Kim 2001, 87)

The basis of Kim's model is an individual with his or her predispositional factors constituting his/her adaptation potential. Kim distinguishes three main predispositional factors: preparedness for change, ethnic proximity and adaptive personality.

The greater the preparedness of the sojourner, the more realistic expectations he has towards the new environment and living and working there. According to Kim, this is facilitated by formal education and by cross-cultural training. The sojourner's prior cross-cultural experiences also associate positively with preparedness. The adaptation potential of the sojourner is further influenced by the characteristics of the transition itself. Voluntary and planned transitions increase the preparedness while abrupt and involuntary transitions decrease it.

The second predispositional factor in Kim's model is ethnic proximity. This describes the similarities or differences of the sojourner's ethnicity based characteristics in relation to those of the host society. Ethnic proximity as an explaining factor in the adaptation process is confirmed by Hofstede's study on cultural differences and similarities (1984).

The third predispositional factor is adaptive personality. Kim identifies three facets in adaptive personality: openness, strength and positivity. Openness pushes the sojourner to self-examination and influences his/her willingness for transformation and change. Kim's facet of strength refers to the strength of personality, which enables the sojourner to face intercultural and transitional challenges. Openness and strength are related to the third facet of adaptive personality: positivity. Positivity affects the inward being of the

sojourner by building his/her self-esteem. It also facilitates the sojourner's social process (Kim 2001, 165-181).

Kim assumes that cross-cultural adaptation contributes to intercultural transformation. Intercultural transformation is not a stable result of a process, but in itself an ongoing process. Kim describes it using three specific facets: increased functional fitness, increased psychological health and emergence of intercultural identity. Kim links the facet of functional fitness to high host communication competence. A functionally fit person has developed a broadened perception of the host society's cultural and communicational patterns. He/she is able to carry out smoothly and successfully his/her everyday work and life activities and feels comfortable in the host society. The facet of psychological health is linked to functional fitness. A psychologically healthy state of the sojourner means that a dynamic fit exists between the inner and the outer realities of the sojourner. A person with a healthy personality perceives the world and himself/herself correctly. Kim relates psychological health to host communication competence. The third facet of intercultural transformation is emergence of intercultural identity. In Kim's model this means development of individualization and universalization of identity. Individualization involves a clear sense of selfhood and self-esteem, defined both by the sojourner and others. Universalization involves development of a synergistic mental outlook, appreciation of universal human values and tolerance to individual differences. (Kim 2001, 183-199)

### **3.2.4 Relevance of culture shock in cross-cultural adaptation**

The issue of culture shock as part of the cross-cultural adaptation process has been widely discussed. It is worth further investigating its relevance to adaptation. Cross-cultural adaptation has usually been visualized by a U-curve (Lysgaard 1955). This shape has been later revised and presented also by W- and J- curves (Adler 1975, Brislin 1981). The curves present different phases or stages in the adjustment process. Anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists have used the term "Culture shock" to describe the unpleasant or negative experiences in intercultural encounters. The anthropologist Oberg (1958) was the first to use the term. According to Oberg culture shock includes at least the following elements: (1) strain due to efforts of psychological adaptations, (2) a sense of loss and feelings of deprivation, (3) being rejected by members of the new culture and rejecting members of the new culture, (4) confusion in roles, values, expectations and identity, (5) surprise and anxiety because of cultural differences and (6) feelings of impotence due to not being able to cope with the new environment.

Oberg linked culture shock to the distress and the emotional reactions experienced by the sojourner as a result of losing the familiar signs and symbols of social interaction and misunderstanding or misinterpreting new experiences. Oberg describes four stages in culture shock. These include: the honeymoon stage, crisis, recovery and adjustment. In the honeymoon stage the newcomer has superficial relationships with the host culture, and he/she is fascinated and

enthusiastic about everything. The second stage of the crisis brings along differences in language, values, concepts, and loss of familiar symbols. In this stage, the newcomer feels frustrated, angry and anxious. The third stage of recovery starts when the person begins to know the language and the culture and feel more confident in the new culture. The fourth stage of adjustment has occurred when the sojourner begins to work and enjoy the new culture although occasional moments of anxiety and stress may be felt.

Oberg's four phases are identical to Smalley's four phases of culture shock. Smalley (in Adler, 1975) only names them differently. According to Smalley the phases are: fascination, hostility, improvement and biculturalism. These four stages are generally linked to the U-curve model for adjustment. Lysgaard (1955) was the first one to use the term U-curve to describe a curvilinear relationship between adjustment and the time sequence of the sojourn. In addition to the U-curve, also a W-curve is presented, which is an extension of the U-curve that takes into account the time when the sojourner returns to his home country (in Adler 1975; Brislin 1981). A shape of J is also represented in the literature presenting realistic anticipatory expectations at the beginning without any honeymoon stage. Hofstede presents his interpretation of a U-curve and analyzes the adaptation process on the basis of the cultural dimensions between the sending and the receiving cultures.

Hofstede names the honeymoon stage as Euphoria, the stage of crisis as culture shock, recovery as acculturation and adjustment as a stable stage. Furnham and Bochner (1982) summarize three broad categories that determine the extent and duration of culture shock. They are cultural differences, individual differences and sojourn experience. The last one refers to the introduction and treatment of the sojourner by the host culture. According to Furnham and Bochner (1982), culture shock occurs within specific social encounters or social transactions between sojourners and members of the host culture. The reason for difficulties or stress in these situations is largely due to sojourners lacking the required social skills. On the basis of his empirical research mainly on sojourning overseas students, Furnham and Bochner (1982) suggest culture learning and cross-cultural training programs to facilitate the experience of culture shock.

Adler (1975, 14-15) suggests a broader approach to culture shock. He describes culture shock as a transitional experience. His approach has four underlying basic assumptions:

- (1) Individuals tend to live in partially separate realities linked to spheres of their activities. At the same time there is a tendency towards integration. When faced with new cultural situations with psychological and social tensions, individuals are obliged to redefine their positions and existence.
- (2) All individuals experience the world through their own culturally influenced values, assumptions and beliefs.

- (3) Individuals are usually relatively unaware of their own values, beliefs and assumptions, but transitional experiences tend to bring cultural predispositions into perception.
- (4) New dimensions of perception and new environments of experience tend to produce forms of personality disintegration.

Adler claims that transitional experience is a process; a movement from a state of low self- and cultural awareness to a state of high self- and cultural awareness. This process very often includes processes of frustration, growth and learning. According to Adler, transitional experience is a journey into the self. He defines five phases in this process: (1) contact, (2) disintegration, (3) reintegration, (4) autonomy and (5) independence. (Ibid., 16-19). Compared to Oberg's four stages of culture shock, Adler divides Oberg's phase of crisis into two parts. The first phase of contact is marked by enthusiasm and excitement of the new experience, which is similar to Oberg's honeymoon stage. Disintegration is marked by confusion and disorientation and feelings of being isolated, different and distressed. The reintegration phase is characterized by rejection and generalization of the second culture. The individual is usually hostile and defensive to new experiences. In the stage of autonomy, the individual is not as defensive anymore, and this stage is marked by the growth of personal flexibility and development of coping skills for the second culture. In the final stage of independence, the individual is capable of accepting the cultural similarities and differences. S/he is capable of having his/her preconceptions, assumptions, values and attitudes challenged. The individual is capable of exercising choice and responsibility and is able to create new meaning for situations. This stage is not the culmination or the final end of the process but according to Adler, a state of dynamic tension, bringing about personal and identity growth through experiential learning. It will help the individual undergo further transitions in life (Ibid., 16-19).

Adler argues that the linear U- and W- curves reflect adjustment through time. He claims changes in identity to be more important. He also denies the statement that subsequent phases automatically need the proceeding ones due to individual differences in cultural encounters. Among others, Torbjörn (1982) and Neovius (1997) also support Adler's criticism of the U-curve. The U- and the W-curves are often criticized for not taking into account the fact that not all sojourners face a new culture positively and optimistically in the beginning of their stay. They can be much more realistic with their anticipatory expectations. There are also many people who have much international experience and may overcome the transfer from one culture to another without any culture shock. Culture shock as a term also holds a negative undertone. Many researchers have suggested that it is more useful to see the positive side of culture shock and cross-cultural adaptation and define it as a process of learning and growth towards a more intercultural identity, just as Adler presents above.

Ward and colleagues (1998) go even further and suggest that the U-curve model should be rejected and other conceptual perspectives, such as stress and

coping theories and culture learning approaches should be further investigated. They bring up two shortcomings of the empirical research on the U-curve. First they claim the majority of the studies in this area are not longitudinal but rather cross-sectional. However, when investigating changes in sojourn adjustment over time, the longitudinal approach would be more appropriate. Secondly, they claim that there is conceptual confusion over the definition and measurement of sojourner adjustment. Lysgaard and Oberg raised the psycho-emotional aspects of adaptation; other researchers have investigated cognitive and behavioral aspects of adaptation. Along the studies, two types of adjustment are identified in cross-cultural adaptation. The first one is psychological adjustment and the second one sociocultural adjustment. Ward et al. (1998) claim that difficulties in both psychological and sociocultural adaptation are greatest upon entry to a new culture, which is the opposite of Oberg's honeymoon fascination. They conducted a research on Japanese students in New Zealand. The participants completed four questionnaires, the first within 24 hours of arriving in New Zealand, the second 4 months after arrival, the third 6 months after arrival and the final 12 months after the initial arrival. They claim that difficulties in both psychological and sociocultural adaptation are the greatest upon the entry. They found no evidence that psychological adaptation was better in the beginning of the sojourn period. On the contrary, the sojourners commenced their stay in a new culture in a state of some kind of distress. On the basis of their study and other studies criticizing the U-curve, they suggest that the U-curve has been on trial for almost 40 years and should now be rejected in spite of its popularity (Ward et. al. 1998).

Ward, Bochner and Furnham introduce a new ABC-model of culture shock (Ward et al. 2001). The ABC- model of culture shock distinguishes three components: Affect, Behavior and Cognitions. The affect component resembles Oberg's original definition of culture shock marked by confusion, anxiety and disorientation. The negative emotions are linked to stress and coping in unfamiliar cultural encounters. The behavioral component of culture shock is related to culture learning. It emphasizes the importance of learning social skills and learning about historical, philosophical and sociopolitical foundations of the host society. The third, the cognitive component of culture shock is related to interpersonal beliefs and perception of self and others, capability for shared meanings. This model represents culture shock as an active process of dealing with change and not just as a passive reaction. The next table summarizes four traditional definitions of the phases of adjustment and culture shock:

TABLE 1 The different phases of adjustment and culture shock

Phases	Oberg	Smalley	Hofstede	Adler
I	Honeymoon stage	Fascination	Euphoria	Contact
II	Crisis	Hostility	Crisis (as culture shock)	a) Disintegration b) Reintegration
III	Recovery	Improvement	Recovery	Autonomy
IV	Adjustment	Biculturalism	Adjustment	Independence

### 3.2.5 Criticism on cross-cultural adaptation

Many researchers have criticized the use of the concepts of “adjustment or adaptation” claiming them to be chauvinist and a form of “cultural oppression” (Kauppinen 1994; Collier 1998; Furnham & Bochner 1986). Furnham and Bochner claim that “adjusting” a person to a new culture oversimplifies the relationships between culturally different people. They argue that it is too simple to think that by embracing the values and customs of the host society and abandoning his/her own, a person is able to overcome the difficulties and troubles that may occur in the new culture. Postmodern and postcolonial critiques of a broad range of culture research call for more open ontological and epistemological assumptions. The categorization of cultural differences is also considered oversimplified requiring further consideration. There is also a need to represent the heterogeneity and within-group differences of ethnic groups. It is recognized that identity groups are socially constructed in a historical and ideological context, and the group members use different forms of empowerment (Bennett & Bennett 2004, 157).

### 3.3 The question of identity in cross-cultural transitions

Kim (2001) suggests that the cross-cultural adaptation process results in intercultural transformation. She suggests that functional fitness, psychological health and intercultural identity are the key elements of intercultural transformation. Adler (1975) also claims that transitional experience causes changes in identity. Peltonen (1998) and Kohonen (2004; 2005) suggest that expatriate experience and cross-cultural transitions initiate a change and rearrangement of selfhood. Bennett (2004) refers to it as identity development.

The concept of identity is complex, and it has been defined in many ways. Very often the concepts of self, self-identity, personal identity, subjectivity or self-concept are used in literature to discuss the concept of identity (Liebkind 1988). The dictionary definition of *identity* is: “who you are” or “all the qualities, beliefs, and ideas which make you feel that you are different from everyone else or that you belong to a particular group” (Sinclair, 1987 Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary). Modern or postmodern approaches to culture have created a challenge to develop different approaches to identity. Since identity transformation is one of the core perspectives of this study, I will introduce some of the current approaches to identity. Finally, narrative approach of identity, which will be applied in this study, is presented.

Hall (1992, 1999) distinguishes between three different views on identity: The Enlightenment subject, the sociological subject and the post-modern subject. The Enlightenment subject understands a person to have an inner core since the subject was born. This core would remain essentially the same, and it was a person’s identity. This identity is seen as stable and unified. The sociological

subject is developed as a reflection to the complexity of the modern world and was elaborated by the symbolic interactionists like G. H. Mead (1934). It emphasizes interaction between self and society. The inner core is formed and projected between the personal and the public worlds. The identity becomes fragmented, and the subject can possess several identities. Identity is formed and transformed continuously in representations of different cultural systems and times.

Tajfel (1982) introduces the concept of social identity. His social-identity theory suggests that the social part of the identity of a person derives from the groups, which he or she belongs to. By comparing attributes of his/her own group with those of out-groups, a person develops a positive sense of who he or she is and a way to act towards in-group and out-group members (Tajfel 1978). Social identification leads to social cohesion, not only towards in-group members but to interpersonal relations as well (Turner 1982). Social-identity typically refers to the boundary around the group and the social categories between “we” and “them” (Ferdman & Horenczyk 2000; Smith & Bond 1998, Jenkins 1996).

Juhasz (1983) discusses the relations of human identity, personal identity and social identity. He claims human and individual identities to be more enduring than the shifting and dynamic social identity. The human identity refers to the enduring human nature that defines the ancestral inheritance of a person. It is the total of capacities and fundamental dimensions of human nature. Juhasz claims human identity to be elementary in the ability of a person to orientate himself in his basic humanity at any place or time. According to Juhasz a personal identity is a life process. It develops from the range of possibilities of human existence. It is a personal interpretation of universal and historical styles of being human. It is a dynamic source of change and growth. Social identity is anchored in the human and personal identities of a person. The approach of Juhasz draws close to the postmodern approach of identity. Juhasz writes, “Life can be seen as the systematic exploration of possibilities of human and social identity away from the unique set of “home places” that each person has”. Personal identity becomes a personal style for a person to carry out his/her opportunities and obligations.

The discussion between self and identity has been going on since Aristotle (Harre 1998). Harre presents some basic distinctions about individuality - uniqueness and individuality - singularity (Harre, 6-14). Harre refutes the Cartesian dualism and defines his “standard model” of a Person with the following: Person {Self1, Self2, Self3}. Self 1 is the sense of self as a singularity with a position of space and time. This includes the singular embodiment of a person and singularity point of view as the self. Self 2 means the totality of personal attributes: physical make-up, patterns of thought and action, repertoires of powers, abilities, skills, liabilities and beliefs about himself/herself. Self 3 is the publicly presented self. Harre (1998) claims that in his/her display of singularity, a person expresses a sense of personal distinctness, a sense of personal continuity and a sense of personal autonomy. Harre’s approach seems to be established on the grounds of Mead (1934), who

challenged the dichotomy of I and society or personal identity and social identity. Mead also sees the relation of self and society as dynamic.

Identity is also approached as a question of both difference and similarity. It can be seen as a set of identity positions and alternative lifestyles (Hetherington 1998). Identity is defined and articulated in relation to others, how we respond to others and how they respond to us (Giles et al. 1999). Hall (1994) discusses the concept of cultural identity. He relates the development of cultural identity to Giddens' (1991) approach to culture. If culture is defined as a shared way of life, bound to a certain place and time, then cultural identity could be defined as a collective "one true self", which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common. This kind of cultural identity would reflect our common historical experiences and cultural codes. Deriving from a contemporary concept of culture as a dynamic process and continual structuration (Giddens 1991), Hall (1994, 394) defines cultural identity as a concept of "*being and becoming*". Cultural identity has its history, but it undergoes constant transformation. It is transformed by a continuous play of history, culture and power. Cultural identity has both a past and a future. It does not proceed in a straight linear line. Continuity and difference go hand in hand.

The terms "positioning" (Carbaugh 1999) or "situated identities" (Weinreich et al. 1986) are discussed in relation to cultural identity. Alternative situated identities can be understood as aspects of one's overall identity, and they differ according to the social context. Cultural identities have both enduring and changing properties. Cultural identities are seen as broad contexts and potential identities are negotiated contextually. Particular cultural identities are enacted and become salient in particular historical, political, economic and social contexts. Furthermore, identities are multiple and overlapping, and there remains a tension between me and us or you and them, when negotiating the identities (Collier 1998). This approach is supported by Hermans' (2001) theory of personal and cultural positioning. Hermans developed the idea of dialogical self. He claims that the dialogical self fluctuates among different positions in accordance with changes in situations and time. Different positions, however, are not considered as isolated from one another. The movement of positions and their mutual relations is dependent on cultural changes. There are internal positions, which are understood as part of oneself and external positions, which are felt as part of the environment. These positions receive their significance from their mutual transactions over time (Hermans 2001).

### **3.3.1 Identity and international career**

It is assumed that increasing cross-cultural interactions lead to cultural changes and even hybridization. This seems to lead to a recombination of existing forms and practices rather than one uniform, global culture. Cultures are transforming and becoming very complex. It is often asked, if a hybrid form of cultural identity should be applied to a cosmopolitan identity, if a person is within contact zones, which are populated by people from different cultural origins



(Hermans 2001). Giddens (1991) sees ontological security and anxiety as being the basic questions for all human life. He raises four existential questions that concern everyone. These questions are the question of existence itself, the relations between the external world and human life, the existence and experience of others and the question of self-identity. He is optimistic and sees that the modern world offers a person as an agent a variety of possibilities to build his self-identity. He suggests self-identity to be something that is created by a person. He defines self-identity as a narrative, which presumes continuity across time and space. It contains a consistent feeling of biographical continuity. Self-identity is not something that is given. A person as an agent interprets it reflexively. A person is responsible for this reflexive project, which forms a trajectory derived from the lifespan of a person in the light of an anticipated future. The process is continuous and implies the control of time and the body as an action system. Action means different choices of being and acting in the world and is called self-actualization. According to Giddens, self-actualization means finding a balance between opportunity and risk as well as being authentic, or true to oneself. In self-actualization a person goes through different series of "passages", or transitions. An individual creates a personal lifestyle by integrating his life experiences with the narrative of his own self-development. The modern concept of lifestyle as presented by Giddens, consists of multiple choices available to the person. These choices are not only decisions about how to act but how to be. Lifestyles are reflexive and based on the mobile concept of self-identity. As a person has many alternative lifestyle options, he involves in life planning, preparing for future actions according to his self-biography. Personal lifeplans are revised and reconstructed as calendars (Ibid.). Kohonen (2005) suggests "embedded identity" to provide a framework for studying international assignments. She understands identity construction as a developmental process, in which the construction of the career is essential.

Bauman (2001) claims that identity has "become a prism through which other aspects of contemporary life are spotted, grasped and examined" (Ibid., 140). He introduces new grounds for the "identity discourse". Bauman argues that the "identity-discourse" is related to the state of human society, which he describes by uncertainty, unpredictability and instability (Ibid., 83-122). Uncertainty penetrates all aspects of human life: personal relationships, professional and cultural identities, presentation or representation of the self among other things. Uncertainty has become permanent and life is sliced into successive, separate episodes. Bauman is quite pessimistic about the consequences of this great transformation and its cultural and ethical consequences. He sees that life-strategies and plans can only last for a short time because everything is ruled by flexibility. Bauman claims that the dependencies of a person are global but his actions are local. As a conclusion, Bauman suggests that in the globalizing world we should stop talking about identities and instead talk about identification, which he sees as "a never-ending, always incomplete, unfinished and open-ended activity in which all, by necessity or by choice, are engaged" (Bauman, 152).

### 3.3.2 Cosmopolitan identity

Cultures and communities seem to become more and more transnational (Hannerz 1990; Cronin 1999). Transnational cultures are in most cases transformations of West European and North American cultures. Their significance is to build and open entry to territorial cultures (Hannerz 1990). Because of transnational cultures more and more people are nowadays involved with more than one culture. Transnational institutions and cultures make it easy for people to shift their bases for longer or shorter periods of time. This is clearly seen in international career paths. Transnational individuals make themselves at home in new cultures. It is claimed that some individuals have more options to enact or to construct their cultural identities (Collier 1998; Hannerz 1990). The concepts of intercultural identity, multicultural identity, cosmopolitan identity, transnational identity and global identity have generated wide interest.

Cosmopolitans (Hannerz 1990) may develop different strategies of coping with a new culture – embracing, negotiating or even surrendering. The cosmopolitan identity includes willingness or orientation to engage with the Other. However, the cosmopolitan himself/herself is the one who decides what and for how long time! It is characterized by openness to diverse cultural experiences, which is turned into competence. Cosmopolitanism can include different variations and levels. Cosmopolitans like to feel free to move, and their self-construals are built on the border zones of different cultures. In general, cosmopolitans have multiple international experiences (Hannerz, 1990). Adaptation to the host country for cosmopolitans can be instrumental. Cosmopolitans seem to develop towards a global identity and experience high satisfaction in their lives both abroad and in the stage of repatriation (Sussman 2002). Cosmopolitans draw strength from being at home in a variety of contexts. They make use of diversity in order to create a distinctive self-identity, which incorporates elements from different settings into an integrated narrative (Giddens 1991).

### 3.3.3 Narrative approach to identity

McAdams (1993) claims that everyone has a need to search for unity and development of an identity through storytelling, making personal myths, expressing himself/herself and his world to others. A person must first know that he/she exists in space and time, as a causal, continuous and independent agent (Ibid., 44). S/he must know that s/he has some control and autonomy in the world. The formation and reformation of identity already begins during the teenage years. It continues as an adult and a person creates an integrative life story through which s/he is able to understand who s/he is and how s/he fits into the world. As his/her view of the world changes and the world itself changes, his story is revised (Ibid., 45). McAdams claims that a person creates a self that is whole and purposefully embedded in a coherent and meaningful story. Revision of self and identity takes place in everyday life. Self has different

facets, and there are tensions in identity commitments. The most important commitments for a person are ideological, occupational and interpersonal commitments. Identity commitments are made to the future and to the past. Healthy identity affirms both change and continuity. Identity is not fully developed in young adulthood. The life span does not develop through a series of repeating cycles, stages, phases or seasons. Some identity commitments are lived out. Self-definition takes place during most of the adult years. McAdams shares the assumption of many modern Western psychologists and sociologists that significant change can also take place during adult life. The personal myth expands; some myths can develop further and become mature and more adaptive than others.

McAdams identifies six developmental trends in life stories. Each of them provides a criterion against which a particular myth at a given point of time can be compared to. A personal myth or the good story in human identity should ideally be developed in the direction of increasing coherence, openness, credibility, differentiation, reconciliation and generative integration (McAdams, 110- 113). Everything should make sense in the story. The story does not need perfect consistency. It must tolerate ambiguity. Openness refers to the ability to grow and change in the story. The stories need to be flexible; otherwise, they become rigid and stagnant. The stories must also show credibility. Identity is not a fantasy and cannot be based on distortions. Identity is a creative work of imagination and at the same time grounded in the real world and accountable to facts. A good story is usually richly differentiated. Through maturity, the personal myth of an adult becomes richer, deeper and more complex. It includes more factors, issues and conflicts. It takes on more experiences, more facets and characterization. As differentiation increases, a good story provides solutions that affirm the harmony and integrity of the self. Reconciliation between different conflicting forces of the story takes place. The human story of identity also has a function of being a productive and contributing member of society. It integrates the storyteller or the mythmaker into a society in a generative way. Personal myths are connected to other people's myths. Mature identity means a creative involvement in a social world. This world is larger and more enduring than the self. The personal myth is oriented to that world. Without this integration there is a danger that the development of identity degenerates into narcissism.

Bruner (1990) supports the approach of Giddens (1991) to identity as a reflexive narrative (lifeplan) and that of McAdams (1993) to define identity as a personal life story or life myth. Bruner (1990) describes the development in psychology during the last decades. He claims that psychology has turned into an exercise in narrative and storytelling. According to Bruner, the meaning of the narrative model of cognitive functioning is looking for connections between events. These storied events are constructed to form a bigger story: a longitudinal version of the Self, which Bruner (Ibid., 119-123) calls an autobiography. The Self is a narrator, who makes an account and justifies it or in Bruner's words " an account of what one thinks one did in what settings in

what ways for what felt reasons" (Ibid., 119). Mancuso and Sarbin (1983) present a narratory principle, where the Self is a storyteller. They describe self-as-storyteller to be a construction that persons develop for use in understanding the creation of self-narratives (Ibid., p. 246). Psychological research has emphasized autobiography and the second tradition in narrative to be based on conversation analysis and ethnomethodology (De Fina 2003).

Polkinghorne (1988) and Czarniawska-Joerges (1994) understand self as narrative in the meaning that a person achieves his/her identity and self-concept by using the narrative configuration. Human beings are social constructors. The key elements of narrative are: coherence, self-respect, efficiency, autonomy and flexibility (Czarniawska-Joerges 1994; Gergen & Gergen 1983). The existence of a person as a whole is to understand a narrative as an unfolding and developing story. Self is not static but "a configuring of personal events into a historical unity which included not only what one has been but also anticipations of what one will be" (Polkinghorne 1988, 150). The plot in a self-narrative is bound to social and cultural settings of a person's life events as well as to the psychological possibilities of his personal history. As Gergen (1983) states "One's present identity is thus not a sudden and mysterious event, but a sensible result of a life story". For Gergen and Polkinghorne, language and social interaction are fundamentals in the construction of a self-narrative. De Fina (2003) and Gergen (1983) refer to social roles as representations and elaborations in reflecting, negotiating and constituting a narrative identity or a life story. There is also criticism against the idea of selves constructing autonomous life-stories. Rose (1989) claims that every individual is expected to construe a life as the outcome of the choices, powers and values of life. All the decisions connected to every aspect of life will provide a message to the individual and to others and should be self-referentially meaningful. Not every individual is capable of making meaningful choices.

The ontological starting point in this study is constructivism, which is in accordance with the above-discussed narrative nature of identity. A person constructs his/her knowledge based on previous knowledge and experiences (Heikkinen 2002). Accordingly, the identity is constructed and revised reflexively. Identity is seen as a whole and not divided e.g. to social or personal identities. I assume that an international career causes changes and transformation of identity. I understand that identities are re-established, and their continuity is secured in their capacity for change (Bauman 1999).

### **3.4 Intercultural learning**

Cross-cultural adaptation has been approached from the perspectives of learning and personal development (Mendenhall & Oddou 1995; Mendenhall et al. 2002; Berry 2004; Bennett & Bennett 2004; Bennett & Castiglioni 2004). The role of learning and training in cross-cultural adaptation has been studied.

Learning seems to have a significant role during the adaptation process. A process model of cross-cultural adaptation refers only shortly to learning, and there is a need for a comprehensive approach to learning integrated into Kim's model for the purpose of my study. What is needed is an approach to learning, which sees learning as a continuous process of dialectics and transactions between a person and his/her environment. There are three current approaches to learning related to cross-cultural adaptation presented by different researchers: social learning theory, experiential learning and transformational learning. I will present them briefly in the next chapters.

### **3.4.1 Social learning**

Black and Mendenhall (1991) connect Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory to different phases of the U-curve. They conducted a study on cross-cultural training effectiveness and developed a model, which integrated cross-cultural training and the social learning theory (Black & Mendenhall 1990). The social learning theory combines behavioral and cognitive theories of learning. Bandura suggests that learning and behavior are based on the consequences of people's actions and observations of other people's behavior and actions imitating the modeled behavior. According to Bandura (1977, 121-122), there are four central elements in social learning: (1) attention (before the behavior can be modeled it has to be noticed), (2) retention (the modeled behavior becomes encoded as a memory by the observer), (3) reproduction (the symbolic representations are translated into actions by checking the modeled behavior in the memory), (4) incentives (incentives and rewards affect which models are observed and which learned behaviors are acted out) and motivational processes (efficacy and outcome expectations influence the modeling process).

Black and Mendenhall describe how cross-cultural training, which is based on the social learning theory, increases the trainees self-confidence and relational skills resulting in the creation of accurate cognitive maps and models of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors in given situations. It, thus, contributes to adjustment and more effective performance. They conclude that people, who have a high level of cognitive flexibility, are those who benefit most from this type of cross-cultural training. However, their approach does not provide an answer if cognitive flexibility should be perceived as a predispositional factor when trying to link it to Kim's model, or just as a characteristic of intercultural identity and thus an outcome of a transformation process.

### **3.4.2 Experiential learning**

Learning during the cross-cultural adaptation process has many elements connected to the experiential learning theory. It was developed by Kolb (1984) and was based on the theoretical approaches of learning by Dewey (1938) and Piaget (1970). Experiential learning sees learning as a continuous process, in which concepts are derived and modified by experience. Kolb defines learning

as “*a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience*” (Kolb, 1993, 155). Learning takes place when the learners involve themselves fully and openly in new experiences. They have to observe and reflect their experiences from many perspectives. The learner must be able to create new concepts based on observations and integrate them into broader theories. Furthermore, the learner must be able to implement new concepts and theories in new situations. The learner moves in the learning cycle or process from observer to actor and from being involved in a specific experience to performing as a general analyzer (Ibid., 148).

A central concept in experiential learning is the concept of transaction. Transaction describes the relationship between the learner and the environment and is a way of integrating both subjective and objective experiences. Experiential learning emphasizes learning as a process. It claims that knowledge is created through the transformation process and that knowledge is continuously created and recreated instead of being perceived as a static entity. Finally, experiential learning transforms both subjective and objective forms of experience. It includes an idea that learning is dialectic and integrates experience, concepts and action. Conflicts and tensions between different dimensions and stages in the learning cycle are also a natural part of learning (Ibid.).

Kolb (1993) speaks about learning as a holistic process of adaptation to the world and not only as an educational concept. Learning also involves thinking, feeling, perceiving and behaving. Kolb claims learning to be the major process of human adaptation. It includes different adaptive activities, which are linked to various situations in life that vary in their degree of extension in time and space. He writes that performance, learning and development form a continuum of adaptive postures to the environment. Performance is limited to short-term adaptations, learning to longer-term mastery of situations and development to lifelong adaptations to one's total life situation (Kolb 1993, 150). Tennant (1993) sees adult development as a dialectical process. Tennant argues that as constant transaction between the learner and the environment, there is a constant dialect between the changing or developing person and the changing or evolving society (Tennant 1993, 133).

The experiential learning theory has been used as a basis for developing cross-cultural orientation programs (Hughes-Wiener 1995). Kolb's cycle is interpreted in the cross-cultural context (Ibid., 382-383). The starting point of concrete experience refers to the fact that learners from different cultural and personal backgrounds have different experiences and attitudes to intercultural learning. Reflective observation refers to the ways of acquiring and perceiving knowledge. The cognitive and perceptual frameworks of different learners influence this phase. Abstract conceptualization refers to the way in which a learner is able to connect the observed information or knowledge to wider theories, select, organize and interpret it satisfactorily. In a cross-cultural context the cognitive frameworks of the learner may prove inappropriate, and focus may be placed on irrelevant information leading to incorrect

interpretations. Active experimentation of what has been learned, which takes place in the social context through behavior may also be difficult in the cross-cultural context in unfamiliar situations, where behavioral patterns differ from what the learner is used to. The outcome of the learning process is to integrate the new experiences and behaviors and to reach a phase where learning is internalized. This brings about a changed base for past experience, observations, conceptualization and active experimentation in behavior. According to Kolb, the experiential learning cycle makes the learners more effective learners. Applied to intercultural learning this may suggest that the learner will be able to activate appropriate culture -relevant frameworks for observation, perception and understanding and behavior.

### 3.4.3 Transformative learning

Transformative learning offers a comprehensive, process-model approach to learning. The concept of transformative learning is based on the theory development and presentation of Mezirov (1991). Mezirov refers to Karl Popper as a forerunner to the transformation theory. Popper writes about knowledge, expectations, critical approach and adaptation (Popper 1999, 57-73). These are concepts that are related to transformative learning. As transformative learning is the approach to learning, which I see to be in accordance with the ontological and epistemological understanding of cross-cultural adaptation and identity transformation applied in this study, I introduce the basic assumptions of transformative learning in detail in this section.

The transformative learning theory has much in common with experiential learning. It is based on experience and interaction. It sees learning as a process like experiential learning. Mezirov (1990, 1) defines learning *"as a process of making new and revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience, which guides subsequent understanding, appreciation and action"*. When Mezirov refers to learning as a process of giving new meaning to experiences, he differentiates two dimensions of meaning: meaning schemes and meaning perspectives. Meaning schemes are the concrete manifestations of our habitual orientations and expectations. They are sets of related and habitual expectations that guide our actions. They are implicit and habitual rules for our interpretation (Mezirov 1990, 2; Mezirov 1991, 44). Meaning perspectives determine our concept of personhood and self image. They refer to the structure of assumptions and principles in the process of interpreting a new experience and linking it to one's past. Meaning perspectives involve criteria for moral and ethical judgment; evaluating right and wrong, good and bad, true and false (Mezirov 1990, 2; Mezirov 1991, 44). Most meaning perspectives are formed through cultural assimilation; others are intentionally or unintentionally learned from our sociocultural contexts.

Both meaning schemes and meaning perspectives influence what we learn. They influence the way we define, understand and act upon our experience. Where they provide a framework to classify our experiences, they also define our expectations or anticipations about our possibilities to act

(Mezirov 1991, 62). Meaning schemes and meaning perspectives also influence what we do not perceive and comprehend. When our meaning schemes are inadequate to explain our new experiences and when the experiences do not fit into our meaning structures, we tend to block out these experiences and thus, avoid anxiety and resort to our psychological defense mechanisms (Mezirov 1990, 4; Mezirov 1991, 63).

In adult learning, it is important to reflect back to prior learning and compare it with the present circumstances. Transformative learning as a change and a revision of meaning structures, takes place in two areas. Mezirov writes that when we focus on task-oriented problem solving and determine cause- and -effect relationships, we are engaged in instrumental learning. We identify relevant options, assess their consequences and variables and reflect on the problem solving process. Mezirov claims that instrumental learning involves the process of learning in order to control and manipulate the environment or other people (Mezirov 1990, 8). The second area of how learning takes place is communicative learning. Communicative learning is learning to understand the meanings that others communicate to us concerning values, ideals, feelings, moral decisions and concepts such as freedom, justice, love, labor, autonomy, commitment and democracy (Mezirov 1990, 8). Through communicative learning a person tries to fit the unfamiliar into his or her meaning perspective (Mezirov 1990, 9).

The transformative theory emphasizes on movement towards reflectivity. In the transformative learning process, the learner enhances his/her level of awareness in the context of his/her beliefs and feelings. It involves critique on the premises and assumptions of the beliefs. It also involves assessment of alternative perspectives and a decision to negotiate between the old and new perspectives and ability to reach a synthesis. An integral dimension in transformative learning is the ability to take action based upon new perspectives and a willingness to apply new perspectives into broader context in one's life (Mezirov 1991, 161). This kind of perspective transformation involves a new sense of self and more critical understanding of how one's social relationships and culture have shaped one's beliefs and feelings. It also contributes to more functional strategies and resources for taking action (Mezirov 1991, 161).

Reflection and critique are essential elements in transformative learning. Mezirov presents the term "critical reflection", which refers to questioning and challenging the validity of presuppositions in learning. It also refers to the justification of defining and posing a problem. Critical reflection leads to transformation of perspectives and includes cognitive, affective and conative dimensions (Mezirov 1990, 12-13). Perspective transformation occurs when meaning schemes and meaning perspectives are transformed. Perspective transformation is *"a process of becoming critically aware of how and why our presuppositions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand and feel about the world"* (Mezirov 1990, 14). It leads to the reformulation of our assumptions in more inclusive, discriminating and integrative ways. It may involve correcting some distorted perspectives and assumptions. Mezirov writes about



epistemic, sociocultural and physic distortions. Epistemic distortions are related to the nature of knowledge. Some examples of epistemic distortions might be linked to our distinctive meaning perspectives about ways of knowing and solving problems. Likewise, we may understand some phenomenon produced by social interaction as beyond human control, or we may interpret the reality abstractly when a concrete interpretation is needed. Sociocultural distortions are linked to granted belief-systems, which are related to prevailing power and social systems. These may involve mistaken self-fulfilling or self-validating beliefs and misunderstanding or misinterpreting the interests of some social groups. Sociocultural distortions may also be related to false ideological assumptions, which legitimate certain institutions, organizations or practices. Physic distortions are linked to presuppositions that prevent us from taking action in situations that generate feelings of anxiety (Mezirov 1990, 14-17).

Mezirov studied the process of personal transformation in a study on women who participated in specialized reentry programs to colleges. From this fieldwork they defined ten phases that were involved in perspective transformation. These phases were later confirmed by other studies. These ten phases of perspective transformation are (Mezirov 1991, 168-169):

1. *A disorienting dilemma*
2. *Self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame*
3. *A critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or physic assumptions*
4. *Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change*
5. *Exploration of options for new roles, relationships and actions*
6. *Planning of a course of action*
7. *Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans*
8. *Provisional trying of new roles*
9. *Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships*
10. *A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective*

The above ten phases are a sequence of learning activities rather than developmental steps. Mezirov prefers to call them "*sequential moments*", when the meanings are clarified (Mezirov 1991, 193). Perspective transformation is a communicative social process. A starting point in transformative learning is the disorienting dilemma. This dilemma is often associated with transitions in one's life. These transitions may occur as a result of health problems, aging, divorce as well as a result of a transfer to a new cultural environment, even a significant discussion or a film may lead to a disorienting dilemma.

Transformative learning and perspective transformation challenge us to reflect our own beliefs, attitudes and emotional reactions, thus transforming our meaning schemes and perspectives. Critical discourse and self-examination lead to a deeper self-understanding, openness and a changed self-concept. Transformation of meaning schemes and meaning perspectives releases energy, reinforces the transformation process and results in new ideas and patterns of

roles and actions. Perspective transformation enables us to be more creative when dealing with change. Even in a new work and cultural environment perspective transformation and learning help the employees to participate more freely in new relationships and discourse as well as to be more effective and more creative. Perspective transformation also makes us re-evaluate and measure our interests and motives according to new transformed perspectives giving place to changed interpretations. Mezirov (1991) claims that reintegration into one's life on the basis of new perspectives may even lead to a new collective consciousness and commitment to political and social action.

The phases of transformative learning can be related to the process of cross-cultural adaptation and phases of transitional experience, which were presented in section 3.2. The next table introduces the combination of the two approaches as interpreted by Mezirov (1991) and Adler (1975):

TABLE 2 Perspective transformation during transitional experience

Mezirov's perspective transformation	Adler's transitional experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interaction and experiences</li> </ul>	<b>Contact</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-examination with feelings of guilt and shame</li> <li>A critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural or physic assumptions</li> </ul>	<b>Disintegration</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognition that one is discontent and that the process of transformation is shared</li> <li>Exploration of options for new roles, relationships and actions</li> </ul>	<b>Reintegration</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning of a course of action</li> <li>Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans</li> <li>Provisional trying of new roles</li> </ul>	<b>Autonomy</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships</li> <li>A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by ones new perspective</li> </ul>	<b>Independence/Adjustment</b>

Cross-cultural transitions provide a frame for new interactions and experiences, which initiate disintegration of many psychological and mental processes of a person. Although not all cultural travelers share a specific experience of culture shock, some kind of disintegration does take place. Adler (1975, 22) claims that international experience is a journey into the self. This is also the case with transformative learning. Both include elements of frustration, discontent and tensions in new intercultural situations. Culturally influenced values, beliefs and assumptions often unconsciously form the lenses for new experiences and may not be satisfactory in the new situations. This may lead to rejection or minimization of the new culture. In the stages of autonomy and independence a person develops new perspectives and builds up his/her self-confidence and identity towards successful adaptation. Both Adler (1975) and Mezirov (1991) suggest the process to be ongoing.

Mezirov's perspective transformation and transformative learning seem to be closely related to Kim's intercultural transformation. Both of them are based

on an open-system approach, in which a person is seen as dynamic and self-reflexive, renewing and changing in interaction with his/her environment. Transformational learning is established on the same fundamental elements as the approach to identity as a story or a narrative. (Bruner, Polkinghorne, McAdams). The next table links Mezirov's main characteristics of transformative learning to Kim's main facets of intercultural transformation.

TABLE 3 Comparison between intercultural transformation and perspective transformation

INTERCULTURAL TRANSFORMATION BY KIM	PERSPECTIVE TRANSFORMATION BY MEZIROV
<b>FUNCTIONAL FITNESS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Broadened perception of the host cultural and social patterns</li> <li>- Person works effectively and is comfortable in life activities in the host society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recognition of a process of change and negotiation</li> <li>- Exploration of new options, planning action, acquisition of required knowledge and skills</li> </ul>
<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Perceives the world and himself correctly</li> <li>- Dynamic fit between inside and outside realities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self-examination and critical reflection</li> <li>- Trying of new roles</li> </ul>
<b>INTERCULTURAL IDENTITY</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A clear sense of selfhood and self-esteem (individualization)</li> <li>- Development of synergistic outlook, appreciation of universal human values and tolerance to individual differences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Building of competence and self confidence</li> <li>- Re-integration of one's life</li> </ul>

Kim's primary contribution to the current discussion on cross-cultural adaptation is to describe it as a process of transformation and change, which takes place in and through communication. This contributes to a grand model that keeps all the different elements and concepts together in the cross-cultural adaptation process. Kim's holistic model has not been empirically tested. The research in this area has been fragmented and focused only on some specific dimensions of the process, not the entire process. Black and Mendenhall (1991) made an effort to combine the social learning theory perspective to cross-cultural adjustment. Their study provided a theoretical framework to examine cross-cultural adaptation and to make hypotheses about situational and individual factors related to adaptation. Further study has not been carried out to confirm this relation. On the other hand, Mezirov's concept and principles of transformative learning and perspective transformation have been empirically tested mainly in studies on limited samples of women, students and therapy groups. There has been an effort to develop proper research methods to study the transformation of meaning schemes and perspectives.

Taylor (1994) relates transformative learning to cross-cultural adaptation. He supports Kim's theory of conceptualizing the process of cross-cultural adaptation leading to intercultural competency. However, he challenges it in the area of learning. Taylor argues that Kim and other researchers have not been able to address, in specific, what kind of learning takes place in the intercultural

transformation process from the viewpoint of theoretical framework of adult learning. Furthermore, Taylor claims that even if and when the concept of learning is used in these studies, it is not explored in-depth. He suggests that transformative learning may be the missing link in the learning process of becoming interculturally competent. Taylor also raises the limitations of Mezirov's theory. The first one is a Western bias and assumption of a universal learning theory. The second limitation is related to the first: the assumption that individuals are free to determine their own realities and goals. The third limitation raised is that research on transformative learning is limited by number, context and limited settings, as expressed above (Taylor 1994, 404–405).

### **3.5 Synthesis of the theoretical background**

To pursue an international career in the global world of ambiguity and uncertainty, acceleration in the pace of living and transformation of traditional cultural settings is becoming more and more challenging. The adaptation process cannot be approached as a mechanism. Kim's model of cross-cultural adaptation (2001) offers a dynamic way of connecting the different aspects in order to explore expatriate experience and adaptation during international careers. It also provides a setting to have a new and critical look on the traditional U-curve pattern and culture shock experience. It combines the individual and the environment in one model and refutes the traditional cause-effect variables. Cross-cultural adaptation takes place through interaction and communication and leads to qualitative transformation of the individual. In transnational communities and cultures the individual capacity for transformation becomes more significant. Kim describes this transformation as an ongoing process with three facets: increased functional fitness, increased psychological health and emergence of intercultural identity.

The individual transformation described by Kim is closely related to the self-narrative or life story discussed in connection with identity (Czarniawska-Joerges 1994; Gergen & Gergen 1983; Polkinghorne 1988 and McAdams 1993). Individuals are the constructors and their personal plots are bound to social and cultural settings of their life events and history. The story of identity is unfolding and developing, as Kim's transformation is an ongoing process. Human beings are seen as social constructors. The key elements of the narrative are: coherence, self-respect, efficiency, autonomy and flexibility (Czarniawska-Joerges 1994; Gergen & Gergen 1983). The existence of a person as a whole is to understand a narrative as an unfolding and developing story. Self is not static but "a configuring of personal events into a historical unity which includes not only what one has been but also anticipations of what one will be" (Polkinghorne 1988, 150). The plot in a self-narrative is bound to social and cultural settings of a person's life events as well as to the psychological possibilities of his/her personal history.

A personal myth or a good story of human identity is ideally developed in the direction of increasing coherence, openness, credibility, differentiation, reconciliation and generative integration (McAdams, 110-113). A coherent story does not need perfect consistency. However, it must tolerate ambiguity and make sense. Openness refers to the ability to grow and change in the story. The stories also need to be flexible; otherwise they become rigid and stagnant. The stories need to show credibility. Identity is not a fantasy and cannot be based on distortions. Identity is a creative work of imagination and at the same time grounded in the social world and accountable to the facts. A good story is usually richly differentiated. Through maturation, the personal myth of an adult becomes richer, deeper and more complex. It includes more factors, issues and conflicts. It takes on more experiences, more facets and characterization. As differentiation increases, a good story provides solutions that affirm the harmony and integrity of the self. Reconciliation between different conflicting forces of the story takes place. The human story of identity also has a function being a productive and contributing member of society. It integrates the storyteller or the mythmaker into a society in a generative way.

Taylor (1994) encourages carrying on future research on intercultural competency based on the framework of the transformative learning theory. He argues that this would offer new perspectives and ideas to facilitate the individual learning process and develop new and more effective training and management arrangements. Salakka (2006, 88-89) also aims for a more holistic approach in his study on re-entry experiences of Finnish missionaries by including the approaches of learning and identity development in his study. To include the cross-cultural adaptation process, the perspectives of identity transformation and transformational learning into one frame offers a new and dynamic way of approaching the narration of expatriate experience in the complexity of the modern cultural settings.

In this research, the synthesis of the theoretical background is established on narrative ontology that binds together the concepts, through which the phenomenon of expatriate experience will be explored. It integrates the theoretical concepts linked to the phenomenon: culture, cross-cultural adaptation, identity and learning. It guides my understanding on how to gain knowledge and collect data. It also affects my methodological choices. Narrative analysis will be the method of analyzing the data in this research. This research is abductive. The integrated theoretical frame helps to keep the wide research area in focus. However, the analysis will be strictly established on the data collected from the interviewees. Coding and analyzing will allow a dialogue between the data and the theories surrounding the phenomenon. The next table presents a short review of the theoretical concepts and how they are understood and applied in this research:

TABLE 4 Summary of the theoretical concepts

Theoretical concept	Meaning in this research
<b>Culture /Cultural context</b>	The dynamic and transforming cultural setting in Israel and Palestine and the cultural background of the interviewees
<b>Cross-cultural adaptation</b>	A holistic and dynamic process, by which an international actor establishes, re-establishes and maintains relationships with the new cultural environment. The individual is seen as self-reflexive and has continuous interaction with the environment.
<b>Identity</b>	Identity or self-narrative is seen as a whole and not divided. A person constructs and revises his or her identity. Identity is changing and transforming.
<b>Learning</b>	Transformative learning may provide a link to unite cross-cultural adaptation and identity transformation. The essential elements of transformative learning are reflection and critique. It is a communicative social process, which challenges a person to reflect his or her own beliefs, attitudes and emotional reactions and re-evaluate his or her interests. It leads to a changed self-concept and deeper self-understanding.

The aim of this research is to explore the interdependence of the above conceptual elements and their influence on international career and on expatriate experience through the life stories of expatriates in the Middle East.

## 4 RESEARCH CONTEXT

The definition by Marschan-Piekkari et al. (2004, 245) of research context includes “the environment of the phenomenon under study and the setting within the research is conducted”. They introduce four interdependent levels of context: (1) the individual context of both the interviewer and the interviewee (2) interview context (3) organizational context and (4) external context.

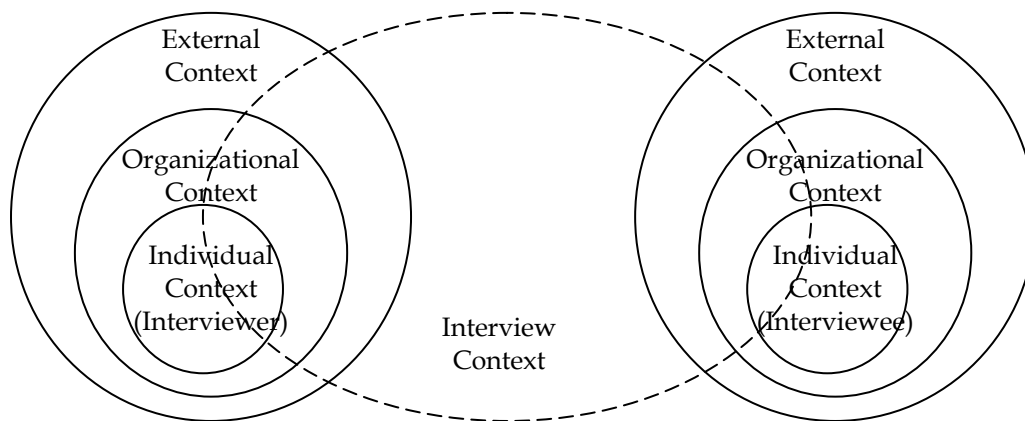


FIGURE 4 Four contextual levels of the research (Marschan-Piekkari et al. 2004, 246)

In this research the Middle East encompasses the cultural, political and economic environment for studying the phenomenon of expatriation and cross-cultural adaptation. This specific external context has certain impacts on the other levels of context. Marschan- Piekkari et al. (2004) claim that the individual contexts of the interviewee and the interviewer (e.g. professional and cultural backgrounds and international experience) influence the dynamics of the interview itself. In addition to situational factors of the interview, e.g. time and

place, the external, organizational and individual contexts influence the interview context. This chapter introduces the external and organizational contexts of the study. The individual context and the interview context of the research will be discussed in chapter five.

The Middle East offers a challenging environment for intercultural encounters. It is in many aspects a unique environment. It seems to be very difficult to keep an objective view of the Israeli and Palestinian societies, which are the immediate cultural contexts in my research. In order to make it possible for the readers and other researchers to recognize and evaluate comparability and possible limitations of the study, I will introduce the geographical, historical, national and cultural characteristics of the context of this study (Marschan-Piekkari et al. 2004, Zalan & Lewis 2004). The next review will give an overall picture of the Israeli and Palestinian societies and their history. I attempt to avoid disputable questions and cover only the main areas, which contribute to cultural contexts in these societies. The personal experiences of the interviewees regarding the impact of the Israeli and the Palestinian societies on their work and adaptation will be discussed later in the study.

## **4.1 The history of Israel**

The history of modern Israel can be traced back to about 2000 BCE. Since then there have been many local kingdoms and political rulers in the area. All the Great Powers of each particular time period have shown interest and political activity in the area. There have been the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Romans, the Byzantines, the Arabs, the Crusaders, the Mameluks and the Ottomans. The modern history of Israel started after the British rule and since then it has been a scene of political activities with America, the neighboring and more distant Arab countries, the former Soviet Union and present Russia as well as other European countries (Ben-Haim 2003; Gilbert 1985).

To understand the Israeli society, it is important to have a short look at the particular time period of history, which contributed to the modern State of Israel in 1948. Britain and France signed an agreement in 1916, which divided the region into zones of influence. According to this agreement, Syria and Lebanon were assigned to France and Jordan and Iraq to Great Britain. This agreement planned to internationalize Palestine. In 1917, the British government issued the Balfour declaration, which favored the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. The Balfour Declaration included a statement protecting the religious and civil rights of non-Jewish communities in Palestine. In July 1922, the League of Nations issued the Mandate for Palestine to Great Britain. The same year, Great Britain and the League of the Nations decided that the establishment of a Jewish national home would apply only to the geographical area west of Jordan River. The area east of the Jordan River would become the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (Ben-Haim 2003). During the time of



the British Mandate and even before it, Jewish immigrants began to arrive in the country, which increased the Jewish population in the area. During the early years of the Mandate the largest groups of immigrants came from Russia and Poland. The next significant group of immigrants came from Western and Central Europe following Hitler's rise to power in Germany. These groups of immigrants from various Jewish communities laid the foundations of the comprehensive social, economic, cultural and educational infrastructure of the current State of Israel (Ben-Haim 2003).

Arab nationalists in the country strongly opposed the Jewish national revival and their efforts to rebuild the country. Their reaction was demonstrated through strikes and violence. The attempts of the British and the Jewish for a dialogue with the Arabs failed, and the British finally recommended dividing the country into two states, one Jewish and one Arab. The leadership of the Jewish communities accepted the plan; the Arabs, on the other hand, were against it. At the same time, the number of Jewish immigrants from Europe was still rising when the Jews tried to find refuge from Nazi persecution and liquidation of the Jews. The Arab population organized large-scale riots, which forced the British Mandate government to impose strong restrictions on Jewish immigration by issuing a White Paper in 1939. During World War II (1939-45) only one third of the Jewish population in Europe survived the war. This meant that the Nazis had systematically liquidated six million Jews, including 1.5 million children (Ben-Haim 2003).

Even after the war the British continued to impose restrictions on immigration. As a reaction to this the Jewish community organized a large-scale and well-planned network of illegal immigration to rescue the Holocaust survivors. During the years 1945 to 1948 about 85,000 Jewish immigrants were brought into the country by this network. World War II and the continual conflicting demand from the Jewish and the Arab communities in the British Mandate exhausted the British government. At the same time, it planned to withdraw from other overseas colonial commitments. Great Britain decided to leave Palestine in 1947 and asked the United Nations to place the question of Palestine on its agenda. The UN founded a committee to draft a proposal on the question. The committee recommended the partition of the land into Jewish and Arab states. The Jewish community accepted the plan, and the Arab community rejected it, as earlier when the British suggested the same solution. In the vote of the General Assembly of the UN on the 29th of November 1947, the British abstained from voting, and the committee's recommendation to partition of the land was endorsed by 33 to 13. It was exceptionally supported by both the United States and the Soviet Union (Ben-Haim 2003).

On the 14th of May 1948, the British Mandate came to an end and Israel proclaimed its independence. In less than 24 hours the armies of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq invaded the country. The newly formed and poorly equipped Israeli Defense Forces fought 15 months against the great number of enemy armies. In the beginning of 1949 during negotiations led by the UN, an armistice agreement was reached by Israel and the enemies, except for Iraq. In

this agreement the coastal plan, Galilee and Negev remained under Israeli sovereignty. Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) were placed under Jordanian rule and the Gaza Strip under Egyptian administration. The City of Jerusalem was divided. Jordan controlled the eastern part including the Old City, and Israel controlled the western part (Hirvonen 2002; Juusola 2005). Israel was at war with Egypt in 1956 and occupied Sinai after the war. During the Six Day War in 1967 Israel united Jerusalem and occupied Gaza, Judea and Samaria and the Golan Heights. Egypt and Syria attacked Israel on Yom Kippur 1973. After the cease fire agreement, Israel started a gradual withdrawal from Sinai (Gilbert 1985, 109; Ben Haim 2003, 51-52).

Israel and Egypt signed a peace treaty in 1979. The treaty was signed after long talks during Camp David. In accordance of the treaty Israel withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula. The treaty also included a frame of proposals for self-government for the Palestinians. Since then, there have been several efforts to promote peace in the Middle East: Madrid, 1991, Moscow, 1992, secret talks in Oslo, 1993, which led to Washington peace agreement in 1993, Oslo II agreement in Washington, 1995 and again multilateral talks in Moscow in 2000 and Camp David in 2000, where the talks between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, President Clinton and Palestinian Authority Chairman Jasser Arafat ended without an agreement. After Camp David in September 2000, the Palestinians initiated a Second Intifada, series of uprising, which was more violent than the First Intifada in the late 1980s. The Israeli and the Palestinian interpretations about the causes of the Second Intifada are conflicting. The Palestinians claim that the second Intifada was caused by the visit of Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon to the Temple Mountain. The Palestinians saw it as a provocative move. The Israelis claim that the Chief of Security of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Jibril Rajub, had given his consent to the visit with the condition, that Mr. Sharon would not visit the mosques. Sharon did not enter the mosques. According to the Israelis, Yasser Arafat was also aware of the visit and had agreed to it. The Israelis say that already during the summer they received information that the Palestinians were planning an uprising. They had been in contact with Arafat regarding their information, and they claim that Arafat just used the visit of Sharon for his own benefit; to put some pressure on Israel to further talks since the negotiations failed at Camp David. It has also been confirmed by some Palestinian sources that there had been plans for an uprising immediately after the Camp David Peace talks (Juusola 2005).

## **4.2 The history of the Palestinians**

The historical background leading to the current situation of the Palestinian society is interwoven with the history of the State of Israel. The name Palestine was given by the Romans during the second century A.D. They used the name Palestine for the area where the former Israeli and Judean kingdoms were

located (Juusola 2005). The geographical boundaries of the area have changed several times throughout history.

The proclamation of Israeli independence was problematic for the Arab population in the area. About 700 000 Arabs left their homes in the course of Israel's War of Independence. This resulted in a serious problem of Palestinian refugees. The Palestinian and the Israeli understanding of this question represent two extreme poles. Both present highly different numbers of the refugees. Israel confirms the official number of refugees to be 500 000 and the Palestinians about one million. 700 000 refugees is the estimation of the UN and the British authorities. There were about 150 000 Arabs who remained in the country after the War for Independence. After the War of Independence, Israel withdrew from Gaza, and it remained under Egyptian occupation but not as a part of Egypt with UN troops patrolling in the area. The West Bank of the Jordan River was incorporated into Jordan together with East Jerusalem (Juusola 2005). The Palestinians tried to establish active underground groups in the countries where they stayed. Yasser Arafat is said to have been the founder of the secret Fatah group in Kuwait in 1959. The group aimed to liberate Palestine by armed force. They would cooperate with friendly governments of Arab countries and friendly supporters of other international actors. They would rely only on the Palestinians themselves, and the group would be run collectively. Fatah had rivals, e.g. the PFLP (The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) amongst the Palestinians, and these various groups formed a threat for the countries they resided in. This was one of the reasons why President Nasser decided to establish a Palestinian organization, which would remain under his control. This was the foundation of the PLO, Palestinian Liberation Organization in 1964. It took many years of internal conflicts between the various Palestinian groups until the PLO was formed under the leadership of Yasser Arafat (Reische 1991; Siljanen & Siljanen 2001).

The situation of the West Bank and Gaza changed when Israel launched an attack on Egypt in 1967. This occurred after Egypt had asked the UN troops to leave Egypt and Sinai and started to mobilize its troops to the Israeli borders. In the meantime, there was growing tension between Syria and Israel, and finally Israel started the mobilization of its troops and attacked the Egyptian airbases in June 1967. Israeli's surprise attack was successful and the Egyptian air force was totally destroyed in a matter of a few hours. Jordan joined to help Egypt, and Israel defeated them and conquered the Old City of Jerusalem, which contained the Jewish holy places. The government of Israel was not unanimous about the strategy towards Syria. Syria and Israel had tensions about water sources. Syria had not mobilized its army but was on alert. After internal disputes, the Defence Minister Moshe Dayan decided on an attack on Syria without the consent of the Israeli government; Syria surrendered. The short war of Six Days was over. Previous cease-fire lines were replaced. Israel had acquired Judea, Samaria, Gaza, the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights under its control. Jerusalem, which had been divided in 1949 under Israeli and Jordanian rule, was reunified under Israel's authority. Many historians claim

that the Six Day War changed the balance of power in the Middle East and created a new reality (Juusola 2005; Ben-Haim 2003).

When the West Bank and Gaza were incorporated under Israeli rule, more than one million Arabs fell under Israeli occupation. It is estimated that during the Six Day War about 200 000–250 000 people from the West Bank, Gaza and Golan Heights escaped to the neighbouring Arab countries. The Arabs who remained in the areas under Israeli rule were placed under Israeli military administration. Israel extended its administration to East Jerusalem although it was never officially annexed to West Jerusalem or Israel. The 1967 war also brought about some positive consequences to the Palestinians. Now when the Palestinian areas were under Israeli control, people could build contacts with each other much more easily than earlier. The Israeli occupation caused a strengthening of Palestinian nationalism. When the Arab states had been defeated in the war, the Palestinians were left alone. The PLO developed into a national movement of the Palestinian people when Yasser Arafat, the leader of Fatah became the leader of the PLO in 1969. The Arab-Israeli conflict had broadened and the Palestinians became a recognized partner of the conflict (Juusola 2005).

The President of Egypt, Anwar Sadat, raised the Palestinian question to open discussion during his historical visit to Jerusalem in 1977. He emphasized his will to peace. He also recognized the Israeli demands for its security. He included the Palestinian question in the peace talks. The Israeli Prime Minister Menahem Begin could not accept the idea of an independent Palestinian state and instead suggested self-government for the Palestinians. According to the idea of Begin, the area would be under Israeli rule. In the final agreement a time period of five years was proposed, during which the final position of the West Bank and Gaza would be negotiated. Jerusalem was left out of this agreement. This agreement was the first agreement, in which Israel officially recognized and confirmed the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. This question was a very sensitive issue to Prime Minister Begin, as can be seen from the Hebrew translation of the English agreement, which speaks only of Arabs in Israel, not about a Palestinian people. Egypt and Israel reached a bilateral Peace Agreement, where Israel withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula. The withdrawal was not easy for Israel; Sinai has been an important buffer against Egypt, and moreover, Israel had found oil in Sinai. However, the agreement was accepted in the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament. The importance of the Camp David agreement was that it formed a good basis for further negotiations on the issues of West Bank and Gaza (Ben-Haim 2003; Juusola 2005).

The first real step in the peace process between the Palestinians and Israel took place at the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991. It was important because it brought together the representatives of Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians under American and Soviet Auspices. The formal negotiations were followed by bilateral and multilateral talks. The secret behind-the-scenes negotiations in Oslo between the Israelis and the Palestinians lead to the formulation of outlines for self-government arrangements of the Palestinians in

the West Bank and Gaza in 1993. Yasser Arafat, Shimon Peres and Yitshak Rabin signed the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement in 1995, and it is referred to as the Oslo II agreement. The agreement included an elected self-governing authority for the Palestinians, the Palestinian Council, which was elected in 1996. It also included an agreement of continued redeployment of the Israeli army in the West Bank. In the agreement the West Bank was divided into three types of areas: (1) Area A, which would comprise of the main cities of the West Bank. The Palestinian Council would have full responsibility for internal security, public order and civil affairs. (2) Area B, which would comprise of the small towns and villages in the West Bank. The Palestinian Council would have responsibility of civil affairs and public order. Israel would have the responsibility for security. (3) Area C, which would comprise of all Jewish settlements in the West Bank, the areas which were of strategic importance to Israel and the areas which were mostly unpopulated. This area would be under full Israeli responsibility excluding the civil matters of the Palestinian population. The Knesset approved the Interim Agreement by a slight majority of 61-59. Increased number of suicide bomb attacks retarded the peace process. The murder of Prime Minister Rabin in November 1995 ceased the peace process in practice (Ben-Haim 2003).

Since then the implementation of the Interim Agreement has been revised in various conferences: In Wye River Memorandum in 1998, in Sharm el Sheik Memorandum in 1999 and in Camp David in 2000. Camp David led to the collapse of Israeli Palestinian relations. The Israeli Prime Minister Barak was ready to convey 90% of the West Bank to the Palestinians. He was also ready to compromise on Jerusalem and to convey the Muslim and Christian Quarters of the Old City to the Palestinian Authority. The Armenian and the Jewish Quarters would remain under the control of Israel. Barak was even ready to transfer the control of the Temple Mount to the Palestinians but retain Israeli sovereignty in the area. Other possibilities of a sensitive question of control over Temple Mount were discussed. Arafat refused all Barak's proposals, and the negotiations were at total deadlock. Critics on the negotiations have blamed Yasser Arafat of having lost his chance of reaching an agreement, which even included Jerusalem.

In September 2000, Palestinian violence escalated after the visit of Ariel Sharon to the Temple Mount. This was the start of the Second Intifada (uprising), which has caused loss of life and much suffering for both Palestinians and Israelis. The failure in Camp David and Barak's propels together with escalating violence led to the resignation of Prime Minister Barak just before the elections for Prime Minister in the beginning of 2001. Ariel Sharon was elected as new Prime Minister. There was, however, no end to terrorism and violence, and Sharon launched pre-emptive attacks on the leaders of Palestinian terror organizations. The "Quartet" of the USA, Russia, the UN and the EU has taken a significant role in efforts promoting the Middle East peace process during the last years (Ben-Haim 2003; Juusola 2005).

During the time of conducting my interviews, Yasser Arafat was the Chairman of the Palestinian Authority. His power had been in ruins since the unsuccessful negotiations with Ehud Barak and President Clinton in the summer of 2000. Moreover, Israel had launched Operation Shield in the West Bank because of the escalating violence. The IDF had destroyed the Headquarters of Arafat and put him in custody in Ramallah, West Bank. Many of the interviewees worked in organizations, which tried to support various development programs in the West Bank and Gaza and worked in close co-operation with the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinians NGOs. Day to day life and work was complicated for the Palestinians and for the foreigners. The IDF closed different parts of the Palestinian areas, and moving around was difficult. The Palestinian people could not come to work to Israel, and government offices, schools and universities were more regularly closed than open. The infrastructure of the Palestinian areas was destructed. Various Islamic extremist organizations caused fear and threat in the area.

### **4.3 The Israeli and the Palestinian societies**

Israel started to build a society on the foundation already built by the Jewish communities under the British Mandate. The mass immigration of the first years of the State of Israel doubled the Jewish population in Israel from 650 000 to 1.3 million from 1948-1952. In 1948, the Jewish community in Israel consisted mainly of the earliest groups of immigrants from Russia, Poland and Holocaust survivors from Europe (Ashkenazi Jews). After the declaration of Independence of Israel, many Islamic countries started to expel their Jewish communities, and new groups of immigrants began to arrive from the Islamic countries in North Africa and the Middle East (Sephardi Jews). In the late 1950s, different ethnic Jewish groups coexisted almost without any social or cultural interaction. This brought tensions to Israeli society, which already had many other challenges of economic independency and security. During the next decades of the State of Israel the social gap between different groups of immigration narrowed through intermarriages and equal opportunities for education in the society. Throughout its history, Israel has continued to receive smaller and larger numbers of immigrants from different countries. The most recent wave of mass immigration came from the former Soviet Union. A significant number of 100 000 Jews from the former Soviet Union succeeded to immigrate to Israel during the 1970s. The mass immigration started after the fall of the Soviet Union, and since 1989 more than one million of Russian Jews have immigrated to Israel. The immigrants from Russia represent highly educated professionals; artists, musicians and scientists, whose contribution to the Israeli society and economy is significant.

An interesting picture to add to the vivid immigration to Israel was the arrival of a Jewish community from Ethiopia. It is thought that there has been

an ancient Jewish community in Ethiopia since the time of King Solomon. This community felt oppression and even persecution in Ethiopia. After successful negotiations with Haile Selassie, Israel started to airlift this community, which was called Falasha Jews. The airlifts were stopped in 1985. In 1990, when Israel and Ethiopia renewed their diplomatic relations, the economic and political situation in the country deteriorated. The Jewish Agency department responsible for Ethiopian Jews brought a report about the situation and a request to prepare a plan to evacuate the Jews quickly from Ethiopia. Their main concern was what would happen during the turnover of power. The Ethiopian Jews lived in distant villages, about 800 kilometers from Addis Ababa. Already at the time of the renewal of diplomatic relations of Israel and Ethiopia, there were 2500 Jews gathered in Addis Ababa. The Ethiopian government had allowed 1000 Jews per month to depart Ethiopia. The Israeli government decided to launch a secret plan called "Operation Solomon" in order to rescue the Ethiopian Jews. A network to call the Jews to gather to Addis Ababa was set up. The network was responsible for gathering, transportation and identification of Jewish families. The Israeli army was responsible for the airlift and the security. During the last moment before the Israeli planes were approaching Ethiopia, the Jewish Agency received permission from the Ethiopian Interior Ministry for the landing of the planes. During 36 hours starting 26.4.1991, 14 163 Jews from Ethiopia had been airlifted to Israel by 37 El Al and Israeli army aircrafts and one Ethiopian national airline. The Israeli officials cooperated with the rebels who took control of the country in less than a day after the dramatic departure of the Ethiopians Jews (Toran 1992).

From Israel's population of 6.4 million some 1.5 million people are non-Jews. They form about 23 percent of the Israeli population and are usually called collectively as Arab citizens of Israel (Ben Haim 2003, 120). However, they include different Arabic speaking groups. There are almost one million Muslim Arabs, who populate small towns and villages, mainly in the north of the country. Bedouins or Bedouin Arabs are also Muslims, and their number reaches up to 170 000 people. They are scattered all over the area of the southern part of Israel. Christian Arabs are estimated to be about 130 000 in urban areas of Nazareth, Haifa and Shfar'am. The Christian Arab population includes Greek Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican and small Lutheran communities. The Druze community also belongs to the Arabic speaking minority in Israel. There are about 106 000 Druzes living in 22 separate villages in northern Israel. They represent a separate social, cultural and religious community, and there is no access to the community for outsiders. The Druze community is different from other Arab speaking communities in Israel, because they want to show respect and loyalty to the government by sending their youngsters to serve in the Israeli army (Ben-Haim 2003).

Israel claims to be a pluralistic society. In consideration with its minority Arab population this means that in addition to Hebrew, Arabic is also an official language. The Israeli government encourages the social and cultural

autonomy of the Arab population by supporting an Arab-speaking education system and traditional religious court. The Israeli Arabs usually acquire knowledge of Hebrew and become bilingual. For them the Hebrew language is just a means of communication and has no cultural link to the Jewish identity. Anyhow, research in the sociology of the language shows that Hebrew elements penetrate into Arabic language. Although the Israeli Arab population may use Hebrew at their work, in the shopping centres etc. it does not weaken their identity as members in the Arab speaking community (Ben-Rafael 1998). In general, there is not much Arab integration into Israeli life. Arabs and Jews usually live in different neighbourhoods and go to different schools. Arabs and Jews mainly run businesses only in their own communities. They do not visit each other in social gatherings or in each others' homes. This situation of ethno religious communities living separately in the Middle East has not changed for centuries. Israeli Arabs live in a situation where they are Israeli citizens, but most of them define themselves as Palestinians. The national legislature of Israel was built for the State of Jewish people. It is obvious that the Arab population cannot share the ideology of the Jewish majority. Most of the Arab population is exempted from compulsory service in the Israeli Defence Force (IDF). Normally for Israeli citizens the compulsory service as a rule in the IDF is three years for men and 21 months for women. The economic gap between the Jewish population and the Arab population has grown. The Israeli Arabs have become politically active in the creation of a Palestinian state. Sometimes struggles and strikes have caused to violence. Israeli Arabs are pulled in several directions: between being Israeli citizens and their loyalty to their own ethnic group (Shahar & Kurz 1995; Bar-Yosef 1993). Salim Munayer's study (2000) on ethnic identity of the Palestinian Arab Christians indicates tensions in the identification between Israeli and Palestinian cultures. Munayer (2000, 127) claims that the Palestinian Arab Christians seek Western values through the Israeli society. At the same time, they appreciate their own traditions and cultural values. Added to the Palestinian national aspirations the situation of the Palestinian Christian population is complicated.

From the very beginning, the aim of the Israeli immigration was to become a melting pot for Jewish immigrants from different parts of the world. The State of Israel is a unique state in the sense that it is defined as a Jewish state. The current cultural situation in Israel has changed from the idea of a melting pot to a more multicultural and diverse society. An important question in a small country with such great numbers of immigrants from different ethnic and lingual background is how these various groups contribute to the development of the society as a whole. As discussed earlier, the Ashkenazi culture of the immigrants during the British Mandate and the years before the State of Israel became a dominant culture, into which new immigrants tried to integrate. Until late 1990s more than 40 % of the Israeli Jewish population were born abroad. Due to high birth rate of the Shephardi Jews, the Ashkenazi Jews are not anymore culturally dominant in Israel. In the multicultural Israeli society, no cultural group, defined by the origin, is demographically dominant.



The largest group is Jews of Russian origin. They have been the single largest group of immigrants during the history of the country. Demographically, they form about 14% of the Jewish population. Moroccans, Poles and Iraqis number between 8-10%. Germans, Hungarians and Yemenites number between 4-7% (Ben-Rafael 1998). In addition, there are Jews from France, the USA, and the Falasha Jews from Ethiopia and members of more exotic Jewish communities from India and China.

There are many changes to be seen in the Israeli society since the 1990s. The Russian ethnic group has been the most secular of all the immigrant communities since the State of Israel. Their roots to Judaism or Jewish tradition are very weak. Culturally, they identify more with Western Christianity. Amongst this group there are also many mixed marriages. When immigrating to Israel their first motive was to get out from Russia and for many of them, the first choice was to move to the USA or somewhere in Europe. When this was not possible, they immigrated to Israel. Many of them did not come with religious or Zionist identification to Israel. Many members of this group are highly educated and have integrated well into the Israeli economy. Culturally, this group seems to keep to their ethnic and cultural circles and also keeps very close contacts to Russia. They have also been politically active and become a political force both for Social Democratic as well as the rightist Likud Party. The influence of the Russian immigration has become even more significant, when they founded a political party for immigrants in 1996; Yisrael ba-alya and later another party for immigrants; Yisrael betenu (Juusola 2005).

The dominance of the earlier Ashkenazi Jews has been transferred to Sephardi Jews. The strengthening of the cultural identity of Sephardi Jews has been linked to the religious and social values of the community and has contributed to the increasing importance of the ethnic-religious Party Shas in the political map of Israel. The Ethiopian Jewish community has brought its own aspects to the Israeli society (Juusola 2005).

During the 1990s, the Israeli economy has become more open. Economic difficulties caused by the first Palestinian uprising and challenge to receive and absorb the mass immigration from Russia made the Israeli governments open up their markets and liberalize their politics. The amount of private investments from outside Jewish communities has increased greatly in the economy. Especially the Israeli High Tech Industry has been of interest globally. The long-range investments on university research as well as on military technology have opened new partnerships with international companies. The EU is the most important business partner of Israel. The USA is also an important partner. In addition, Israel has opened business relations to India, Japan and China. Economic relations with Arab countries have decreased during the last years due to the Second Intifada. The Second Intifada brought many problems to the Israeli economy, when the number of tourists in the area decreased drastically. Although the GDP in Israel has increased, the economical gap in the society between rich and poor has grown and is the largest in industrial countries after the USA. The growing economy has demanded Israel to open its labour

markets and bring in foreign workers from countries such as Romania, Turkey, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Korea, Niger and China. This started during the course of the first and second Intifada when the Palestinians were declined entry to work in Israel due to terror attacks and violence. The amount of foreign work force in Israel was already about six percent of the total work force in 1997. This amount has increased during the last years, and there are also many illegal immigrants in the country. It has brought many challenges to the Israeli society. Firstly, these foreign workers are non-Jews and the Israeli policy is not to increase immigration of non-Jews to the Jewish State of Israel. Secondly, many employers do not treat the workers according to the Israeli laws. Thirdly, many of these workers tend to find a possibility of permanent stay in Israel. This brings a new challenge in defining their status and the status of their children in the country. Even more difficult is the position of the children of the illegal immigrants in Israel. These children are not registered anywhere, they do not have rights to education or health care. The Israeli governmental and civil sector organizations try to find ways to respond to this problem (Juusola 2005).

The picture of the current Israeli society is fragmented from many perspectives. The society faces enormous challenges in developing a democratic and equal society on the basis of ethnic and cultural diversity. At the same time, it faces security threats from the extreme Palestinian terror movements and some hostile Arab countries such as Iran and Syria. Keeping up its economy on the demands of the global markets is also a challenge. In addition, the state of Israel was built as a Jewish state, where Jewish religion automatically guarantees citizenship. Religious tensions between the different groups of Jewish population bring additional tension to the society.

The Palestinian infrastructure and economy are in ruins. Half of the Palestinian population is below sixteen years of age. The unemployment figures have risen dramatically after the Israelis closed their borders from Palestinian employees during the last years of escalating violence. Harvard's Center for Middle East Studies estimates the unemployment figure to be more than 50%, and the number of the Palestinians who live below the poverty line to be more than 30%. However, the deteriorated economical condition of the Palestinians is not only caused by Israel closing its borders. One reason has been the corrupt leadership of Arafat's administration. The Palestinian Authority is bankrupted because of several years of misuse of the donations and the support from the EU and many humanitarian and development organizations. The ministries and the security services of the Palestinian authority employ thousands of people. The financial aid earmarked to construct and develop Palestinian education and health system was mainly transferred to personal secret accounts of Arafat and his closest circle. This was also the case with the taxes collected by the Israeli government and transferred to the Palestinian Authority. In the atmosphere of fear and mistrust, people were afraid of openly criticizing the corruption of the administration.

Compared to the fragmented Israeli society, the Palestinian society is more homogeneous. From their ethnic background the Palestinian people are Arabs.

Nationally the common factor is the Palestinian identity. Religiously, the Muslims are a dominant group. The Arab Christians live under the pressure of the political and the extreme Islam. There is a long way to democracy in the Palestinian society.

#### **4.4 The Israeli- Palestinian dialogue and co-existence**

It has been stated in many researches (Gur-Ze'ev & Pappé 2003; Yaron 1993; Ashcroft & Ahluwalia 1999) that both the Israeli and the Palestinian societies carry collective historical memories, which have given basis to the self-identities of the nations. Researchers go further and claim that a fruitful and continued dialogue, which would contribute to proceeding in the peace process and co-existence of the two societies, will be possible only as a result of deconstruction and reformulation of the Palestinian and Israeli mythic narratives of their identity. The source of the Israeli collective memory is the Holocaust, when six million European Jews were persecuted by the Nazi regime. The Holocaust memory has been defined as a matter of law, and in 1953 the Israeli Knesset founded a governmental agency to protect, and present it (Gur-Zev & Pappé 2003). The Holocaust is a living memory to the survivors of the Holocaust and to the family members of the perished victims. The Palestinian society has attempted to define a connection between the Holocaust and its own history. The Mufti, the Palestinian leader of Jerusalem was a close partner of Hitler and served Hitler's propaganda in the Arab world. Palestinian historians have attempted to deny the Mufti's cooperation with Hitler and minimize the Holocaust. This perception has changed to the acknowledgment of the Jewish tragedy. The Palestinian history has tried to equate the Holocaust to the Palestinian catastrophe (Nakbah) during the partition of the area and declaration of Independence of the State of Israel. Its equation between policies of the Nazi regime and the way the State of Israel treated the Palestinians, is demonstrated in many studies (Gur-Zev & Pappé 2003; Said 2000; Ashcroft & Ahluwalia 1999). Palestinian intellectuals Edward Said and Azmi Bishara together with some other authors have criticized this approach and strongly condemn the equation between the Holocaust and the Nakbah. The mass extermination of the Jews cannot be denied or minimized. At the same time, they criticize the way the State of Israel and Zionism have instrumentalized the Holocaust. They also demand that the Nakbah should not be minimized (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia 1999).

Said (Said 2000; Ashcroft & Ahluwalia 1999) assumes that there is no real military option for Palestinians or Israelis but the only hope is *"a decent and fair co-existence between the two peoples based upon equality and self-determination"* (Said 2000). Yaron's ideas about Jewish- Arab coexistence go even further. He suggests that coexistence based on mutual toleration – live and let live, should be taken further to proexistence, based on *"the affirmation of the otherness of the*

*other, on acceptance and mutual respect*" (Yaron 1993). There is still a long way ahead for both of the nations, both in the question of their self-identity and in the road of peace.

## 4.5 Non-profit organizations

Non-profit organizations have always played an important role between the public and market sectors. In the global world, their importance, number and variety have grown significantly in recent years (Salamon, Sokolowski & List 2003). They can be called the civil sector, non-governmental sector and non-profit sector or voluntary sector. In America, the civil sector contributes more than 6% of America's GDP and is responsible for 10.5% of total employment (Rifkin 1995). John Hopkins University carried out a comparative study on documentation, structure and the role of the civil sector in 35 countries focused on evaluation and explanation on the development of the third sector. The definition of the organizations was based on the following terms: "1) A civil society organization receives the predominant portion of its revenue from private contributions, not from market transactions or government support. 2) A civil society organization takes particular legal form (association, foundation etc.) and it is exempted from some or all of a country's taxes. 3) A civil society organization promotes the public good, encourages empowerment and participation or seeks to address the structural roots of poverty and distress." (Salamon, Sokolowski & List, 2003)

In the above study, the civil society organizations represented 4.4% of the work force of an economically active population. There is a big difference between the percentages of civil society workforce in different countries. The highest percentage share of non-profit workforce is in Netherlands, being 14.4%, and the lowest in Mexico, being only 0.4%. In Scandinavia the figure is lower due to the traditional role of a strong public sector. The share of civil society organization workforce was about seven percent in both Norway and Sweden but only five percent in Finland (Ibid., 17). The studies indicate that the employment share of the third sector has increased rapidly during the last decade (Helander & Laaksonen 1999).

The third sector organizations can be classified into 12 International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations-groups (INCPO-groups). These groups are: culture and recreation, education and research, health, social services, environment, development and housing, civic and advocacy, philanthropy, international activities, religion, business and professionals, unions and others, not elsewhere classified (Salamon & Anheier 1996).

Non-profit organizations from various INCPO-groups represent different models of employment and expatriation. The present situation of growing third sector in the global environment gives a challenge to HRM in third sector organizations. The employer- employee relationship is defined in many different ways in different organizations. Third sector organizations also depend on volunteers (Koskinen 1999). As an international actor in the field of

the international HRM, third sector faces the same challenges as business and public sectors. The research of Johns Hopkins University that covers 35 countries shows, that 57% of the workforce of the civil sector is paid workers and 43% are volunteers. The relation between the paid workers and volunteers changes from country to country (Salamon, Sokolowski & List 2003).

Israel was included in the above study of John Hopkins University and the civil sector contributed to 8% workforce of its economically active population. The majority of them are paid workers. According to the Israeli Center for Third Sector Research, there are over 34 000 registered third sector organizations in Israel. Half of them are active and more than one thousand new organizations register annually ([www.oliveinteractive.co.il](http://www.oliveinteractive.co.il)). There is no systematic study on the situation of the civil sector organizations in the area of Palestinian Authority. Edward Said claims that the EU and other sources of funding have provided Palestinian organizations with money to establish various research institutes and study centers as well as women's and professional groups that are organized as NGOs. According to Said, they are productive and important in the Palestinian society, but the Palestinian Authority has seen them as rivals and has made their work difficult. Said also sees a danger when these NGOs keep the Palestinian life going, they may become a goal instead of the liberation and the changing of the Palestinian society (Said 2000). In addition to the Palestinian non-profit organizations, there is a growing amount of international civil organizations operating in many fields in the Palestinian society. These organizations have played a vital role in contributing to everyday life of the Palestinian people in the political and economic situation of the recent years. Israel has also throughout its history been a scene for many Israeli and international non-profit organizations. There are many international Jewish non-profit organizations working in different activities in Israel. In addition to Jewish organization, there are many other international organizations operating in the fields of social services, health, education and development, culture and other activities. There are no figures available on the real numbers of the international non-profit organizations in Israel or Palestine. The personal estimation based on the networks amongst the international community in East and West Jerusalem shows that they are to be found abundantly.

### **HRM in the non-profit sector**

Non-profit organizations have a great variety of objectives, which also have an impact on their management practices. Brewster and Lee (2006, 133-134) present some differences between the non-profit and the private sector. Firstly, they claim that a higher proportion of the employees of non-profit organizations are based outside their home country compared to private sector organizations. Secondly, especially in the case of IGOs, the aim of the organizations is not to have any predominant norms of one specific country or government as guidelines for the organization. Thirdly, the selection of personnel in bigger inter-governmental organizations ensures that certain countries or geographical areas will be represented in specific posts. Fourthly, it seems that HRM policies

and procedures are inconsistent within the same organization in different locations. Brewster and Lee further claim that the governing boards of non-profit organizations often have narrow HRM specialist skills. The governing practices vary in different organizations. Managing human resources in the international non-profit sector faces many challenges. Highly educated, internationally oriented, mobile and linguistic employees of non-profit organizations are sometimes more interested in their own private goals and their self-initiated assignments rather than in the objectives of their organization (Suutari & Brewster 2000).

The international non-profit sector also employs a great number of volunteers and local staff as stated above. Different groups of employees require a variety of clear HRM policies (Kealey & Protheroe 1995). At the same time the HRM in non-profit organizations seems to concentrate on administrative, day-to-day management tasks, instead of strategic HRM planning due to the lack of HRM resources in the organizations. This may be one of the reasons for almost non-existent HRM research on non-profit organizations together with the uniqueness of the organizations (Brewster & Lee 2006, 146; Drucker 1990).

## **5 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

### **5.1 Initial stages of the research**

Throughout the years of my own international career, the phenomenon of cross-cultural adaptation and successful international career has been the focus of my interest. As early as in 1998, I wrote my first set of preliminary interview questions where I attempted to combine cross-cultural adaptation and learning. I was interested in examining the Learning Contract- Program, which was developed by the Continuing Centre of the University of Jyväskylä, Department of the Multicultural Programs as a tool to help the cross-cultural adaptation process and increase overseas efficiency during international assignments. The Program emphasized three elements of overseas efficiency (Kealey 1990): professional expertise, adaptation and intercultural interaction.

Since I studied the phenomenon on a more conceptual level I found more concepts, which were closely linked to it. These were discussed in chapter three. In addition to learning, culture and identity arose to be important elements related to an international career. I decided to build my interview sheet on the themes of Kim's model of cross-cultural adaptation. The entire set for the interviews is to be found in Appendix 1.

Our family lived in Jerusalem during the years 2000-2003. I had the opportunity to study as a visiting research fellow at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and work part time in a non-profit organization. The Al-Aqsa Intifada started in October 2000 and never officially ended. The violence of the Intifada made us consider our everyday routines of traveling and moving around, and I found very little time to proceed with my own study. The first year at the university was mainly spent constructing the conceptual framework. For this work, the huge library of the Hebrew University with many fields such as management, anthropology, sociology, education cultural studies, provided a perfect place. In Jerusalem there were practically no postgraduate students in management or human resources. This made the academic discussion difficult. It took almost a year to complete the interview sheet and start conducting the

interviews. The first interview took place in December 2001 and the last one in May 2002.

## **5.2 Collecting the data**

### **5.2.1 Criteria for the interviews**

#### **The number of interviewees**

Hiillos (2004) writes about her considerations to define the optimal amount of interviews for her research on personnel managers in crisis situations. She says that she wanted to find heterogeneous interviewees according to their sex, age, experience and the area of their work. This was her way of obtaining a rich variety of episodes, which were the basis for emotion handling in her study. The richness of the data was also my aim in planning the interviews. Bertaux (1981) and Glaser and Strauss (1967) speak about the method of saturation. According to the idea of saturation, a certain amount of the data will bring out the theoretical frame, which can be raised from the data. Often it is difficult to define the optimal amount for the saturation, and it can be defined when running the research. Eskola and Suoranta (1998) suggest that theoretically, in order to obtain fifteen answers to four categories of different versions of stories, sixty interviewees are required. On the other hand, they refer to researchers who found after having conducted a certain amount of interviews, that new interviews did not bring additional information. After having conducted twenty interviews in my research I sensed that I was reaching a point in which the data from the newest interviewees seemed familiar to the previous interviews. This was confirmed by the process of transcribing the interviews, which I was doing simultaneously. However, to ensure the richness of the data, by taking into account the different cultural background of the interviewees, I decided to conduct thirty interviews.

#### **Interview themes**

I conducted the interviews according to a sheet, in which the interview questions were organized by themes. The themes were built according to the theoretical concepts based on Kim's framework of cross-cultural adaptation (Kim 2001). The themes were: background and predisposition, environment/host society, personal communication, host social communication, ethnic social communication and intercultural transformation (Appendix No 2). The themes were a logical choice because they gave a holistic and familiar setting and covered the areas that I was interested in gaining more information and understanding.



### 5.2.2 Interviewee selection

When reading through literature on international HRM, I found out that the non-profit sector has been overlooked in the research although non-profit organizations have been very active in international operations (Harris et al. 2003). At the same time the importance of the non-profit sector in the global economy had grown, and it had become a significant employer in many economies (Salamon et al. 2003). During the history of Israel and Palestine, there have been a great number of non-profit organizations that are involved in many areas of the society. Moreover, also in Israel and Palestine, as in many other places, the third sector organizations have been very active a long time before any business contacts. I decided that non-profit organizations would be a good source for the data in my research. It would produce data from the area that has not been studied very much, and its significance is growing in international operations and employment. I had already, in the summer of 2000, made the decision to conduct the interviews in the context of Israeli-Palestinian societies. There were two main reasons for this. The first one was that usually studies on cross-cultural adaptation were made in more or less stable political situations. Israel and the area of the Palestinian Authority would provide a scene to examine if the implications from these studies could also be applied to the situation of crisis and insecurity. The second reason was that the Israeli and Palestinian societies are culturally, religiously and ethnically very heterogeneous as described in chapter four. The cultural context of the societies is changing all the time, which would give a chance to mirror the adaptation against the contemporary approaches of culture. On the other hand, the Palestinian society struggles to define its identity and aims in the midst of political struggle for self-governance, and many of its people are living as refugees or voluntarily in exile outside Palestine. This complex context offers a challenging setting of examining the phenomenon of cross-cultural adaptation of expatriates working in non-profit organizations.

An additional advantage of this choice was that I acquainted many people, who worked or who had contacts with various non-profit organizations. My network had been built through the school of my children and through an international women's network, which I was a member of. I used the same tactics that Sintonen (2001) and Jokiranta (2003) describe in their studies. I first covered the possible organizations and people, who might be willing to be interviewed. I shared the idea of my research with my husband and my friends and asked them to think of the organizations they had contacts with. I wrote a letter of introduction (Appendix No 1), which I sent to some organizations and handed out in various gatherings of the women's network, in the school of my children and in other meetings and social gatherings of the expatriate community. It was surprisingly easy to gain access to the interviewees. People were very interested and eager to participate. The political situation in the Middle East forced many people to rethink their assignment in the area. This might also be one reason for which they wanted to go through their process of adaptation with me. I started by conducting five interviews

with the people whom I had contacts with and at the same time handed out the letter of introduction to the management of some non-profit organizations to find more people who would be willing to participate. The response was very positive and enthusiastic, and I made contact with a great amount of interviewees. There were many people, who voluntarily contacted me after I had completed the first five interviews, when they had heard about the interviews from their friends who had participated. My aim was to include different types of non-profit organizations in the study, and I achieved that goal. In total, I interviewed 30 people who represented various sectors of non-profit organizations and 15 different nationalities.

### **5.2.3 The interview process**

#### **External conditions around the interviews**

I began to conduct interviews in December 2001. At that time most of the international community decided to stay in Israel and Palestine. The date of the last interview was May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2002. Spring 2002 was a difficult time in the middle of the violence of the Al-Aqsa Intifada. I conducted the interviews under the condition of insecurity and fear in the Palestinian and Israeli societies. The interviews took place in my home, in the home of the interviewee, in restaurants, offices or other places that the interviewees found suitable for them. We usually found a quiet and peaceful place for our talk although the external conditions were less peaceful in the area. I was surprised and glad about the positive attitude and involvement of the interviewees. I recorded all the interviews and transcribed them literally as soon as possible after every interview.

Although the interview situations were different, I did my best to create a peaceful and secure atmosphere. At home I had a study, where we were able to sit in peace with the interviewee if the rest of the family was at home. If they were not at home, I was able to use our living room for the interview. Some of the interviews were conducted in the work places of the interviewees. They had reserved time for the appointment and we could talk in peace and quiet. The only interview, during which there were interruptions, was the interview with interviewee number 28, who worked as head of a Canadian media organization. He, himself repeated many times that he is not disturbed by the interruptions and wished that they do not disturb me. He was used to interruptions and quick changes in his work.

The time period of conducting the interviews was six months. This meant that while interviewing new people I transcribed the earlier interviews from the tape. Furthermore, I was living out my own story and my own international career. I lived in Jerusalem like most of my interviewees. I was there with my family, working part time in a non-profit organization. In addition, I was a researcher and academically involved in the field. I shared the tensions and difficulties of living in Jerusalem during that specific time of history; Al Aqsa Intifada and the frozen hope for peace. My personal position was a researcher, an international actor and constructor of my own story, analyzer and

interpreter of the research data and constructor of the stories of the interviewees. All this was done from the perspective of my own personal history and connoisseurship on the phenomenon. I wanted to avoid too close of a relationship with the interviewees and made sure that none of the interviewees worked in the same organization as either my husband or me.

### **Conducting the interviews**

I began the interview by telling the interviewee that I am conducting a Ph.D. research for my university in Finland about cross-cultural adaptation and international assignments. I emphasized that sharing their experiences would be of great value for the research. I also stated that the interview is open to subjects that they find relevant, although I had prepared questions, which I would like to ask them. I told them that they were free to answer shortly or use more time in a way that would be convenient for them and to also raise questions. All the interviewees were very positive and even excited to spend their time in the interview. They gave their permission even to use their names in the study. I prefer, however, to just use a code number or one letter of their private names, when referring to them in this research. I clearly understand that the interviewees constructed their experiences and understanding in the social context, where the interaction and the encounter between the interviewee and me contributed to the research data. Moreover, both of us applied multiple frames of orientation and interpretation of the interview situation. In the analysis of the data, my interpretation and understanding were guiding the analysis (Alasuutari 1995, 87-91). I share the experiences of Sintonen (2001) and Jokiranta (2003) in relation to the personal role of the researcher in the interview situations.

After a brief explanation of my research, we started the conversation. Every interview situation was different. For many of the interviewees I represented someone, with whom they could reflect their own experiences and ideas about their work and about the hectic situation of living in the Middle East. I had a feeling that through the interview the interviewees might get a chance to organize and crystallize their own thoughts. Some of the interviewees worked in positions where they were responsible for other expatriate employees, and they had faced the challenges of international assignment in the area of crisis from that perspective. I felt that they were eager to gain more understanding on the complexity of the framework of international assignments, and several times they exceeded the specific time limit for the interview. One of the interviewees lived in the middle of a family crisis, which I had no idea about before the interview. She was desperate to clear her thoughts on the situation and the options for her international work and private life and had already been thinking over her background and many other reasons, which might have led her to the current situation. Many of the interviewees had already made decisions about their future career path and were very enthusiastic to reflect their experiences and plans in relation to the themes of the interview. Others had been working in international assignments for some

time, and the interview seemed to be the right occasion to review the course of the path of their career and future.

I conducted the interviews in English. For some of the interviewees it was their mother tongue. For most of the interviewees it was their second language and in most cases the language they used in their work. My own proficiency in English was challenged in some interview situations by different accents of the interviewees. To avoid misunderstanding, some questions were clarified, and I asked the interviewees to explain more if I was not sure about their answers. Marschan-Piekkari and Reis (2004) discuss the influence of language skills in cross-cultural interviews. I share their experience that it is more challenging to interview someone in your second or third language. In some cases, some of the interviewees even brought some idioms of Hebrew into the interview. However, my experience of conducting thirty interviews with people representing fifteen nationalities was positive. Ensuring enough time and creating an open atmosphere of mutual trust was more important than the languages used. Most of the interviewees had worked a long time in international assignments and were comfortable in expressing themselves in English even though it may not have been their first language.

I decided to take what Marschan-Piekkari and Reis (2004) call a unilingual (English) approach to interviewing. Three of the interviewees were native Finnish speakers like myself, which meant that I could have conducted the interviews in Finnish. However, I decided to use English instead of Finnish for the following reasons: First, the questions that I had prepared were in English, and I should have translated them in Finnish. This might have caused slightly different nuances of the meaning of the questions. Second, if I had used Finnish during the interviews with my Finnish interviewees, I should have transcribed their interviews twice. First in Finnish and after that provide a translation and new transcription in English. The multiple interview transcripts may have caused me to lose some valuable data and nuances. My plan was to conduct thirty interviews in order to have enough data to look for differences and similarities in the data. To do this in a systematic and transparent way meant that the interview transcripts had to be in the same language. Third, if I had used Finnish with the native Finnish speakers, then I should have considered using e.g. Hebrew with some of the interviewees who used Hebrew as their main working language and were more fluent in Hebrew than in English. Finally, as Brewster and Lee (2006) confirm, the employees of the non-profit sector seem to be linguists, internationally minded and internationally mobile. This is also seen in chapter 5.3.2, which presents background information about the interviewees. Most of them had a long international career, and those few who did not know more than one language were usually native English speakers. Although English was the main language of the interviews, the interviewees sometimes used some words in their own language or some expressions of Hebrew, Arabic or Finnish, which were transcribed accordingly. Thus the interview situations were in many cases multilingual although English-dominated (Marschan-Piekkari & Reis 2004).

All the interviews were recorded. The duration of each interview varied from one hour to two and a half hours. The total time of the interviews was 51 hours 30 minutes. After having conducted the interviews I transcribed all of them literally including the possible mistakes in the language. Although this was a long process I preferred to do it myself without any outside assistance in order to keep a direct contact with the texts. This allowed the texts to “begin to live in my mind” and allowed me to make associations and find more clues to my inquiry. As a summary I present the details of the interview situations and the transcribed data in the following table:

TABLE 5 Details about the interviews

No.	Time daymonthyear	Duration	Length in words	Transcribed text (pages)	Place of the interview
1	Dec. 2001	1,5 hours	2861	8	Home of the interviewee
2	Dec. 2001	One hour	1723	5	House of the interviewer
3	Dec. 2001	Two hours	6033	19	Office of the interviewee
4	11.12.2002	Two hours	6450	19	Home of the interviewee
5	14.12.2001	2,5 hours	9272	26	House of the interviewer
6	18.1.2002	Two hours	6428	19	Office of the interviewee
7	12.2.2002	Two hours	5225	16	House of the interviewer
8	13.2.2002	Two hours	5550	17	Workplace of the interviewee
9	16.2.2002	1,5 hours	4977	15	House of the interviewer
10	25.2.2002	2,5 hours	6963	21	Office of the interviewee
11	25.02.2002	Two hours	9501	26	Home of the interviewee
12	26.2.2002	Two hours	12896	35	Workplace of the interviewee
13	6.3.2002	One hour	4658	9	Workplace of the interviewee
14	7.3.2002	One hour	3514	10	Workplace of the interviewee
15	8.3.2002	Two hours	6409	19	Office of the interviewee
16	13.3.2002	1 hour 40 min	5982	19	Office of the interviewee
17	15.3.2002	1,5 hours	6206	19	Office of the interviewee
18	18.3.2002	Two hours	5113	16	Office of the interviewee
19	19.3.2002	1,5 hours	8596	24	Office of the interviewee
20	20.3.2002	2 hours 20 min	6360	20	Office of the interviewee
21	22.3.2002	1,5 hours	10518	29	House of the interviewer

22	25.4.2002	1 hour 40 min	7378	21	Home of the interviewee
23	25.4.2002	1 hour 20 min	6889	21	Home of the interviewee
24	2.5.2002	1 hour 50 min	12558	34	House of the interviewer
25	3.5.2002	1,5 hours	6358	19	Restaurant in East Jerusalem
26	5.5.2002	1 hour 40 min	6757	19	House of the interviewee
27	14.5.2002	1 hour 45 min	7987	23	Office of the interviewee
28	20.5.2002	45 minutes	4807	15	Office of the interviewee
29	21.5.2002	1 hour 40 min	4024	13	House of the interviewer
30	21.5.2002	1 hour 50 min	5250	15	House of the interviewer
		51,5 hours		571 pages	

### The interview context

Before continuing to discuss the data analysis it is worthwhile to evaluate the interview context and its impact on the interview data. According to Marshcan-Piekkari et al. (2004, 246), the interviewer and the interviewee create a “shared context for the exchange of experiences, ideas and meaning. Wider external context and organizational contexts of both the interviewer and the interviewee form a frame of the interview. The individual contexts of the interviewer and the interviewee refer to various professional, cultural and educational influences, which play part in the dynamics of the interview situation. These factors are discussed in detail in chapter 5.3.2 from the perspective of the interviewee context. I have clarified my position as a researcher in different phases of the research starting from the first pages of the thesis. However, it is good to give some deeper thought on the interview and on the data generated in the interview context.

My role as an interviewer was to provide a facilitating context for the interviewees to share their experiences about working and living in a foreign cultural context. The interview plan was based on the themes mentioned previously and were presented as open questions, and I made sure to give the interviewees time to continue sharing their thoughts freely. I allowed them to open up new topics and construct their answers accordingly. According to the constructivist- narrative approach the interview situation is a collaborative effort between the interviewer and the interviewee. The textual data or the story as a result from the interview is created and constructed. I participated in the situation with my pre-understanding based on my personal experience and my understanding through reading the literature and previous research and with my goals rising from the research setting. The interviewee participated with his/her own background, experience and understanding presenting his/her answers and story first to me as the near audience, and to the academic circles interested in the phenomenon. Thus, what was told in this specific historical,

geographical and cultural context could be formed differently in another situation and to another audience (Erkkilä 2005; Riessman 1993).

My national and cultural background is Finland. I went to school in a small town and came from a family, who had no international contact. As is written in the first pages of this study, my international experience began when I studied at the university and has continued since that as an integral part of me and my own family. My studies in Helsinki School of Economics supported the international option by providing good language studies as well as opening horizons to international business. After having worked a couple of years in municipality development in Finland, I started my first international assignment in Tanzania. I was employed by a church-related organization, which worked in partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. My position was administrative assistance in church administration and running community development programs. After four years' assignment I returned to Finland. Having met my husband, who had "the global calling" to work as a pastor, we applied to the same organization and were offered a job in Israel. Israel became our second home. My husband worked in congregational duties, and I worked in church administration. When we started our assignment, we had only one child, a tiny, eight months old daughter. Our sons were born in Jerusalem. When we returned to Finland in 2003, the tiny daughter had grown up and graduated from high school. During our time in Israel, there were years, when I worked full-time, and there were times when I was on maternity leave and working half-time. The time that my family spent in Israel, enriched our life in many ways. Our circle of friends broadened around the globe. There were different languages that were used in the house, depending on the people who happened to be present. There was a time, when our children used English as their common language. When we settled down in Finland, many global contacts have been kept thanks to modern systems of travel and IT. International matters and multicultural relations belong to our everyday life and broaden and enrich our world view.

In many ways I share the same kind of expatriate experience as the interviewees of the research. This had many advantages. It was very easy to approach them. I decided not to include my personal friends as participants in the research. I, however, knew some of the interviewees beforehand. I had met three of the Finnish interviewees in some official or semi-official occasions, but I had no personal contacts with them. Some interviewees were employed by the school, which our children attended. I had met them often at school, but I had not run any real conversation with them before the interview situation. Some of the interviewees took part in the meetings of international women's network in Jerusalem. We had met in the meetings and had run some charity projects together. Some of the interviewees were friends of the members of this network. Finally, there were a couple of interviewees, who happened to live in the same street in Jerusalem. They worked and lived near by, and I had seen the sign of their organization on their front door. I contacted them, and they were willing to take part in the research.

The core of qualitative research is the social and linguistic nature of human reality (Tynjälä 1991). Human experience is explored through communication and language. The reality is constructed in inter-subjective communication by the interviewee and the interviewer (Tynjälä 1991; Aro 1996). Aro speaks about story telling, when she refers to situations where the interviewee continues his/her speaking exceeding the straight answer to a question. This kind of story telling is naturally related to the themes and the context of the interview, because the story arises from the interview questions (Aro 1996, 63). Aro (67-74) defines time, place, people, events, explanations and the question of self to be the main elements of a story constructed in the interview. Time and place are not exact determination but rather orientations, which are related to the logics of the story. People and events, especially critical events are entwined together in a coherent story. Self appears in different aspects in the story. People construct their stories differently in different situations and contexts. Nevertheless, one story is not truer than the other (Löyttyniemi 2004). The interviewees may have constructed different stories through the interviews, if I as a researcher, had been an outsider of academic circles instead of being one of them, living in the same external situation and sharing the same type of organizational context. Löyttyniemi (2004, 72) writes about the situation, when she interviewed medical doctors, being one of them herself. She also asked a question, if the interviewee had spoken differently, if the researcher had not been a doctor. Many of the interviewees expressed that they would have spoken differently in that case, but could not specify, what things would have been told differently. It seems that it is difficult to specify why people talk specific versions of stories to different people.

The interview binds the social and cultural contexts of the interviewer and the interviewee. The told narrative is a social play including different aims (Hänninen 1999). When I think about the interviews in this research, I can recall many things, which were used as the scenery for the audience (the researcher). I recognize some of these "external effects" even from the tapes when re-listening to the interviews. They can be recognized e.g., in which place the interviewee wanted the interview to be conducted, what kind of expressions s/he used to emphasize his/her meaning, raising voice or in the free conversations before and after the interviews. Nevertheless, the transcribed interview data is based on the data spoken during the actual interview situation. Thus the linguistic communication was the basis for the data. Other elements that may have contributed to the data are not being discussed in the study. Even the use of language as a way to enact power is not analyzed. My expertise as a researcher was not enough to evaluate the hidden meanings and objectives behind the several times differently spoken English. I tried to keep my participation in the research at the level of interview questions in order to give the interviewee a chance to continue his/her speech freely even beyond the questions. That was my way to not get involved in the interview and change its nature to be a discussion. This would have been very easy in the external cultural context of the Middle East, where many interviews in the media turn into vivid



discussions and formal discussions into fierce debates. My role and expatriate experience has surely had an impact on the interview data. It could be very different even with the same interview questions if the interviewer had been someone else. There is no way to say if it had been truer or falsier because that kind of questioning in narrative ontology is not relevant. The interviewees revealed what they wanted to tell me. I have not tried to change the stories of the interviewees. I may have questioned something in my thoughts during the interviews, I may have even suspected their aims, but I have based the construction of their life stories on the data as they told it. The social and cultural play in the research continues even after having conducted the interviews. It is seen in building the life stories and in interpreting the data. The interpretation is based on my understanding at this specific time and place. The research may have contributed to different results and emphasis if I had analyzed the data immediately after having conducted the interviews. For the purpose of the research I see that the more peaceful external environment in Finland and distance from the hectic situation in the Middle East have provided a proper setting to approach the data.

### **5.3 The data analysis**

#### **5.3.1 Guidelines of the analysis**

Mäkelä (1992) raises three criteria, which are essential for the success of qualitative analysis. He suggests them to be relevant especially for a research based on the data that is clearly defined, e.g. texts from interviews or other written texts. In order to give the outside reader of my research a chance to evaluate the research data, I approach the data through the criteria presented by Mäkelä (1992, 47- 59):

Firstly, the qualitative data should be evaluated according to its significance in the society and the culture. In research practice this means that the data in the research is really worth the analysis. The reader should also be able to understand the cultural context and the significance of the data. In this research, my aim was to gather socially and culturally significant data relating to the phenomenon of international assignment and expatriate career with its various aspects. The interviewees represent fifteen different nationalities. By this I wanted to ensure that there is no bias to any national culture. From thirty interviewees sixteen were female and fourteen male. The age of the interviewees varied from 25 to 61 years. The interviewees represented different types of non-profit organizations ranging from humanitarian to media organizations. Two of the interviewees did not work in NGOs. They worked in an IGO, in a department under EU commission dealing with NGOs. I decided to include their interviews in the data and see if there will be any significant differences in comparison to the rest of the data. The data should be evaluated according to its significance in the society and in the culture. Hence, according

to the criterion, the data in this research can be defined as significant. From the point of view of narrative approach the context of the study is understood to refer to time, place and social structure (Erkkilä 2005). This means that the meanings created and presented by the interviewees have their origin and significance in the cultural context of the interviewees. The limitation in this respect is the fact that none of the interviewees represent African or Asian cultures. I realized this limitation already when I conducted the interviews, but there were not any Asian or African people working in the non-profit organizations that I gained access to through my networks. On the other hand, it reflects the reality of the current situation in international non-profit organizations in Israeli and Palestinian societies. Most of the Asian people in Israel work as foreign workers either in building or agriculture, and although that context is very important in the Israeli society, it is far from the context of my study.

The second criterion that Mäkelä brings is the sufficiency of the data. This is linked to the idea of saturation, which I discussed in the previous chapter. Thirty interviews form a relatively large amount of data in a qualitative research. Mäkelä (1992) claims that the number of the cases itself does not prove the sufficiency of the data, but the amount of transcribed text from each interview is important. The interviews in this research took from one hour to two and a half hours, and the total amount of transcribed text is 571 single-spaced pages. It has taken hours to listen to and transcribe the interviews as well as analyze the vast amount of text. One of the advantages of this research is the rich data. A great deal of research in the field of cross-cultural adaptation and international assignments has been quantitative. Often the qualitative research in the field has been focused on the data from people who represent only one national culture.

The third criterion presented by Mäkelä is that the research should present adequate basis to repeat and to evaluate it. This means that the researcher has to present unambiguous rules for interpretation and categorization in the process of analysis. My decisions on these questions will be discussed in chapter 5.3.4, where I write about the analysis process.

### **5.3.2 Background of the interviewees**

This chapter clarifies the interview context from the perspective of the interviewee. It introduces some background information about the interviewees and about their national-cultural and organizational contexts.

First, I present a table to demonstrate the age, gender, language skills, international family background and international work experience of each interviewee. Each interviewee is assigned a code in order to keep their anonymity. Furthermore, in order to make the reading of the following chapters more fluent, from this chapter onwards each interviewee will be referred to as using the letter I and the number of the interviewee, i.e. interviewee number two= I-2. A brief description of each title of the table is given before presenting the table.

**Code** Each interviewee is assigned a code number  
**Age** The age of the interviewee  
**Gender** Male (M) or female (F)  
**Languages** The first language is the mother tongue of the interviewee. Some of the interviewees have more than one mother tongue. After the + sign it is shown, by how many other languages the interviewee manages with. If the number is in brackets, this means that the language skill is quite minimal.

**International family background**

This shows if the interviewee has had earlier international background by coming from a multicultural family or having lived abroad as a child

**International work experience**

This column shows if the interviewee has worked internationally before this assignment

TABLE 6 The background information of the interviewees

Code	Age	Gender	Languages	International family background	International work experience/ How long time in Israel
1	55	F	1 + 5	Yes, father worked many years abroad	Thailand 83-96 / two years in Israel
2	37	M	1 + 2	Yes, his wife is German and he is British. His father traveled internationally	Brussels 3,5 years, Germany 1,5 years / three months in Israel
3	45	M	1 + 3	Yes, lived abroad as a child	Grew up in Argentina and Japan, short stay in Germany and the USA / in Israel 9 years
4	66	M	1 + 2	No	Has worked in Israel 36 years, not in other places before that
5	39	F	1 + 5	Yes, multicultural family	80-84 America, 82-83 Paris, 87-88 America, 91-93 Israel, 93-95 Croatia and from 95 in Israel
6	40	M	1 + 1 (+1)	No	No earlier international experience, now 11 years in the area, 5 of them in Gaza
7	41	M	1 + (1)	No	Germany 87-90, Cyprus 79-82, Falkland Islands 81, Balkan 95 for half a year, short stays other places / in Israel 6 months
8	41	F	1 + 1	No	No other international work experience, has been here 14 years
9	30	F	1 + 4	No	Kenya 1 year, Namibia 2 years, Ivory Coast 1,5 years, Germany 9-10 months/ has been in Israel three weeks
10	34	M	1 + 4	No	8 months in Israel in 1991, not worked abroad / now 1,5 years in Israel
11	29	F	2 + 4	No	In England for a year, traveled but not worked / in Israel 2,5 years

12	26	F	1 + 4	No	Milan half a year, Beirut one year, almost a year in Israel
13	50	F	1 + 1	Yes, family in different countries	Not worked or lived abroad/ has been 2,5 years in Israel
14	61	F	1 + 1 (+1)	No	Mozambique 91-98 / in Israel 2 years
15	51	F	1 + 1	No	Not worked abroad earlier / 2 years in Israel
16	56	M	1 + 1	No	Botswana 2,5 years, Tanzania 3 years, Kenya 5 years/Israel almost 2 years
17	27	F	3 + 3 (+1)	Yes, multicultural family	Lived in Spain and Lebanon, Brussels half a year / Israel 1,5 years
18	37	F	1 + 3	No	England 2 years, Israel 1,5 years / no in Israel 1 year 9 months
19	45	F	1 (+3)	No	Not worked abroad earlier/ Israel 3 years
20	27	F	1 + 3	Yes, multicultural family	Lived 18 years in Egypt, lived in France/Israel 2,5 years
21	35	M	1 (+1)	No	Worked during summers in China and Poland/ Israel almost 2 years
22	61	M	1 + 2 (+1)	No	Not worked abroad earlier/ in the area 7 years
23	50	F	1 + 1	No, sister now in International organization	Half a year in Jerusalem 81-82, three months in the USA / now 7 years here
24	34	F	1 + 3 (+3)	No	Some weeks in Africa, some months in Asia/ Israel 5,5 years
25	30	F	1 + 3	Yes, father worked in the UN	Short stays in Israel, 2,5 months in India, studied in Scotland/ Israel 3years
26	31	M	1 + 1	No	Not worked abroad earlier/ 1,5 years in Israel
27	33	M	1 + 4 (+4)	No, later sisters moved to Belgium	Studied in the US, worked in France 93-95/ Israel 7 years
28	45	M	1 + 2	No, not worked abroad. Married to an Arab Christian from Egypt	Not worked abroad earlier/ in Israel 4 years
29	42	M	1 + 2	No, wife Finnish	Israel 90-97, England 97-2001/ now 6 months in Israel
30	25	M	1 + 1	No	Not worked abroad earlier/ now in Israel 3,5 years

The above table reveals many interesting facts. There were 16 female and 14 male interviewees in the study. The age distribution of the interviewees was from 25 years to 66 years. The interviewees had lived in Israel, in general, for a relatively long time; I-4 had stayed in the area for 36 years. I-9 was the exception. She had just come to Israel and stayed there for only three weeks but

she had four international assignments before this job. All the interviewees have long-time international experience. Many of them have stayed in various countries for reasons related to family, study or work. Even those interviewees, who did not have earlier international experience besides Israel, had stayed there for at least two years except for I-9. A common significant feature for the interviewees is that many of them seem to have a very good command of different languages. Two young women had a mother tongue fluency in more than one language. I-11 comes from Ukraine and speaks Ukrainian and Russian as her mother tongues. I-17 comes from multicultural Lebanese-Spanish family and used two languages at home: Spanish with her mother and Arabic with her father. The third language that she defines as her mother tongue is French. This is due to the fact that it was the language of her education from primary school up to university. Six out of thirty interviewees come from a multicultural family, which means that the parents represent different cultural backgrounds, or their spouse is of another nationality. Furthermore, some interviewees came from a family, where family members were or are currently working abroad. I-3 lived as a child many years abroad because of the international assignment of his father.

### **The national and cultural contexts of the Interviewees**

Time and space, the past and the future form a crucial force to the present experience of the interviewees. This is why it is important to understand the starting point and the background of the interviewees. Some basic information about the cultural contexts of the interviewee is shown in the next table. The table also presents some important information about the complexities of living and work environments in the Israeli-Palestinian context:

<b>Code</b>	The number assigned for each interviewee
<b>Status</b>	M = married, S = single
<b>Host society</b>	the interviewee was asked to name his/her host society I= Israel, PA =Palestinian Authority area
<b>Work environment</b>	The work related environment of the interviewee I, PA, Leb.= Lebanon, M-E= Middle East

TABLE 7 The national and cultural contexts of the interviewees

Code	Status	Nationality	Host Society	Work environment	Place of living	Did the interviewee have cross-cultural training?	Adjusted / not adjusted
1	S	Finland	I	I	I	Yes	Yes
2	M	England	I	both	I	No	Yes
3	M	Norway	I	I	I	No	Yes
4	M	United States	Israeli Arabs	Both	I	Yes	Yes
5	M	Germany	PA	PA	East Jer.	No	No
6	M	United States	Both	Both	I	No	Yes
7	M	England	Both	PA	East Jer.	Yes, short	Yes

8	M	United States	I	I	I	Yes	Yes
9	S	Finland	Both	PA	East Jer.	Yes	Not yet
10	M	Finland	I	I	I	Yes	No
11	M	Ukraine	I	I	I	Yes	Yes
12	S	United States	None	I	I	Studied	Yes and no
13	S	South Africa	I	I	I	No	Yes
14	S	England	I	I	I	No	Yes
15	S	Sweden	PA	PA, Leb.	East Jer.	No	Yes
16	M	Sweden	Both	PA, ME	East Jer.	Yes	Yes
17	S	Spain	PA	PA	East Jer.	No	Yes
18	S	Finland	I	I	I	Yes	Yes
19	S	England	Israel	I	I	No	Yes
20	M	France	PA	PA	East Jer.	No	Yes
21	S	United States	I	Israel	I	No	Yes
22	M	Germany	PA	PA	PA	no	Yes
23	M	Germany	PA	PA	PA	No	Yes
24	S	Germany	Both, more I	I	Israel	Yes	Yes
25	S	Norway	PA	PA	East Jer.	No	Yes
26	M	Denmark	I	I	I	No	Yes
27	S	Belgium	I	I	I	No	Yes
28	S	Canada	None/Canada	PA & I, M-E	I	Yes	Yes
29	M	Brazil	I	I	I	Yes	Yes
30	S	Denmark	I	I	I	A small course	Yes

The above table shows the family situation of the interviewees as well as his/her nationality. The interviewees represent 15 different nationalities. An important matter affecting the interaction and communication of each interviewee is what society the interviewee sees as his/her host society. In some cases a person works in Palestine and lives in Israel. The position of East Jerusalem was vague when I conducted this study. It is geographically located on the border of Israel and Palestine, and the future of the area and its borders inside the city are under continuous discussion. In some cases the work environment was both Israel and Palestine, but the person lived either in Israel or in Palestine. Personal evaluation of the interviewee concerning his/her own cross-cultural adaptation is shown in the column "adjusted". 26 interviewees state that they have adjusted to living and working in the area, only two of them share the experience of not feeling adjusted. One interviewee had just moved to the area three weeks ago and said that she had not yet adjusted. Furthermore I-12 answered "yes and no" to the question related to personal adaptation. Sixteen interviewees had never participated in any cross-cultural training. Two interviewees had participated in a short course and only twelve of the interviewees had received the possibility for a more extensive cross-cultural training. I-12 had attended cross-cultural courses as part of her university training. From the table it could be interpreted that there is no linear link between cross-cultural training and the personal experience of adjustment expressed by the interviewees.

### The organizational context of the Interviewees

The organizations of the interviewees of this study represent various types of non-profit sector organizations. The next figure shows the types of organizations in which the interviewees worked.

TABLE 8 The types of non-profit organizations in the study

Types of Non-Profit Organizations	The interviewees in relation to the organization
Culture and recreation	5
Education and research	3,12, 21, 22, 23, 27
Health	24
Social Services	6, 14, 18, 19
Environment	
Development and Housing	15, 16, 17, 25
Civic and Advocacy	20
Philanthropic intermediaries	
International activities	2, 7, 9, 11, 28
Religious	1, 4, 8, 9, 13, 26, 29, 30
Business and professionals	
Other	

The interviewees in this study worked in various types of non-profit sector organizations. It was not so easy to define the organization clearly according to the INCPO Group classification. Many of the organizations were active in different types of activities. Even many of the religious organizations were involved in education and social services. I-2 and I-28 worked in non-profit news and media organizations. I could have placed them either in international activities or business and professionals. I-7 and I-9 worked in the International Red Cross, so their organizations could also have been defined in the types of organizations involved in development, social services or health.

All the organizations in the study were international organizations. Some of them had their own premises in the area and worked very closely with local organizations. However, the recruitment and the terms of the contracts of the interviewees were agreed upon internationally. The sample of this study is too small to draw any conclusions on the types of international non-profit organizations in Israeli-Palestinian context. Most of the interviewees worked in multicultural teams. Only I-26 and I-30, who were Danish, were mainly working only with Danish people. The interviewees had an open attitude to the challenges of the Israeli and Palestinian cultures but often the organizational cultures related to their work brought an additional challenge to adapt to.

### 5.3.3 Narrativity as a method of analysis

The theoretical frame of reference for the research is based on narrative ontology and this led to a decision to apply narrativity also as a method of analysis of the data. Narrativity as a means of analysis can refer to analysis of narratives or narrative analysis (Polkinhorne 1995, 6-8; Heikkinen 2001, 116-130; Heikkinen

2002, 13-27). The analysis of narratives emphasizes the categorization of the narrative. The narrative analysis focuses on producing a holistic and chronological story with a plot, a new narrative. The construction of a new narrative is based on the research data. The analysis of narratives and narrative analysis can also often be combined in the same research, stressing more on one of them. The distinction is based on Bruner's presentation of two cognitive means: narrative cognition and paradigmatic cognition (Bruner 1991). Polkinghorne links the analysis of narratives to paradigmatic cognition and the narrative analysis to narrative cognition. Narrative analysis offers a researcher a way to present the narratives in forms that can be located between academic writing and fiction, even dramas or visual presentations (Heikkinen 2002). A very important element of a narrative or a life story is the concept of time. Carr (1986, 4-9) explains that in addition to organizing social existence, a narrative is a way of organizing experience of time. Lämsä and Sintonen (2006) suggest that participatory narrative may offer new ways for organization members in practical learning situations. They present a connection between the participatory narrative and the critical learning theory, which is the approach to learning applied in this research and which is referred to as transformational learning in my research.

The narrative approach means that the starting point in exploring international career and cross-cultural adaptation is the perspective of the interviewees. Each interviewee narrates his/her work and life in different ways. At the same time s/he narrates his/her identity (Aro 1996). Narrative analysis can lean on many kinds of research data since the interaction in the interview situation usually facilitates the interviewees to construct stories (Coffey & Atkinson 1996). In addition to conveying their own perspective on their life and worldview in relation to the themes of the research, the interviewees construct and convey a picture about who they are, what they have become and why. Their construction of life stories and life histories can be understood as a way of identity construction (Öberg 1997; McAdams 1993).

Tesch claims that among the wide variety of principles and procedures applied by qualitative researchers the combining element is that "analysis is the process of making sense of narrative data" (Tesch 1990, 4). In a wide sense of meaning, all the interviews, where the interviewee is allowed to talk freely, can be seen as narrative interviews (Roos 1988). My role as the researcher and the interviewer was to facilitate and to encourage the interviewees to go through their international work experience (Riessman 1993; Roos 1988).

#### **5.3.4 The analysis process**

The first steps towards analyzing the research data took place when I already met the interviewees during the interviews. I agree with the claims of Lincoln and Guba (1985, 1994) that the observer "cannot be disentangled from the observed", but the inquiry leads to joint construction of the reality. Analyzing 571 pages of data was a challenge. This difficulty is also mentioned in qualitative methodology literature (Alasuutari 1995; Miles & Huberman 1994;



Patton 1990; Silverman 2000). My experience in the analysis of the data confirms this. I started the interviews in December 2001. A considerable amount of time and effort was spent in arranging the meetings with the interviewees and because of the hectic situation in Jerusalem the timetable often changed. While interviewing I started to transcribe the interviews that I had recorded. I did it in a way, that I marked the places where there was hesitation in the sentences or where the interviewee emphasized something by raising his/her voice, when s/he was laughing or got angry or had some pauses. I also assigned a running number to different questions of the interview. I did not use any assistance for transcription. I wanted to listen to and transcribe every interview myself in order to keep an intimate touch with the data. My last interview took place on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, and I had all the interviews transcribed by the end of June 2002. Autumn 2002 I started to read the data thoroughly and to define my approach for the analysis. At the same time, I continued reading the literature in order to enhance my understanding of the phenomenon. This was very much disturbed by the escalating violence and preparations of the possible USA attack on Iraq. I stayed in Jerusalem with my family. We had to reconsider our stay in Jerusalem. For my research this meant that spring 2003 was taken up by everyday practical things and supporting our children, especially our daughter in her final exams and preparing the house for receiving guests evacuating from the Tel Aviv area. It also took a great amount of work preparing the move of a family back to Finland. I decided to put my work and research aside and instead take care of my responsibilities as a mother and spouse.

The analysis process in qualitative research can proceed in different ways. Miles and Huberman (1994) define the analysis process as data reduction, data display and conclusions (10-11). Data reduction takes place through the process of conducting qualitative research. It already occurs when the researcher considers the aspects of the conceptual framework, during the time of defining research questions and data collection. At this stage of the research, data reduction meant that my next step would be to reduce the transcribed interview texts so that it would include the essential elements. Secondly, while reading the transcriptions, experiences seemed to arise that were similar in many aspects, thus, giving me an idea that there might be some typologies of expatriates to be found. For this purpose, I wanted to systematically reduce each interview so that all the interview texts would be reduced according to the same principles. I did this by using Labov's story framework (Labov & Waletzky 1967). Kiviniemi (2001, 78) claims that the analysis in the qualitative research is both analytic and synthetic. He suggests a holistic thematic structure to be a way of holding the data together. He continues by stating that usually the internal tensions and detailed thematic specifications take their final form only after many phases in the analysis. This was also the case in my research. Vilkko (1997), Jokiranta (2003) and Sintonen (2001) discuss the process of being an active actor and self-reflexive in the process of reading and analyzing the data. To avoid biased interpretation and analysis I decided to aim for a

polyphonic construction of narratives (Hytti 2003; Czarniawska-Joerges 1995). It became a long process finding the practical steps of how to proceed.

The next figure shows the phases of the process of analysis in this research:

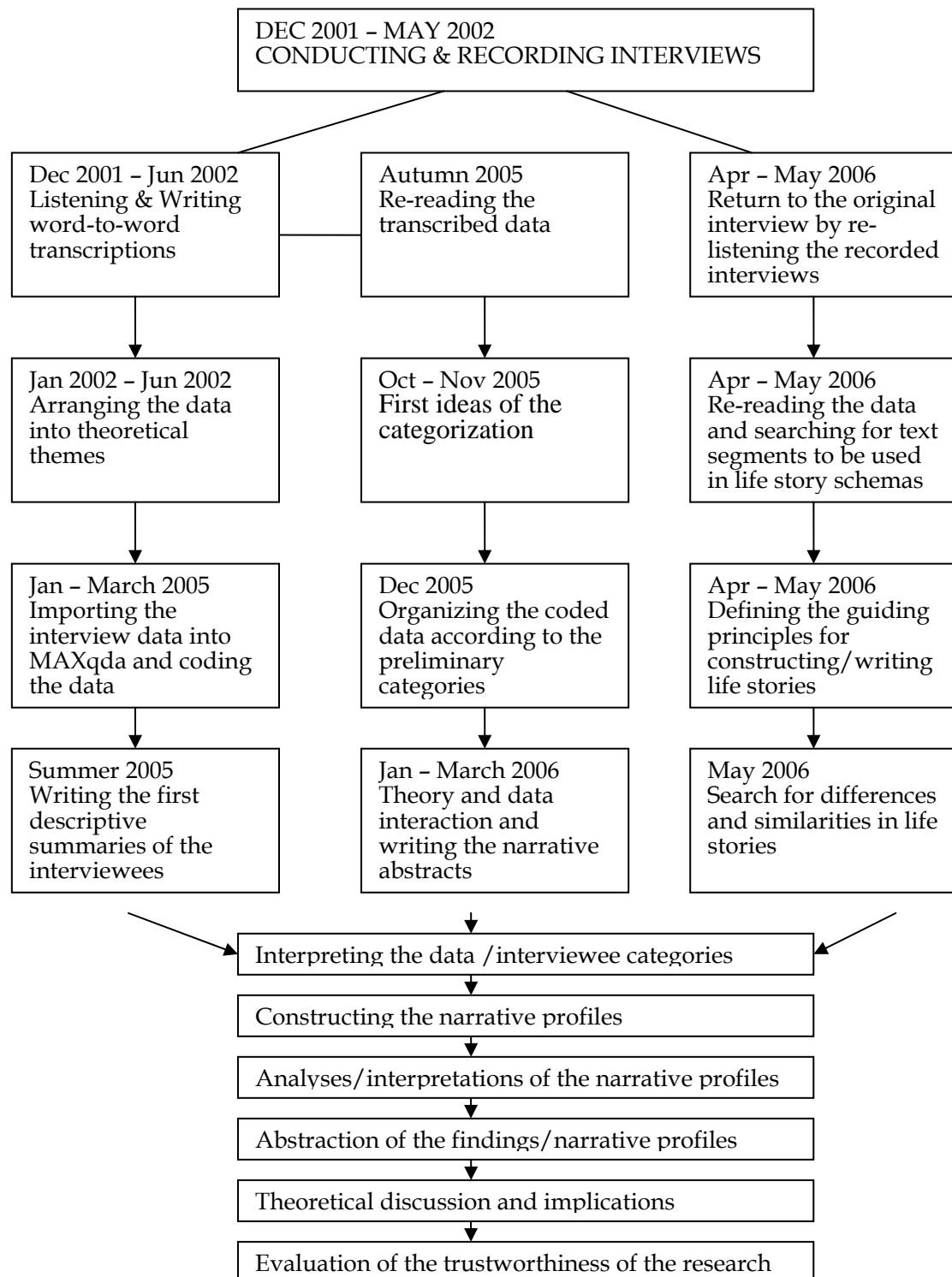


FIGURE 4 The analysis process

I conducted and recorded the interviews while in Jerusalem from December 2001 to May 2002. While completing the interview task, I carefully listened to the recorded interviews and wrote word-for-word transcriptions. At the beginning, the mini-disc that I used during the interviews gave me some problematic moments, but I had problems only in the recording of interview number two; nothing was found on the tape. Fortunately, I had written down every single word during the interview, and I managed to do the transcription on this basis. During the first interviews, I used to write down everything because I did not feel very comfortable in trusting the recorder. Writing did not cause major problems because I used to work many years as a professional secretary and was used to writing when people spoke or dictated. With the rest of the interviews there were no problems anymore.

From autumn 2002 to spring 2003 I spent a lot of time strengthening and broadening my theoretical understanding on the phenomenon of cross-cultural adaptation during international assignment and spent time on reading through the interview data. I arranged the transcribed data under the themes according to Kim (2001). When we moved to Finland in summer 2003 I put my research aside. Surprisingly, it took longer than I expected before I got an opportunity to get more involved in continuing the research. We moved to Finland in Midsummer 2003. I started my new job just a week after our arrival. It took some time to settle down and to make the arrangements for our young children to continue their education. In the course of the year 2004 I took my study notes and research data and started to proceed with reading and writing. Meanwhile, I also participated in some seminars on qualitative research methods and on the topic of international career, which were arranged for doctoral students. I received a scholarship and was finally able to work three months full time on the research. My aim was to read through the data and to define the approach for continuing the analysis. In the meantime, I had taken a course of a computer program MAX qda (qualitative data analysis). It is a computer program, which was developed to help the data management and analysis in qualitative research (Rantala 2003).

The analysis by MAXqda complies with the following steps: (1) transcribing the texts (2) analysis and summary of each text (3) comparison of individual cases (4) development of thematic codes either inductively from the texts or deductively based on the theory (5) coding the texts (6) Analysis of the codes (7) comparing and analyzing interactions between the codes. At this stage of the analysis I applied MAXqda as follows:

1. I had transcribed all the interviews in Word-format while in Jerusalem. In January 2005 when I had attended the course on MAXqda I imported the text to MAXqda and started to code each text according to the code system that I had developed from the theoretical framework.
2. At the same time I reread the interviews and wrote a first summary of each interview. I concluded each interview by key words, my key

observations from the interviews. I preserved these summaries in Word and did not import them to MAXqda.

3. MAXqda enabled me to form summaries of each code from the entire data. My next step was to combine all the text segments of different interviewees under a certain code and to get an overall picture from the data.

The amount of the transcribed text to be analyzed was enormous. MAXqda helped to organize this data in a systematic way. At the same time, I was reading through the data allowing it to become intimate and alive in my mind. After having read all the data a couple of times, I took a notebook and wrote down some matters that had become important and relevant from each interview. The relevance was defined according to my own personal understanding of the data. This was the start of writing up narrative abstracts or story synopsis of each interviewee. Kiviniemi (2001) writes that the analysis process in qualitative research is both analytic and synthetic. The analytic process includes organizing and coding the data under certain themes and codes in a systematic process. This takes place during various stages and steps back and forth in the analysis. This was also the case in my research. The synthetic process, according to Kiviniemi, is to find out a thematic structure that holds the entire data together. I decided to write the narrative abstracts, which are my descriptions about the interviewees based on the four pillars of my integrated research framework. I wrote these descriptions through the lenses of the integrated theoretical frame of Kim as an outsider. I refer to these descriptions as narrative abstracts, and they are written in the third person showing that I as a researcher have been the constructor. These abstracts are enclosed in appendix no 3.

At this stage, I wanted to approach the data from a different point of view and find a way, in which I could give the interviewees a possibility to construct their own stories in terms of their international work, life experience and adaptation. I saw a danger in continuing the analysis based on the coding and the narrative abstracts. Leaning on the fragmented codes would easily lead me to too early steps of generalization or stereotyping the interview data. Leaning on the narrative abstracts, which were established on the basis of the theoretical frame and my own personal experience could bind my search and process of unriddling, as Alasuutari calls it (1995).

This was the reason why I put the narrative abstracts aside and closed MAXqda in my computer and started from the very beginning. In order to detach myself from the earlier paths in the analysis I decided to do this starting from the authentic interview situations. I could very easily detach myself from the coding process because it was already more than one year from having worked with the codes and MAXqda. I took my minidisc and relistened to each interview. It took more than fifty hours to listen to all the thirty interviews once again. However, I found it very important in order to get into the interview situation and have the authentic feelings and nuances of each situation. I

succeeded very well in this aim because in more than one situation I could even hear the sirens of ambulances, the voices from the street or restaurant, and also birds singing in the garden. I wanted to conduct this stage by strictly keeping one interview situation as one case of analysis, rather than mixing up all the interview data. After this, I built a frame, in which I could locate relevant texts of each interview, word-by-word according to his/her own expression. According to Alasuutari (1995), plot summaries of different stories enable the search for similarities and differences between the stories. Plot structures also help examine meanings and special features of the stories. For my own research I found the structural story frame developed by Vilkkio (1992) and based on Labov's (Labov & Waletzky 1967) structural analysis to be most useful. This frame is presented in more detail in the following chapter. This frame offered a starting point for the search of possible categories of different stories; the clue that I found in the first reading and during re-reading of the interview texts.

At this stage of analysis I had three different "stories" about the same interviewee. The first story was constructed by the interviewee him/herself and I refer to it as a life story. The second one, where I was the constructor, is referred to as a narrative abstract. The third "story" was the descriptive summary of each interviewee, which I had written on a very early phase of the analysis. I continued my analysis by exploring the life stories of the interviewees. According to Hänninen (1999) and Hyvärinen (1994) the researcher approaches the data by presenting theoretical questions against the data. This means that the research task itself should be the guiding force for the analysis. The researcher should be able to present the original stories of the interviewees to the readers so that they could evaluate the trustworthiness of the study. Thus, the life stories of the interviewees gave me a basis for a systematic approach and study on the process of international career and cross-cultural adaptation.

The next step in the analysis was to find similarities and differences between the subjective life stories of the interviewees. This analysis took place in three steps. (1) During the reading and rereading process I started to think that some of the experiences of different interviewees seem to resemble each other. (2) To study this intuition more thoroughly I printed the coded data of work related experiences of each interviewee. This showed that the interviewees expressed a different emphasis on work. There were four types of emphasis to be found: emphasis on personal career, emphasis on the balance between career and personal matters, emphasis on the ideology behind the work and the fourth type of interviewees were unstable in their relation to their career. (3) I continued the analysis by using a method presented by Roos (1988) as life-management and by Alasuutari (1995) as self-control of the interviewees. They used it for categorization of narratives. Following the above three steps I built the narrative profiles. After that, I continued the analysis process by searching for "a grand plot" inside each category and naming the categories. Then I attended to the theoretical framework in light of the empirical findings of this research in the frame of each narrative profile. Finally, I evaluated the

credibility and trustworthiness of the study in accordance to the criteria of the qualitative and especially the narrative analysis. One of the complexities of narrative analysis is that it covers so many different options. This leads to the fact that narrative analysis usually requires much time. There are many phases in the process of analysis, and the researcher has to return to the original data several times (Vuokila-Oikkonen & al. 2003). This can also be seen in the figure number three, which shows the different phases of my process of analysis. I tried different paths before I found the way to continue the analysis in a way, which, according to my understanding, would be coherent with the presumptions of narrative analysis. In addition to the enormous textual data, most of the interviewees had drawn their personal adaptation process and a map, showing their social interaction with the environment.

## **6 LIFE STORIES OF THE INTERVIEWEES**

### **6.1 Principles for constructing the life stories**

There are different ways of building life stories. In my research, I was interested in the content as well as the structure of the individual stories. Stories are held together by certain structures. Labov (Labov & Waletzky 1967) developed structural categories to analyze and interpret stories (Riessman 1993). In this study the personal life stories of the interviewees will be built with the help of a schematic structure, which was used by Vilkkö (1992, 91-94) when she analyzed autobiographies. She has applied and developed the structural frame, which was first presented by Labov (1967). Vilkkö's aim was to build a frame, which would facilitate the evaluation of the narratives. Vilkkö's schematic frame provided me with a good way of organizing the contents of the interviews as personal stories, which are comparable to a certain degree. Furthermore, it provided a systematic way for deeper analysis and evaluation, as well as a source for searching for a method to emplot the different stories.

Vilkkö demands two principles in the data management: Firstly the story has to be kept holistic although it is divided into certain schemes. Secondly, the researcher has to keep to the story told by the interviewee. When she analyzes autobiographies she clarifies her principles saying that she wants to keep as near to the data as possible, to make her choices based on her reading experience and dialogue with the texts and its constructor and to respect the writers of the autobiographies (Vilkkö 1997, 23). I find Vilkkö's principles important in my research. I wanted to keep to the data and decided to build the structural life story by using verbatim references of the interviewees. When I selected the text segments I relied on my familiarity with the interviewees and the text they constructed in the interview situations. I also wanted to respect them and their opinions and experiences and even the way they expressed their thoughts. I applied Vilkkö's schemas in the story to my research as follows (Vilkkö 1992, 94):

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	Introduction to the story: Why and how did the interviewee come to work in Israel?
<b>Orientation Position</b>	The frame of the personal story: Time and place/environment Description of work and life- main action in the story Social interaction with people – actors of the story
<b>Complicating action</b>	What did take place? What kind of difficulties has the interviewee experienced?
<b>Solution Result</b>	What was the reaction to the above difficulties? How has the interviewee managed to solve the problems faced during the international career?
<b>Evaluation</b>	The interviewee's personal reflection and evaluation of the international assignment, the significance of this experience and considerations about the future
<b>Coda</b>	What has the interviewee learned and what are his/her conclusions about this experience as to future life and work

To evaluate if the above structure is applicable for building life stories, I compared it with the statements presented by Polkinghorne (1995) for the guidelines of developing narratives. Polkinghorne refers to Bruner's idea of narrative cognition (1986, 1990 and 1991) and states that "narrative cognition configures the diverse elements of a particular action into a unified whole in which each element is connected to the central purpose of action" (Polkinghorne 1995, 11). In this research, the purpose of action is the international assignment and the personal experience of the interviewee in relevance to it. According to Polkinghorne, narrative cognition makes this action understandable. The result of narrative analysis is to produce stories from different elements of the data. The focus of the research defines what kind of data is required. Polkinghorne claims that the data gathered has to relate to a bounded system, and it should reveal uniqueness and complexity of the individual case. In narrative analysis "the researcher organizes the data elements into a coherent developmental account" (Polkinghorne 1995, 15). For Polkinghorne, this means relating the events and actions to one another and, thus, "configuration of the data into a coherent whole" (15). The configured story does not include all the elements of the data, but, on the other hand, it must be in line with the entire data and result in order and meaningfulness that is not clear from the data itself. The story should be able to explain how a certain phenomenon took place and offer an explanation to the events of the story and its outcome. The statements of Polkinghorne are based on seven criteria of Dollard (1935) for judging a life history. Polkinghorne (16-18) applies the following criteria for the development of a narrative:

1. The cultural context where the research takes place has to be included in the life stories: In the above frame the cultural context is described in the part of "orientation or position", where I have included text



fragments about the host society and the communication network of the interviewees. I have described the host societies and their specific features in chapter 4. The predisposition/background information about the interviewees shows the nationality of the interviewee as well as his/her previous cross-cultural experiences in tables six and seven.

2. Bodily dimensions such as illnesses and death should be included in the life stories. I agree very much with the statement of Polkinghorne "the body places temporal limits of life" (1995, 17). The experiences of illnesses and death have come out in the interviews. They have been included in the life story when they have had an influence on the orientation or complication actions of the interviewees. Otherwise, the embodiment is present inside the story structure but it is not specifically attended to.
3. The relationships between the actor and other people form a significant element in the story development. These relationships are included in many parts of the life story structure used in my research. Their presence shows the importance of the others in constructing the individual life story.
4. Polkinghorne claims that the story should concentrate on the central character and his/her choices and movement for a desired outcome. The cultural context, the bodily dimensions and the relationship between the interviewee and other significant people form a frame for the personal choices of the interviewee in order to accomplish his/her goals. The life stories in this research are constructed according to the personal experiences and reflections of the interviewees on their experience of the ongoing international assignment in the Middle East. The choices, inner fears and struggles of the interviewees are brought out from the life stories as their own statements throughout the story.
5. The historical continuity of the characters is important in the stories. Firstly, this means that the social events of the particular historical setting influence the stories, and the actors respond to it in different ways. The historical setting of the life stories is the Middle East crisis, which has specific effects on each interviewee. It can be seen in the introductory part of the story, e.g. when the interviewee states, "*long oriented interest in the Middle East*" as the main reason to bring him/her to work in the area. In other cases, the historical setting is an essential force behind the complicating actions and requires choices and specific actions as a solution. Secondly, this historical continuity of the characters means that the interviewees construct their stories based on their previous experiences. The present and future actions of the interviewees can of course be different, even completely different from the previous decisions, but Polkinghorne claims that the researcher has to understand their impact on the life story. During the long interviews, I thoroughly discussed with the interviewees their previous and present experiences and actions during their international assignment. The

interviewees also expressed their personal considerations of their future and some of the life stories present a systematically planned and continual path from the past to the future. This dimension is often expressed in the evaluation- part of the story.

6. The storied outcome of narrative analysis should present a person in a unique situation where the plot of the story takes place. The story, thus, requires a beginning, middle, and an end. In the above structural frame, the beginning of the story is included in the introduction. The middle is what takes place at work and personal life during this specific international assignment in the Middle East. The end comes from evaluating these experiences with a personal coda of the interviewee referring to this situation or to future similar situations. Each life story presents a unique story of one person in a specific situation.
7. *"The story should provide a story line or a plot which will configure the data elements into a meaningful explanation of the responses and actions of the actor"* (Ibid.,18). This point of view instructs the researcher to select data elements and put them in an order to show how certain events and actions lead to a certain outcome. In my research and story building this means that using the above structural frame helped me to configure the life stories so that I can show the personal path of each interviewee during this international assignment; how did s/he decide to come to the Middle East, what was the outcome of the assignment, what were the complicating actions and difficulties, what was the response of the interviewee and whether they contributed a solution or not. Finally, each interviewee evaluates his/her international assignment relating to the dimensions s/he sees significant and draws the conclusions.

The structural frame by Vilkkio (1992) and the guideline statements of Polkinghorne (1995) for the development of a story helped construct a whole and unified story, which connects the parts together. Whether it is a real story or not or a true story is a question that is not relevant in narrative analysis. From the constructivist point of view the actors/interviewees of the stories are the active constructors of their own stories. When I wrote in chapter 5.2.3 about the interview situations I shared my reflections as to the different roles placed on me in those situations. In constructing the life stories, my position as a researcher was not neutral either, because "my voice" is seen inside the stories although they are told by first person noun and the text segments are directly and word-for word from the interview data. The presented life stories include my background and understanding of the situation and the experiences of interviewees even though I have aimed for a systematic configuration of life stories inside the above frame. The story frame helped me select data elements, which hopefully aids the reader in understanding the life stories as meaningful explanations of expatriate experiences during their international assignments. Ricoeur (1985, 160) writes that without the life-world of the reader the narrative

is incomplete. This brings in a third element in the evaluation of constructing the stories: the interviewee, the researcher and the reader.

Jokiranta (2003) discusses his experiences during the interviews and analysis of his study on Finnish men living in the country side. He approached the life stories of the men with the humble attitude of acknowledging the richness of the stories. He wrote that it required a considerable amount of time before a conclusion was reached regarding a systematic tool, by which he could approach the stories and open them during the analysis. In my research, the structural framework of Labov offered this tool. Jokiranta (2003, 85) claims further that the only possibility for a researcher to understand life stories and construct an inductive data based interpretation is successive rereading of the stories from different angles. He suggests that there are two ideas to be found behind the rereading of the data. Firstly, the researcher develops a more intimate relationship with the interviewees. Secondly, the way of reading during different reading processes varies; during the first reading it is usually more general, aiming for a holistic perspective and possible first hand identification of similarities and differences between the texts. During the rereading process, reading is more systematic, and the aim of the researcher is to open every interview text in separate, to view all the interview texts at the same time and to construct new texts.

## 6.2 Life stories of the interviewees

This chapter presents the life stories of the interviewees constructed according to the above-described principles:

### Life story constructed by interviewee 1

<b>Abstract</b>	<i>I came here to work with the Thais, that was the main reason to come here. If</i>
<b>Introduction</b>	<i>not thinking that God is behind everything.</i>
<b>Orientation</b>	<b>Time: Two years in Israel</b>
<b>Position</b>	<i>I thought that I would work with Thais and not with Chinese but now I am working also with Chinese that is something new that I didn't expect. I live in two cultures here; in the Far Asian culture and this culture. I feel more home with them than with this society because I know their language and also their non verbal speaking, body language and voices I understand. I feel home, I am not surprised in many cases. And then of course Thais work with Jewish people and that is why I wanted to learn Hebrew to be able to speak with them and to live in this society, not outside of this society but in the country. My host society is Israel. My place of work is the whole country. I work with seven to eight Chinese, three Finns and thousands of Thai people. I have some non work contacts with Chinese people.</i>

<b>Complicating action</b>	<i>The situation is very hard and although I am not myself very much involved in it, anyhow it has an affect because I live with the people. This society reflects with all its problems. This multicultural country that I am surprised sometimes and even afraid of the behaviour. The living conditions of these Asian people, who work here as foreign workers. They give me sometimes a feeling that I would not like to adapt to this society. Some places are closed and I cannot go there even when Thai people work there. The conflict is all the time present. In a way I am not afraid because I cannot work if I am afraid. I don't have the feeling of freight. And not knowing the language properly. There are times that I was very irritated. I saw very negative part of the society. Difficult aspects are the values of people, to understand what is important to them and seeing that through these foreign workers.</i>
<b>Solution Result</b>	<i>When I started the language studies it is easier that time when you go in something new. I have a Hebrew teacher. I have very good cultural training through her, not only studying the language. She teaches not only the language but the way of thinking. And fortunately I have also seen very good employers. I think it goes like waves. I had to say all the time to myself that this is not the truth that all the society is not the same as some employers are... this I had to say to myself.</i>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<i>In the beginning the Finns were important to me because they interpreted the culture. Now it has changed. Now I feel that somehow I don't need this interpretation. Now the Israeli people have become more important and also the Chinese people. If I have totally adapted myself here? I like to stay here. So if that means adapting, then yes. I will work here as long as the Thai people are here in this country. They are my motivation, at least now. It means that I say no to some work offers from Finland. It means that somehow I have to choose. This is the first priority. I prefer this kind of work. It has effect on my cultural identity. I feel more home outside of Finland. I need a call from God to be in Finland.</i>
<b>Coda</b>	<i>I think that I have learned from the people I work with. I have learned a new way of doing things with Thai people. I have never worked like that earlier. I really work in a new way here. It is important to have respect. That it is important where you come from but still at the same time you can respect other people; not losing your own personality, knowing and valuing your own background. Your way of thinking is not the only right one. There are many ways to think, there are many ways to see the world. To accept that life is not so easy and not to try to find easy solutions, to accept confrontations and try to live in that kind of situation. Having the peace but living in a place where there might not be peace. Tolerance with different kind of places and different kind of people, openness to new situations and willingness to learn, not to be a ready person, to be "epävalmis", to be in a learning process all your life – it is hard. I think people have these kinds of things, perhaps not the whole package in one person. But it is the way (to become intercultural). I think that you are on the way to that.</i>

## Life story constructed by interviewee 2

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	<i>The three main reasons that brought me here were job challenge, sense of adventure for both me and my wife and good living conditions compared to what we could afford at home.</i>
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<b>Orientation Position</b>	<p><b>Time: three months in the area</b></p> <p><i>I expected my work to be very challenging and hard. So it is. In my profession the Middle East is one of the most wanted places of work. I work and live both in Israel and Palestine. We are about fifteen people at our office, eight from the UK, three to four Israelis and three to four Palestinians.</i></p> <p><i>We live in Israel and Israel is my host society. I have been received extremely well by this society. The Israeli society is very open and I feel also friendly to strangers. The Palestinian society is also open for strangers.</i></p>
<b>Complicating action</b>	<p><i>The political situation has of course influence. I cannot take my wife to see some Palestinian friends or places. It is difficult to travel sometimes. Not knowing the language, security and how it influences people and sometimes too much work have made the adjustment difficult. There is always the fear of terror that you feel but me or my family have not felt it personally dangerous living here. The biggest challenges are the language and the safety issues.</i></p>
<b>Solution Result</b>	<p><i>Working in the... (Name of the organization) has a great influence in this situation. When people hear where I work, they immediately try to give a positive and normal picture of themselves and their society. Especially the Palestinians have got used to use the media as their tool to influence the Western world.</i></p> <p><i>My ways to manage is the work that enjoy and my wife who likes staying here. It is crucial to find time for the family. I take every three weeks some days that we can spend together. Nice house, neighbours and the job that enjoy have helped my adjustment.</i></p>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p><i>I have worked in this field already twelve years and enjoy my work. I plan to continue in an international career. I may stay here four to five years but I think that will be all the... (Name of the organization) allows me to stay in one area. I am sure I will continue in the international career. And having worked here is an advantage in my profession.</i></p>
<b>Coda</b>	<p><i>I am used to living abroad. I think that I have adapted quite well and also my wife. What has helped is open frame of mind and that we are a strong couple. Continuing international career will have an influence on my family. We have discussed about what kind of education we want to give to our child. I am English and my wife is German. It may be that my English identity becomes weaker and more flexible. I have learned every day something new professionally and individually. I think an intercultural person or I would prefer to call him multicultural person is open and flexible.</i></p>

### Life story constructed by interviewee 3

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	<p><i>I had a calling here. First we were asked to come. Second thing was that we felt from outside okay, we had time to reflect to the whole issue of Israel and we asked some advisers of our own. I went to a psychiatrist so that they could find out if I fit a life in a pressure cooker because we knew that life here would be difficult.</i></p>
<b>Orientation Position</b>	<p><b>Time: Nine years in Israel</b></p> <p><i>For us this is a pressure cooker. It is tense. You see in the way people behave, the way they drive in the traffic, the way to respond. After the Intifada it is more difficult to see the bright sides. What makes our life so easy that there are no other Norwegians we relate to here. That makes our life so good. At least in Jerusalem. Our best friends are some British Jewish immigrants. Israeli society is open for strangers. One example the way they relate to strange pronunciation of Hebrew is very open and generous.</i></p> <p><i>To be a boss in an Israeli work place with the mixed Israeli – foreign staff, it is very interesting challenge. I want us to be a good local work place. I don't want</i></p>

to transfer Norwegian system here, like benefits. On the other hand, what were the Israeli benefits? I didn't know about the gifts and the holidays. I had the need to have extensive use of advisers on to details on how to do the Israeli work place. My staff here, many of them are here just occasionally. Most of the workers are part time or not paid at all. We are about seven full timers. I have Norwegian, Danish, American, Finnish and Israeli workers.

**Complicating action**

It is a pressure cooker more than ever. We get more tired. And I see no solution to it. And I see no black and white. If I could just have one hero and one bandit, my life would be easy. But I have seen too much bad going on here that there is no white and black left. That is tiring me. We are aware that things can happen. I think we are not afraid but we are living with this awareness and that is tiring. And also we are very sensitive to what extent our children feel. If they feel that they are afraid or not. We didn't plan to have children in this kind of environment. We said yes before we had children. So they just came and I see the longer we stay the more gypsy identity they get. I am more concerned about going back to Norway. It's more a part of my identity being a Norwegian outside Norway. That's how I grew up. I think that any person that fills a role will be received as a part of that role. So it means people might be upset with me or happy with me to some extent because of the role I am filling. They want to show that the role of me and the role of others is stressed to be guest. Where people who come to the country three years ago play the role of being local and me and my family are given a role of being a foreigner, from outside. The one is a legitimate group the other is not. That is something that has a heavier price long term than I realized because something seems to me be wrong that my kids who don't know anything else, have to get identity of being foreigner and visitors and this identity is pushed to them by others.

**Solution Result**

The most important thing for my adjustment is that I have done it a number of times before. I started my life as a kid in Argentina and then had to adjust to Japan. And after six years in Japan I had to adjust to Norway. I can't recall of having any culture shock. I think it has to do with two things. My upbringing and that I had two sabbaticals before I came here. I think it is important to understand the importance of the role. The way people meet you, respond to you, both positive and negative ways, according to the role you have. To get some kind of professional relationship to the role where I understand that reactions to me is not to me, it's to my role. And to be able to distance myself from these reactions on a professional way is very helpful. I think it is very important to be sober because this is a hyper prophetic environment where you have all kind of crazy ideas. Because I felt the price of this kind of confused background identity I see that for the sake of the kids and perhaps also for the sake of my wife we should say that 2004 is enough.

**Evaluation**

The work here is very fun. And we have achieved things that is very stimulating to a part of. I like my work very much. I have learned, started to learn at least, how to build a multicultural ministry. Establishing a base in the US is working according to very different rules than how to establish a base in Germany or establish it in Norway. But that I am defined a guest role all the time while others are entering. I realized, living here non stop nine years now, that that has price because you are not part of the group. The longer I am here, the more I feel the price. I don't have fixed plans. I think we will go to Norway 2004. The purpose is to give our children a Norwegian identity. If they stay outside Norway so that they become teenagers, like I was, they will become gypsies like I am. My identity is to be a Norwegian outside Norway. I mean this is where I fit very well. I think that I belong myself to the people who ask themselves where they come from because they don't fit exactly into a box. There are boxes where we belong to in different places. I personally think that the culture thing would be different when being a child in different country and being as adult in a different country. It is two different things. As a kid it is a kind of basement of

*the whole identity. If a mature adult moves from one country to another, what happens, is that you get a kind of confusion on the top of the basic identity. Where you don't really feel fully Norwegian anymore or something but there is kind of solid base of coming from somewhere. But it is a bit shaking, the top layers. My opinion is that transferring kids from one culture to the other is much more basic. It is the whole kind of basic structure of their personality and identity and everything. Kids have no choice. It grows up in some kind of normality that it later on discovered doesn't fit to any box. Later on as you in this box you feel that this is my life. I am still confused on both level, inner level and the top level (LAUGHING). As I said, nothing valuable is for free. I think there is value in this.*

#### **Coda**

*My guess is that I have a kind of a process of learning were I don't identify what I learned. That learning is more related to our international development than it is being in Israel at this very moment.*

*I think people like me are needed for the society of tomorrow. I think I can understand and translate the Messianic Jewish search for identity. I know that such a search is possible to have and it might be painful. And on the other level. If a company want to work internationally, they need to hire international staff and they need people in leadership who know the whole question of identity, the expenses etc. My understanding is that only those companies succeed who know to hire and keep people with this kind of experience. Because more and more the key people will be people that need to be mobile and if you want to keep these people you need leadership who understands their staff that is exposed to this kind of multicultural things.*

### **Life story constructed by interviewee 4**

#### **Abstract Introduction**

*The practical aspect that bought me to this country, to this specific location was that I had a Business Degree and my area director wanted somebody who had that experience. First of all (it was) the call of God because of the tremendous spiritual need on this are. Then I also had a personal calling toward the Muslim Arab people. And I learned about the country in the Seminary and felt very much led to this are while I was studying.*

#### **Orientation Position**

##### **Time: 36 year in the country**

*My host society here is actually the Israeli Arab community, the minority, 20% of the country. That is as far my work and professional relationships are. We have our own local mission colleagues and an international church fellowship but we are very close the... (Name of the umbrella organization for Christian churches) and the groups that fellowship together. At the same time we have the Arab Christian community and the Arab Muslim community. My personal work is mainly done out of my home and from the home of my friend, who is a Muslim background believer. We have a network now of about what you call thirty to fifty house churches and over eight hundred Muslim background believers scattered all over the country. Here everything is Middle Eastern whether it is Jewish or Arabic. The Arabic culture is based not on time schedules and it is an orally verbal culture and patriarchal society. Many customs govern the relationship between men and women and the society outside and learning these customs is always a challenge. There is a very close link to the language and the Arabic people worship the language. The Arab culture is in so many ways similar to our culture deep South.*

<b>Complicating action</b>	<p><i>I wasn't prepared what I was going to face in the Mission structure, relating to other missionaries. It was everything; so much resistance from my own local mission. Internal mission politics, that caught me much in wears. Everybody had a different opinion about how to do it and everybody very much expressed their opinions so this all impacted on you. It even continues to be a point of mild anxiety now. Because you have so many people you are responsible to. The religious-political situation is the daily point of tension in the country and confrontation in the area. It case the tension level be higher between the Jews, between the Jews themselves, between the Muslims and the Jews, between the Christians and the Muslims and between the Christians and the Jews. It is very difficult if your children have difficulties at school and (in cases) of the death of parents and loved ones so far away.</i></p>
<b>Solution Result</b>	<p><i>In the way our mission is structure now. In the last five years there has been a radical change. During times of tension people are suspicious about who you are if you come in as a foreigner. So I purposely don't go into the Palestinian areas during the times of tension because it would cause even the people I come to see problems.</i></p> <p><i>You have to be very careful in the Arab society how you express a negative or confrontational opinion. They already have a stereotype about who you are, what you think. You have to get through that initial barrier by expressing yourself in their language, politely, seeking their welfare and their will, what bothers them, where they are. You have to find ways that you don't embarrass a person. It's and uphill pool; you have to; takes energy. It is something that I enjoyed. It can be almost a hobby to get to know the local culture.</i></p> <p><i>It is dangerous as in any place of the world. You become aware of not getting too close to busses; you know busses have a way of blowing up in the times there are suicide bomber. And crowded areas, you have to be aware of that. So this is something we have adapted to. We go to the shopping mall, go out for lunch and dinner. Get to the historic sites. And travel abroad and have local vacations.</i></p>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p><i>I have made the practice doing my career studying as I work. Studying the culture and applying it as I work. And then about every five years take a year off and then do the Academic area. Because of the demands of the life. Just simply coping and doing your work here you really don't have time to give a lot of Academic reflection. You need to have a time away and off. You have to get away and have your mind settled.</i></p> <p><i>More than half of my life is now spent overseas. It is almost an amazing experience having been able to serve the Lord particularly in the Holy Land and to see during the last few years some of my dreams that I have dreamed and prayed for years to come to pass. It has had a tremendous impact on my life. My children have grown up learning three languages and seeing things they would never have seen in the States. And two of them have chosen to live abroad. It has had a big, a major impact on my family. Much of my life has been preparing to come here. I can see God has given me certain abilities, talents and certain experiences back home that have prepared me to this experience here. It has also given me a world view particularly in the present fundamentalist Islamic revival and the conflict in the West. It has given me background in this area.</i></p> <p><i>I have formed my organization called AIM partners in California. I hope to be able to continue to encourage the work here in the Middle East among the Muslims when I am in the States. I may be travelling back and forth for my family here and for my work occasionally.</i></p>
<b>Coda</b>	<p><i>Every day here is a learning experience. And every place you go, every place you travel, every person you meet, it a learning experience. So you never quit learning.</i></p> <p><i>I feel that we have adapted that way that we could have intercultural identity: a person who is able to feel at ease in the host culture and language and living daily life as the local people live. And who adapts features from his own native culture to the host culture. So it is always a combination. And then you learn</i></p>



*the host culture, so it is a mixture of many different cultures. That doesn't mean that everybody is going to accept you.*

## Life story constructed by interviewee 5

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	<i>There is only one reason, work. I have a background in Arab studies. I was always interested in the Arab world; I was very interested especially in Sudan. But then the job offer that was indeed offered was in Jerusalem. That's how that came to be Jerusalem.</i>
<b>Orientation Position</b>	<p><b>Time: Six years in Jerusalem</b></p> <p><i>I see Palestine as my host society. Everything is a struggle. So there is a lot of frustration here. The political situation affects every aspect of life. There are about 15 people at my place of work (community centre). I do not have non work contacts with them but that's because of the situation because they are from Bethlehem and I am from Jerusalem and I go home after work. I really wanted to be part of the society here. But that didn't work out very well. And then I had very little contact with anybody. I didn't even know the expatriate network existed. And suddenly I have a lot of people whom I can talk very easily.</i></p>
<b>Complicating action</b>	<i>I am not managing very well. I am having severe problems in my marriage. In fact we are divorcing and I am fighting for the custody of the boy. I have always believed that people should be equal. This is one of the reasons I married my husband. I didn't care that he was Muslim, that he was Palestinian. There is an expectation of instability and it makes it difficult. Within three months when I started work the second intifada broke out. And tourism dropped dramatically. Because of the environment there is constant problem, checkpoints and sometimes I can't go to work.</i>
<b>Solution Result</b>	<p><i>In the beginning I thought that it will be okay. I have been received in a very polite way but always as a foreigner. Because of all the problems you are extremely restricted. It permeates every aspect of your life.</i></p> <p><i>Most of my time I spend now with my small boy. I was basically all alone with him since he was born. Since we got married my husband never wanted me to travel and when the child came this came extremely difficult until the point that the boy shouldn't leave the country until he was eighteen. As we speak... (CRYING) I haven't seen my sister for five years. You work becomes like a family and there is more understanding when your child is sick and you have a problem of getting to work.</i></p>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p><i>I spent years learning about Arab culture and I did well in the university, I got all the answers. But living them on practical level, they are very, very different. People thought of me like someone who was particularly well tuned to Arab society because I knew so much about it on superficial level. And when it became part of my life, I didn't want to do it anymore on regular basis. And then I became very disliked, I couldn't keep up the show.</i></p> <p><i>I don't really fit anywhere. Especially when I came here and got married, you are expected to become Arab, it is no longer accepted to be a foreigner. There are no more allowances for mistakes or being sad. You are not allowed to be sad because there is nothing better in the world than an Arab family. This created me a lot of loneliness. And if you feel lonely or if you feel depressed, only you are to blame yourself because there is no reason in an Arab society to feel lonely and there is no understanding whatsoever for any reason you might be lonely; that your family is far away, you don't understand the language...</i></p>
<b>Coda</b>	<i>Personally I have learned that I am incredibly naïve. I assume goodness; that nothing bad ever happens to me. I assumed that life is linear, predictable. This cause me a lot of heart ache. I still think that I am naïve. I am trying to find out</i>

*what I am. My father describes me to be like a ship without a harbour floating here and there, dropping my anchor but having no harbour*

## Life story constructed by interviewee 6

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	<i>I began to have really a strong interest to what was happening to Jewish people while I was studying the Bible and read the Prophets about the restoration of Israel. I prayed one night if there was something here for us. I had a very strong message to me to believe in God. I didn't understand what we would do and how and for why but this was a very fearful and powerful encounter about what we should do.</i>
<b>Orientation Position</b>	<p><b>Time: Eleven years in the area</b></p> <p><i>I am the coordinator of (the name of the organization). This work is work with an organization which brings children to heart surgery in Israel from Palestine. I do field work, visit parents and hospitals, paper work and supervise the volunteers. I work both in Israel and in Palestine. We live now in a Jewish area in Jerusalem.</i></p> <p><i>I didn't know what we would be doing. I came here with zero expectation or interest in the Arab community. I had an opportunity to encounter that community personally and I began losing my preconceptions about them. We became to see a need in South Gaza. The last five years the Palestinian Arabs took us right into the heart of their community. We moved down there into a refugee camp, into a very crowded, very visible community where everyone knows everyone else. At the same time on the governmental level we have always been integrated to Israel. In addition to myself (there are) perhaps two more, they are from the US and the UK. This is all kind of new to us.</i></p> <p><i>Israel is a mixed story. Israel is a consumer society has become more and more Westernized. I think Israel has been moderately open and friendly but they seem to have some kind of stereotypes about us. The Arabs concerning strangers are very open. We are almost these eleven year, we almost never identify with the American expatriate community.</i></p>
<b>Complicating action</b>	<p><i>We came just at the beginning of the Gulf Crisis when they started speaking of gas masks, sealed rooms and war. So that brought tension and she (the wife) had second thoughts about whether we should be here. The political situation affects us even in such issues as can we travel, can we get through checkpoints etc. As we were in Palestinian vehicle trying to travel and get through their check points there was a real potential that we could have been harmed by the Israel army. The work here can be very consuming.</i></p> <p><i>(It was difficult) with the expectations of the family members. In my own experience my wife has gone through periods here she finds it difficult to be here and will say, I just like to go home. So definitely to hold the family together in a cross-cultural environment is very much a challenge. Probably the outstanding case of culture shock took place when we moved into Gaza. Here in Jerusalem we were able to live very sheltered and quiet, not so terribly different life. But when we moved to Gaza, we moved to a very conservative religious area. My wife and my daughters had to be wearing a head cover and long garments always and they couldn't be uncovered outside home. And we wanted to be respectful so we tried to adapt their way. For several weeks they were pretty unhappy about it but over time it was interesting to see how they adapted to it. It was difficult to coming back to Jerusalem because my girls had so adapted to Arab culture that they felt out of place coming back here. Suddenly here they are back in a more Western environment.</i></p>

<b>Solution Result</b>	<i>Three things that have helped our adjustment: language skills, living in the community somewhat isolated from other foreigners and perhaps the emphasis on the Scriptures, I would say, having a humble and true spirit. To my mind by far in the way the largest factor to integrating here is to have the language skills. We are a close knit family, we do most everything together. So when we have spare time we would hope to have a family activity.</i>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p><i>It has been an interesting experience. Living in both sides. In the beginning the threat was terrorist attack, Gulf War... We need to learn to face those fears and to put them into a perspective as well. That's also a part of cross cultural adaptation. In our home country people don't face buses blowing up or missile attacks. But we live here in experiencing and we are actually able to put it into perspective.</i></p> <p><i>It is also simply a broadening experience. It enlargens our perspective to spend out time outside of our home country. We start to look the world and our own country through the eyes of other people. So definitely we have been changed and that happens to anyone who lives cross culturally. The experience has been positive.'</i></p> <p><i>I don't plan but I very much hope that I can continue here all my life. I guess we would want to cultivate the way of living so that our primary identification was with the Kingdom of God in any case and not with any particular country. But we do hope our hearts would be with the people in this land, both the Arab people and the Jewish people and hope to see them coming closer together, too.</i></p>
<b>Coda</b>	<p><i>I think the whole narrative of faith, the whole history of faith has always been focused to this land. So as Christians we have the sense of connectedness and familiarity and this part makes me feel privileged to be here and to feel this is a special place.</i></p> <p><i>I have learned much about how things work with providing medical care for those in need. And seeing people who are willing to help. I am just learning the mechanics of putting those together.</i></p> <p><i>I think we definitely can develop towards intercultural identity. The major thing would be to maintain the balance. True intercultural identity requires affirmation of both cultures and avoiding the two extremes, which are to see your own culture as superior or to reject your own culture. This all is challenging and painful in the beginning. But we can begin to have the new identity.</i></p>

### Life story constructed by interviewee 7

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	<i>I was offered contract to work here, I was offered several contracts and I chose to come to Jerusalem. Purely simply I had never been here before and it would probably been the only chance to be offered to work here other than come to vacation. I like a variety in jobs, I never go to the same place twice even when I was in military. In (name of the organization) I worked in Georgia before coming here.</i>
<b>Orientation Position</b>	<p><b>Time: Six months in Israel- Palestine and still six months more ahead</b></p> <p><i>As an organization that promotes neutrality, I should say that both are hosts (societies). But to be honest in my opinion the host society is Palestine rather than Israel. We do work with Israelis in Tel Aviv. There are approximately 50 expat delegates and they are from England, France, Germany, many from Switzerland, Austria, Somalia, Kenya, Canada, Belgium, Australia, Finland and Norway, so it is very multicultural. We have quite good social contacts outside work. I have no contacts with other British people. I keep myself to my work colleagues.</i></p>

<b>Complicating action</b>	<i>I think it is very difficult. It is a unique country, I have never been anywhere like Israel. Many people are stressed. We have got several resignations. It is a tremendously stressful job. It is a pressure cooker environment to work here. And it is very difficult to calm down and you don't realize how much under pressure you are till you actually leave, you go on for vacation. Here the biggest problem that most people face when you are here that you are not relaxed. Even though you are out of work, you are not fully relaxed. Working away from home, although I have done it a long time but it doesn't come any easier. It is a problem at home and a problem here. You haven't got that support, you are on your own and your family on their own. And that causes problems.</i>
<b>Solution Result</b>	<i>I am being an ex-military person so I want to keep myself relatively fit. So I try to schedule myself to go to the gym or to go to a run. Surely working in the job I do, it is extremely stressful and I am pressure oriented so it is a vital release to relief some of the tensions. I get time off every 2-2,5 months and I visit them (the family) in the UK and also they came out, which is a very important part of keeping insane. They haven't had a dedicated professional logistician here so the biggest problem that I face here are the changes, people don't want change and it was dinosaur mentality. This is the biggest problem that I have faced convincing people why things have to be changed. I keep myself really for my work colleagues who come from all walks of life. They are my ethnic group and important because you work with them on a daily basis, you get a good bonding, we work together but we also mix out of work.</i>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<i>I have been working as professional logistician for over 25 years now. I like the job and I must say I have succeeded. Yes, I think I have done a good job wherever I have gone.</i>
<b>Coda</b>	<i>I enjoy the international work. I always keep my options open; I have about six options at one time. Even if I say it myself, I am good in what I do. But that of course causes problems because it means that you are working away from home and I may consider of doing something else. My cultural identity is never changed, it has always been British wherever I have been and that will never change. I am like rainbow in the aspect of culture. I enjoy most aspects of culture but not here.</i>

### Life story constructed by interviewee 8:

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	<i>We felt a calling to come here. We were taught that it was a good vocation, something honourable to do so – to work in the church.</i>
<b>Orientation Position</b>	<b>Time: Twelve years in Jerusalem</b> <i>Things were in the beginning stage and we had an expectation we would have a better-defined job. We are in charge of our colleagues and new personnel. We have an international staff of 16 people. I have friends in the Israeli society. My husband works much with the leaders of the Arab church. My host society is Israel and I manage with Hebrew and feel comfortable with the non-spoken social rules here.</i>

<b>Complicating action</b>	<p><i>In the beginning it was irritating and part of me would get angry because I felt things were done to me personally.</i></p> <p><i>We were not necessary working with the people that we had chosen, in Hebrew we say "Ma she yesh".</i></p> <p><i>I wouldn't like to call my children a baggage but you have extra things to consider. My son had some struggle when he started High School.</i></p> <p><i>Some of the pressures that come with living here, too, for instance the violence and thing like that we are not used to anywhere else, you have to come up with ways to process these things and it is not something any of us grew up with. So allowing them to talk out or giving them ways to process what just happened and to help them through some of these things is also a challenge.</i></p>
<b>Solution Result</b>	<p><i>We had children in the public school but he started talking about maybe going somewhere else to school. So we decided that two younger children go to local Hebrew Public School and two older are in Black Forest Academy in Germany.</i></p> <p><i>I can't expect to be everything I used to be but I have to let different parts in my personality to come out, to come something else, to fit it, which has helped. My expectations have to be lowered and maybe put aside but to allow lots of differences when you are working with colleagues. I am always looking and thinking about what is going on, for me it is always a study. Recently I have agreed to meet with someone to help to refine my Hebrew.</i></p>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p><i>I feel comfortable- I am not uncomfortable. I think my family have adjusted well. And I think it is a process of learning different aspects of life. I enjoy the work and most likely will continue.</i></p>
<b>Coda</b>	<p><i>I think that I can look at things from an American perspective and understand it and I can also try to get behind the eyes of my host culture and try to understand it as well. And sometimes there is a fine balance of how I express that or how I handle that internally. Part of deputation is learning to communicate well with people and understand where they are coming from and where you are coming from and how it fits together.</i></p>

## Life story constructed by interviewee 9

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	<p><i>(The reason) to come here, it is only work. I didn't choose to be assigned here. I was more looking type of work rather than the duty station.</i></p>
<b>Orientation Position</b>	<p><b>Time: February 2002 three weeks in the area, with a contract for six months</b></p> <p><i>I work mainly in the Palestinian territories and I am living in Jerusalem. In the organization it is emphasized that we don't take sides. The situation is tense, you never know, what's going to happen. In Jerusalem office we are something like 35 expatriates mainly from Europe. And half Swiss at least. I am the only Finn in that office. And then local personnel, it is 20-30 at least. I have non work contacts to all. The (name of the organization) expat community, that's the reference group.</i></p>
<b>Complicating action</b>	<p><i>The complexity of the conflict as such (has been difficult). Because you really have to work hard to understand what's happening. It is the same organization but a new work and in a completely different sector. We have this professional role; you are (name of the organization) delegate 24 hours a day. They see our cars and we have the patches and they know that we are people organizing the assistance and they know it. In Gaza you can feel that the atmosphere is very tense and there you are sometimes thrown stones but very seldom.</i></p>

<b>Solution Result</b>	<i>One reason why our office is on the green line...so we don't really want to get involved in being identified with one group or another. All our workers live in East Jerusalem for practical reasons and partly for security reasons also. There are no suicide bombers or like that in the Easter side. I think I came pretty open minded. So I didn't have any fixed setting in my mind that this is how you live and work and cope here.</i>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<i>Work wise it's the natural continuation because my entire professional career is abroad. I don't know if I have adapted but I have got used to it. I think (easy and difficult aspects) easy concerning adaptation, because I have gone through the process several times, so every time it gets easier and easier, you know a bit how you process it yourself. I felt that I am no longer a very typical Finn. I have recognized that as my own culture and I have very strong contacts there and I am planning to settle down there some day but I felt that of course my cultural identity has changed and it's a bit problematic because sometimes you look at Finland as an outsider and see things you don't like and you realize that in certain situations you behave differently than you would have done before leaving.</i>
<b>Coda</b>	<i>For me I feel that I am happy to have my friends and my family and my ties in Finland and I am planning to settle down there again some time. I am trying to save for an apartment to buy one especially in Finland and that's my thinking and I think I value that very much because then you know it may not be the best climate and the cheapest place and whatever but at least it's your own place where you belong and I think that's something I at least treasure very much.</i>

## Life story constructed by interviewee 10

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	<i>I got the first push to work here in Israel eleven years ago when I came here the first time and worked in different places. I just got this feeling, kind of intuition but just a feeling that one day I would come back and work in spiritual work. I think (my wife) had same ideas. And then we made already eight years ago we decided that we will go together to work as missionaries.</i>
<b>Orientation Position</b>	<b>Time: One year and one month in Israel</b> <i>Here the society is a little bit tougher than in Finland. My host society is Israel. It is easy to come here because there are always so many cultures; people come from different countries in this land. On the other hand the bureaucracy here is much higher when you think about something negative considering Finland. We haven't fallen into the Israeli society so rapidly because we have been first in this society between the Finnish workers here. All the co-workers, I mean missionaries, come from Finland and we have six local people from the Palestinian side.</i>
<b>Complicating action</b>	<i>I feel the pressure here is quite hard. Most difficult has been that you have to work or you know, you have to fight to get something from the society. You have to be ready to demand things. This is a macho culture here, kind of machos. Politics is something that comes everywhere. You have it for breakfast, lunch and dinner. I think it affects too much. It is somewhere there in mind and listening the sirens and the ambulances or listening if you hear a bomb, you think where are the children and the workers and what is happening. What is going to happen in the Palestinian side and this side? This is really new work to me. My work is not definitely, not what I expected. There are lot of things I don't know. I don't have so much experience of being a boss to many people and telling them daily what to do or what not to do. And that's also a challenge.</i>

<b>Solution Result</b>	<i>I like my work. There are some enjoyments but also some challenges and I think I am still in the process of looking what this is going to be. There are situations like the day before yesterday or when E. was taking our daughter to the School and a bomb was there on the street. But so far we haven't felt that it is so dangerous that we couldn't be here. It is just that you never know when your life is going to end, it can happen anytime. Of course you have to avoid risks. You don't have to be stupid and you don't have to take certain risks. We are doing our daily work quite freely.</i>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<i>I started to learn Hebrew ten, eleven years ago. I must be very thankful that I started to study the language already so early. That is something that I must say I was well prepared. If I think about our family situation, I think, it is not very easy at all. It is not the easiest and the best situation to come with four children two babies. But we have managed so far. I want to get a feeling of working a good time in a foreign country, not only one or two years.</i>
<b>Coda</b>	<i>I am thinking that for my work I am now considering that I am doing spiritual work- this is new- and I am hoping to learn to do this spiritual work. I sense my Finnish nationality more and more and get a new perspective to my Finnish culture. At the same time I can be Finnish and learn something. I am not afraid.</i>

## Life story constructed by interviewee 11

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	<i>He (Danish husband) was offered a job and he wanted to know how I related to it. After I visited Israel I thought I could live here. I was coming here in the country to be the wife of the Danish pastor. I didn't speak any Danish and I was first to be the co-leader of the congregation of Danish people... I knew it would be hard.</i>
<b>Orientation Position</b>	<p><b>Time: Two and a half years in Israel</b></p> <p><i>You can basically be in Israel and experience other cultures at the same time. Absolutely anything is represented here in Israel. I associate myself with and the first one is the Danes in the country, the Danish church and its expatriates like some Danish ladies who are married locally or Danes that live here locally and that's by my husband's job. Mostly it is Danish people and the Danish language. But another group is international students where the common language is English but we work together with the national movements so we sometimes speak Hebrew as well. International students come all over the world; Americans, Germans, Finnish, Danish. It's many cultures that you expose yourself to in that setting.</i></p>
<b>Complicating action</b>	<p><i>I knew it would be hard. That was my expectation but I think apparently it was a little harder than I thought because I didn't take into consideration that we were just married. We were just married in a third culture and leading a congregation. So that was very hard. We had many things to adjust. It's interesting how people receive you here. The attitude to me is like to a foreigner. It's the same with Israelis or Palestinians. No matter how many years you have lived here, if you are not a Jew or Israeli Arab, you are not Israeli, you are a foreigner.</i></p> <p><i>Because I am married to a Dane and living in Israeli culture, it is hard to say, which things sink in from which culture. So what makes it exciting in Israel also makes it difficult. The richness of the cultures that you have to relate to is that makes it difficult. And the fragmented work. Now the war situation makes it difficult. It's like your life has come to a stagnation period, everybody is waiting what is going to happen. Nobody is moving anywhere, everybody is so depressed. And I am very much people person so I kind of have difficult to cope with.</i></p>

<b>Solution Result</b>	<i>The first I try to speak Hebrew whenever I can. I have experienced that if you speak English with the Israelis in a formal context, they experience it as a threat. But if you speak Hebrew, they relax and they might even serve you better. Basically we serve as a home (Danish congregation and volunteers) to them. And other part is that we serve as support to the national movement. We have learned to live with all things in Israel. It helps that there are so many Russians. We have spare time one night a week and Sunday for ourselves. We think statistically that you have just about the same possibility of getting killed in Madrid by gangsters... than is here. As long as you stay out of the places that are openly dangerous you can feel safe. There are some places that we don't go with K. (the daughter). For example I don't go to Ben Yehuda and sit in a cafeteria with her. I can do it myself but I don't do it with her.</i>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<i>I definitely would describe staying here as easier than staying in Denmark. I speak Danish which is respectable but still I am not a Dane. So people treat me with care. I think if we continue living here there will be two cultures influencing very strongly, Israeli and Danish. If we move to Denmark there will be Danish culture sinking. I want to keep my Ukrainian roots and I intend to speak with K. in Russian.</i>
<b>Coda</b>	<i>I think it is important to know where you come from and still know your roots, appreciation and respect for yourself. You can learn enough about your own culture even by taking the bad and the good things. And saying clearly to people, that's where I am coming from. But purely psychologically, I do think that it is important to learn to rest in who you are.</i>

## Life story constructed by interviewee 12

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	<i>I knew in the High School that I was going to travel. I have always been interested in seeing the world. So I knew I would always do something. I didn't know when I was doing it but teaching has allowed me an opportunity to do it in my professional rallies. I don't know, I think people either have that edge to move away from their safety zone or they don't.</i>
<b>Orientation Position</b>	<p><b>Time: Almost one year in Jerusalem</b></p> <p><i>I came two times before to Israel before I started my job. But I was a tourist. I don't know how one really prepares for like in Jerusalem. I expected the framework (at work) to be in place when I came. There was nothing. The books weren't ordered. There was no syllabus for grades 8 and 12. On top of everything else being a new teacher and getting to know staff that was difficult. Maybe there are 25-30. A lot of them are from the UK. Then we have several local teachers as well but mostly from the UK. The work is pretty strenuous. I have the most hours being a teacher at the school; I teach 30 hours plus I have to play, so it's four hours after school plus discos. I don't need this culture to need me. That's not why I came to make everybody's friend in Israel. So it's a different culture. It is different history and it is a different pace. And the pace can drop people off. And the stress of that pace. I didn't really expect to be in some of the activities that have happened on Jaffa Street. I was in both bombings that just happened on Jaffa and King George.</i></p>



<b>Complicating action</b>	<p><i>The work load is strenuous. It is too much from what I see. You are living at the school, working at the school, not strain very far from the school. From what I see from other who have to live on campus: We have no lives, really. Everything is such self contained. You have dinner with each other. Housing has been a real problem. The other thing, when I arrived. I had to spend 600 dollars to repair it and to fix it up.</i></p> <p><i>It's a hard place to live. It's taxing, not easy. I really thought because I had done it before, I could do it again and it wouldn't be such a big deal. But it has been a bid deal.</i></p>
<b>Solution Result</b>	<p><i>I have really take some time and process my feelings, my apprehensions and nervousness and lot of instability, I think is what I felt here this year in Jerusalem.</i></p> <p><i>I am not pro Palestinian and not pro Israel. I am in relationship with somebody who is Israeli. So there was a lot of boundary crossing for me. Religiously we are different and culturally there are differences but ultimately I have learned through this relationship that people are really just people and you find similarities in how you are and what you believe about people. O. and I are planning to get married next year. So I think there are long term problems as far as I am not knowing what's going to happen, it's daisy. But there are places in the world that are daisy. There is a risk certainly, safety wise. I kind of let my life lead me instead of me trying to force fit what I think my life should be so much.</i></p>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p><i>I find, internationally, surprisingly, that there is sense of exploiting teachers. I am looking it through cultural lenses from the US. I feel like I have left it better which is what I have always wanted to leave a job feeling like I have made it better than I arrived. So despite the stress and some other discontent, there is a tremendous sense of accomplishment. So I feel tremendously optimistic for what I can do if given the opportunity. So that's been on advantage this year, definitely. I think that there will always be an international aspect whatever I am doing, just because I love it. I love being exposed to things and people and I find that it has helped me define who I am as a person. I felt more lost when I was in the US. I don't' know if I can be happy anywhere long term though, really. I mean, I tend to flutter around a bit. I have been in three countries during the last three years. So we'll see.</i></p>
<b>Coda</b>	<p><i>(In the US) There was a path that was ready for me if I wanted to go down but it wasn't my path. I feel like being in an international community you are more focused on what you want to be and what kind of community you are able to contribute how you grow within that community and change as a person. I would say either travelling around, getting outside of Israel and coming back has given me new perspective. Certainly I know more what it is like being in America now that I don't live there. And what a shift in my mind was to go from a place that was completely comfortable in almost every sense of the word, strangely enough, to a place that wasn't comfortable at all, has really made, I think, flax my skills of being an international worker.</i></p>

### Life story constructed by interviewee 13

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	<p><i>(The reason to come here) was God, God, God. I had been offered a job and prayed about it and the Lord gave me Scriptures and everything. ...I definitely knew I am coming to Israel because of the scriptures.</i></p>
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<b>Orientation Position</b>	<p><b>Time: Two and a half years in Israel</b></p> <p><i>I came here and I was going to be cleaning houses because I was working with an organization that organizes tours from South Africa to Israel. When I got to that point I found that it wasn't really what I wanted to do. I wasn't comfortable. And the Lord, the way He works, He took me to the (name of the organization) and I worked for four months in the costume department and after that I lived with an old lady. Then I came to the (name of the organization) back to the type of work that I had been doing twenty years. Combined here and the distribution center I think it is probably thirty (people). There are quite a few from America, a guy from Australia, originally from Malaysia. We have got Swiss people, myself South African, we've got from Finland, England, we've got others as well. I work and live in Israel.</i></p>
<b>Complicating action</b>	<p><i>You know, with the language barrier it is very difficult. What I find very rough is the kind of pushing, walking into you. Sometimes it irritates me if I am not feeling too good in myself then I get irritated by what I call rudeness. I suppose it's really briskness more than rudeness. The only thing that I find difficult in this country is the lack of the language.</i></p>
<b>Solution Result</b>	<p><i>I think that mainly the friends I have made have enabled me. And of course the Lord enables me. I have the peace of God. I just feel this is where the Lord wants me and it doesn't matter how tough it is. I will stay until He says Move on! (The way to manage is) staying on my knees.</i></p>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p><i>Coming here (the name of the organization) although it is the same basic type of work that I have always done, I had to learn new programs to do that. My work has advanced tremendously because I have had somebody to teach and encourage me in the line of art. I was still learning the programs and having to teach the other girls because they have got artistic minds and I have got a practical mind. I learned a different area of the same job, you know. I am thinking of getting into different line; I want to be working with people. I think I have learned a lot of tolerance. I think I've got a deeper understanding of different cultures. I've got a deeper understanding of what Lord requires of us to bring others to the kingdom. I think when you are on a mission field your outlook of life starts getting different. You kind of like get to be others focused.</i></p>
<b>Coda</b>	<p><i>I just am and live just as I am, you know. I walk in perfect peace. Now it's kind of alike me, God and the people around me...I think that my hope in the Lord is pretty much deeper than it was.</i></p>

### Life story constructed by interviewee 14

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	<p><i>The Lord brought me here. He showed it clearly. He really wanted me here. That was the reason why I came. And because I love Jewish people. I had always wanted to come to Israel. I never thought I'd come and work here.</i></p>
<b>Orientation Position</b>	<p><b>Time: Two years in Israel</b></p> <p><i>I didn't really know what to expect when I came here. I didn't really know what I was coming to when I came here. When I was in Haifa, I enjoyed the fact that we could pray with the residents. And here coming to work to a Holocaust team, which I really wanted to do. You really see the pain and how they are still going through it. (My host society) is Israel. I don't know really (how many employees and what origin, see no. 13). I don't really have non work contacts with them. Everyone is so apart. Where I am staying there are two British people there.</i></p>

<b>Complicating action</b>	<i>For me coming here was more difficult because I have always used to be in the country side. Not everybody speaks English, so that's another harder thing here. Some you could communicate with, some you had difficult communicating with. So those I know at the moment, they can speak some English.</i>
<b>Solution Result</b>	<i>We are going to start doing the language next week. I am using English, I shall work through interpreter. I think people here in (name of the organization) care for you. If you have problems, you can go to them. The Lord has been my greatest help. I just feel His presence with me. I just have peace in my heart.</i>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<i>I haven't felt any danger living here. I've just had peace. I haven't had any difficulties. I just feel at home here when with them. And I learn from them. I am planning to stay as long as the Lord wants me to. And here. I am not planning to move. This is where the Lord wants me at the moment and this is where I stay.</i>
<b>Coda</b>	<i>I hope to get closer to the people here. To understand them more. But I don't expect any problems. I have learned a lot about people. I see a lot to learn. I am feeling, I've got a lot to learn. I think it takes time if you go from one culture to another. Because you really do need to know how people work in that culture. There is many differences. And it takes time. I think you won't really get integrated so quickly just spending a couple of years here and a couple of years there.</i>

### Life story constructed by interviewee 15

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	<i>I have since the middle of nineties when I first visited this are, been very much interested in and was involved in Middle East and Oriental culture activities. The indirect reason was that I was working at the Swedish news agency and they had a huge deficit and they hired a consultant who just split the deficit with the number of people to get rid of the deficit. So more or less every third journalist was sacked. And I was one of them. After some weeks I realized that this is a golden opportunity to do something quite different. Then I dared to think of my dreams. What would I do if I could wish, if I was able to wish and most of all, what would I like to do. I would like to be in the Middle Eastern countries for some time.</i>
<b>Orientation Position</b>	<b>Time: Two years in Jerusalem</b> <i>The work; in a way I am using my journalistic skills. It's administrative. More reports and more papers to be sent to the head office and to the development authorities in Sweden. (I would like) not to be a journalist. Not just write, look and write. I would like to be apart of ... I would like to be involved. Most of our partners they have been our partners for several years. We are seven people here (in the office), two Swedes and five Palestinian women.</i>
<b>Complicating action</b>	<i>It was the same behaviour as the first Intifada that people very much locked themselves, they stayed at home, they grieved, and they didn't have parties. There isn't much public social life. We are working too much, not much for social activities and few restaurants, few places to go. Eastern Jerusalem is very empty in the evenings and the work load is also eroding the social life that could be this time. In the beginning I was scared when I had to leave the office late and you never know what is around. There were burned cars in several places. It's not unproblematic in an Arab country to be a single middle aged woman. You are at least quite districted. I am all the time very aware that I am a representative of (name of the organization) and very much so in the place where I live, among the neighbours and so on.</i>

<b>Solution Result</b>	<i>I am working very often long days and it is always dark when I leave the office. I have a big apartment with space and with balconies and I am not in a cage when I am at home. My home is my castle. I can relax very much at home. And it's calm area. then we can always, we have always a choice to go to Jaffo or to the beach. I mean I can always as a Westerner, I can always change and... I can feed up with. I mean Eastern Jerusalem is really a small village.</i>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<i>I like my job very much. I thought that work would be more work together than it is. I would need much more someone just to try the ideas, but I use my desk officer in Sweden very much for that. Here (in the work) it's no end. And you always know you could have done that better. I thought when I came first that I met people who could be friends. But then I realized that people in my age they live quite a different life because even very mature and self reliable young women they stay with the parents. They are very restricted. So and it is not easy to find male Palestinian friends. And to be sure it is only friendship. If I would like to go back to journalism in Sweden, it will lower my ranking position definitely. But if I would choose to go on with some sort of aid or developmental associated work in Sweden, then of course I would benefit from it.</i>
<b>Coda</b>	<i>(I have learned) about myself. About everything and also you grow with increased responsibility also. It's give and take. I mean in that way; the more you give, the more you will have.</i>

## Life story constructed by interviewee 16

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	<i>It was actually the decision or proposal by our organization. I applied job for elsewhere abroad, for (name of the organization), there were more than one position. And then they said, what about Jerusalem. And we said, yes we haven't thought of that but we accepted it.</i>
<b>Orientation Position</b>	<b>Time: One and a half year in Jerusalem</b> <i>We had no background from the Middle East. We had just come here as tourists in 1985. We had an African background. We live mostly in the Arab world here. It is the Arab culture basically. Our network is basically with the Arab community. We have our work permits and (name of the organization) is registered in Israel. And we have a very good cooperation with the Ministry of social affairs. We came to the organization which was well established. They were used to Swedish people, they understood us and sort of could receive us in a way we felt comfortable with. We are seven in this office. Two Swedes and the rest are Palestinians. We have very good contact with the rest of the Swedish community. Both through the consulate and sort of organizations working here.</i>
<b>Complicating action</b>	<i>It's as it is now with this situation, of course it is more difficult here. We have never experienced anything like this. I feel the community here as such, and I think that goes for both sides, I think it is harder sort than the African. It's a bit tougher here. And I think it is a result of the situation. Because here people are killed and injured in big, big numbers and people sort of close to our partner network or even from it. Basically it is easy to live here, everything is available, basically it is easy apart from the situation. We had a lot of ambitions when we came. To do this and that and where to go. So after I have had my problems, we walk. When we came her father was seriously ill at home. So she commuted between, she spent a lot of time coming and going, almost a year and eventually he died last year. And when he died, just some months before I got my heart attack. I think that that's one of the main problems, with the work and on top the situation...</i>

**Solution Result**

*We are in a network of international agencies, development agencies. We meet regularly and I see many committed people. There is sort of church community. Unfortunately on one way maybe we are too much linked with each other. Which today is an asset when the situation is as it is because if things happen then immediately we have a group of supporters. I feel that we need once in a while we need to get out to sort of breathe some fresh air. I think it means a lot. To be able to get out. And when the climate, the season is right, we quite regularly go to the beach. We went to Galilee two weeks ago for a weekend and try to do something, to Sinai, to Eilat. We like the work. It is not basically our reason to go home. It is the situation and my health.*

**Evaluation**

*I think I still have a few years to go. And if there is a good opportunity we would like to continue. But I don't see it as a catastrophe to return back home. We are completely in agreement on what we do and our choices. I am too old to think about career anymore. No, I skipped my career because then I should never have started to go and come. But I am not complaining. I have learned (here) a new approach to development than from before although there are similarities; creating kind of awareness to equip the countries and our organization to involve themselves so that people understand what are their rights and what they can demand. This opens up challenge for me, which I like.*

**Coda**

*I realized that when you come for the first time particularly as a newcomer somewhere, you think, Oh you know exactly how it should be done. But you see, there is a reason behind. It could be culture, it could be religion. Or it could be whatever has made this happen or this situation to be. I think it is important and we have to learn. If you see; this is Swedish as a square and then of course as if you live in other cultures for a number of years and you move around to, I mean you go further on. And of course these ones, the corners will be maybe smoother, more round after a while. We can see that in all our Christmas traditions etc. Which at home, it was so strict, you know exactly what do, with your family rules etc. That is not important anymore. We may appreciate it but we have spent Christmas Eve and Christmas Day in Maasai Mara in a tent in a camp and a wonderful time and we have been on the beach or whatever, we have celebrated Christmas in an African tradition, environment. If there is a Swedish celebration around here definitely we are there and I think that is important. So you tend to do things together, I mean the community does something and everybody supports, then you can enjoy.*

**Life story constructed by interviewee 17****Abstract Introduction**

*I had only requested for a post in the Middle East. Because when we had interview for my post you could only request a region, not a country and then they would place you where there was need. And I got Jerusalem and I was quite happy for it. I wanted to stay in the Middle East because it is the region I know, the language, my studies in the Political Science were very much Middle Eastern oriented, it's a conflict I know and like, it fascinates me and I wasn't actually at ease in Europe. I wanted to go abroad.*

**Orientation Position****Time: One and a half years in the area**

*I deal with all the projects that are financed by the Commission through NGOs. So anything relating to non governmental organization be it Palestinian or International, European, comes through this department. And then there is the relational aspect. I like part of human relations a lot. So relationships are really the best part of my job.*

*Of course the majority of the staff is Palestinian. And we are several foreigners. We must be around thirty. Because of my mixed background I might as well have Palestinian friends with whom I have the Arab point of common the fact that we are both Arabs and I have lots of European friends with whom I share*

*my fifty percent of European but I must say that usually these are Mediterranean, my European friends.*

<b>Complicating action</b>	<i>Every day something is happening. Something tragic is happening, something that really upsets you. But in terms of work, the office routine is the same. So it is rather the external factors. I feel trapped here on a personal level because going out is always such a mess like at the airport and customs. You fell a little bit in prison and the fact that I cannot go to Lebanon makes me feel trapped as well. And lack of cultural life. Like no cinemas, no movies, no concerts.</i>
<b>Solution Result</b>	<i>Especially in the situation like this it gets the best out of us when you are in a conflict situation. In Lebanon it was the same during the war. You come more solidary person. Because you want to help others because you know this is an exception circumstances. Here is not that you can do many hobbies. But I try to do as many hobbies as I can, surround myself with people I like. I like my work, which helps a lot. (I am) not letting myself feeling lonely because then you start thinking a lot about all these bleak and gloomy ideas and pictures and when you are in a group of people you love and who care about you, I think you relativize much more.</i>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<i>I do like my work a lot. It was my first real international experience that has enriched me and where I have learned a lot and made excellent friends and lived very intense moments. It does tire you, it does burn you out. I mean just seeing what has been happening these ten days. And I don't want to be here when things really get worse. Because in my analysis things will get worse and I don't want to be here when it happens. This is perhaps the first time that I have been able to have both of my fifty percent cultures in the same place. You start asking yourself, but okay, if I am that much of a chameleon and of a cultural schizophrenic, then who am I, because if one moment I can feel or pretend I completely agree with you and then the other... I agree on something else. It makes you wonder but then who I am. It is a problem until you get to synthesize it in your head and develop your own cultural personality. It has taken a long time to heal this identity. But eventually when you get to it, I think it's amazing, the horizons it opens.</i>
<b>Coda</b>	<i>In terms of assistance, humanitarian assistance through NGOs: You either do it because you believe in it in spite of all the difficulties and all the problems we have in implementing these project because of the situation. Or you really detach yourself and take it as a job with the many difficulties that it entails but otherwise if you somewhere in between, I think they wouldn't last. Something that the persons, the young one of us who choose such careers, have just assume the consequences of our choices: I mean coping with distances, (being) floating persons. Because when you choose it as a career, as an international career, you either do it or you go nuts. You learn to survive everywhere, not only survive but to be happy.</i>

## Life story constructed by interviewee 18

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	<i>I felt what the truth is that it was eighteen years ago when I was a young believer that God gave me a special love for this country when I was studying the Bible. ..and at that point God already told me that at some point I am going to come to Israel and help people here. I heard this organization needed volunteers and I was particularly interested in working among people. At that point I applied for the job and received it.</i>
<b>Orientation Position</b>	<b>Time: One year and nine months in Israel</b> <i>In this organization we are people from different cultures. We have now seven ladies: one from Canada, one from England, one from Hawaii but she is originally from Zimbabwe and three Russian speakers. I have some friends who are Hebrew speakers but I wouldn't say they are really</i>

close friends. Whereas I have many close friends among Russian speaking people. I meet some Finnish people not so regularly but fairly often. In free time I notice that I am Finnish, I need to do something Finnish; I read something Finnish or talk Finnish in order to relax, I go to a Finnish sauna.

<b>Complicating action</b>	Earlier I used to think that it was a privilege to stay here. The security thing has made it somehow... I still think it is a privilege but not an easy one. Somehow I am irritated by the things that in Finland everything seems to go so smoothly and here many times you need to struggle like one friend said that in this country you need to pray and fast even in order to draw your own money from your own bank account. And this is a really family oriented culture that for sure that I am single it has been somehow difficult and offending at some point all these questions that why aren't you married and so on.
<b>Solution Result</b>	It has been easier to settle down here ((than in England)), because I had a clear calling to come here. Certainly during this kind of time it is more problematic here. Somehow people here and particularly the Russian speakers, among whom I mostly communicate, they are fairly open and warm hearted people. I wanted to improve my Russian. I had started to study Hebrew already eighteen years ago. I now study Spanish. I actually wanted to work with people but because of my computer background they first wanted me to work in the office but we were able to have a compromise. Little by little I have been able to do more and more what I really want, to communicate with people and now I am really happy with my work.
<b>Evaluation</b>	I have enjoyed to work here and I would love to stay here. The longer I stay here, the more difficult it would be to return back to the work with the computers. Well. actually when I go back to Finland there are certain things that I find difficult.
<b>Coda</b>	It is probably so that when a person stays a longer time abroad that when a person is abroad, he misses his home country but when he is his own home country, he misses the country he stayed for a long time.

## Life story of interviewee 19

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	I think I felt the Lord gave me a call for Israel about five years ago. But it wasn't sure when I would be coming. I just believe that God gave me a heart for the Jewish people and Israel as a nation. He revealed His purposes. He told me to go and give up everything I had in England and to come here. So it was just totally giving myself to Him in obedience and to step out in faith.
<b>Orientation Position</b>	<b>Time: Three years in Israel</b> Initially when I came in 1999 I expected to be working distributing clothing. But I was very disappointed and then went back to England for three months knowing that the Lord wanted me to come back for a longer term and to make a commitment here and then I came to work with the (name of the organization). I think that there are seven of us who work here at the moment. Three Russians, one Canadian, one Finnish, one Zimbabwe and me and our manager, he is an American. I live in shared accommodation. You have to be prepared here for anything, especially in Jerusalem. It seems to be a very faster way of life with people tend to be living always on the edge never knowing what tomorrow will bring and never having the security of peace here. I know my calling is to the Jewish people. I try to keep a balance so I try not to differentiate. Of course we know that God loves everyone. Every day is different, definitely different. It is far more stable in England. Even before then (the Intifada) there was always news here, someone visiting, someone had come. So this is hyper activity, 24 hours it is all news, things happen so quickly here. It is so tense politically. It's the centre of the tension of the world. It's under microscope all the time. But it's just the place to be, everybody wants to be here.

**Complicating action**

*I had never been to Israel. I had never been in the Middle East. I had hardly every been to Europe on holidays and to come and live here and there is such an intense battle, spiritual battle here. And a completely different way of life to what I had been used to. The manners, the attitudes, I find that very different because there is no chivalry. The attitudes towards the men and the women here, the mindset here, their view of Western women to the Middle Eastern women. I find that quite offensive and upsetting.*

*Here you work internationally, you are working with a lot of nations, all are coming from different countries, different cultures and you have to work together. And you know, it highlights your thoughts, highlights things that you maybe never noticed before.*

*It's almost as you live on your nerves here, you live with the knowledge that anything can happen at any time. Of course you get on with your life but I think the Intifada has really had an effect on everyone. The other thing is attitudes, the reactions of people, both local and foreign. There is a lot of fear and mistrust now. That's reflected on the way people live and their attitude to each other. You can't relax. That reflects the whole way of life here. Along with the Intifada (there has been) a change of staff. I think it is more stressful here because the whole atmosphere here is more stressful. When you are living with the same people you are working with, you know, it's eventually you are going to have a break from it.*

**Solution Result**

*People are in and out of the country all the time. It takes the pressure off from you for a while. I haven't been to England since I had holiday. But when they come back they sort of help you to float, they encourage you.*

*I depend very heavily on prayer. You've got to have that inner strength, that divine peace in order to give out here because if you don't, you are burn out very quickly. It has given me a deeper walk with the Lord because I need Him more. Networking (has helped). Finding people who have common ground with, who you can connect with, a chat with coffee. The other thing is my church. I think that's really bid help. And also good work colleagues.*

*I suppose I am getting to a point now that I am getting ready to a break. I think not just the pressure here. I think you get to the point that your body wants a rest.*

**Evaluation**

*The work has been totally different. So I just believe that the work's been different but in some ways it's been easier because the Lord has undertook, He has taken me into the areas I would never attempt to go. I was a widow and I was giving up not only my family but the home where I had married and everything to come to the land where I had never been before. I know I have changed. My whole mindset has broadened. In some ways I am very concerned about going back. It's going to be very difficult to go back and be the same person again because your attitude, your whole approach to the situations is changed.*

*People always ask where you are from and straight away you are tied cast. So they've already put you in a box. Then you have to start breaking down the barriers and getting alongside them. They've got boxes for nations; they've got a picture image of what you are.*

**Coda**

*I think if you are working here then you have to adjust to the way of life here somehow, to cope with it because you cant' bury your head in the sand. It's around you all the time and you can't avoid it, the tensions and reactions of people. I've got alongside with people and really felt the heart beat of the land. It's almost embarrassing now to be British, the way they have treated Israel as a nation from the British Mandate. You can't put right the past that has happened but you try to sow yourself in a true light. I think I have learned a lot about people, a lot about the Middle East and I think it's shown me a lot of faults in myself, you know. I think it has been like a mirror to me. It's shown up a lot of that I had no idea of before and it's not all good. I just feel it's been a humbling process for me and an embarrassing one at times.*



## Life story of interviewee 20

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	<i>I was the one who had the job but we knew there were great possibilities for him (husband) to find a good job. (The main reasons to come here were) curiosity about this very particular point of the Middle East region. Good experience, good professional job experience, for both of us. And third one is being in the Middle East.</i>
<b>Orientation Position</b>	<p><b>Time. Two and a half years in East Jerusalem</b></p> <p>(My job) <i>It's basically coordination of programs with the Palestinian authority since these are our main partners. And also working with development counsellors and their representatives on programming coordination with other donors and Palestinians. This was my first permanent job. We are roughly a bit less than twenty. And they are from different nationalities. Palestinians are the biggest group. Many of them have another nationality, usually European nationality and us foreigners; maybe the French group is most important. We have non work contacts with them sometimes. We are not so much in contact with the French society, our main networks are Palestinians.</i></p> <p><i>The political situation is very particular and therefore social situation is very particular making confidence between people more difficult to acquire or to establish. Non said or latent stress and uncertainty about the future, that condition has consequences on all the culture.</i></p>
<b>Complicating action</b>	<p><i>Given again the political situation that makes you think twice if you want to go in that country or the other county, like Syria, Lebanon and all these countries are difficult to reach from here being in a sensitive area. We start to feel very much the restrictions of movement; let's forget about the cinema, let's forget about this film because it is in this cinema whether in Jerusalem or either in Ramallah. Since the beginning of Intifada it is more difficult and it's getting ore and more touchy and sensitive. You know, hyper sensitivity. And kind of violence in spontaneous relations. A bit of aggressivity and it comes from both parts, whether Palestinian or Israeli.</i></p> <p><i>The practical events of the political situation are obvious since we are working with the Palestinians and it is always for me the Palestinian Authority. But it is in the Palestinian society which is in a way collapsing and we in our work we have to take that into consideration for every single step we are doing. Definitely I have to be more cautious than if I were in France. I mean, as a woman, as a married woman. Palestinian culture makes more difficult for young woman to affirm herself.</i></p> <p><i>Definitely it is not an easy thing to handle as regard to family. He is Algerian having lived in France for a while. He knows Egypt and feels good in it. (We have now) three cultures; French, Eypian, Algerian and also Palestinian or Middle Easter culture.</i></p>
<b>Solution Result</b>	<p><i>(Things that have helped) I would say being in the Middle East in contact with the Arab culture. Being with my husband and this would be the first. We like very much the region and we feel ourselves very much comfortable. And having been able to have a good network of friends.</i></p> <p><i>I am not trying anymore to see from French, Egyptian, to what or who I am exactly. It's a mix which I do not define very precisely. I am not trying to define it. Same for marrying or living whether with an Egyptian (or French). This was not possible. Through this marriage although he is Algerian but he knows France. And being Algerian also he knows the relationship between Algeria and France. so he would understand what I am with all these parts.</i></p> <p><i>It's more of what are our principals of life that were very much questioned and challenged by being here. And in that it softened and strengthened our principals but definitely it questions them very much. Definitely it enriches them. You need some internal strength to stay here and not to be shaken by all what you discover here or the societies also.</i></p>

**Evaluation**

*I am happy in my work whether it is with the colleagues, with this international environment. So it is kind of harmony of my own expectations toward my work and what I am doing. And therefore I think I am doing it as efficiently as possible and I think it is going fine. Also being personally on the non work level happy and so helps being efficient as a whole. But of course my work suffers once again from the situation, the everyday work. I like very much such a career. Personally for me it is a condition of liking to work. For the time being we are here at least one year and we would probably move maybe in the region, maybe somewhere else. We are not thinking of going to Europe for the moment. We would not like to stay in France at the moment. As for both of us but for me it is very important that my husband would not suffer from international career, I would like him to find himself in that.*

*For me adjusting is you are adjusting with the society you are and for me expatriate society is not the society of the country. It is not culture of the country. It is true that in these countries maybe here more than other places the international society is quite important. But in the same time, adjusting for me is adjusting to the people, local people, I don't like that term but with the people of the country where you stay.*

**Coda**

*As I mentioned I have asked myself questions for a long time what I am, what culture do I belong to and I would say it does not help. I know I am a mix. I feel it from what I've been told and I am also seen as a mixture between these cultures. In France and Egypt and even here. In the same time it is a good thing, of course, but it is not an easy thing to handle because you can feel in a way that in your case, in two different places. In my place two different places. And in the same time you are not totally in your place in neither of these. Or you would not recognize yourself totally in this one or this one. And you would not be recognized by others totally. Also having discussed that with friends that also have this mixture; we share this same feeling in the middle, I mean somehow in the middle. Belonging to different places but in the same time not really belonging to them. Actually it required quite a time and quite deep reflections. They are not finished and in a way this is part of questions that anybody would ask himself. I have learned a lot with from working with the colleagues from different places, from different backgrounds. Whether it is working with partners with their own cultures and their own priorities and of course learning in a place where you are not at home.*

**Life story of interviewee 21****Abstract  
Introduction**

*I was thinking in my job in America that I was getting tired of it and I didn't want to give it up and I wanted to change my life. And I had always travelled, every summer, internationally. I saw this advertisement in the Internet of the (name of the organization) school in London times. I e-mailed and they responded and I flew to England and had an interview and they hired me. Being Jewish I thought it would be a good idea to come to Israel and in Jerusalem; be part of something that you've grown up with and believed in although I wouldn't call myself Zionist or anything like that. But the idea of being in Jerusalem and at the time it looked like there was going to be peace. I am single and one of the reasons I wanted to come here was maybe to try to find someone, to meet someone that would be, you know, a possibility although it wasn't an objective. You know, in the Jewish population you have a better chance to meet a lot more younger people than where I am from.*

**Orientation  
Position**
**Time: Almost two years in Israel**

*I am in an unusual situation being a Jewish person working in Israel in a Christian school. You know, I am Jewish and I have some Jewish friends but having been living at the school last year kept me very isolated. (There are) I would imagine, about 40-50 employees. They are American, British, Israeli, Arabs; yeah, Jewish, Christians, Muslim. I would think the majority of them are British though.*

*I think Israel is a very unusual country. The culture is much different. Particularly in Jerusalem I find it being a very tense place and also I have been here very difficult time. I would say people in general are not openly very friendly. I don't see it as a terrible hospitable culture. You know, this culture is a very closed culture in some ways. It's afraid of the outside world in many ways. Israelis are very cautious of strangers. My social life is not very strong with the network of people just to the people at school and now I am working in an additional job. So most of the weekdays are very, very busy, mostly work.*

**Complicating  
action**

*I was told what I was going to teach but it wasn't very clear. That was frustrating because I wanted to prepare beforehand but it wasn't so that there was material for me to see. You are teaching so many different classes and trying to care for so many different classes. Plus I had never taught the IB before. Many materials I had from America only apply for one or two of the course and all the rest I have to organize and still I don't feel that I am totally organized. I am so spread out. I am running around so much in my job from one class to another class and then to my other job. One of the things that has made it difficult I think the school can do a lot more to help the teachers before they come. I am disappointed in that respect. They need to do a lot more to help the teachers be prepared before they come.*

*The school has been such a centre of the location of so many bombs that every time when there is a bomb that goes off I immediately get concerned that someone from the school child or student has been hurt. I want to see as much I can on weekends to get away and it is also because of the Intifada, I find Jerusalem unpleasant place to be and in my free time I want to leave the City and go to Tel Aviv. I mean I've been near shooting once, just maybe ten or fifteen minutes before. There have been numerous bombs near the school.*

*This year was difficult. I didn't have a place to live. I've moved out like three four times and it was so hard to get my year going. I've had some depression at times. Actually in the end of last year I was thinking of not coming back. Actually I was somewhat in depression, I wasn't really happy. I felt like I was working very hard and the situation wasn't looking good, politically and I kept saying to myself, what's the point of this and I came very close actually of going back to my other job. And I find now when I am trying to meet people, they know that I am going home; they don't want to give me the time of going out and spending time to get to know new people.*

**Solution  
Result**

*Like me, people are careful where they go, when they go, they are careful about travelling on buses, they are careful about where they go on holiday. They are careful, you know just about walking around the city, you know. So I don't walk on certain streets, I don't take the buses. And I'm thinking to myself which is the best direction to walk. When you think about how you can do a certain thing, you think, oh I have to think about this first. This is how your life becomes. And I think that's another thing that has affected my group relationships. Knowing some Hebrew and being a Jew helps.*

**Evaluation**

*One of the factors that I wouldn't come back anyway is that I do not think the school is financially stable. I don't like what they offer the teachers in terms of compensation. My personal dilemma is that I would like to continue in international education. I've been applying to some other international schools and if I find something that is really interesting and the country and it is good for my career, I think I will not go back to my old job, I will resign.*

*I have worked eleven years as a teacher and I love being a teacher. Professionally I am much better prepared to go to another international school and I think I would have a pretty easy time of getting another job now that I*

*have done the IB, I've done the IGCSC and I've done a little bit of the MYP. So professionally I would be better suited to go to another position in another school than I would be to my old job where I have the knowledge of being in a different culture and learning all these subjects. I am a little worried of going back home and how I am going to adjust to it. I am very concerned about my life just going to a minimalistic direction.*

### **Coda**

*I think also the interest and passion and the obsession with this land is also an attraction to a lot of people so they want to be here. It isn't dumping ground like so many other maybe international jobs may be. (International work) ... there is both positive and negative side to it, you know. The positive side is that you have tolerance, you embrace other cultures, you are not afraid of people and you want to meet people and I think I have that. And negative side is that you lose a sense of home, you lose a sense of base, you lose a sense of roots.*

## **Life story of interviewee 22**

### **Abstract Introduction**

*I was working 21 years as a headmaster in one school and this is a very long period. I was the youngest headmaster in the country for a long time. It started to become a little bit boring. The school was a new school, model school and one of our main content was to challenge the German history in the Third so called Reich, the Nazi fracture. I was affiliated especially with the German- Jewish problem. We went each year to a concentration camp with student to work in that place. Therefore I was curious, this history of the Jews and the present. And in general it was always my dream to work for a limited period abroad.*

### **Orientation Position**

#### **Time: Seven years in Palestine**

*Here it is not only the school; it is kindergarten, we have boarding section, we have agricultural area even. School is school all over the world. That means there are children with different attitudes. Before we came there was trouble between our German church and the local church because they wanted to change the headmaster from a German headmaster to a local headmaster. The school is seen as a German school and it is connected with the idea of some qualities and that you see for example punctuality and cleanness and all that sort of things belonging to the standard of this school.*

*We are much more connected with the Palestinian people and I am responsible for 850 Palestinian students and one hundred employees. We as private schools have the highest percentage of Christians; 75% of the students are Christians, 25% are Muslims. At the moment there is very strict unification of public opinion in Palestine and this is also connected of course there is no real democratic structure and the suffering is united suffering. I have contacts with Germans even every after two days, because I am partly representing Germany here.*

### **Complicating action**

*Now it is more problematic due to the conflict of course. When we came 1995 there was hope for peace and there was hope for independent state but already in 1996 it changed and from that time it was always up and down and now these two years a very difficult situation. The year 2000 when Intifada started I said what I built up in four years it was destroyed in four weeks. We are living more or less in world we never thought to live, under curfew, under occupation and also of course sometimes these safety, security problems.*

*Here the headmaster is the head and in the beginning it was very difficult. When I came I had the feeling I cannot leave the school for two hours because there is always a need for decision. Here I had to learn that I had to respect the institution. I had to get my rights to be seated according to the institution. At the beginning I sometimes was surprised about some reactions. If there is a conflict or a mistake done, you have the duty to discuss but there was also this to keep the dignity of a person. If the business issue was solved, there was also the private, the reconciliation, to invite both parties with some witness and*

*then to sit together shaking hands and drinking coffee and this was new to me. There was a bit difficulties; the relationship between boys and girls and clothes especially of female people and sex things... The language brings some difficulties in both sides Israel and Palestine.*

**Solution  
Result**

*I felt at the beginning because I had the tools to lead an institution I could take the time to see first the culture and to cope with the culture. It was also more of a family issue that we all together could discuss this and we felt we could agree with main, with the leading and guiding principles of the culture. I think the main thing is that we are together as family discussing. I told to Germany, I was 21 years headmaster in Germany and in that time I never felt that I needed a wife on my side for my job, for my family yes, but not for the job. But here, without my wife, I think, I would not stay here now.*

*I always feel that the staff is not putting me in a difficult situation. They introduced me to the local connections and that made my life much more easier.*

*I had to learn the word dignity; the special character of proudness, of self estimation, to give people the dignity. It was my aim to give to the heads of the sections more responsibility and include a lots of Palestinians in the administration of the school. I could give a little spirit of democracy and participation.*

**Evaluation**

*I think if I would evaluate my professional life, I will always say this is the main important years for me. We are two Germans in a Palestinian institution. I feel that for our personal knowledge and learning it was helpful that we are living inside Palestine. There are situations of stress but I can sleep in the night time. I can divide between important things and less important things. This is also one of my belief in that direction that as headmaster, you must be able to listen to the people and to change also. I will leave in two years. I think that the main item what I missed this time is to learn the language and to be more able then to live inside the society.*

**Coda**

*I think it is important to have the feeling now this is my place. It was most enrichment in our lives that we saw that there are other priorities in life. I learnt to cope or to adapt the rules of leading an institution, to adapt the local culture and I learnt a lot about people behaving and so on but also about other emotional aspects in the connection between teacher and the student.*

*We are happy with walking around in the compound. I think we have developed more the inner values when we have been here. You are a little bit in between. I think nobody will forget where he or she is born and living like me more than fifty years and that would not change but you are winning a look of inside, outside.*

## Life story of interviewee 23

**Abstract  
Introduction**

*When peace was about to come, we had the feeling, both of us that we can sort of help to build up something. This was the main reason we came. And just to do something different after teaching at the same place so many years.*

**Orientation  
Position**

**Time: Seven years in Palestine**

*I am not only teaching, I am supervising the German teaching at the schools here. It is altogether nine schools; it's two governmental schools and then we have the Lutheran schools and two Catholic schools and one Muslim school in East Jerusalem. There are three Arabic colleagues and we are working together in a good way.*

*Young people here are educated in a very strict way, the freedom of behaviour is a lot different. It's quite a closed culture, a different way of living and they are sort of laughing about different life style. The Arabic people are not always very open towards foreigners.*

<b>Complicating action</b>	<p><i>In the beginning it was very difficult that you could not plan. Sometimes depending on the Islamic calendar so this made it very difficult. You don't even know when there will be holidays. Sometimes they are postponed or sometimes they suddenly start. The next thing was that we didn't speak the language. It was extremely difficult sometimes. And what I thought was difficult in the beginning was the moving in two completely different worlds, in Palestine and in Israel. Somehow to bring this together was, is impossible sometimes. It's impossible to express yourself in such an open way (like in Germany).</i></p> <p><i>Since the situation became so difficult and so tense, I don't feel really relaxed when I walk through Ramallah and everybody can see I am a foreigner and I am afraid they might take me for an Israeli. When I take a taxi I understand that people are talking about me like if I were Jewish, you see and this can become dangerous.</i></p>
<b>Solution Result</b>	<p><i>We depend a lot on each other as a family. And we try to sort of get some relaxation, some enjoyment from making trips. But this was before Intifada started, now it is more difficult. And we enjoy being here. So we are very much restricted but we enjoy it. The people we are working with, everybody was concerned that we feel fine and that we have everything.</i></p> <p><i>In the beginning we didn't meet any Germans at all, for a long time. Maybe also due to the situation, security situation because we cannot move around in area A, we go more often to Jerusalem to meet German people.</i></p>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p><i>We have two more years but then I will be happy to be back in German schools. I have a job there; it is not a problem of going back. I have enjoyed for quite a period of different experience and I think this is enriching itself and back in Germany I will have to start in a way again because they have changed quite a lot curriculum and the things. In the beginning I will have some problems of course. The Arabic people always dress up in a way, they dress much more properly than the German teachers do. Another thing is that here everything is much more emotional on both sides, more aggressive sometimes but more emotional in a positive way. And here the contact is more physical and in Germany they are much more distant. And the next thing is that it will be difficult for me to adopt another style of driving again.</i></p>
<b>Coda</b>	<p><i>In a way I would like to consider myself as a world citizen. I am ready to adapt here and there and on the other hand you try, of course, not to get mixed up or lost or anything like this too much. But the German cultural tradition is not that strict or whatever. I think it is a process, in the beginning you are very open to a foreign culture and then you sort of end up in the middle. I think you should be ready, as far as I can judge, to accept a certain amount of chaos.</i></p>

## Life story of interviewee 24

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	<p><i>I remember when I was about thirteen and I thought about my profession and things like that I knew I would like to go abroad to work as a nurse, doctor, something like that. I wanted to go abroad. I thought about that time to go back to Africa once more because I liked it very much and then God spoke very, very clear. I never thought about Israel, you know. Any other country except Israel. And then He talked and I said, okay, if You say me Israel, then You will also give me full heart with it.</i></p>
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**Orientation  
Position**

**Time: Five and a half years in Israel**

*A friend of mine, she worked as a nurse in the same hospital. She told us about work her and she loved it and so I heard also it was a cancer hospital and I had always been very interested in the cancer. We have about six-seven languages at work and we have many different cultures, like all over the world. For example on my ward we have nurses from at least, let's say five, six different backgrounds, you know; like American, English, German, French and also Scandinavian, Russian and different Russian; Ukrainian Russian... then we have Palestinian and Israeli... and everybody think I do the best. The hospital was for my degree, really well equipped and I was happy. (The patients) they are Jewish nationality from all over the world; like American, Swiss, German, English, Russian, Ukrainian, Moroccan, a lot. And we have Armenians, then we have Arab Palestinian and Syrian and we have Christians from all over the world, as patients and also as workers. Our hospital is like a family. I have contacts to both sides. It also comes from work, I work with Palestinian and Israeli nurses. My friends are from all over the world and Israelis.*

**Complicating  
action**

*The main problem is the language. Then there were problems at work. There was lots of tensions because of different reasons. One thing what was really difficult to adjust was the aggression here. I had to struggle quite a bit in the beginning with that. Also the nursing style at home is very different. Like here is the American nursing style. Here it is much more like the nurses are half doctors. Everybody has a standard how he works. Here it is very negative to criticize somebody straight (at work).*

*One big issue for people coming from abroad, you know, facing the whole man issued. I live a year near the Old City and it was always a big problem and it makes like so difficult like cannot trust somebody. So this was very difficult...as woman going out in the evening. I don't feel the danger at all, but this made me just feel uncomfortable. You know, who is around next corner and things like that.*

**Solution  
Result**

*I really want to dig into a new culture. I don't want to go abroad being together with myself and Germans, you understand. If I want to stay, I really have to make an effort to learn the language, to get in, also because my doctors spoke also Hebrew with me. We have a rule at the hospital; we don't talk about religious or political subject in an open thing. Our goal is the patient.*

*If you have a little bit of aggression, sensitivity and diplomacy everything works better. I have changed a lot in this area that I approach things different, also relationship problems and other problems. It is also when you think about all these bombs, all these tensions, I think I cope much, much better than my family copes. I think with my faith, it is my strength, the only strength. I live very normally. I am just aware of this one effect (man/woman issue) I have to be careful.*

**Evaluation**

*I am very much aware going from different countries to different countries that if I move somewhere and I really want to be there whole heart and body, soul, that's why also language is important because without language I don't dig into the culture, you know. Israel was much, much more easy to get in because I had the experience before. I work with human beings and with cultures, with living thing, big, big difference. I have to appreciate or to acknowledge the other personality, culture, whatever it is. And it can be in five minutes something else. It is one of my strengths that I adapt very easily to other cultures. Although I know I need a certain frame.*

*I can't really imagine going back to Germany. I think it is much more like growing up in some sort of society and you remember all the goods, you forget all the bad things and then coming back, it like it is not there anymore. And suddenly it is not you home anymore.*

**Coda**

*Being a foreigner, you stay maybe always a foreigner a bit since you have also friends so it is always how much you are really a part of the society because you can live fully separated from the society although you live maybe fifteen years here.*

*I think you have to be strong. I think I learnt to see who I am as German. To see the good and the bad out of it, the weaknesses and the strength out of it and I will be always German and I love to be a German and also I love to see my responsibility as a German towards Israel. I think I live very ware of my roots and I think coming here an also seeing it as a mirror almost, I have learnt to embrace my German identity much, much more.*

## Life story of interviewee 25

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	<i>I came here for work opportunities and to learn Arabic and to establish myself and finally get a job like this. I don't think I expected to end up in this position when I first came down. I expected, my highest wish was basically maybe to be able to work as researcher for on international organization. I did not expect to get a management position.</i>
<b>Orientation Position</b>	<p><b>Time: came to the Middle East for Master's research in Political Sciences in 1997. After that has permanently stayed in the area of Palestinian Authority for three years</b></p> <p><i>Our aim is to work in areas where poverty is high to reduce poverty. It's a development agency. We recruit development workers from outside, from any country that have skills and expertise that doesn't exist here. They are recruited on the request of our partner organizations, Palestinian partner organizations. They come here and stay for two years or longer to give training, share their skills.</i></p> <p><i>Social wise it is very different. Organizational culture, management culture. (My host society is) Palestine. They have a very strong stereotype image of foreigners.</i></p> <p><i>When I am in Gaza, I think I am very much part of the UN expat society. Here in Jerusalem it is totally mixed with Palestinian friends, Israeli friends, internationals. I have friends from the Palestinian society. I got to know them through contacts I had when I came down, through work, through Arabic classes and going to the University.</i></p> <p><i>(We are) twelve. They are from Britain, Kenya, Egypt, Jordan, Greece, United States, Canada, Norway, Palestine, Belgium and France. They are stationed in Gaza, Ramallah, Nablus or Bethlehem. We have non work contacts, we go out for dinner and they come to Jerusalem for weekends. We have a flat here in Jerusalem. Everybody can use it when they come. Because we had to evacuate all the time, you know.</i></p>
<b>Complicating action</b>	<i>I have been here now 3,5 years but I don't feel I have enough knowledge yet to kind of read between the lines, you know. The ways they think about man and woman and sex and relationships and families, it's extremely different. Especially being alone as woman it affects my social life and it has affected my way of interacting with people.</i>
<b>Solution Result</b>	<p><i>If I didn't have a chance to be with the internationals here, I think I would have gone crazy. Talk about the situation and work problems and staff with international colleagues who see it from my perspective. Talk with people who understand my humour, you know; it is kind of cultural thing. Before Intifada started I didn't really think like anything here being difficult, you know. Small challenges. The ways to manage to live here now is to leave as often as possible. We have in our organization a counsellor helping us with stress management mechanism. And to spend a lot of time with friends and one of my ways I have always had by managing to live here is that my flat is totally private.</i></p> <p><i>A strong professional interest in this place and in this conflict has helped me. I mean, psychologically overcome any obstacles to live here. And learning the language, of course. I think the presence of Israel although Israel is the one putting all the obstacles in a way to our work; the presence of a Western culture has helped in some way.</i></p>



- Evaluation** *I like my job very much but the situation now is very frustrating because we are stopped from carrying out many projects. It could be worse, you know. There have been internationals here for so long time and there is so many of them. So I think that the culture here has actually adopted to receive us in different ways as well. It's like we come here to share our skills as an organization but basically we return with a lot of experience.*  
*When I finish here, it will be six years; five and a half years. I think that's enough. The situation here is wearing me down and I think, it is not only for negative reasons I feel I am finished, you know. It is, I might come back here, I need a change.*  
*In Norway people are almost trained to be naïve and trusting. That changed totally here. I am not naïve anymore, I am suspicious. I don't trust people and I can be bitchy. When I came here, I came without prejudices, when I go now, I will go with a lot of luggage. And I will go with prejudice against the people that I am going to meet.*
- Coda** *I am a well functioning human being. I integrate with people and my job. It's going well and I have no problems really. But I don't think I will never be well adjusted because I am a foreigner here, I always will be. I will integrate to a certain degree and then I will not go further because I will always want to keep for myself my own culture. I don't think that people with very strong made up mind about how things should be done will have much chance to survive here. They need to be extremely flexible. In both their personal life and work wise.*

## Life story of interviewee 26

- Abstract Introduction** *It seems like God called us for Israel already ten years ago when we were here for the first time. We had a lot of prayers about whether we should go here or not. At last after ten years it seemed like He wanted us to go. God needed us to this place and He wanted us to be here for this period. God chose Israel and He said in His word that the one who bless Israel will be blessed by me.*
- Orientation Position** **Time: Almost one year in Jerusalem**  
*Our foundation of the work is the Danish volunteers and if we don't have volunteers we don't have work. The work is very different from what we were called to do because the situation here in Israel has changed completely. The work is definitely not like what I expected. We have five colleagues. In this house we have three people working; my wife, me and S. Then we have two other colleagues here in Jerusalem who live in another apartment and work in social and diaconal work.*  
*(My host society is) Israel. There is no Palestine. We have had a very good meeting with this culture. People have invited us to their lives in Israel. It's multinational culture. The culture is all from Russian to Western European Jewish and it's Arab, it's everything.*
- Complicating action** *The situation in Israel makes it complicated to stay in Israel. We have five colleagues and we all react differently from what is going on here in Israel. It's always difficult to react with different people; 24 hours a day when you are used to having your own house, your own family. And we have a certain way of doing things in our family and here we suddenly have to share our house with another colleague and we have people staying here for shorter or longer period and we have to make everything work for these people as well, so it has been difficult.*  
*Our specially big child had problems in learning the language because she started in the Hebrew kindergarten.*

<b>Solution Result</b>	<i>We have had to change our own way of living. We have learnt about all this that you have to accept that we act differently. We try to spend the limited spare time as a family. We are trying to get out of the house. And we have good friends, so we visit them and try to do our day off, make it a family day. We have a lot of friends in Denmark who pray for us and because we know that God gave us these responsibilities for these years to stay here. And I think the most safe place to us to be in this world is where God wants us to be and that's the thing that gives us the peace of staying here.</i>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<i>In Denmark you lived for the weekends. Before like life was more like work, it was money and to have that as a basic income. I think it has changed in a way that I think in Denmark money is very important factor of our life. Here I have seen that the main important thing is to have made up your minds about God in your life and make Him the leader of your life and giving Him the first place. So in that way it has changed my view of life quite a bit. I have no idea what plans God has for me. I don't know. When I left my job, I was... asked to go into the leadership of the company. They offered me to come back and they offered to me like a two year vacation or something so I could go back. But I refused it. I wouldn't commit me to go back because if I would do that, I would limit God's possibilities in my life and I wouldn't do that.</i>
<b>Coda</b>	<i>I wonder people to come here and doing a professional career because that's not a place to do it. If they want to go here to be a blessing for the Jewish people...it's needed here. I am sure we will always be affected by the years we have been here. Israel is for me a unique place in this world because it's through this country that God has spoken to people. It has always been the chosen people of God so that makes this country different from any other country.</i>

## Life story constructed by interviewee 27

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	<i>I was the first to go abroad. I was the pioneer and the oldest. That was in 1998 when that project came to end so it was closing a chapter and I was looking for new challenges. And I was on holiday to Middle East when somebody pointed me to the direction of the school and in the mood of craziness I said: You don't happen to have any jobs around here?</i>
<b>Orientation Position</b>	<p><b>Time: Seven years in Israel</b></p> <p><i>There have been so many changes. I started as a teacher and then I became responsible for the whole computer system. The responsibilities started to rise. (Now I work as) Site and Services Manager. I did not have any expectation particular except that my nature is I am a problem solver and a crisis manager; the more problems, the more crises, the happier I am. (My host society is) Israel. It is a hostile environment whether you like it or not; from establishment, government point of view and offices. Population, the people itself, completely different. Before coming to the school I had those few years to get to know the culture, to see things and have fun time in Israel. I think the staff in total is about 69. We had 42-43 teaching staff, which has now been reduced to nineteen. The majority is British, we have a few Americans. the number of locals is almost half of the staff as a lot of Israeli staff and a lot of Palestinian staff. All people who live here (in the campus) we have quite a social life... (I have) many friends from the time in the kibbutz.</i></p>

<b>Complicating action</b>	<i>Coming to Israel was a problem, it was bad. But also working for a British organization was more of a problem. My culture shock was not with the Israeli culture, it was with the British culture in this particular place. (My difficulties were) bureaucracy in the country, bureaucracy in the organization and lack of professionalism. In terms of professionalism and amateurism compared to the country I come from. It was for me on a professional level. (The societies) are aggressive. It is very difficult not to be judgmental. I had absolutely no problems with the security situation before this Intifada started. Only this particular school year I have been more cautious in where I am going and when I am going.</i>
<b>Solution Result</b>	<i>I had to come down the ladder and adjust myself to their level (at work). Sometimes I end up doing things that are really not part of my job. So it is more to do with the level of expectations. I was well prepared to Israel. The Israeli society was very easy. Friends, language related to the host culture, friends within your working environment and contacts and social life outside the community give you spectrum. I have tried to integrate myself as much as possible here. So I've studied Hebrew. You have to be careful about what you do or I am not going to say this because it might upset someone. I was surprised to have to make that adjustment to my life ((because of the Intifada). I am still going out to restaurants but I am not going at what I consider to be dangerous times. And I am not going to the Shuk (the market place), I go to the supermarkets and I take a car.</i>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<i>Most likely I would stay in international career and probably stay in Israel but not necessarily at the school. I am not sure whether I would work for a Christian organization. I wouldn't say it's been such a good experience; too much rival, political issues, not really like politics related to the country but religious issues. I have seven hats, I am doing three full time jobs. I've learned to manage people. I think that's the one thing I've enjoyed. On technical professional level I have not learnt anything new. I've become a global citizen; you are relating to global issues and issues specially related to the Middle East. In many ways this country in itself... the whole world is focused on this country, you become a global citizen rather than just becoming part of another country, another host.</i>
<b>Coda</b>	<i>I think that the fact that you have to adjust and be more flexible, not because you wanted to but because you had to, makes you more prepared if you have to move to another country. The globe becomes bigger. There are more experiences, more you've been through with different levels of experiences, different cultures, different societies. But you'll never actually hit or change your inner identity. It's like different channels and I don't think they affect each other because they just build on but it's easier to go from one stage to another, it doesn't cost so much effort. But I don't think they actually overlap each other. But as many layers as you build, if you would go back to your own home country, I think all these years, that would be reduced, reduced and will fall back to your home identity. So once your world view has been broadened, you cannot just crush it back or compress it back. I don't think the view change changed because once it is liberated and free but I think you will fall back in the habits of your culture because it is almost forced upon you.</i>

### Life story by interviewee 28:

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	<i>I have a long-standing interest in the Middle East; desire to report on foreign news and this is career advancement. I am funded by Canada, I am ordered here.</i>
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<b>Orientation Position</b>	<p><b>Time: Four years in the Middle East</b></p> <p><i>I don't belong to their society (Israel and Palestine). This place is alien. This culture is almost ridiculously ethnocentric. Jerusalem is a little walled city in the middle of nowhere that exists because of national or religious reasons, where everybody hates each other, I mean; going to Amman is a relief. I worked in Jordan, in Baghdad, less now, in Syria, in Lebanon. I am the boss, four employees, one is Israeli born, a Britt and another is Israeli Arab, the fourth is a Palestinian and the fifth is my wife. Very little (non work contacts), very little, I mean, to a certain extent, I am the boss.</i></p> <p><i>I have very little contact with the Israelis nor do I have much social contact with Palestinians. My social life is with other expatriates.</i></p>
<b>Complicating action</b>	<p><i>Because of the Intifada the work load became almost back breaking. This is officially determined a hardship post. There are other hardship posts that are in my view more hardship than here, probably Moscow is a bit harder than here. Certainly Peking is because Peking is so alien and on the other side of the moon. This is the big story. I've seen people in the middle of horrible gun battles. My neighbour's balcony got hit by gun fire. And I've been caught and I mean suicide bomber blew up outside the school and his head flew in the school yard. Children had hard time adapting. Kids are tougher here than in Canada. We were almost depressed within about three or four months of being here. It's because this place is so alien...</i></p>
<b>Solution Result</b>	<p><i>We effectively live for the next trip out, that's it, and always outside Middle East. We never ever take our kids to a public place. They live completely sheltered life. We are allowed a trip abroad every three month for a week and we take it. Plus home leave. We don't spend any money forward here. We don't participate forward here, we just live here. I had to advance the whole idea of trying to be nice and talk away the situations and I finally just told to my son and daughter: Fall up you face and hit the other person as hard as you can on the face three or four times and they can bleed so they will stop. This is Middle East. As simple as that! Apparently you just become accepting this and you know what exists and that's it. Nothing to do about it!</i></p> <p><i>It's pointless to study Hebrew and I'll tell you why: There are only sic million people in the world who speak Hebrew. There are hundred and fifty million who speak Arabic. ...that's why I did it.</i></p>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p><i>We are here for the job primarily. It is an experience, but it is costing you as well. In more than one way you are throwing out the best years of your life, or five years of your life, which you can't buy back. I have a lot of expertise in a crucial area that is you are now marketable and desirable for companies.</i></p>
<b>Coda</b>	<p><i>I am here one more year, and then I will go to Washington. There is a limit! Professionally I can navigate in the Middle East; nothing about the Middle East ruffles me.</i></p>

## Life story of interviewee 29

<b>Abstract Introduction</b>	<p><i>It was our desire to come first of all. We believe it was God's plan and we believe there is a need also for that.</i></p>
<b>Orientation Position</b>	<p><b>Time: Now six months in Israel but has lived in Israel for seven years from 1990 to 1997</b></p> <p><i>We lived in England and come from Brazil to Israel, Brazil is the same as Israel, a third world country with a first world technology. England is a different matter, everything is much more organized. I work in a British organization. Everything is being as we expected and as we were told. We work and live in Israel. Most of our friends are Israeli. I speak Hebrew, my wife is learning it. Somehow the Israeli society is very welcoming. This place is about four hundred something different nationalities. They are used to people</i></p>

*coming abroad. We are around thirty people at my workplace. Most of them are Israelis, some originally Russian, Americans, then we have volunteers from Europe or Africa.*

**Complicating action**

*This is a Middle Eastern country and you have to think about that. And it is more difficult of course. And on top of it is the political situation with war, terrorism and thing like that. Because of the tension you don't have the freedom going to the places as you want. (The difficult things have been) driving in Tel Aviv, the fact that you are a foreigner and you know you are a foreigner and the fact that we are missing things back (in Finland and in England). I think I got through a culture shock second time. The first time definitely not. Never. The situation, the ways of living in England where everything is simply, just easier.*

**Solution Result**

*We knew the society and we knew the way round, that was easy. And also the language. Contextualizing, my family and being in a family you can help each other. And friends, I would say (have helped to manage). The vast majority of our friends are Israelis. Some of them are part of the same group that you meet with one regular basis; some of them are your neighbours.*

**Evaluation**

*In working with people this is a very good training ground because they come from different background always and they are very outspoken, some more aggressive in the way they deal with people, they deal with you. You either learn to deal with that or you are not functional. So I think people's management is one of the things you learn. I believe (I continue to work) here. To my work it will have just positive effect anyway because of the nature of the work. To my family, hopefully it will have a positive effect as well. I speak Portuguese to my children. But if we come to the point that Daniel starts to lose his English I will drop Portuguese. Because he needs Portuguese only every two years that he can communicate with his grandparents. I think my cultural identity is going kaput. I am more anything than Brazilian. I don't know if it is good or bad, it doesn't matter for me so much but I don't feel very Brazilian most of the times. I think at the moment I am a mixture of probably British and Israeli. (When I go to Brazil) I do feel as apart. I am a different person because the Brazilian culture is very... I am not saying it is better or anything, but Brazilians are very happy somehow. Brazil is a mixed culture anyway. We have so many cultures in the country and I think that helps probably accepting other people and the situation and I am happy there, I am fine there.*

**Coda**

*Don't ever think that your culture is the best in the world or your language is the best in the world or your home country. There is no such thing as far as I can see. There is no such thing as the best culture, the best language or the best country. You make it. Be accepting, be open, open minded and humble. For me part of the core would be adaptation, learning and accepting the culture. And the Godly values; the honesty, the relationships to people, I think they can be used anywhere.*

## **Life story of interviewee 30**

**Abstract Introduction**

*Most of my intention was just to get out of my country and travel, to be away from home. I was encouraged to do it because I was in a Bible School and my teacher used to live here. And another reason was that I was very interested in the language, in the Hebrew language. I knew the people who were here before me so I saw how they worked and the things they did. So I had a good feeling on what it was about.*

<b>Orientation Position</b>	<p><b>Time: Three and a half years in Israel</b></p> <p><i>We've been recognized as a non profit organization (in Israel). So they are giving us visa, which is a big help for us. We used to have a big group of Danish people here. Now we have a small group here. We are right now 5, including Tiberias we are nine plus six volunteers, all are Danish. It is part of my work to show people around, do tours. It's like a life style to live together like that (in the house of the organization)</i></p>
<b>Complicating action</b>	<p><i>I feel sometime. I used to do it at least when there was a lot of people, I felt like living in a ghetto. You know; all Danish, speaking Danish all day long, do Danish things, eating Danish stuff, don't have much contact with the Israeli society. So that could be a stumbling block.</i></p> <p><i>I fell like on the sideline very much. Some things that is very difficult here like to get to know the society because the language is really important thing. The big stumbling block for me is still the language.</i></p> <p><i>If you talk politics, they become very, very aggressive. I am even after three and a half years I have a problem finding out how the system works politically. I pretty much feel things seem to work the same way where I am from but when I get into the systems, it really doesn't work the same way. It is more heavy to work with, it's more difficult. If I say that I am a Christian, they put me in a box immediately. The mentality of the people here is much more in one way relaxed but in another way more tense. Here it is more like we'll see what happens if we don't have it done today, maybe tomorrow.</i></p>
<b>Solution Result</b>	<p><i>After being here more than a year, two years, I feel more comfortable about the environment, the attitude of people themselves. I study the language in the ulpan two days a week. There are not so many people (Danish) anymore; I have many more opportunities to get out and to meet people. Two things I would mention: the first one is to work with handicapped people and the other thing to be in a ministry, I am constantly learning new things.</i></p>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p><i>Israel is very special to me. I have an idea that I would like to come back here, maybe as part of my study, maybe after my study. I would like to work here. I am going to study; I hope I will study Hebrew language, culture and religion.</i></p> <p><i>I have now an opportunity to look my own culture from a distance and I can easily, more easy now when I used to live in it, point out things in my culture that I like, that I agree with and things that I don't like, I don't agree with. I adapt thing into my life style that I guess is changing me. I love the life style of being around people, being at their service. To work with people is much different. I would say I get a lot of results.</i></p>
<b>Coda</b>	<p><i>There is an aspect that for me to be a Christian, to be a believer, is actually the reason for me being here and personally on one side I am adjusting to be a Christian more and more every day. That's part of Christian life, to adjust to be a Christian. And that affects me on how to be around with other people. I think my identity is not I am a Dane, I am proud to be a Dane. I live in Israel, I am proud to live in Israel. Where I live, who I am, I am a believer, I am Christian</i></p>

This chapter introduced the analysis process and its principles. As a result of this process the life stories of thirty interviewees were constructed. The life stories based strictly and purely on the interview data. No comments or personal interpretations of the researcher were included in the life stories. The analysis continues in the next chapter by classification of the life stories.

## **7 NARRATIVE PROFILES OF EXPATRIATES IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

### **7.1 Rules for categorization**

The first reading process and the processes of rereading the interview data showed that some interviewees working in international assignments shared similar kinds of subjective experiences. Roos (1988) claims that life histories are processes, through which a person lives his/her subjectivity. This can also be applied to life stories. Heikkinen (2001, 130) shows that the strength of narrative research is that it facilitates the individual and authentic “voices” of people when sticking to the context as well as to personal and subjective knowledge. Peltonen (1995, 28) claims that expatriate life provides an interesting setting to explore processes of personal sense making and construction of a meaningful career narrative. He suggests that an expatriate experience is a change in selfhood. Therefore, an international assignment can launch a minor or significant rearrangement of identity and emerge into new forms of subjectivity (Peltonen 1998). The first categorization of life stories was based on tacit and intuitive grounds or what Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to as “look-alike” or “feel-alike”. To find a more systematic basis for categorization, I returned back to my research question. As discussed in chapter two, the aim of this research is to explore, how expatriates in the Middle East narrate their work and life. Accordingly, I wanted to go through the subjective experiences of the interviewees related to their work and to their life as a broader context.

#### **7.1.1 Relation to work**

When I coded the interview data, I named one code as “work” and coded all the statements related to work under this code. When I read through the textual expressions of the interviewees, significant differences were found between the interviewees. There were interviewees, who pursued international career around the globe, and their emphasis was on their personal career. Secondly,

there were interviewees, who expressed determination to pursue their long-term career either in an Israeli or in a Palestinian context and who wished to continue their international assignment and transfers between their country of origin and the Middle East. The third significant group of expressions came from the interviewees, who strongly referred to their work as an ideological commitment. Finally, some interviewees were less clear in their relation to work: sometimes it was stated as “not planned” or as “an enthusiastic international option” or “a way to be with people, who understand you”. The coded segments related to work showed four different types of relation to work or career. The summary of these findings from the interview data is shown in the next review.

The identification of the text segments used in the following chapters can be followed according to the number of the interviewee and the number of the line in the transcribed interview text. For example in the text segment (8/35-35), number 8 represents the interviewee number, and 35-35 shows that the sentence or paragraph came from line 35 of the text segment.

## 1. Emphasis on career

Interviewees 2, 7, 9, 16, 17, 20, 25, 27 and 28 emphasized career building when they related to their work. Their expressions are as follows:

*“In my profession the Middle East is one of the most wanted places of work” (2/29-29)  
“...Having worked here is an advantage in my position. I am not sure that the (name of the organization) will allow me to stay in one area” (2/81-81)*

*“I always keep my options open, I have about six options at one time. I enjoy international work. Even if I say it to myself, I am good in what I do” (7/81-81)*

*“I was proposed if I would consider a mission in Jerusalem. So I was more looking the type of work rather than a duty station” (9/30-30) Work wise it is the natural continuation because all my professional career is abroad” (9/81-81)*

*“I applied for a job elsewhere...there were more than one position. Then they said, what about Jerusalem, maybe my profile was more fit to this” (16/29-29)*

*“I had only requested for a post in the Middle East. I wanted to stay in the Middle East because it is the region I know, the language, my studies in the Political Science were really very much Middle East oriented. It’s a conflict I know and I like, it fascinates me” (17/29-29)*

*“I like very much such a career (20/81-8...good professional experience for both of us (refers to her husband)” (20/30-30)*

*“I came here for work opportunities and to learn Arabic and to establish myself and finally get a job like this” (25/29-29)*

*“I have worked in this field long and I absolutely like it (27/65-65”I am not planning to go back (to Belgium)” 27/81-81)*

*“(The reason to come here) a long standing interest in the Middle East, a desire to report foreign news and career advancement.” (28/33-33) “I am one year here, then I go to Washington, four years” (28/84-84) “I have a lot of expertise in a crucial area that is you know marketable and desirable for companies” (28/89-89)*



## 2. Emphasis on the need of expertise combined with personal desire

Interviewees 1, 4, 8, 10, 11, 15, 18, 22, 23, 24 and 29 emphasized the need of their expertise and a personal consideration when they discussed their work. They also often related to questions of family and personal matters when speaking of work. Their expressions related to work are as follows:

*"I came here to work for Thais. If not thinking about that God is behind everything." (1/22-22) I will work here as long as the Thai people are here in the country." (1/72-72)*

*"I came to work here because of the tremendous spiritual need on this area. Then also I had a personal calling toward the Muslim Arab people. The practical aspect that took me to this country was that I had a Business Degree and my Area director wanted somebody who had that experience." (4/33-33)*

*"We felt a calling to come here. My husband had a special calling to Israel to move here." (8/35-35)*

*"I got the first push to work here in Israel eleven years ago when I came here for the first time and worked in different places." (10/33-33) "I want to get a feeling of working a good time in a foreign country, not just one or two years." (10/84-84)*

*"He (the husband) very practically got this offer and he thought it was interesting...so I kind of willingly followed my husband. I didn't know that I would work here, that came later. Naturally I became involved with the (name of the organization) because that was something that I had been doing." (11/31-31)*

*"I realized that this is a golden opportunity to do something quite different. So I applied for two jobs I could find and this was one of them." (15/30-30) "I don't look myself as one with a career." (15/81-81)*

*"Eighteen years ago God gave me a special love for this country. I heard that this organization needed volunteers, I applied for the job and received it." (18/28-28)*

*"I was working 21 years a headmaster. Here was no problem but it started to become a little bit boring. I was affiliated with the German-Jewish problem, therefore I was curious. And in general it was always my dream to work for a limited period abroad." (22/32-32)*

*"I wanted to do something different after teaching at the same place so many years. And I was always curious to get to know other countries and travelled during the holidays a lot." (23/33-33)*

*"It was our desire first of all. We believe it was God's plan and we believe there was a need also for that." (29/32-32)*

## 3. Emphasis on the ideology

Interviewees 6, 13, 14, 19, 26 and 30 emphasized an ideological commitment when they discussed the reason to come to work in the area. They express it as follows:

*"I prayed one night if there was something here for us." (6/33-33) "In my case I had few conceptions because I really didn't know what we would be doing." (6/36-36)*

*"I had been offered this job and I prayed about it and the Lord gave me Scriptures and everything." (13/28-28) "I just feel this is where the Lord wants me and it doesn't matter how tough it is. I will stay until He says Move on." (13/39-39)*

*"The Lord brought me here. He showed it clearly. He really wanted me here. That was the reason I came." (14/28-28) "I am planning to stay as long as to Lord wants me here. And here. This is where the Lord wants me at the moment and this is where I stay." (14/79-79)*

*"He opened doors and showed me exactly what I would be doing." (19/28-28) "If He wants me to continue, then yes." (19/79-79)*

*"The main reason is that God need us to this place and He wanted us to be here this period." (26/31-31) "I have no idea what plans God has for me, I don't know." (26/82-82)*

*"I was encouraged to do it because I was in a Bible School and my teacher used to live here. And I just felt like travelling. And Israel was a cheap and easy place to travel in." (30/30-30) "Israel is very special to me. So I have an idea that I would like to come back here." (30/81-81)*

#### **4. Emphasis on seeing the world and finding his/her own place**

There were four interviewees, 3, 5, 12 and 21, who seemed to have mixed feelings related to their reasons to work in the Middle East. Their reasons for being in the Middle East as well as their plans concerning the future showed hesitation. Their expressions related to their work are as follows:

*"First we were asked, secondly we had time to reflect because a couple of years ago we didn't reach a conclusion. We had been through so long a process. We asked some advisors of our own, I went to a psychiatrist so that they could find out if I fit a life in a pressure cooker." (3/37-37) "I don't have fixed plans, I don't know..." (3/88-88)*

*"I was always interested in the Arab world. I was not interested in the Israeli Palestinian conflict. So I sort of slipped into it. The I was offered a job in the UN." (5/35-35) "The reason I worked with the UN is that I feel that identify with that kind of people. When I stopped working in the UN I felt that there was something wrong with those people that they run away from something. When I got married, I wanted to get out of it. I felt that it was comfortable to live and work at home. Deeper I have a feeling that I would like to go back to the UN. People don't understand my feeling of travel." (5/88-88) "I would like to continue. I feel that there are not many people who are like myself and I identify with them. I cannot do it if I am in Germany." (5/86-86)*

*"I have that edge to kind of move out from a box and move around and find my own place in the world, not having it made for me." (12/28-28) "I think there will always be an international aspect whatever I am doing. Just because I love it. I love being exposed to things and people and I find that it has helped me define who I am as a person. I've felt more lost when I was in the US:" (12/79-79)*

*"I was thinking in my job in America that I was getting tired of it and I didn't want to give up and I wanted a change in my life. Being Jewish I thought it would be a good idea to come to Israel and in Jerusalem as a means of trying to know, be part of something that you have grown up with and believed in although I wouldn't call myself Zionist." (21/30-30)*

The analysis of the data according to the experiences related to work revealed four different types of emphasis of the interviewees: emphasis on career, emphasis on the need of special expertise combined with personal desire, emphasis on the ideology and emphasis on seeing the world and finding his/her own place. I wanted to continue by examining if there would be some other characteristics to be found that would be similar to some of the interviewees.

### 7.1.2 Relation to life

As I proceeded, I wanted to be sure that the categories would provide a "reasonable construction of the data" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, 349). Accordingly, to define more specifically the above four categories I decided to approach the subjective life stories of the interviewees from the point of view of personal life management of the interviewees to see what kind of common features would arise from them. This was due to the second part of my research question: how do the expatriates in the Middle East **narrate their life experiences**. My approach was based on the process of classification of life stories applied in the researches of Roos (1988) and Alasuutari (1995). Both of them found a basis for the classification of personal life stories in the dimension, which they call the interviewee's internal or external control of life. Alasuutari calls it self-control and Roos life management. I prefer to use the term life management, which I define as having two dimensions in my research: internal and external.

The internal life management emerges in the life stories in the internal actions and evaluations of the interviewee in relation to the international assignment. The feelings expressed in the interview situation, the way the interviewee presented him/herself, his/her emphasis on certain matters, repeating, and coming back to certain themes strengthened the textually (verbally) expressed experiences. I defined the external life management in relation to the situation of the employment of the interviewee. The two dimensions of the external life management were either "in control" or "wandering". When the external life management was "in control", it meant that the interviewee had a frame for his/her present and future work. This emerged in the "abstract" schema of the life story when the interviewee expressed the reasons why s/he came to work in the Middle East. The "wandering" dimension of external life management emerged from the interviewee being unsure about the work before coming to the Middle East but still coming because of a "spiritual inner call", or because the interviewee was searching for different work options without a clear distinction.

The data of the internal life management showed three different dimensions: calculated, balanced and diffused. The internal life management was analyzed as stated in the subjective experience of the interviewee's selfhood and his/her career path. The dimension "calculated" means that the personal advancement in the career is very important for the interviewee and that former and present work experience represent a planned and even calculated career track. However, it does not mean that the interviewees in that category do not consider, for example, the welfare of their family members when making decisions about the career. It means that the next moves are planned in good time and planning includes both work and family matters. The dimension "balanced" of the internal life management does not include as much desire in career advancement as the dimension "calculated" although work and personal development are very important for the interviewees placed inside this dimension. The dimension "diffused" includes such properties,

which indicate that the identity and the personal evaluation of the selfhood of the interviewee show a stage of diffusion.

Hirsijärvi & Hurme (2001, 174-175) suggest that categorization or typification of the cases is done by certain common traits. What is essential is that two or three common features appear inside one category. In this research, the defining features come from the internal and external dimensions of life management of the interviewees. McAdam (1993) presents a concept of narrative tone to help understand human stories. He claims the narrative tone to be a very strong feature of a personal myth and life story in the adulthood (McAdams, 47-50). For McAdams, the narrative tone of a story reflects the underlying hopeful or hopeless perspective on life. The narrative tone of the life stories of the interviewees supported the classification based on life management. The next table shows how the interviewees were placed into categories according to the above dimensions.

TABLE 9 The life management of the interviewees

Internal	External	
	In control	Wandering
Calculated	"Calculated/in control" 2, 7, 9, 16, 17, 20, 25, 27, 28	"Calculated/wandering"
Balanced	"Balanced/in control" 1, 4, 8, 10, 11, 15, 18, 22, 23, 24, 29,	"Balanced/wandering" 6, 13, 14, 19, 26, 30
Diffused	"Diffused/in control"	"Diffused/wandering" 3, 5, 12, 21,

The second phase of the analysis helped me to define four different story types. I named the categories intuitively according to the relation both to work and to life. Interviewees in the category, in which the internal life management is called "calculated" and the external life management "in control", came to work to the Middle East according to a clear plan which would advance their international career. I named this category as "**global careerists**". Interviewees whose internal life management was analyzed as "balanced" and who were placed in the external life management in the section "in control" had a clear frame in their work although the reasons for coming to work in the area were either purely professional or ideological arising from religious or human development aspects. I named this category as "**balanced experts**". There were interviewees who were internally balanced and optimistic as to their selfhood but whose background and present work situation showed "wandering aspects". Some of them stated that they "*received a clear calling from God*" to come to Israel, and they had no idea about the work or the location in the area. They did not necessarily have any external frame of work or life before coming to Israel or even during their stay. I named this category of interviewees as "**idealizers**". The fourth category of interviewees included people who seemed to have problems with diffused selfhood and whose external frame for life and work was in a process of search and grope. I named this category as "**drifters**".

The above table of internal and external life management makes it possible to have six theoretical categories. In this study none of the interviewees fell into the category, in which the internal life management of the interviewee would be “diffused” and the external life management of the interviewee would be “in control”. Like wise, none of the interviewees fell into the category, in which the internal life management of the interviewee would be “calculated” and the external life management would be “wandering”. Another setting and a larger sample might have also brought people into these categories. In this setting I could perhaps have placed I-3 in the category, in which his internal life management is “diffused” and his external life management is be “in control. His career seemed to be planned in a more systematic way than the career of others placed in the category of drifters. However, his plans did not come to a reality as planned, and he also said that he does not plan his career. A good example of this is that during the time of the interview, he planned to move to Norway with his family because of his own career and because of the children so that they would find their roots in Norway. When I had come back to Finland I received the information, that instead of moving to Norway he had moved with his family to the USA. Thus, placing him in the category of “drifters” proved to be correct afterwards. I would think that expatriates would be found who could be placed in the category, in which the internal life management is diffused but the external life management is in control. In the light of this research, it seems more difficult to find international travelers in the category, in which the internal life management is calculated and the external life management is wandering. It may be that there are people who have chosen an international career as their way of life, and who very often change their place of work, the organization as well as the country. At the end, they might be found in a situation where they lose the focus, and the transfers may become their way of life. However, such expatriates were not found in this study.

In the following chapters, I will construct a profile story of each category with the help of the individual life stories, the preliminary story summaries and the narrative abstracts of the interviewees. I call these stories narrative profiles, and they present a frame or a composite story of each type. The narrative profile is a story synthesis of the individual and unique life stories located in the same category. The narrative profile will not be an ideal story representing the entire category but a fictive synthesis of the different stories inside the category. Before continuing, I will organize the coded textual interview data according to the above four categories. This information provides me with the data for description and evaluation of the profile stories. After this, each narrative profile will be analyzed in terms of cross-cultural adaptation, learning and identity transformation.

Hyvärinen (1994, 54-55) indicates that it is essential to recognize the type of narrativization in the story and the core rhetoric of the story. A traditional typology of the narrative types is based on the Western way of narrating arising from the plot axis of the story (Riessman 1993; Lieblich & al. 1998; Saaranen & Eskola 2003). The prominent typologies are tragedy, comedy, romance and

satire (White 1973; Riessman 1993; Hänninen 1999). Another way to approach narratives would be searching for the progression of the narrative, which refers to the development of the plot of the narrative over time (Gergen & Gergen 1988; Lieblich & al. 1998). Three basic formats of progression are a progressive narrative, a regressive narrative and a stable narrative. For example, the narrative profile of a global careerist presents a progressive narrative, whereas the narrative profile of a drifter presents a regressive narrative. The narrative profiles of balanced experts and idealizers fall into the format of a stable or progressive narrative.

The further analysis in this study is based on the classification of the stories. Since there were thirty different life stories there was a danger that the further analysis and interpretation would be fragmented. That is the reason why I base the further analysis on the classification of the life stories. The classification of the life stories allows me to reach a more holistic approach to the data in its richness. At the same time, I recognize that the individual uniqueness weakens when the differences between the story types are emphasized. My decision to construct a composite story of each type as a synthesis of the interviewees located in that category instead of using one "ideal" or "example" story of the life stories, which would represent the entire category brings along some advantages and disadvantages. The first advantage of this procedure is that it facilitates the use of the rich data of different interviewees of each category. On the other hand, it enables me to go beyond the original setting of my research and raise the ideas and the interpretations at a more abstract level. Secondly, it makes it more difficult to identify the interviewees when the analysis goes into personal experiences of adaptation and selfhood and typical actions and decisions inside the story category. The disadvantage of this procedure is that the composite story or the narrative profile is a fictive story (Hänninen 1999, 33; Saaranen & Eskola 2003). Coffey & Atkinson (1996, 123-124) encourage the analyst to use this kind of approach in the construction of textual representations in order not only to provide "a novel nuance" in the approach but to also adopt one or more personae and insert additional voices as an alternative interpretation. They claim that fact and fiction cannot be absolutely distinct in the construction of texts as even more familiar and traditional ways are usually based on analyst's selection of the data segments. The above experiences in analysis and research and the advice of Coffey and Atkinson (1996) encouraged me to continue the analysis in construction of narrative profiles to represent the story categories.

Four categories of international actors in the Middle East; global careerists, balanced experts, idealizers and drifters characterize the key features of the international careerists in terms of cross-cultural adaptation, identity transformation and learning in an unfamiliar cultural setting during the Middle East crisis. The interpretation of their work and life narratives will be compared against the current theoretical understanding of the phenomenon. The narrative profiles of each story type are represented and analyzed in the following chapters. I have named each story according to a fictitious male or female name

depending on the number of male and female cases falling into the category. A narrative profile is a composite story, which is presented as a personal story of one person fictively representing the entire category. However, in detailed analysis and interpretation of the narrative profile I lean on all the life stories inside the category. Inside the category also extreme examples emerge and I will present their perspectives because if the sample of the research were larger, more extreme narratives might arise.

I relate to the expression of Vilkkö (1997, 32) when she considers her own position related to the autobiographies of Finnish women. She defines herself as a “weaver of a patchwork quilt”. The following representations of narrative profiles of expatriates in the Middle East resemble a patchwork quilt. As a researcher I weave together the subjective experiences of the interviewees and give them a place or a voice in a composite narrative profile. In the same patchwork I weave the patches of current theoretical understanding and the challenges raised by the data of this research. My interpretations and conclusions are woven as patches inside the same quilt. The common ground for the patchwork quilts of narrative profiles of expatriates is the Middle East. The idea of patchwork quilt offers a polyphonic representation and analysis of the data and justifies constant interplay of different perspectives from the rich data. The representation itself is in line with the dynamic ontological approach towards culture and identity transformation applied in the research. Furthermore, it is established on the holistic and process oriented approaches of cross-cultural adaptation and learning presented in chapter three.

## **7.2 Categories of narrative profiles**

### **7.2.1 Global Careerists**

#### **7.2.1.1 Narrative profile of Sam**

Sam is a 35-year-old professional. He has systematically gained experience and expertise in his own field both in his own home country and even more internationally. He is very committed to his work and enjoys its challenges. Even the Middle East crisis with all the tensions and violence provides him a professional challenge. Sam systematically builds his international career and his intimate family supports this.

Together with his family, Sam has considered options for the education of their present and coming children as well as the impact of international living on the children. He shows wide interest in the Middle East and global matters. The interest is related to his personal advancement and profession. He has strengthened his professional competency by language and other studies. He has a good command of English and French, the main Western global

languages. He also manages with Arabic, which is a great advantage in the Middle East.

Sam works in a multicultural context. He has some friends in the Israeli and Palestinian societies, but his close circle of friends consists of his expatriate colleagues. He spends most of his holidays outside the Middle East. His transfer to the Middle East was a planned move in relation to his past and future career path.

The key words, which would describe Sam, are:

- Determined in his career path
- Committed to his work
- Confident in his expertise

Nine of the thirty interviewees fell into the category of global careerists. Five of them were male and four were female. As the name of the category indicates, global careerists had been working and living shorter or longer periods of time abroad in different places. Only I-28 had not worked abroad earlier. However, he indicated that he would continue his career in Washington after his current assignment. Eight of the nine global careerists share a good command of foreign languages. The only exception is I-7 who is British with a long international experience and intention to continue and who does not know any other language except English. He works in an international organization and manages at his work with both colleagues and local partners by only using English. He has very little contacts with the surrounding society except through his work. His assignments are usually for short periods of time, from half a year to two years, and the decision of his family was that his wife stayed in England with their school age children. This is also one reason as to why his holiday trips are planned to England.

#### **7.2.1.2 Cross-cultural adaptation of Global Careerists**

Global careerists recognize the cultural differences between their countries of origin and Israel/Palestine. By their own words they state, *“Cultural differences are almost completely different (28/37-37). Social wise it is very different. The organizational culture, the management culture, the way they think about man and woman and sex and relationships and families, it’s extremely different (25/33-33).* I-17 found the Mediterranean culture to be familiar and a common ground because of her Lebanese background. Having lived a long time in Lebanon prepared her to come and live in Israel/Palestine. She was used to coping with the security situation already in Lebanon.

Global careerists have work experience from different parts of the world. Only one out of nine interviewees in this category had no previous international work experience. However, he had worked for many years in a news agency and said that he has had a long-term interest in the Middle East. Global careerists have a good command of many Western languages. Many



interviewees in the category were also fluent in Arabic. Having lived abroad in many different places makes the adaptation of a global careerist easy in many practical aspects. Even the interviewees who had no previous experience with the Middle Eastern culture and who did not know Arabic or Hebrew and expressed the current political situation as being very complicated, shared a subjective sense of being adapted to live and work in the area. Like one of the interviewees said: *" maybe the years abroad in different countries have helped in that respect become a little bit sensitive and understanding that things are not like at home. I mean you have to know how you approach"* (16/81-81).

The nearest reference group of a global careerist is his/her work colleagues and the expatriate community of the area. I-28 represents the most extreme example of communication and adaptation inside this category. He hardly has any contact with the Israelis or the Palestinians. The only compulsory contacts are through his work when reporting news. He tells, *"All my social life is with the expats"*. He and his family avoid any participation in the Israeli or the Palestinian societies. They always travel outside the Middle East for their holidays. He defines his host society to be Canada although he has lived four years in Israel. He finds both Israel and Palestine very aggressive societies. He goes further saying that *"Israelis are very rude and Palestinians are aggressive in a more friendly way"*. He sees the entire place as very alien. He says that he was very depressed during the first months of his stay in the area but has now struggled himself out and accepted the situation and continued living here- he says that he has adjusted. The fact that he knows that he will be here only temporarily helps him. He already knows that his next job will be in Washington. For him, adaptation means accepting the situation and making the best of it.

Ward, Bochner and Furnham (2001, 42) suggest that a common theme in all models of cross-cultural adaptation is *"the recognition of psychological well-being and satisfaction as well as effective relationships with members of the new culture are important components of adaptation for cross-cultural travelers"*. Kim (2001) emphasizes in her approach to cross-cultural adaptation two boundary conditions that are necessary for the adaptation process. First, the stranger residing in a new culture should be at least minimally dependent on the host environment in meeting his/her personal and social needs. Secondly, the stranger should be at least minimally engaged in firsthand communication experiences with the environment. These conditions are very minimal in the case of the extreme global careerists as represented by I-28 my research. The adaptation of I-28 questions the conditions presented by Kim in her model for cross-cultural adaptation. The dependence of the interviewee on the host society is very minimal and restricted mainly on physical needs of housing and infrastructure. Social needs and firsthand communication of I-28 are very restricted to work relations. Kim's definition of cross-cultural adaptation *"as a dynamic process by which individuals establish, re-establish and maintain relatively stable, reciprocal and functional relationships with new, changed cultural environment"* has a different meaning for global careerists.

Adaptation of I-28 resembles very much the picture of a modern cosmopolitan presented by Hannerz (1990, 239). Hannerz suggests that the term cosmopolitan entails relationships to a plurality of cultures and includes an orientation of the coexistence of cultures in the individual experience. In addition, cosmopolitanism includes an aspect of competence and a state of readiness to make one's way into other cultures. Hannerz calls it maneuvering with a particular system of meanings and meaningful forms. According to Hannerz, cosmopolitanism consists of different levels. A cosmopolitan can express varieties of different levels at different times. Global careerists fit in the picture of cosmopolitans as defined by Hannerz. Hannerz claims that modern cosmopolitans gain a competence regarding alien cultures in a sense of mastery or maneuvering the structures of meanings fit to the alien culture. At the same time they accept a foreign culture as "a package deal" (Hannerz 1990, 240). For Hannerz, even the surrender to the alien culture is a part of the mastery of the cosmopolitan. As global careerists in the Middle East say it:

*"We were well prepared to come here. It was good that we had lived abroad earlier" (2/27-27)  
"I think I have adapted quite well and also my wife. What has helped is open frame of mind and that we are a strong couple" (2/64-64)*

*"This is the most difficult area of culture surprises that I have worked in and that surprises me. I don't recognize changes in my adaptation process. I always accept everybody whilst it can be irritating but to be honest, it has been more irritating and annoying than other cultures that I have come across" (7/63-63)*

*"Normally it just comes when you move from one place to another. You have to go through the adaptation process several times. So I think you just let it happen...unless you really hold on tightly, I think it will happen anyway. If you are very judging and you have attitudes and expectations and you want to stick to those, it can prevent, I think to seeing the other cultures openly; you rather maybe seek things to confirm your attitudes rather than trying to see what really is happening" (9/87-87)*

*"Of course we have to adjust according to what is, of course you can't avoid it has some influence on our way to live" (16/53-53)*

*"You either do it because you believe in it in spite of all the difficulties and all the problems we have in implementing these projects because of the situation. Or you really detach yourself.....And if you don't believe in it you start thinking why the hell am I doing it" (17/86-86)*

*"For me adjusting is you are adjusting with the society you are and for me expatriate society is not the society of the country. It is not the culture of the country. It is true that in these countries maybe here more than other places the international society is quite important. But in the same time... adjusting for me is adjusting to the people, local people, I don't like that term but with the people of the country where you stay" (20/83-83) "But frankly speaking we are working here for a determined period. Thus your internal attitudes to the place where you are and its culture or cultures here is different, you are not trying to adjust totally to it" (20/63-63)*

*"I think I have adjusted, I am a well functioning human being. I integrate with people and my job....but I don't think I never will be well adjusted because I am a foreigner here, I always will be. I will integrate to a certain degree and then I will not go further because I will always want to keep for myself my own culture and I am not willing... like to go further than... I have a boundary" (25/62-62)*

*"I think that the fact that you have to adjust and be more flexible, not because you wanted to but because you had to, makes you more prepared if you have to move to another country" (27/88-88)*

*"They reach a level of miserable accommodation. They hate it at first. But eventually they get to the point where they are philosophical about it; they accept it and they look forward to leaving" (28/86-86, when referring to the expatriate adaptation in the area)*

The variety of levels of cosmopolitan adaptation is seen in the above text segments of the interviewees. Transnational cultures linked to occupational networks of institutions and organizations (Hannerz 1990, 243) provide the social networks and frame for global careerists. Some of them are ready to integrate themselves more into the local cultures. Others encapsulate themselves from the host culture of the given time and suffice themselves with minimal interaction with the host society and are more involved with the international or transnational networks as Hannerz calls them. All of them are professionals who possess expertise that is transferable internationally. Their language proficiency plays an important role in their global transfers (Welch & Welch, Piekkari 2005). Global careerists have chosen to live abroad for a certain period of time. They can choose to go home or to another place when it best suits them. Their decisions can sometime show very narcissistic characters. Accepting the situation of the host society or surrendering to it, according to Hannerz, is conditional to a cosmopolitan. S/he is an intercultural traveler, on the move. S/he is able to operate selectively and conditionally. His/her expertise or knowledge is not tied to a particular culture or setting. This can be applied to global careerists. On the other hand, the attitude of a global careerist towards home may be complicated. At the same time s/he is at home everywhere and never quite at home anywhere. The adaptation of global careerists is not only adaptation in a certain cultural frame but rather reaching an operational flexibility and a synergistic outlook towards the world with its cultural diversity. This includes the perspective of the selfhood and the world of a global careerist to be realistic. This enables him/her to develop a dynamic and quick fit between inside and outside realities in the adaptation process and is connected to the intercultural transformation, which Kim (2001) presents as an outcome of cross-cultural adaptation as functional fitness and psychological health.

### **7.2.1.3 Identity transformation of Global Careerists**

Global careerists define their identity and their experiences of identity transformation as follows:

*"My cultural identity is never changed. It has always been British wherever I have been and that will never change (7/83-83) "As I said before I can accept all cultures and there are many aspects of cultures that I have across to that I really like and really enjoy and I enjoy most aspects of culture but not here" (7/90-90) "Me I haven't really been encompassed to any cultures to change me" (7/90-90)*

*"Cultural identity is an interesting one. I guess it has been reforming over the past years in Africa. I feel that I am no longer a very typical Finn. I have recognized that as my own culture and I have very strong ties there, of course my cultural identity has changed and it's a bit problematic because sometimes you look at Finland as an outsider and you see things you don't like and you realize that in such situations you behave differently than you would have done before leaving...so it has changed for sure and it is changing" (9/81-81) "I think they are playing a very important role. They are people who are in the same culture in a way, working environment. They know the system you working in and they are normally always taking you around and they have the same experience of coming here as a new person" (9/40-40)*

*"I have met people... who have been instrumentally keeping the Swedish traditions within the Finnish or Scandinavian community where they have been working. But at the same time they can gladly mix sort of in to their position" (16/88-88) "This is Swedish as a square and then of course as if you live in other cultures for a number of years and you move around to, I mean you go further on. And of course these ones, the corners, will be maybe smoother, more round after a while" (16/87-87)*

*"I stayed much longer in Lebanon. This is why I do feel a little bit like in my home country although I was never really at home either in Lebanon. For me it has always been half, half home, not never one hundred percent home neither in Lebanon nor in Spain. When I was a kid it used to bother me but not anymore. I don't have to feel necessary at home anywhere" (17/27-27) Because it is perhaps the first time that I have been able to have both of my fifty percent cultures in the same place. Because in Lebanon it's only the Lebanese and in Spain only the Spanish. But here I have been able to have them all around (17/39-39) "So this is an excellent thing and a beautiful thing, tolerance towards others, understanding more than one value; understanding that there is more than one system to life, to beliefs, to social codes. The difficult part is keeping **your** personality, saying, okay, I know both, I share both, I maybe a product of both but at one point or the other in my life I will have to synthesize what is mine and make my own. And make out of it what becomes really your intercultural identity. It's a process" (17/87-87) "At one point you feel too much of a chameleon. And you start asking yourself: Okay, if I am that much of a chameleon and of a cultural schizophrenic, then who am I. Because if one moment I can feel or pretend I completely agree with you maybe in one sense and then the other...I agree on something else. It makes you wonder but then who I am. It's a problem until you get to synthesize it in your head and develop your own cultural personality. It takes a while (17/87-87)*

*"Some people would consider me more Egyptian, others more French. For me I would consider myself definitely as a temporary resident here and I am not trying too much to define myself towards the people here" (20/39-39) "I am not trying anymore to see from French/Egyptian, to what/who I am exactly. It's a mix which I do not define very precisely. I am not trying to define it...It is more of what are our principals of life that were very much questioned and challenged by being here. And in that it softened and strengthened our principals but definitely it questions them very much" (20/82-82) You can feel in a way that in your case, in two different places. In my place two different places. And in the same time you not totally in your place in neither of these. We share this same feeling of being in the middle (with her husband). I mean somehow in the middle, belonging to different places but in the same time not really belonging to them" (20/88-88) "It required quite a time and quite deep reflections. I mean they are not finished and in a way this is part of questions that anybody would ask himself" (20/89-89)*

*"My Norwegian identity in Norway you kind of ...such a safe place and people are almost trained to be naïve and trusting and you know. And that changed totally here. I am not naïve anymore. I am suspicious. I don't trust people and I can be bitchy" (25/81-81)*

*"You become a global citizen rather than just becoming part of another country, another host. Your worldview has changed. I've become a global citizen, you are relating to global issues and issues specially related to the Middle East" (27/82-82) "But I think your national identity is the core: Quite little globe and around it you build circles like shells and the more international experience you have, the more shells of experience are built around your identity, which will broaden not just your view but who you are come bigger. The globe becomes bigger, there are more experiences, more you've been through with different levels of*

*experiences, different societies and so you but you never, I think you'll never actually hit or change your inner identity" (27/88-88) "I think it can as easily be removed as it is built up. I would say you have a core identity with different shells and the more international experiences you have, the more shells. It is like different channels and I don't think they affect each other. They just build on but it's easier to go from one stage to another, it doesn't cost so much effort. But as many layers as you build, if you would go back to your own home country, I think all the years, that would be reduced and you will fall back to your home identity. The only thing I would think would remain is your world view and the way you see things" (27/88-88) "So once your world view has been broadened you cannot just crush it back or compress it back. I don't think the view can be changed because once it is liberated and free but I think you will fall back in the habits of your culture because it's almost forced upon you" (27/89-89)*

*"My cultural identity is you know...if I can say this... I am a pee Protestant. I am not religious observative at all. My family is all Scottish. All Scottish Presbyterian, you know, and my cultural identity derives from that. Four years in the Middle East won't change that. I don't like people hugging me or kissing me just because they first met me" (28/85-85) "Also you have to take into consideration that in more than one way you are throwing out the best years of your life or five years of your life which you can't buy back. You know, it's an experience but it's costing you as well. So it's a trade off" (28/66-66)*

Global careerists seem to have a healthy, balanced and even humorous attitude and an understanding towards their identity. All except I-7 recognize changes in their identity. I-27 refers to his national identity as a core and says that his international experience builds shells around the national identity. Thus the globe becomes larger. He experiences it as though these shells are removed when you move back to your familiar cultural surroundings. *"The only thing that remains is your broadened world view, it never comes back"*. When referring to cultural identity this interviewee speaks about the habits (27/89-89).

Global careerists see changes in cultural identity in a realistic, analytic and through an optimistic light. Hannerz (1990) claims that the cosmopolitan identity includes willingness or orientation to engage with the Other and is open to diverse cultural experiences which the cosmopolitans turn into competence. Global careerists move constantly between various cultural groups. My interpretation follows the view of Collier (1998, 132), that particular cultural identities enacted by global careerists may become salient in particular historical, political, economic and social contexts. She further claims that some individuals may have more options to enact cultural identities than others. In this way, global careerists are more privileged to negotiate and enact their identity as many other intercultural travelers.

It is interesting that global careerists such as I-17 and I-20 express at the same time their multiple identity positions and their search for coherent definition of the self. This finding is consistent with the findings presented by Hermans (2001) when he refers to the study of Butt, Burr and Bell (1997, in Hermans 2001, 353). Although the respondents in the study of Butt et al. strongly present strong relational multiple position repertoire in their relationships, at the same time they express a clearly defined and well-developed sense of self. The identity construction of the global careerists confirms the search for unity and development as claimed by McAdams (1993). While the options and choices open to global careerists are consistent with the lifestyles presented by Giddens (1991), the narrative of self-identity of global

careerists would seem to be closer to the approach of McAdams (1993) where a person creates an integrative life story through which s/he is able to understand who s/he is and how s/he fits in the world. McAdams claims that without integration there is a danger that the development of the identity degenerates into narcissism. This may be seen in the above paragraphs about subjective experiences of cross-cultural adaptation and learning of global careerists. It is also seen in the life stories of the global careerists.

#### 7.2.1.4 Learning experiences of Global Careerists

Global careerists are travelers who are well equipped with language skills. They have also gained experience in intercultural communication skills during their career. All global careerists in this research express an open attitude towards learning. They are ready to invest their time and effort in learning. Only two of them did not study Hebrew or Arabic. Most of them already knew Arabic before taking the assignment. The first of the two interviewees had just come to the area; the second one worked in short time contracts, which did not enable learning any of the host society languages. Against the goal-oriented behavior of a global careerist, it is interesting to notice that I-17 who speaks Arabic as one of her mother tongues, has started to study Hebrew although the "use" of the Hebrew language is very limited to Israel and does not include transferability.

As to their work most of the global careerists seem to have learned a great deal. Only I-7 and I-27 say that they have not learned anything new in their own professional field. However, I-27 says that he has learned to manage people and relate to global matters, and, thus, his worldview has broadened. All the other interviewees say that they have learned a great deal professionally. As I-27 says that having worked in the Middle East has made him very marketable and desirable for media organizations. It has been very good for his career. The global careerists in this research raise management and organizational matters as a major area of professional learning. This includes learning how to handle conflicts and stress. The next text segments express how the global careerists describe what they have learned in the Middle East:

*"Work wise it is very big learning process for me. And also the culture, I mean, well the whole story of Israel and Palestine but also the Arabic culture because I haven't lived in the region. I think that there are many, many things to learn. I kind of look forward to it (9/85-85). The interviewee number nine had just started her assignment and been in the area only three weeks. "It's a bit problematic because sometimes you look at Finland as an outsider and... you realize that in such situations you behave differently than you would have done before leaving." (9/81-81)*

*"I have learned a lot... a kind of new approach to development than from before. We are creating an awareness..." (16/85-85) "...I realized that when you come for the first time ...you think you know exactly how it should be done. But you see there is a reason behind: it could be culture, it could be religion. It could be whatever which has made this happen or this situation to be. I think it is important. Because many times there is a reason and sometimes it is a good reason for it. And we have to learn." (16/86-86)*

*"I do not necessarily share these values but I can understand them and this makes it easier. Because when you understand something then at least it doesn't provoke anguish or rejection*

*and at the same time you can be yourself and say: I understand how you think and I am a tolerant person and I completely respect it but I am not like that" (17/61-61) (I belong to) "Floating persons even in the terms of sentimental life. I mean coping with distances and yes, it is something that the persons, the young of us who choose such careers, have to just assume the consequences of our choices" (17/81-81) "It is my own tourage" (17/85-85)*

*"For me any differences are welcome because it is like discovering something new." (20/29-29) "You have to deal with these different rules that are represented to us by individuals rather than a society." (20/62-62) "It questions us a lot. It is more of what are our principals of life that were very much questioned and challenged by being here. And in that it softened and strengthened our principals but definitely it questions them very much." (20/82-82)*

*"I have learned very much. Now I think management experience and organizational experience and how to handle conflict and how to handle enormous stress and difficulties. I am also learning a lot from the professionals about speech pathology, about agriculture and water problems, about issues that I wasn't involved in before." (25/86-86) "I have learned a lot, it's with from working with the colleagues from different places, with different backgrounds. Whether it is working with partners with their own cultures and their own priorities and of course learning a lot from being in a place where you are not at home. So you have to discover many different things, whether it is social, political, cultural...and from all that I have learned" (25/86-86)*

*"Language, related to the host culture, friends within your working environment and then contacts and social life outside the community, I think that gives you a spectrum." (27/45-45) Your worldview has changed." (27/82-82) "I've learned manage people. I think that's the one thing I've enjoyed. But on technical professional level as far as my own profession is concerned, I have not learnt anything new" (27/86-86)*

*"Professionally I can navigate in the Middle East with extremely ease. Nothing about the Middle East ruffles me, I don't find this strange at all. There are no more mysterious secrets for me in the Middle East. Meaning that there are not very many people that can say that." (28/89-89) "It is also...you learn to live all by yourself. You learn to live detached from the main stream of culture" (28/91-91)*

Learning experiences of global careerists seem to link closely to the professional expertise. These experiences can be seen as learning cross-cultural know-how. Holden (2002, 299-300) suggests that cross-cultural know-how includes cross-cultural transfer of knowledge, experience and values, collaborative cross-cultural learning, cross-cultural networking, interactive translation, development of participative competence and creation of collaborative atmosphere. Many global careerists state that they have learned to manage people and work with colleagues and partners from diverse cultures as well as gained further expertise in their own professional field (except I-7 and I-27). All of them emphasize the importance of the spatial and worldwide network of work colleagues. They all share the feeling of being ready to learn and the disorienting dilemma brought about by challenges in new cultural context and work environment, as Mezirov describes it. They also share readiness to search for new roles, relationships and actions. They build their self-confidence both through their professional expertise as well as through their new roles and relationships (networks). These learning activities confirm the appliance of Mezirov's transformative learning to intercultural learning. The experiences of global careerists suggest that learning is a process, which includes learning cross-cultural know-how and revising the meaning schemes (habitual rules and expectations) and meaning perspectives (principles of interpreting new

experiences and determining the selfhood) of the expatriates. International experience questions and challenges the life principles. Mezirov (1990, 9) claims that transformative learning is collective. This is also seen shared in the learning experiences of global careerists. All the interviewees in this category, except I-28, see their learning process as being connected to other people and to new culture or religion. Finally, learning leads to a deeper understanding of the expatriate herself/himself and the others and to a broadened worldview. Mezirov refers to it as perspective transformation.

## **7.2.2 Balanced Experts**

### **7.2.2.1 Narrative profile of Liz**

Liz is 45 years old. She worked many years in her profession in her home country. Then she felt that she could help in building community in the Middle East using her expertise. When the opportunity arose she was ready to go and has already lived many years in Jerusalem.

She enjoys her work and is very committed and at the same time recognizes the workload and the challenges of her work. She has visions about the work and development of the community in the future. Her organization has its main office in her home country. In Jerusalem most of the workers represent the host society although there are also some employees from her own home country. She has invested her time and effort in digging into the host society language and culture. She has many friends from the host society. When she first came she was more dependent on the psychological support from her own countrymen but this has changed now. Her main networks of friends come from the host society and the international community.

Liz says that she has learned a new and more relaxed way of doing things in her work. She seems to have another perspective to her work compared to earlier. She has turned to be more people-minded. Liz has an open and positive attitude towards her future. She would like to continue to work in the Middle East although she clearly sees its consequences related to her family and friends in her home country. She also analyzes the complications related to being a single middle-aged woman in the Middle East and the impact of living many years abroad on her selfhood.

The key words, which would describe Liz, are:

- Positive and balanced
- Realistic and analytic in the considerations about her selfhood and identity
- Content and realistic attitude to the work, to the community she works with and to the host society

Balanced experts in this research had usually spent many years in the Middle East. I-4 had the record of 36 years in the area. Some of the interviewees in this category had spent some time either in their countries of origin or some other



place and later had come back to work in the Middle East again. The significant finding in this category was the length of the time and the effort the interviewees put into studying the host culture languages and culture. They express connectedness with the host cultures. In their assignments they work in diverse teams with colleagues from the host cultures and other international people. The language of work is mostly Hebrew or Arabic. English is also used as a working language of the organizations they are employed in.

Balanced experts daily experience the difficulties of the crisis situation in the Middle East. It may be that they experience it more personally and deeply than the global careerists because of their daily face-to-face interactions with the host society people. They are realistic in their conceptions of the situation and the culture. Many of them remember having experienced a culture shock during the time of transition to the area.

#### 7.2.2.2 Cross-cultural adaptation of Balanced Experts

Balanced experts recognize the cultural differences between the Israeli or Palestinian society and their own culture. *"The difference here is that in here everything is Middle Eastern whether it is Jewish or Arabic"* (4/31-31). The cultural mix in Israel and the influence of the Middle East crisis is raised in the consideration: *"The difference is because of the many cultures, the many languages and many nations in this country and of course now the political situation. The situation is very hard and although I am not myself very much involved in it, anyhow it has an affect because I live with the people. This reflects and this society reflects with all its problems"* (1/36-36). *"The religious-political situation is the daily point of tension in the country and confrontation in the area. It causes the tension level to be higher"* (4/57-57). *"Politics is something that comes everywhere. You have it for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Politics and politics..."* (10/57-57).

The host societies are seen as open to strangers and easy from practical sides of living as to housing, shopping etc. At the same time the societies are seen tough, brusque, aggressive and hectic. Balanced experts place high value on the languages spoken by the host society members. All of them with the exception of I-22, a German headmaster of an Arab school manage very well with either Hebrew or Arabic or have started to study one or both of the languages. Even this interviewee knows some words in Arabic but had not been able to find time for language studies due to a hectic work situation.

The personal experiences of the adaptation of balanced experts are shown in the following text segments:

*"To adapt to live here is quite easy. The reason may be that I have lived so many years in Thailand. You don't expect anymore that all the things would be the same as in Finland"* (1/20-20) *"Language is a very important tool. Another tool is that I have a Hebrew teacher. I have very good cultural training through her, not only studying the language"* (1/34-34) *"There are good times and there are some things that are hard to accept. If I have totally adapted myself here? Let's say that I like to stay here. so if that means adapting somehow, then yes. But of course I don't understand all the things"* (1/54-54)

*"They receive you as an American, outsider, and foreigner usually in the beginning. And they already have a stereotype about who you are, what you think. You have to get through that initial barrier by expressing yourself in their language, politely, seeking their welfare and their will and what bothers them where they are" (4/58-58) "There is a very close link to the language and the Arabic people worship the language, both the spoken and the written language. So that's been a challenge. And also the tension between the Arabs and the Jews causes you always to be sensitive to the situation, the way you come in, the people you meet and how you relate to them" (4/31-31)*

*"As a minister of the Gospel I can use the phrase, I die to myself and let myself be made in the image of God in this place. Becoming something else...I have to realize that that is a part of me but there are other parts of me that need now to come out. And so I feel like there was also a remaking of myself to be able to fit in and not to try to take everything I used to be here and make it fit in" (8/44-44) "I can't expect to be everything I used to be but I have to adapt to things and even become, let different parts in my personality come out, even come something else to be able to fit in. That has really helped. It has also helped to allow for differences... My expectations have to be lowered and let them be maybe put aside but to allows to lots of differences when you are working with colleagues and you also have cultural things that come into it. Sometimes we have relax expectations...and to become more flexible and understanding. If we stick to our expectations of how things should be and not how things are, it is very difficult" (8/47-47) "I don't think it (adaptation) was easy but I don't think it was terribly difficult" (8/67-67)*

*"At least now I can be thankful that I am living quite much in a Western infrastructure...when you go shopping, you find everything. That's something that makes it easier here" (10/44-44) "The pressure, the atmosphere with pressure, feeling that you have to be on your toes, I would say you can feel the pressure" (10/49-49) "I would think that this society is kind of scared...towards real strangers like Christians. But then again...because there are all the time people coming, Jews from different parts of the world, it is easy for you just to be a person from another country" (10/53-53)*

*"Israel is unique in the sense that you can meet anyone here, any kind of religion, church, organization, everyone is, absolutely anything is represented in here in Israel. So you can be in Israel and experience other cultures at the same time" (11/31-31) "That we were just married in a third culture and leading a congregation. So that was very hard. We had many things to adjust. It was good though. All the things at the same time, in all fronts" (11/34-34) "Overall no matter how many years you have lived here, if you are not a Jew or Israeli Arab, you are not Israeli, you are a foreigner, you'll never understand" (11/38-38) "I definitely would describe staying here as easier than staying in Denmark. Because here it is a very multicultural society and you can speak any language you want, in any accent you want, and you will still be, if not accepted but at least respected and understood"(11/42-42)*

*"It's not unproblematic in an Arab country to be a single middle aged woman. Because you are at least quite districted" (15/41-41) "If I hadn't this good apartment...then it would have been more difficult, I think. I can relax very much at home" (15/45-45) "I can always as a Westerner I can always change and...I can fed up with. I mean Eastern Jerusalem is really a small village. So when I would like maybe to go to other places to have wider circles for my weekends for instance..." (15/63-63)*

*"For me personally it has been easier to settle down here (than in England) (18/39-39) "I felt that it was very important for me to get away for a while to think about something else for a while, not to hear so many ambulances" (18/41-41)*

*"The main challenging item but also the main interesting item was that we came in a country with many different aspects" (22/30-30) "From the very beginning I felt that we are at home and people like that we are here" (22/39-39) "...at the beginning sometimes I was surprised about some reactions. I think now most of the actions and reactions I know how to deal with" (22/65-65)*

*"What I thought was difficult in the beginning was the moving in two completely different world, in Palestine and in Israel. Somehow to bring this together was impossible" (23/49-49)*

*"That we have about six-seven languages at work and we have many different cultures, like all over the world. So I am always confronted by this respect. So this has always been some sort of challenge for me but for me a positive challenge" (24/28-28) "I am very, very easily adapting to other people and also to other cultures. I know it is one of my strengths" (24/32-32) "Here if you have a little bit aggression, sensitivity and diplomacy, everything works better" (24/42-42) "Being a foreigner you stay maybe always a foreigner a bit. So it is always how much you are really a part of the society because you can live fully separated from the society although you live maybe fifteen years here... So that's really a question, when are you really a part of it. But I think really that I have adjusted well...I feel comfortable here and I really feel at home here, very much" (24/63-63)*

*"There is an adaptation period which we are still going through" (29/35-35) "We just get on with things. I think contextualizing is the best way to manage in every culture anyway. The English say: In Rome as the Romans, so in Israel as Israelis. We just get along with things and we are part of the society" (29/44-44)*

Balanced experts in the Middle East see themselves as foreigners in their host societies even when they manage with the host society languages. On the other hand, they define their host societies as being open to strangers, friendly and hospitable. They also state that the societies are religiously closed and life is hectic and because of the situation arising from the crisis they are all the time under pressure. The subjective expressions of adaptation of balanced experts fit in many aspects to Kim's (2001) approach to cross-cultural adaptation. While Kim sees communication as a key concept contributing to adaptation, the balanced experts maintain direct and regular contact with the members of the host societies with their own languages. For Kim, the sign of being adapted is that the individual is able to establish and maintain relatively stable and functional relationships with unfamiliar cultural environments. The fact that balanced experts have continued to work many years in the Middle East supports their functionality. While Kim brings the ethnic proximity of the individual compared to the host culture ethnicity as one of her predispositional factors in her model, there was no indication that adaptation would have been easier for people of certain ethnic backgrounds than for others. On the other hand, all but one interviewee in this category were Westerners. I-29 comes from Brazil. The findings of this study suggest that when the cultural context becomes very mixed and complex, the influence of ethnic proximity may no longer be significant at all in Kim's model. The intimate host society of balanced experts was the Israeli or the Palestinian society. This was the society where they wanted to be adapted to and not the international expatriate society or their own home country society. This finding revealed a significant difference compared to the category of global careerists.

### **7.2.2.3 Identity transformation of Balanced Experts**

The personal experiences of balanced experts on their identity transformation are as follows:

*"It has affected my cultural identity. I was back in Finland a few years ago and it was very hard. I feel more home outside of Finland. But I then I think that it is this call of God. I need a call from God to be in Finland" (1/73-73)*

*"They receive you as an American, outsider, foreigner, usually in the beginning. And they already have a stereotype about who you are, what you think. You have to get through that initial barrier" (4/58-58) "(in the U.S.A) after two or three months you usually get bored because the life in the Stages doesn't live the level of interest and tension whatever you are used to live here" (4/91-91) "I feel that we have adapted that way that we could have intercultural identity. That doesn't mean that everybody is going to accept you" (4/92-92)*

*"Sometimes you have to remake yourself or redefine yourself. Some of the pressures that come with living here, you have to come up with ways to process these things and it is not something any of us grew up with" (8/45-45) "For cultural identity I think the longer I am here, I don't necessarily think I fit in when I go back home. I can't stay I fit hundred percent here or hundred percent there. So the longer I am out of the country, I think the less I feel comfortable in my home country so that has an effect as making this career. Family also, it can be stressful with children" (8/83-83) "I think that I can look at things from an American perspective and understand it and I can also try to get behind the eyes of my host culture and try to understand it as well. And sometimes there is a fine balance and how I express that or how I handle that internally" (8/90-90) "It makes you slightly schizophrenic. But the challenge...is to be able to handle it and put it into balance and to put it in place. Once you can do that you have a very good advantage point to understand the whole of the problem" (8/90-90)*

*"I feel myself more Finnish than I were in Finland. I sense my Finnish nationality more and get a new perspective to my Finnish culture" (10/85-85)*

*"I don't think I am a typical Ukrainian in the sense that you can look at me and talk to me and you can look me and see that I am sort of Slavic looking but I don't think that you could identify me here easily with the Ukrainians in type of thinking. And that's because I have been exposed to the West. I speak with my mom and I can identify our cultural difference already so. This inevitably will happen because I am married to a Dane and living in Israeli culture and some things are very hard to say which things sink in from which culture. I want to keep my Ukrainian roots and that I think has very much to do with the language. I don't think I will ever forget Russian or Ukrainian and I intend to speak with Katja (the daughter) Russian" (11/83-83) "In some way or another the person does develop. I think the person can develop a new identity in anything, even culturally, a new identity in faith or a new identity in something else. And I think it does happen in a different culture even though for an intercultural person it's always a kind of schizophrenic experience because you are one person and in one minute you are another person...If I speak English with you I am a little bit different person than if I speak Russian with you. It's different. Though a person develops flexibility. There is no other way to deal with it. You have to. In a way you get closer to the culture, whose language you speak. But I think it is important to know where you come from and still know where your roots lie and not be ashamed of that" (11/89-89) "Like I belong to Ukrainian culture and the Communist culture which occupied Ukraine for seventy years so you will find Communist kind of heritage in me as well. And it's not good. I don't like it but it's good to face it. Facing comes from learning about it, not hiding from others and kind of sharing it with other people. I think share you are with other people is great because it enriches you, it helps to understand more who you are and it enriches other people (11/89-89)*

*"In a way there is a difference between myself when I arrived here and today" (15/82-82)*

*"It's give and take. So I mean that way; the more you give the more you will have (15/88-88)*

*"The longer I stay here the more difficult it would be to return back to work with the computers (former profession in Finland). Actually, when I go back to Finland there are certain things that I find difficult. ..I have noticed that there are certain things in the Finnish society that irritate me now. The fact that people are so reserved and they don't smile, that they don't greet you unless they know you well. It is probably so that when a person stays a longer time abroad he misses his home country but when he is his home country he misses the country he stayed for a long time. So somehow your cultural identity changes that it will become combinations of different elements from the both cultures or all the cultures you have been in" (18/79-79)*

*"We changed. The life in Europe was...more or less in the social competition between living standards and also about holidays which place. I think we have developed more the inner*

*values when we have been here. It was most enrichment in our lives that we saw that there are other priorities in life" (22/90-90)*

*"Before I didn't think too much about my German identity. I just took it. The first time I came to Israel I was thinking a lot about my German history, the Holocaust and things like that. Now it became less and less important to me even. I sort of went back in my cultural identity and realized how relative it is. ..Of course we had to reflect and think about our German identity again and again and in the beginning see how different we are but on the other hand we were very curious to get to know the other culture. So in the end I would say our German culture is less important to us than it was before for us adults (23/91-91) "In a way I would like to consider myself as a world citizen. I am ready to adapt here and there and on the other hand you try, of course, not to get mixed up or lost or anything like this too much but the German cultural tradition is not that strict or fixed or whatever. In the beginning you are very open to the foreign culture and then you sort of end up in the middle (23/91-91)*

*"I have changed a lot in this area that I approach things different, also relationship problems or other problems, I just address them different (24/42-42) "I have changed a lot. I knew it already before that I will change after every country (24/55-55) "I think it is much more like growing up in some sort of society and you remember all the goods, you forget the bads and then coming back, it's like opposite. ..This is a picture of many things you are very focused on. And suddenly it is not your home anymore. It's much easier to get used to something different than to be disappointed that it is not your old country anymore (24/81-81) "I think I live and am very, very aware of my roots and I think coming here and also seeing it as a mirror almost, looking back to Germany, having studied a lot about my history since I have been here. And I have learnt to embrace my own German identity much, much more" (24/88-88)*

*"I think my cultural identity is going kaput, probably. I am more anything than Brazilian. I don't know if this is good or bad but...its' not something that I try or it doesn't matter for me so much but I don't feel very Brazilian most of the times. I think at the moment I am a mixture of probably British, just basically because we just came out of it and Israeli (29/84-84) "Things change in your country. Yes things change everywhere and if you are not part of it all the time, it may take me a little longer to get on with things there" (29/90-90) "My Brazilian culture is like a bag here and I can pick it when it is needed" (29/91-91)*

McAdams (1993, 110-113) suggests that a good story in relation to human identity should ideally be developed in the direction of increasing coherence, openness, credibility, differentiation, reconciliation and generative integration. In the identity stories of balanced experts the personal myth and contribution to the society is connected to other people's myths. According to McAdams, the mature personal myth means creative involvement in the social world. This is seen by the deep and long-time commitment of balanced experts in their work. The dynamic outcome and a process itself of Kim's cross-cultural adaptation process is intercultural transformation. According to Kim (2001), it has three facets: greater functional fitness, psychological health and an increasingly intercultural identity, which emerge during the adaptation process. Kim (2004) claims that extensive experience of stress and adaptation contributes to intercultural transformation. It is a process, which will never be complete. This research indicates that the strength of balanced experts is that they are very aware of their roots. At the same time, they are able to mirror and reflect their own culture and be open to change. They acknowledge the difficulties related to their identity and their being in the middle or feelings of being an outsider even in their own home countries. However, they see their ability to change and

the vision of what they may yet become as enrichment and not as a threat. This indicates that balanced experts are psychologically healthy people.

#### 7.2.2.4 Learning experiences of Balanced Experts

Balanced experts expressed their learning experiences as follows:

*"I think that the language teacher is very important. Because she teaches not only the language but the way of thinking. In the beginning the Finns were important because they interpreted the culture. Now it has changed. Now I feel that somehow I don't need this interpretation." (1/67-67) "I think I have learned a lot from the people I work with, seeing for instance how Chinese people work. And in a way I have learned a new way of doing things with Thai people. I have never worked like that earlier" (1/77-77)*

*"You have to get through that initial barrier by expressing yourself in their language, politely, seeking their welfare and their will and what bothers them, where they are." (4/58-58) "I have made the practice doing my career studying as I work. Studying the language and the culture and applying it as I work. Then About every five years I take a year off and the do the Academic area." (4/67-67) "My whole concept of the church and its reasons for being and what is the real church has been broadened." (4/68-68) "It has given me a worldview ..." (4/85-85) "Every day here is a learning experience. Every place you go, every place you travel, every person you meet, is a learning experience. So you never quit learning here" (4/89-89)*

*"I think it is sometimes when you come to a different culture, things start to be revealed from yourself that you didn't know were there and there are certain things that make them come out...learning to live in different kinds of ways. And I think it is a process, learning different aspect of life." (8/64-64) "...part of the deputation is learning to communicate well with people and understand where they are coming from and where you are coming from and how it fits together. So I think I have developed a sphere in people skills to be able to get along with people, understand and respect differences and yet define where I differ from somebody else" (8/87-87)*

*"I sense my Finnish nationality more and get a new perspective to my Finnish culture. On the other hand I want to get something new from different cultures, learn something. I don't want to stay the same. At the same I can be Finnish and learn something. I am not afraid" (10/85-85)*

*"Sometimes it's just very hard, you think that you understand." (11/38-38) "...you never completely reconcile with what you don't like but you learn to live with it. So I think we have learned to live with all the things in Israel" (11/64-64) "In the beginning I had the desire to fix things. You can't, sometimes you just can't. But you can sometimes help by just being there, not fixing all the time. I didn't have that before coming to Israel." (11/87-87)*

*"Here they can be both very sensitive and very soft in their arguing but sometimes there are very heated discussions and when you are supposed to be soft and when you are supposed to be...that's very difficult. Maybe I have learned some but..." (15/34-34) "...I learnt that it's very important when you go abroad for some time that you realize when you leave your home country that you will come back" (15/75-75) "You grow with increased responsibility" (15/86-86) "You can deliberately expose yourself to different situations and experiences." (15/88-88)*

*"Here I had to learn the word dignity, to give the people the dignity and that I had to respect the institution. " (22/65-65) "I learnt that there are some cultural differences and I cannot say it's a question of efficiency. I learnt that there are border lines...I had to change a little bit my expectations" (22/86-86) "I learnt to cope or to adapt the rules of leading an institution, to adapt the local culture and I learnt a lot about people behaving...but also about other emotional aspects in connection between the teacher and the student" (22/88-88)*

*"I think this is enriching itself." (23/85-85) "I have learnt about German as a foreign language and teaching. And I have learnt from the side of the work somehow to look it as a little less important that everybody thinks it is in Germany" (23/89-89) "(I have learnt) not sort of stick to the point of view that your culture is superior to any culture" (23/90-90)*

*"I have learnt to appreciate my Germaneness in a different way. Like when I see other cultures, I learn much more in comparison what is a German like. I learnt to see, okay who I am as German. To see the good and the bad out of it, the weakness and the strength out of it and I will always be German and I love to be German and also love to see my responsibility as a German towards Israel" (24/82-82)*

*"In working with people this is a very good training ground because they come from different backgrounds always and they are very outspoken, some more aggressive in the way they deal with people, they deal with you. You either learn to deal with that or you are not functional. So I think people's management is one of the things you learn here" (29/88-88)*

The above learning experiences of balanced experts show deep thinking and reflection in the richness of their experiences. This resembles very much the approach of Mezirov's (1991) transformative learning, which involves critical discourse and self-examination. Mezirov claims that critical discourse leads to a deeper understanding, openness and a changed self-concept. It contributes to the building of competence and self-confidence. Balanced experts have used much of their time in gaining the fluency of the host culture languages. Only I-5 could not manage with Hebrew or Arabic. Furthermore, during their years of staying in the area they had also spent time in getting familiar with the host society culture(s). In addition to language and culture studies, the experiences on learning of balanced experts included reflections of their own cultural backgrounds and ways of doing things. This can be linked to revision of meaning structures in Mezirov's (1990) transformative learning. According to Mezirov (1991), the perspective transformation as a result of an individual learning process involves a new sense of self and critical understanding of one's social relationships and culture. Balanced experts seem to be happy and open to learn and challenge their own beliefs and traditions and mirror them in the light of new situations. They also express their willingness for a change as a positive option. This can be seen in their expressions about relaxing in their expectations and finding new ways to do things, sometimes even only "listening" like I-11 stated. Balanced experts seem to be able to approach situations from different perspectives in a relaxed and even a humorous way. Compared to the learning experiences of global careerists, the balanced experts seem to have gone through a more thorough perspective transformation. In their case it seems to lead to a more collective consciousness and commitment to their work.

## 7.2.3 Idealizers

### 7.2.3.1 Narrative profile of John

John is a devoted Christian. Israel is a unique place for him from the Bible. It includes the entire narrative of his faith. He had felt a calling to come and work

in Israel for a long time. When he had a clear call through prayer, he decided to come to Israel. His wife and children were ready to come along with him.

John works in an organization, which is based in his home country. One of the goals of the organization is to promote friendship towards Israel. Here, his work is involved with the assistance of people of the host society as well as the young volunteers from his home country who come to work for some time in Israel.

John lives and works in the house for hosting people. At home he and his wife are on duty all the time. Their children go to a Hebrew kindergarten in the neighborhood. They have good relationship with their neighbors. They regularly attend a Messianic Jewish fellowship. John does not know any Hebrew, but he manages well by using English and his mother tongue.

John has had no problems in adjusting to living in the Middle East crisis. He says that he has inner peace. It is a privilege for him to be able to live in Israel. He is willing to continue to work in Israel but is also open to other places where God calls him.

The key words, which would describe John, are:

- Positive and satisfied
- Confident with inner peace in all the conditions
- Optimistic attitude towards future

The reason for all the four persons located in the category of idealizers to come to work and live in Israel was related to a strong inner calling. They had stayed many years in the area. I-26 had stayed only ten months in Jerusalem. The idealizers take the cultural environment as it is and do not get into deep definitions of cultural context with its diversity or similarity.

### 7.2.3.2 Cross-cultural adaptation of Idealizers

Idealizers acknowledge the complexity of the Middle East crisis. Like I-19 says it: *"You live on your nerves here. You live with the knowledge that anything can happen at any time. You don't think about it, of course, you get on with your life but I think the Intifada has really had an affect on everyone"*. They also recognize the cultural context where they work and live in. The following text segments show how idealizers have experienced cross-cultural adaptation:

*"If we are somehow prideful for our own country and background and then in our thoughts separate ourselves from people of the land and look them of being a different category of people; make cynical remarks about their way to drive, the way they push in lines and this and that. At the same time we are separating ourselves and even establishing ourselves as judges when we think about superiority of our home culture" (6/35-35) "I think the whole narrative of faith, the whole history of faith has always been focused to this land. So to live in another country perhaps could be more difficult to me because I wouldn't have that sense of connectedness" (6/44-44)*

*"I didn't actually have any expectations" (13/30-30) "The only thing I find difficult in this country is the lack of the language" (13/43-43) "So I didn't find that much of a culture*



*shock. I just found I was able, maybe it is just a gift that the Lord has given to me that I was very able to fit in" (13/31-31)*

*"I have never had any problems adjusting to Africa or here. So even going home I had no problems; going home from Africa. I have never had any trouble settling in either country" (14/40-40) "I never had any culture shock. I don't really know what culture shock could be. I have never had depression. No I have never felt anything" (14/61-61)*

*"I feel at home here" (19/37-37) "you have to be prepared here for anything, especially in Jerusalem. It's under microscope all the time...that reflects your accommodation and the price and the way you are living but you just have to. I think you are aware of the problems here all the time and every day. You can't get away from it. It's always there" (19/39-39) "If you are working here then you have to adjust to the way of life here somehow, to cope with it because you can't bury your head in the sand. It's around you all the time and you can't avoid it, the tensions and the reactions of people" (19/53-53)*

*"We had a very good meeting with this culture" (26/38-38) "The only culture shock was ...and it was like 38 degrees in night and we had two children and they kept crying the whole day... (26/64-64)*

*"I still don't feel adjusted in the society but slowly, slowly... (30/45-45)*

Only two out of five idealizers experienced difficulties in their adaptation. I-6 and I-30 express that they have experienced some difficulties. I-13 and I-14 said that they have adjusted and never had any problems of adjusting anywhere but admitted language and communication to be a problem. The findings of the data in this research indicate that a strong ideological commitment may contribute to easier cross-cultural adaptation. It may be that the idealizers are persons who are satisfied in being what they are with their relationship to God. On the other hand, they are living a modest and humble life without great personal aspirations.

### **7.2.3.3 Identity transformation of Idealizers**

Idealizers relate to their identity as follows:

*"It's simply a broadening experience. It enlarges our perspective to spend our time outside of our home country. We start to look the world and our country through they eyes or other people. Sure it has changed us very much" (6/47-47) "(continuing in international career means) further weakening of our identity as Americans. I guess we would want to cultivate the way of living so that our primary identification was with the kingdom of God in any case and not with any particular country. But we hope our hearts would be with the people in this land, both the Arab people and the Jewish people and hope to see them coming closer together" (6/84-84) "I think we definitely can develop towards intercultural identity. The major thing would be to maintain the balance. True intercultural identity requires affirmation of both cultures and avoiding the two extremes" (6/90-90)*

*"I think more than it being the society it's my spiritual growth that has alienated me from sort of what I was like in South Africa...Your outlook of life starts getting different. I think I've got a deeper understanding of different cultures. I've got a deeper understanding of what the Lord requires of us to bring others to His Kingdom" (13/85-85)*

*"I don't think I will lose my cultural identity. I don't think I will lose my identity. But I think I've learned a lot when I was in Africa and I think I learn a lot about the people the people being here, too. It has affected to me to know the fears they go through. And to know all the heart ache. And I don't think I will forget those things. And that is a big difference" (14/80-80)*

*"It's going to be very difficult to go back and be the same person again because your attitudes, your whole approach to the situations is changed" (19/80-80) "...When you come here people always ask where are you from and straight away you are tied cast. Whatever country you are from, they've got a picture image of what you are. So it's very difficult to get away from that. So they've already put you in a box before you've been able to say anything or do anything. So then you have to start breaking down the barriers and getting alongside them. So it's very difficult to come here and to be an independent international person because they've already tied cast you something by asking you the questions" (19/86-86)*

*"Here I have seen that the main important thing is to have made up your minds about God in your life and make Him the leader of your life and giving Him the first place. So in that way it has changed my view of life quite a bit" (26/83-83) "I think that it would be easier for me to talk about if I had worked in any other country except Israel because Israel is for me a unique place in this world because it's through this country that God has spoken to people since Abraham" (26/89-89)*

*"I think my identity is not I am a Dane. I am proud to be a Dane. I live in Israel, I am proud to live in Israel. I think there is an aspect that for me to be a Christian, to be a believer, is actually the reason for me being here and personally on one side, I am adjusting to be a Christian more and more every day" (30/88-88)*

Idealizers emphasize their Christian belief to be the main basis for their identity. Their primary identification is with the kingdom of God rather than with any culture, country or nation. This study indicates that, for idealizers, intercultural transformation means a deeper understanding of their religious commitment and spiritual growth rather than reflective transformation and narrative construction of their identity. The common trait with the previous categories of expatriate narrative profiles of global careerists and balanced experts is a healthy and balanced self-esteem and internal life management. It is interesting to see that the categories of global careerists, balanced experts and idealizers represent controlled internal life management. In a way, global careerists and idealizers can all be located under the same umbrella with balanced experts and interpreted as extreme pools of the representation. They all share sound self-confidence and an optimistic attitude to the challenges of the foreign cultural context and adaptation. They are all ready and open to explore new things and very few of them show frustration even dating tough experiences. They seem to have a good sense of humor. Even the idealizers with their strong Christian commitment did not give the impression of strict religious pressure. They seem to have found the internal balance of living and being themselves and letting the other do so as well.

Eisenberg (2001, 543) raises an interesting point in the identity discussion. He presents a theory of communication and identity, where the development of the identity takes place by sub-processes of mood, communication and personal narrative. These processes operate within the surround of social world, which is characterized by the following elements: spiritual, economic, cultural, societal, interpersonal and biological. Eisenberg claims that the spiritual system has been neglected in the Western research. Eisenberg suggests that the questions about a human's place in the world and about how to live your life in a meaningful way should be raised in the framework of construction of personal narratives. He writes that this is even more crucial in the modern world, where individuals are obliged to develop a workable narrative about the self and the world in

relation to uncertainty. Eisenberg's suggestions make it easier to understand the internal balance of the idealizers when they live and build their narrative based on spirituality and work in a not so clearly defined frame in the Middle East and seem to be satisfied and adapted. According to Eisenberg, certain mood states as a basis for motivation and individual resources "encourage particular interpretations of the events in one's life and offer more communicative choices and multiple narrative possibilities compared to the situation of personal anxiety" (Eisenberg 2001, 545). The "take for granted" attitude of idealizers may be a representation of this kind of mood state presented by Eisenberg. Verter (2003) discusses spiritual capital as individual investment. According to Verter spiritual capital is part of cultural capital of a person, and it is produced and reproduced in various social contexts functioning simultaneously independently and interdependently (Verter 2003, 170).

#### 7.2.3.4 Learning experiences of Idealizers

Learning experiences of idealizers are as follows:

*"Like I mentioned I had my own stereotypes and preconceptions." (6/35-35) "It enlarges our perspective to spend our time outside of our home country. We start to look the world and our country through the eyes of other people." (6/47-47) "I hope that we are learning ways to get things done here and are used to the system and the language to push things through." (6/86-86) "Definitely I have learned much about how things work with providing medical care for those in need" (6/88-88)*

*"I think I have learned a lot of tolerance." (13/83-83) "I think I've got a deeper understanding of different cultures. I've got a deeper understanding of what the Lord requires of us." (13/85-85)*

*"I have learned a lot about the people here. As I get to know the language I think I will get to know a lot about the people. It has affected me to know their fears they go through. And to know all the heartache, that has affected me." (14/80-80) "I have learned quite a bit. I have learned a lot about people, how they feel, how to approach the Jewish people. I know. I've got a lot to learn. A long way to go, I've only started because it is so new." (14/84-84)*

*"I have learned a lot about people, a lot about the Middle East, the mindset of the Middle East and the culture differences. I think it's shown me a lot of faults in myself. And especially being a Britt, being English and how people see you and the affect that Britain has had here...I think it has been like a mirror to me. It's shown up a lot that I had no idea of before and it's not all good, I have to say. I just feel it's been a humbling process for me and an embarrassing one at times. I think it makes you realize the shortcomings of your own." (19/86-86)*

*"I a studying a bit all the time...the Jewish culture is very complicated because it is so many different cultures actually." (26/50-50) "If you want to be the guest in somebody's home, you want to follow the rules of the home, so we feel the same about being here in Israel...it is important to do it for being a part of the society." (26/63-63) "I've learned a lot about human relationships." (26/87-87)*

*"I have now an opportunity to look my own culture from a distance and I can easily...point out things in my culture that I like, that I agree with and things that I don't like, I don't agree with." (30/82-82) "(I have learned) two things that I would mention. The first one is to work with sick, handicapped people. The other thing is to be in the ministry." (30/86-86)*

The learning experiences of the idealizers do not show as much deep reflection in comparison to the experiences of learning of the balanced experts. It may be suggested that because the idealizers take their work commitment as a calling from God, they do not have so much reason to question or reflect their own role and actions – they take the frame for granted. However, they show a humble and positive attitude towards learning and appreciation of their host culture as the balanced experts. They also state that the international assignment has revealed their own stereotypes, preconceptions and faults. Their reflection seems to be more of a statement than an analytic and critical reflection. The learning process of the idealizers does not lead to considerations of new and creative options, as was the case with the balanced experts or global careerists.

## **7.2.4 Drifters**

### **7.2.4.1 Narrative profile of Mary**

Mary is 40 years old. She was brought up in a multicultural family. As a child, she lived abroad and attended an international school. She stayed abroad during her own studies at the university. Mary has always been open and tolerant to new people and cultures. She found the host culture familiar due to her intercultural studies. She felt well tuned to the host society and got married. Her husband is from the host society, and the family decided to stay in the Middle East. She was never religious at all and so the marriage between two cultures and religions did not seem a threat. She felt comfortable with her command of the host society language. After five years of marriage, Mary is divorcing and fighting for the custody of her son. In the Middle Eastern patriarchal society this seems hopeless.

Mary likes her work in the organization, which is run under the local administration. Most of the other employees are people from the host society. The organization works closely with international organizations and private people. The work of the organization is very much disturbed by the political situation in the area. It also has an affect on her private life.

Mary's expectations towards the Middle East did not meet with the reality. She is desperate in her private life. She is looking for her identity and says that she does not belong anywhere; not to her country of origin and not here. She is disappointed with the host society, which sees her as a guest and foreigner. Mary's identity is confused. The external confusion due to the political situation and the confusion of her private life also make the work situation difficult.

The key words, which would describe Mary, are:

- Confused both on inner and external levels
- Unsatisfied
- Role of a guest and a gypsy

All the interviewees in the category of drifters found the Middle East to be a very difficult environment to live in. They found the political situation and the Middle East crisis more disturbing than the interviewees in other categories. The common significant characteristic of their subjective life stories is frustration in relation to their host society as well as towards themselves personally. The second common trait for the category of drifters is that all the interviewees have had previous international experience. Two of the four interviewees in this category come from multicultural families.

Drifters express their cross-cultural adaptation as follows:

#### 7.2.4.2 Cross-cultural adaptation of Drifters

The drifters narrate their experiences of adaptation as follows:

*"For us this is a pressure cooker. It is tense, you see it in the way people behave, the way they drive in the traffic, the way they respond. After the Intifada it is more difficult to see the bright sides" (3/34-34) "I think it is more difficult for us non Jews, it is more difficult with regard to the authorities" (3/49-49) "The most important thing for my adjustment is that I have done it a number of times before. I started as a kid in Argentina and then had to adjust to Japan. And after six years in Japan I had to adjust to Norway. And then I tried to live some months in Germany, I had to adjust to that" (3/53-53)*

*"But you are given a certain role as a foreigner, as a guest" (3/59-59) "It is a pressure cooker more than ever. We get more tired. And I see no solution to it. And I see no black and white. If I could just have one hero and one bandit, my life would be easy. But I have seen too much bad going on here that there is no white and black left, pure black and pure white. That is tiring to me" (3/62-62)*

*"There is a lot of frustration out here. And it is in smallest day to day things, where I go shopping. If I meet someone in the street who is friendly with me...and that person and that person turns out to be Israeli, you cannot carry out" (5/46-46) "I am not managing very well. I am having severe problems in my marriage which might be personality problems that could have occurred anywhere but I think they have a lot to do with living here" (5/47-47) "I think the political situation...affects every aspect of life. And for the religious point of view also. Islam does affect. My husband is a Muslim and I live in a Muslim environment" (5/59-59) "I have always believed that people should be equal. I was raised in Germany without social norms and in America there is a saying that everybody is free. But my freedom ends where yours begin" (5/67-67) "There are no more allowances for mistakes or for being sad. You are not allowed to be sad because there is nothing better in the world than an Arab family and the warmth of the Arab family. And if you feel lonely or if you feel depressed, only you are to blame yourself because there is no reason in an Arab society to feel lonely and there is no understanding whatsoever for any reason you might be lonely" (5/80-80)*

*"I didn't have any cultural miss in cultural adjustment in Beirut. I didn't have a feeling of homesickness. I think it was because there it was very easy making friends and that was a big difference. Here in Jerusalem you friends become your colleagues. There is no separation from you work and your personal life...That's harder than in Beirut" (12/30-30) "I am in relationship with somebody who is Israeli. We met in Turkey, a very neutral location. And then I was in Beirut with my Lebanese American Catholic background with this Jewish guy. So there was a lot of boundary crossing for me" (12/35-35) "In Jerusalem I feel more of an outsider as an international person. I think it is in desperate" (12/36-36) "There isn't a group that I can fit right into but I don't know if I really want either to be honest. I came here to find out who I am and what I can do and what I can contribute, what's my job" (12/37-37) "I don't know if one adjusts to Israel particularly well...But I would say I have not completely adjusted" (12/61-61) "I didn't expect to be caught on that on my way back to school. I was in both bombings that just happened on Jaffa and King George. I think you think it will be okay and it won't touch you or it won't quite affect you and then one day it does. And then everything changes like a paranoid. So I wasn't really prepared. I find it*

*difficult because I don't understand much Hebrew. Hebrew is pretty necessary here and Arabic if you are in the Palestinian territories or Palestine" (12/29-29)*

*"I am very easy to adjust. I have traveled so much and I have a personality that I get to know people pretty easily. Adjusting wasn't so hard. And I think if people know you are Jewish you get a strong lock in. You know, this culture is a very closed culture in many ways. It's afraid of the outside world in many ways" (21/31-31) "I think in general Israelis are very cautious of strangers. I don't find it a very open society initiative. But I think once you get to know people they come really strong friends with you" (21/38-38)*

*"I do have uncertainty that I could be somewhere and a bomb could go off and I could be finished" (21/56-56) "I have adjusted. I think people never adjust concerning being blown up in a bomb although you adjust dealing with the possibility" (21/63-63)*

*"The culture is so obsessed by the news as it is very unhealthy. I mean it is unhealthy what is happening but it is further unhealthy how much people are obsessed just by the news and their mind is so focused on them that it creates anger, it creates frustration and adds the whole cultural problem" (21/70-70) "I have a lot of friends and acquaintances but I wouldn't call them close friends" (21/76-76) "I think it is a tough city to live in right now because of the tension and the danger" (21/87-87)*

All the above experiences of adaptation expressed by drifters include sadness and frustration. They also show a feeling of getting tired with the situation. Although all the interviewees have even according to their own words gone through the adaptation process several times and, thus, claim it to be easier, the above segments of their experiences indicate a different picture. Feeling of being an outsider and foreigner is almost touchable in their stories. Even I-21, being Jewish himself, finds the Israeli society very closed and has not found close friends in Israel during his almost two- year- stay in Jerusalem. I would suggest the underlying trait for cross-cultural adaptation of this category to be personal disappointment.

#### **7.2.4.3 Identity transformation of Drifters**

The experiences of identity transformation by drifters are as follows:

*"You are a foreigner. Here you get a system that people, who enter the country after you, go into a role of defined as a local. And I realized, living here non stop nine years now, that that has price because you are not part of the group. The longer I am here, the more I feel the price" (3/35-35) "It is more a part of my identity being a Norwegian outside Norway. That's how I grew up. So I am more concerned about going back to Norway now" (3/70-70) "My identity is to be a Norwegian outside Norway. I mean this is where I fit in very well" (3/89-89) "I think that I belong myself to the people who ask themselves where they come from because they don't fit exactly into the box. My guess is that that is perhaps where I am" (3/95-95) "There are boxes where we belong to in different places. I personally think that the culture thing would be different when being a child in different country and being as adult in different country. It is two different things, it cannot be compared. As a kid it is kind of basement of the whole identity. If a mature adult moves from one country to another, if you have a monoculture background what happens is that you get a kind of confusion on the top of the basic identity. Where you don't really feel fully Norwegian anymore or something but there is kind of solid base of coming from somewhere. But it is a bit shaking, the top layers. I am still confused on both level, inner level and the top level. As I said nothing valuable is for free. I think there is a value in this. I think people like me are needed for the society of tomorrow" (3/96-96)*

*"Culturally I was a Christian but not religiously. Coming here religion is politized, it is everything, who you are, it is even more than nationality. I found that I was just German. But when I came here, I found out that many of the things that I thought that were German, were actually Christian. So I am much more Christian than I thought" (5/59-59) "My own*

*cultural background would be very complicated to define. I don't really fit anywhere. I am a German who went to American School all my life in Germany so I would say I am 75% attracted to Anglo Saxons. So I identify myself very much with the United States but here Americans don't consider me as one of them." (5/78-78) "The reason I worked with the UN is that I feel that I identify with that kind of people" (5/88-88) "I am trying to find out what I am. My father describes me to be like ship without a harbor floating here and there, dropping my anchor but having no harbor. I am looking for my identity. I don't belong to anywhere. My son doesn't speak German because I don't feel comfortable with it. My father is from Peru. And my feeling of home was when Bonn was a capital and international and there was an American School in Bonn- and this never exists" (5/97-97)*

*"I kind of let my life lead me instead of my trying to force fit what I think my life should be so much" (12/39-39) "It's harder for me to be who I am in some respects because I am vivacious ... I would say that I have lost a certain element of my identity as far" (12/53-53) "Finally just acknowledging that I have really take some time and process my feelings, my apprehensions and nervousness and a lot of not insecurity but instability. Hopefully I make some changes that will help me not feel that way" (12/61-61) "I get more global perspective to what's going on" (12/68-68) "One objective is that we shall try to become global citizens. We don't live on isolated islands and there is the global world...so I think there will always be an international aspect whatever I am doing. Just because I love it. I love being exposed to things and people and I find that it has helped me define who I am as a person. I've felt more lost when I was in the US. I felt as being a woman being the only daughter in a family of boys and a traditional family. There was a path that was ready for me if I wanted to go down but it wasn't my path...So I find more tuned to who I want to be living away from the US than I ever would have been in the US" (12/79-79) "Cultural identity is a big one. I don't know if I can be happy here long term. I don't know if I can be happy anywhere long term though, really. I mean, I tend to flutter around a bit. I have been in three countries during the last three years. So we'll see. It's a personal process anyway. I am not seeing it as a linear process A to B to C. I see it as you are affected and you affect the same time. I think living internationally is a choice and unless you are forced to do it against your will. It's a choice. For me at least it's a choice. It is one that you have to make consciously and conscientiously and know that it is not going to be always perfect all the time. But it is beautiful. Like just living abroad and being exposed to something other what you have been exposed to. It is really kind of what it is all about" (12/86-86)*

*"There is both positive and negative side to it. The positive side is that you have tolerance, you embrace other cultures, you are not afraid of people and I think I have that. And negative side is that you lose a sense of home, you lose a sense of a base, and you lose a sense of roots. I am a little worried of going back home and how I am going to adjust to it" (21/88-88)*

The experiences of drifters in this research show that they have a feeling of being a foreigner and an outsider both in the Middle East as well as in their countries of origin. Three of four interviewees express their identity to be diffused even before their assignment to the Middle East. It may be that the transition to the Middle East can be seen as an effort to find their identity. The experiences of the drifters do not indicate positive results on the self-search. Only I-12 sees international living as a positive choice, which she defines as "beautiful", but "not perfect all the time".

The drifters have gone through the process of cross-cultural adaptation several times. Their process of intercultural transformation has been longstanding, for most of them since childhood either by living in a multicultural family or having lived in a multicultural environment as a child like I-3. In this sense, also I-21 has been living in a situation where he was exposed to a multiple value system of being raised in a Jewish family in the U.S.A. Adler (1998, 237-238) sees that tensions and stresses can make a multicultural person vulnerable when s/he confuses the profound and the

insignificant. This can lead to a situation where the sense of evil and good is diffused and lack of boundaries makes it difficult for a person to determine what s/he is. Like I-5 says that she assumed goodness and has learned that she has been and still is, extremely naïve. Adler claims that stress and tensions may also lead to multiphrenic identity or like Erikson calls it “a diffused identity” (in Taylor, 1998). This means that a multicultural person is open all the time to many kinds of stimuli and when his/her own identifications are flux, s/he can be easily pulled by all kinds of winds. In my research this can be seen in the seemingly restless and uneasy wondering of the drifters around the globe.

#### 7.2.4.4 Learning experiences of Drifters

Learning experiences of drifters are as follows:

*“Before I though that I will learn; I will pass that stage when I drive, I will pass the stage when I will be upset by the poor service and the rudeness and so on and that I have to accept. I will always be upset with this. I have to live with this frustration” (3/70-70)*

*“I have learned, started learning at least, how to build a multicultural ministry. My guess is that I have kind of a process of learning where I don’t identify what I learned” (3/93-93)*

*“I actually learned about the culture, I learned about the language, I had many Arab friends” (5/37-37) “I thought that I was completely without prejudices. I thought that I was completely open and that all people are people. I really wanted to be a part of the society here. That didn’t work out very well.” (5/45-45) “Professionally I have learned to deal with people as people, that they are not machines. I think that this is something to me personally because in Germany for me office work is more like a machine, I put zero effort that there is a person in the office who does it” (5/94-94) “Personally I have learned that I am incredibly naïve. I assume goodness that nothing bad ever happens to me. I assumed that life is liner, predictable. This causes me a lot of heartache. I still think that I am naïve” (5/94-94)*

*“There has been a lot of boundary crossing for me.” (12/35-35) “I have learned what I am able to do professionally. So despite the stress and some discontent, there is a tremendous sense of accomplishment” (12/84-84)*

*“I think traveling is one of the best ways you can learn about yourself and the world. I personally think that traveling and international world really opens up your eyes and all the biases that have been put on your body unconsciously through your childhood from your culture and religion and whatever. It takes some time to verdict those down and you realize that the crazy perceptions you have from some cultures are not really so real as they are portrayed” (21/82-82)*

The interviewees in the category of drifters were obliged to put a great amount of effort into their work. Two of them worked in the same organization. The organization had problems in management, and their workload was overwhelming. Furthermore, they had both lived some time in the compound of the organization, which lead to even more frustration. I-5 had big problems in her work because she lived in East Jerusalem and had to travel every day through West Jerusalem to her office in Bethlehem. Due to the situation of crisis and violence the road blocks and closures made it impossible to plan the work. Even when having to reach the office was on many occasions impossible. Only I-3 had free hands in his organization. He was in a leading position, and the work of the organization was proceeding well. Due to the work-related hardships it may be suggested that drifters did not have much energy and



effort for reflective learning. It seems that they have learned what is needed to run their daily work. This even brings slight satisfaction into their experiences. I-21 expresses that traveling and international work makes you reflect your own perceptions. Both I-5 and I-12 state, that there has been a considerable amount of border crossing for them. I-12 is just in the beginning of her international career and still shows some optimistic attitude for future options; all the other drifters are very pessimistic about the future. They have experienced a subjective disappointment in their plans and expectations. They all wanted to be a part of the society, invested time and effort in studying the language, but were somehow left as outsiders. In this outsider position, however, all of them have managed to do their work in a satisfying way.

### **7.3 Summary of the narrative profiles**

The aim of this study was, firstly, to find out how the expatriates manage with the challenges of work and life in the compact cultural context of the Middle East. Secondly, I wanted to explore the roles of learning and identity transformation in cross-cultural adaptation. The conclusions of this study show that there are four different categories or story types to be found in the narration of work and life experiences of expatriates in the Middle East. These categories are presented as four types of narrative profiles of cross-cultural travelers or international actors. The four narrative profiles are called global careerists, balanced experts, idealizers and drifters. Cross-cultural adaptation, identity transformation and learning were demonstrated differently inside the categories.

The findings of the study are consistent with the model that Kim (2001) presents on cross-cultural adaptation as being a dynamic process of identity transformation. However, the study suggests a novel contribution to the model. Kim claims that communication and relationships with the host society are essential for cross-cultural adaptation. This study indicates that the expatriates relate their adaptation to various cultural contexts. Four narrative profiles introduce different references of cultural contexts. For global careerists the frame of reference seems to be the international colleagues. They felt that they have adapted to living and working in the Middle East without having many or hardly any contacts to their host societies. Instead, the narrative of balanced experts shows deep and longstanding interaction with the host societies. They invested much time and effort in learning Hebrew or Arabic and in familiarizing with the host society culture. The primary affiliation of idealizers was their ideology. Lastly, the drifters seemed to be outsiders everywhere. Although they claimed to be easily adapting, they expressed much frustration and saw both the host societies and their own countries of origin as being strange to them.

The data of this study support the findings of Kauppinen on the difficulty to separate adjustment experiences from work and private life (Kauppinen 1994). It seems that in a situation of cultural complexity and uncertainty, work and personal life are strongly interwoven. On the other hand, cultural similarities or differences compared to the original cultural settings of the interviewees seem to have little significance as to adaptation. The study suggests that for a successful cross-cultural adaptation subjective attachment to a certain frame is required.

Twenty-nine of the thirty interviewees express that they have undergone changes in their identity. They described the changes richly, which could be seen as an indication that the interview situation was not the first situation when they were thinking of these matters. Balanced experts and global careerists expressed openness to change. When going through the experiences of change, balanced experts referred mostly to the cultural context of their own country of origin and the questions they will be facing when they are back in their home countries. Global careerists expressed more considerations with regard to their multiple identity positions and the search for a coherent self, which can be explained by their professional mobility. The language skills and multiple identity repertoires of global careerists are consistent with the findings from the study of Zaidman (2001, 436), which suggests, "individual business people have a repertoire of several communication systems". While the global careerists and balanced experts seem to reflect their identity in relation to the cultural contexts that they have been living in, the idealizers seem to relate to the transformation of their identity mainly as a process of spiritual growth. For the drifters, new cultural contexts and experiences seem to provide a new arena for their search of themselves.

McAdams (1993, 94) claims that there are tensions in the identity commitment of a person. For him, the most important commitments are ideological, occupational and interpersonal commitments. Further, he claims that these commitments are made to the future and to the past, and healthy identity affirms both change and continuity. The narrative profiles of the international actors in the Middle East demonstrate the way in which expatriates continue to strengthen the past identity commitments when pursuing their international career. At the same time they are considering the choices of the commitments for the future. The capacity for change of every expatriate is different. Global careerists seem to have the highest potential of making choices in their frame of reference. This is linked to their marketable cross-cultural know-how and expertise. It is also connected to their well-planned career path. Balanced experts reflect their identity in relation to the past in their countries of origin and consider their choices in relation to the needs of their work environment as well as their interpersonal commitments. Their identity demonstrates a healthy and meaningful story, not only for themselves but to others as well. The self-narrative of idealizers shows personal growth in their ideological commitment. The drifters seem to search for

meaningful identity commitments in the chaos of their past, present and future choices.

The aspects of learning were important in all narrative profiles. International experiences lead to critical reflection of beliefs, assumptions, attitudes and emotional reactions (Mezirov (1991, 168-169). Transformative learning and identity transformation are interwoven. Expressions like "*Every day here is a learning experience*" of I-4 show that learning has become a way of life. Many interviewees confirmed this. Learning experiences of balanced experts indicate the closest similarities with perspective transformation which can be seen in the interaction with the host cultures, shared experiences, self-examination, recognition of one's discontent and exploration of new opportunities, planning new action and acquisition of knowledge and skills required for it, trying of new roles, building of competence and self-confidence and reintegrating one's life on the basis of new perspectives (Mezirov 1991). Learning experiences of global careerists are more related to their professional expertise and career. Learning experiences of idealizers show reflection to their own perspectives. However, they do not question them very deeply. Instead, they relate to them as statements. Drifters relate their learning experiences to professional learning and growth as well as critical reflection of their selfhood and perceptions. Learning experiences of each narrative category can be more or less related to transformational learning.

Finally, all the four narrative profiles of international actors enact strong personal attachment or affiliation in their stories. The impacts of the attachment are seen throughout their work and life experiences. The global careerists attach their stories to their career. For them the network of international work colleagues presents a new cultural environment, instead of a host society. The balanced experts fit into the traditional context of international assignment and the approach to cross-cultural adaptation. The Israeli and Palestinian societies with their languages and cultures demonstrate the setting for their narratives on adaptation, identity transformation and learning. The idealizers express strong attachment to their ideology. They mirror their international experiences in relation to their ideological commitment. The drifters are attached to their self-search along their international career. The primary attachment of each narrative profile helps in understanding the sense making of different story types.

## **8 DISCUSSION AND EVALUATION**

This chapter evaluates the research process and findings of the study. Firstly, the main conceptual, methodological and practical implications of the study are discussed in chapters 8.1 and 8.2. Secondly, the trustworthiness and the limitations of the study are evaluated in chapter 8.3. Finally, topics for further research are suggested in chapter 8.4.

### **8.1 Expatriation and HRM**

This research extends understanding of expatriation and HRM by examining multicultural data from heterogeneous organizational contexts in a complex external environment. It illuminates the changing nature of expatriation from two main perspectives: (1) Expatriation in the non-profit sector and (2) Characteristics of expatriate experience and expatriate classification. There is paucity of research on expatriation and HRM in non-profit organizations (Brewster & Lee 2006; Harris 2003). Even less research is available on different types of expatriate experience (Inkson et al. 1997; Suutari & Brewster 2000). The main contribution of this research is to address these nearly unexplored issues.

The analysis of the study produces four categories of international actors. The study indicates that the four categories of international actors enact different “attachment anchors” in their narratives. The study claims that successful expatriation requires attachment of the expatriate to something that is important to him/her. Global careerists attach themselves primarily with/to their global careers. Balanced experts attach themselves strongly with/to their host societies. For idealizers, the primary attachment is the ideology behind their assignment and their spiritual capital (Eisenberg 2001; Verter 2003). Drifters are in a continuous process of searching for their attachment. From the point of view of the internal and external life management, the expatriation experiences of the drifters are mainly negative. The different sources of attachment can be seen from the light of different internal career success

orientations (Derr & Laurent 1989). Global careerists fit the profile of “getting ahead”. Balanced experts can be linked to “getting-balanced” or “getting-secure” orientation. Idealizers seem to possess “getting free” or “getting high” orientation. The study suggests further exploration of the connections between the different narrative profiles of international actors and internal career success orientations. The results indicate a need to develop the traditional understanding of career towards a continuous development process, which contains invisible changes and changes in the individual’s perception of his/her identity, as suggested by Larsen and Funck (2000).

The findings of the study support the view that there are different categories of expatriates found in international assignments. The existing classification of expatriates is based on the discussion on traditional expatriate experience and overseas assignments (Inkson 1997), and on self-initiated foreign work experience (SFE) by Suutari and Brewster (2000). These studies seem to present a too simplified picture and need to be explored further. It was quite difficult to try to place the thirty interviewees of this study into the groups of conventional expatriate experience or self-initiated foreign work experience. The characteristics of these two groups (Inkson et al. 1997; Suutari & Brewster 2000) seemed to be mixed in the light of the findings of this research. The initiative for leaving originated in many cases from the employer and the employee simultaneously. There were also cases, when the initiative originated clearly from the expatriate. It seems that most of the expatriates in this research were committed to work for organizational goals whether the initiative originated from them or from the organization. Many of the SFEs were career-oriented and almost all the assignments were funded by the organizations. There were some cases where I found it difficult to place the interviewee in any of the groups. This indicates the importance of extending the definition of expatriate beyond the definitions of conventional expatriates and SFEs. When I “used force” to classify the interviewees of this research to the above two groups, about two thirds of them could be defined as SFEs and one third as conventional expatriates. As this research is one of the very few studies in this field, it increases the importance to explore, test and refine the classifications of expatriates also in other parts of the world outside the Middle East. Characteristics and attachment orientations of expatriates need to be investigated more thoroughly and their applicability to different kinds of external contexts needs to be tested.

This research increases awareness of the importance of international HRM and HRD in commercial and non-commercial organizations. The findings of this study support the changing nature of expatriation discussed by Brewster and Scullion (1997). HRM strategies, policies and practices seem to be unique in different non-profit organizations. Non-profit organizations often recruit both paid employees and volunteers. They also have to take into account the objectives of their governors and donors. These factors complicate the management of non-profit organizations and management of expatriates in these organizations (Brewster & Lee 2006). The focus of this study was the

individual expatriate experience and the issues of HRM were raised from the point of view of the interviewees. Due to the broad theoretical frame and the focus of the study, the implications of this study to HRM issues in non-profit organizations are more practical than theoretical.

The findings of this research suggest that successful expatriation requires different approaches to strengthen the attachment anchors of international actors during their international assignments. Global careerists require more support in offering new options in their career building. Balanced experts need support in balancing the challenges arising from their work and private lives. Idealizers, who are employed in organizations, which fit into their ideological frame, seem to expect their ideological commitment to be strengthened. In addition, balanced professionals working e.g. in humanitarian organizations, expressed a need for support in strengthening the vision of their work. HRD and cross-cultural training need to address the developmental growth and transformation during international assignment (Sanchez et al. 2000). There is need for “tailor-made” training and development programs in order to support a healthy transformation and multiple identifications during the international assignment.

This research does not illuminate the connection between classification of the expatriates and their organizational contexts. Another limitation of this research is that it has not explored the characteristics, e.g. the organizational cultures of the employing organizations. Also the question of language in cross-cultural research setting could be explored more, not only from the perspective of interview, analysis and interpretation of the data, but as a competitive and flexible linguistic capital of expatriates (Marschan-Piekkari et al. 2004).

## **8.2 Cross-cultural adaptation, identity and learning**

The findings of this research support the understanding of culture as transnational process with a multitude of cultural flows (Banerjee & Lindstead 2001). The experiences shared by the interviewees of this study indicate that they learn new things related to new culture and translate them and negotiate between them (Rushdie 1991; Clifford 1997; Ashcroft 2001). The findings of this study introduce personal experiences of the oscillation and tensions between transforming and traditional cultural contexts on individual level.

### **Adaptation**

The findings of this study suggest that cross-cultural adaptation is a wide and dynamic process, which involves various processes of individual change and transformation as well as learning. Interactions and transitions in the modern world involve complexity of diverse cultures inside the organizations and in the environment. Holden (2002) argues that the time has come to develop new theoretical approaches instead of traditional ones, which were established on

cultural diversity and culture shock experiences. He suggests a narrative mode for examination of cultural aspects in organizational behaviour and interactions. This study has made several contributions in expanding the cross-cultural research approach and setting.

A significant contribution and strength of this study results from its rich data and the profound process of analysis. This contributes to polyphonic presentations of the international actors in the Middle East. The appliance of narrative analysis paves fresh ways for further exploration of expatriation and international career. The main contribution of this study is that it enhances the previous approaches of cross-cultural adaptation by applying a constructivist-narrative approach in a holistic and dynamic frame inside changing and complex cultural setting. Cross-cultural research has been criticized as being too narrow with regards to the data and the geographical or cultural setting (Mendenhall et al. 2002). The aim of this study was to take into account the limitations of many previous studies. The empirical setting of the study was the Israeli-Palestinian cultural context. It offered a complex context with diverse cultures in a situation of external uncertainty. To increase the width of the data, the interviewees presented different cultural and professional backgrounds.

Secondly, this study expands cross-cultural research to non-profit sector, which has been overlooked in cross-cultural HRM research. Furthermore, various types of non-profit organizations were included in the research. Earlier research has been blamed for overlooking the non-profit sector and focusing on only one organization (Harris et al. 2003; Brewster & Lee 2006).

This study contributes to the cross-cultural research by exploring the phenomenon of expatriate experience and cross-cultural adaptation during the actual transition periods. One of the shortcomings of the expatriate experience is that it has usually been conducted distant from the cross-cultural transitions (Peltonen 1998). In addition to conducting the research during the international assignment of the interviewees, I as a researcher did not make an intervention from the outside but rather shared a position as one of the international actors.

As a theoretical contribution this research enhances the current theoretical approaches on the phenomenon of cross-cultural adaptation. Most of the research on cross-cultural adaptation has been quantitative. The holistic model of Kim (2001), which was applied in this study, has not been studied empirically. One of the aims of this study was to evaluate Kim's model on cross-cultural adaptation by qualitative approach. Thus, *this study makes a contribution by empirically investigating Kim's model and bringing new information on Kim's assumptions*. The research supports Kim's view on cross-cultural adaptation being a dynamic process. It expands the model and increases understanding of learning and identity transformation during the cross-cultural adaptation process. Kim's model introduces cross-cultural adaptation as a process, which takes place through communication with the new host society during the international assignment.

As the elements of developmental models of cross-cultural adaptation by Black et al. (1991), Kauppinen (1994) and Aycan 2001) are included in Kim's model, I will mirror the findings of this research only against Kim's model and

its assumptions. The findings of the research support the overall approach of Kim. However, the findings of this research question some of Kim's basic assumptions and boundary conditions (Kim 2001, 34-38). The study shows that successful individual adaptation of an expatriate does not necessarily require deep involvement or communication with the host society. Kim assumes that adaptation occurs in and through communication. Kim also claims that intercultural transformation is facilitated by host communication competence. According to Kim's model participation in the host social communication activities facilitates and is facilitated by intercultural transformation. The findings of this research indicate that adaptation and intercultural transformation occur also in cases of very minimal or almost nonexistent host social communication. The host communication competence understood as the competence of host society languages Hebrew or Arabic seemed to have little influence on the subjective experience of adaptation of the interviewees.

The findings of this research indicate that Kim's model offers a good way to approach cross-cultural adaptation. However, there is a need to further evaluate and to explore Kim's model. This study suggests that the adaptation of expatriates occurs in relation to various cultural contexts. I suggest that expatriates have different frames of reference, which play a vital role in their adaptation. For global careerists, the frame of reference seems to be the international, sometimes global network of colleagues. The frame of reference for balanced experts is the host society. Their adaptation process strongly supports Kim's model. The frame of reference for idealizers seems to be their ideology or spiritual commitment. It provides a mirror for their adaptation. The drifters tend to be so involved in the search of their own identity that it is difficult to discuss real adaptation in their case. Further research is needed to develop the approach of cross-cultural adaptation on the basis of the main affiliations of expatriates.

Culture shock seemed to have very little relevance to the subjective experiences of interviewees' adaptation. The findings of the study did not indicate any linear connection between culture shock and adaptation. The study supports Adler's approach of culture shock being a transitional experience (Adler, 1975). Adler claims transitional experience to be a process of moving from low self- and cultural awareness to high self- and cultural awareness. Adler's definition of culture shock being a journey into the self was supported by many of the life stories of the interviewees.

## **Identity**

*The findings of this research argue that identity transformation takes place during international assignment.* All except one of the interviewees confirmed that they had undergone changes in their identity. This finding supports the studies of Adler (1975), Peltonen (1998), Kim (2001) and Kohonen (2004). In a transforming cultural context of the Middle East, the approach to identity by the interviewees came near to the approaches of Hall (1994) and Giddens (1991). Their approach of identity can be described as a process of "being and



becoming". The experiences of expatriates under different narrative profiles support this.

The findings of the study support the narrative configuration of identity presented by Polkingorne (1988), McAdams (1993) and Czarniawska-Joerges (1994). The findings also support the idea of tensions and different identity commitments of a person (McAdams 1993). The findings of this research indicate that different attachment "anchors" of each profile are enacted in the narratives of different categories of international actors. For the global careerists the transformation leads to the ability of multiple identifications and a "global mindset". Balanced experts face the challenge of building a bicultural identity as a combination of their own ethnicity and nationality and the host culture. Idealizers transform according to their ideological commitment. Even the narratives of drifters include identity transformation although there is not such a clear direction to be found in their narratives.

Among the four narrative profiles found in this research, only global careerists tend to raise the issue of "positioning" (Carbaugh 1999) or "situated identities" (Weinreich et al. 1986). Global careerists express simultaneously their multiple identity positions and their search for coherent definition of the self. These findings support the approach of narrative self-identity by McAdams (1993) which emphasizes the importance of creating an integrative life story through which a person is able to understand who he is and how he fits in the world. Without this integration there seems to be a danger that global careerists turn from balanced cosmopolitanism into extreme narcissism.

### **Learning**

*The findings of this study show that transformative learning includes many characteristics that are essential for successful adaptation.* However, the experiences of the interviewees did not indicate, how the approach of transformative learning could be used in intercultural training and mentoring programs. Bennett (1998) claims that in order to gain cultural empathy in new cultural situations a new perspective of the worldview is needed and merely a shift in position is not enough. The findings of this study are consistent with the findings of Bennett. While understanding the possibilities of transformative learning in growing to intercultural interactions, more research attention should be given to practical applications.

The phases of Mezirov's transformational learning (Mezirov 1991, 168-169) are almost identical compared to Adler's (1975) approach of culture shock as a transitional experience. Both approaches include the key elements of a narrative: coherence, reconciliation, self-respect and integration through ambiguity and differentiation, efficiency, autonomy and flexibility (McAdams 1993; Czarniawska-Joerges 1994; Gergen & Gergen 1983). Learning understood as transformative and critical learning, is expressed in many ways in the narrative profiles of expatriates. It can be seen as deep thinking and reflection in relation to adaptation and identity and also when the interviewees related specifically to their learning experiences.

As to the experiences of “formal or organizational learning”, it was found that most of the expatriates were not offered any training programs or even short cross-cultural training before their transition. *The study suggests that instead of overall training programs individual training paths should be developed in the organizations to enable transformative learning during international career. Furthermore it argues the importance of communicative networks of expatriates in the novel cultural setting in the process of transformative learning.* Critical reflection requires a referential frame, where the “disorientation dilemma” can be mirrored. As global careerists, balanced experts and idealizers are attached to different reference groups, providing these networks requires different organizational involvement. As employing a drifter clearly presents a risk for the organization, this group of international actors should be recognized already in the phase of recruiting and selecting employees. The significant differences of the four categories of international actors need further investigation in different phases of international HRM.

### 8.3 Trustworthiness of the study

Evaluation of a qualitative research can be done in many ways. I establish the evaluation of this study from the general criteria of trustworthiness in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba 1985) and how these criteria are met in this study. In addition, I proceed to evaluate the more specific criteria for a narrative study presented by Lieblich et al. (1998) and Riessman (1993). First, I would like to introduce some general evaluations of this study. Mäkelä (1992, 47) suggests that it is important to evaluate the question about the cultural and societal significance and scope of the study. When building the empirical setting for my interviews, I made an effort to have both women and men, older and younger in age and in profession to take part as interviewees. The interviewees represented different sectors of non-profit organizations under various administrative “umbrellas”. However, there was something that was common to all the interviewees: they were pursuing an international career in the Middle East and were facing the challenges of the complex cultural context and political violence. To achieve my aim, the number of interviewees in the study increased to thirty, which can be seen as a rather wide sample for a qualitative research. The amount of data caused many hours of work in listening, re-listening, transcribing, organizing, analyzing and coding. On the other hand, I was able to establish my analysis and interpretations on strong and rich data. As a limitation to the question of cultural significance, I see the fact that all the interviewees represented Western countries, only one was from Brazil but he had lived a long time in Israel and in England. If I had succeeded in including interviewees of African or Asian origin to the research, their narratives would have broadened the aspects of the research. As there were no official statistics available on the amount of expatriate employees in non-profit organizations in Israel and

Palestine, I had no way of studying their countries of origin. From my personal experience of having lived twelve years in Israel, there were not many Asian or African employees in the non-profit organizations in the area. The interviewees representing non-profit organizations can be seen both as an advantage and as a limitation. The significance of third sector is increasing, and it has been overlooked in the international HRM research. On the other hand, including business and private sector people in the research may have brought more variety to the narrative profiles.

Next I will deal with the criteria of trustworthiness in qualitative research in detail: The criterion of "*credibility*" requires that the researcher has "represented the multiple constructions adequately" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, 296). The prolonged period of engagement of the researcher increases the credibility of the research. Moreover, it helps in building trust and in learning the culture and in having sufficient time to conduct the research. In my case an additional advantage was that it was easier for the interviewees to speak to me, and we had the same understanding, for example about the violence and what was going on in the area, compared to a researcher that would have come from the outside for a short time only. I would suppose that in that case it would have been very difficult to find interviewees who were ready to use their time for the interviews. On the other hand, the fact that I was in the same situation with the interviewees and shared many of their experiences brought a continuous oscillation in conducting the research and in trying to keep an appropriate distance in my position as a researcher. To increase the credibility of this research, I have described the interviewees in the chapters of analysis and introduced their narrative abstracts in the appendix. Furthermore, I have been very clear and exact in defining the constructor of the life stories, the narrative abstracts and the narrative profiles. I have established my analysis not only on the transcribed data, but I have used a great amount of time to re-listen to the recorded interviews in order to test the adequacy of the data and my analysis. After having the life stories constructed, I was in contact with one of the interviewees, and he was willing to read his own story and the narrative profile of the category his story was placed in, but he never gave his comments.

"*Dependability*" of this study leans on the organized data and on detailed and transparent accounting on measures taken in different phases of the study. The entire process and the data management with its coding systems is auditable.

"*Transferability*" in my research means that the data of this research is available to other researchers as they may apply and make necessary judgments of transferability. This also requires that the ways of collecting the data, the recorded tapes and transcriptions be presented in an organized and well-kept manner.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the major technique for establishing "*conformability*" is the conformability audit. The criterion of conformability is related to transferability. I have kept records of the raw data material, designs for the methodological choices, write-ups and considerations for analysis, my

sketches for narrative abstracts and written thoughts about reconstructions of the data as well as my initial notes considering the credibility and reliability of the research. I have also tried to establish conformability by presenting my choices and decisions along the study process as clearly as possible.

Vuokio-Oinonen, Janhonen and Nikkonen (2003, 105) discuss the advantages and weaknesses of narrative research. They see that “respecting the participants of the study as constructors of their own experiences is a great advantage in the narrative research”. According to them, the fact that there is not a clear definition about narrative analysis or narrative research is one of the weaknesses of this approach. They claim that using narrative analysis requires a considerable amount of time and creativity from the researcher. The researcher is also required to have a deep understanding of the data and an attitude to take risks because there is no clear manual or research path to proceed in narrative analysis. My experiences in deciding to use narrative analysis as a method of analysis confirm the above considerations. Firstly, the analysis was really time-consuming. Secondly, I had to make several attempts of trial and error before I reached a decision of how to proceed. I had no previous experience of conducting narrative analysis and although I read many studies, which applied narrative analysis, the variety of the decisions made by different researchers, made me very confused. Even some of the good advice on how to proceed made me even more confused. However, they made me consider thoroughly all the different options and helped me find my own way.

Lieblich et al. (1998) present four criteria of proceeding with the evaluation of narrative studies: width, coherence, insightfulness and parsimony. “*Width*” refers to the wide and rich presentation of the finding or results of the phenomenon. I have presented all the thirty life stories of the interviewees. I proceeded to introduce the narrative profiles as composite story synthesis of different categories and the analysis of the experiences of cross-cultural adaptation, learning and identity transformation inside the categories. The criterion of width is related to the criteria of conformability and transferability presented earlier.

Lieblich (1998, 173) defines “*coherence*” to be “the way different parts of the interpretation create a complete and meaningful picture”. It can be evaluated internally and externally. In this research, I have explained my theoretical choices and have aimed for a holistic approach to cross-cultural adaptation. I made a great effort to build the life stories of the interviewees in a coherent and comparable way. The number of the stories gave me a possibility to search for a classification of the stories. By this, I was able to construct four narrative profiles presenting the expatriate experiences related to cross-cultural adaptation, learning and identity transformation in Israel –Palestine. The narrative profiles offered a way to relate the findings of the study to the theoretical frame of reference. This increases the coherency of the study.

“*Insightfulness*” (Lieblich et al. 1998, 173) as a criterion to evaluate narrative research brings a challenge to a researcher. Applied to this study, this means that the life stories and the narrative profiles, which are presented in this

study, show a sense of innovation and originality in their presentation and analysis. The utmost critics to insightfulness would come from the reader of this study and his or her evaluation of the stories and the analysis of this study have resulted in greater understanding of the phenomenon of intercultural interactions and cross-cultural adaptation and what their insight is regarding his/her own life.

The fourth criterion by Lieblich et al. is "*parsimony*" (1998, 173). Parsimony refers to the "ability to provide an analysis based on a small number of concepts and elegance and aesthetic appeal". The central concepts of this study are cross-cultural adaptation, cultural context, learning and identity transformation. Although the number of theoretical concepts is not great, each of them is a wide concept in itself. Together with a great number of interviewees this brought a great challenge in analysis and in the presentation of the findings. A decision to concentrate only on one or two of the concepts around the phenomenon may have contributed to a deeper analysis and less work but at the same time questioned the central aim of the study to build a holistic approach. Elegancy is related to an innovative and appropriate way of presentation of the research report in accordance to the narrative approach. Aesthetic appeal requires consistency and logics in reporting the different phases of the research as well as presenting the results of the research. As I evaluated earlier, it was not easy for me to find solutions to proceed with the analysis of the vast data of this research. I went through many moments of despair before reaching final decisions, which are seen in this report. The question of ethics is also related to this criterion. My solution was that I asked permission during the interview if I can use the name of the interviewee and the private data in the research. All of them gave their consent. However, I decided not to use the private names of the interviewees in the report. In some case, I may use a letter of the private name just for identification purpose in the analysis. The names used in the narrative profiles are fictitious. The literary text segments from the interview data under narrative profiles are used only by the reference number of the interviewee. The significance of intimacy and ethics is always important in qualitative analysis, and it is increased in the narrative approach where the voice of the interviewees is present all the time. As most of the interviewees of this research are scattered around the world, the chances of recognizing them are anyway very small.

In the above paragraphs I evaluated my research against several criteria. I thoroughly discussed different aspects related to my work as a researcher. Furthermore, the limitations of the research were introduced. Although my evaluation was established on different criterion, the final evaluation of the study as an academic research will be based on an internally coherent and logic study report. In writing this report I have tested its structure and contents by consulting people who are outsiders to this study process. This has proved to be very useful and has hopefully resulted in a more understandable and coherent report. Altogether this research process has taken ten years. Evaluating back all those years, my personal experiences and efforts would require a detailed

diary. The process has been intensified during the last two years, and my understanding of the phenomenon of cross-cultural adaptation and expatriate experience has grown enormously. The most strenuous part of the research was to first find the appropriate methodological approach and then to apply it in practice. I am sure that if I were in the position of doing the research process again, I would be able to proceed more quickly. Like one of the interviewees in this research said. *"Nothing valuable comes free"* (I-3).

## 8.4 Suggestions for further research

This study paves the way for further research on several topics. Firstly, the role of learning in cross-cultural adaptation could be addressed more deeply from the point of view of transformative learning. This would require a longitudinal qualitative study that could take the form of an autobiographical narrative of cultural travelers. This would provide an interesting contribution to the theoretical discussion. Moreover, further research should be addressed to develop individual intercultural learning paths based on the "attachment anchors" of different categories of expatriates.

Secondly, research on internal career success could be broadened to assess international assignments in complex cultural settings. This kind of approach would produce new tools for international HRM and diversity management practices.

Thirdly, it would be important to evaluate the individual narratives of cultural travelers in the wider context of cultural change on global level. This would require a multidisciplinary team, composed of researchers representing various fields of study, working together. This type of co-operative research project would enable the application of narrative research on a wider range of topics. In addition, the narrators could be given a more participative role in the research through closer co-operation with the research team.

This study made a contribution by exploring the phenomenon of cross-cultural adaptation of expatriates in non-profit organizations. This area needs to be studied further. Research on different types of non-profit organizations and their policies on issues such as salary and work-related benefits may be useful. In addition, the impact of organizational culture on individual expatriates is an area that needs further investigation in a complex and changing cultural context. The relation of organizational context to the nature of expatriation in the non-profit sector also needs further research.

Finally, although this research did not manage to encompass each and every aspect of expatriation and cross-cultural adaptation, the research questions were answered and the understanding of international assignments in the complex cultural context of the Middle East was enhanced. In addition the research raised many valid questions that should be taken into consideration in future studies. As I-3 said: *"Every day here is a learning*

*experience. Every place you go, every place you travel, every person you meet, is a learning experience. So you never quit learning here".*

## TIIVISTELMÄ

Jatkuvasti muuttuva globaali toimintaympäristö lisää kansainväliseen työuraan liittyviä haasteita. Muutokset vaikuttavat henkilöstöjohtamiseen ja henkilöstön kehittämiseen. Tämä tutkimus valottaa kansainvälisissä tehtävissä toimivien ihmisten työhön ja henkilökohtaiseen elämään liittyviä kokemuksia. Tutkimus perustuu narratiivisuuteen sekä ontologisena olettamuksena että metodologisena lähestymistapana.

Tutkimuskysymykset esitettiin seuraavasti: (1) Miten Lähi-Idässä asuvat ja työskentelevät ekspatriaatit jäsentävät työhönsä ja elämäänsä liittyviä kokemuksia? (2) Miten kulttuurienvälinen kokemus voidaan ymmärtää sopeutumisen, identiteetin ja oppimisen näkökulmista?

Tutkimus antaa aluksi lyhyen katsauksen tutkimuskysymykseen liittyvistä teoreettisista käsitteistä. Käsite kulttuurienvälisestä sopeutumisesta perustuu Kimin malliin, jota tutkimus laajentaa ja arvioi. Identiteettikäsite perustuu identiteettiin narratiivina, jota yksilö rakentaa refleksiivisesti omiin kokemuksiinsa ja aikaisempaan tietoonsa pohjautuen. Tutkimuksen oppimiskäsitteksenä on Mezirovin transformatiivinen oppiminen.

Tutkimuksen empiirinen osa toteutettiin haastattelemalla 30 Lähi-idässä asuvaa ja erilaisissa kolmannen sektorin järjestöissä työskentelevää kansainvälistä toimijaa. Haastateltavat edustivat 15 eri kansallisuutta. Israelilainen ja palestiinalainen yhteiskunta ja Lähi-idän kriisi muodostivat tutkimuksen muuttuvan ja monikulttuurisen kontekstin. Aiemmissa tutkimuksissa kulttuuriympäristö liittyy yleensä tietyn maan kansalliseen kulttuuriin. Globaalissa maailmassa kansalliset kulttuurit sekoittuvat ja maantieteelliset rajat eivät enää muodosta selkeitä kulttuurisia eroja. Israel-Palestiina on alueena itsessään monikulttuurinen konteksti, jossa on tapahtunut ja tapahtuu jatkuvasti kulttuurista muutosta ja maahanmuuttoa sekä maastamuuttoa. Aluetta voidaan pitää globaalin maailman muutoksia kuvaavana mikrokosmoksena.

Haastattelut litteroitiin ja analyysi perustui lähes 600-sivuiseen tutkimusaineistoon. Narratiivianalyysin avulla rakensin jokaisen haastateltavan elämäntarinan, joka perustui tiukasti haastatteluaineistoon. Elämäntarinat rakennettiin Labovin rakenteellisen mallin pohjalta. Sisäiseen ja ulkoiseen elämänhallintaan pohjautuva elämäntarinoiden analyysi tuotti neljä luokkaa, joihin kansainväliset toimijat voitiin jakaa: globaalin uran rakentajat, tasapainoa hakevat asiantuntijat, idealistit ja ajalehtijat. Rakensin jokaiselle luokalle fiktiivisen narratiiviprofiilin ko. luokkaan kuuluvien haastateltavien elämäntarinoiden pohjalta. Sopeutumista, identiteetin muutosta ja oppimista käsiteltiin luokitusten sisällä.

Tutkimuksen tuloksena on selkeästi nähtävissä, että eri luokkiin sijoittuvat kansainväliset toimijat edustavat erityyppisiä kiinnittymisankkureita kansainväliseen uraan ja siihen liittyviin kokemuksiin nähden. Globaalin uran rakentajat kiinnittyvät vahvasti omaan työuraansa ja sen kehittämiseen. Heille sopeutuminen merkitsee sopeutumista lähinnä siihen työyhteisöön, jossa he kulloinkin toimivat – ei niinkään sopeutumista vieraaseen ja uuteen kulttuuri-



ympäristöön, kuten aikaisemmat teoriat sopeutumisesta olettavat. Globaalien uran rakentajien viiteryhmänä toimii kansainvälisten kollegoiden verkosto. Tasapainoa hakevat asiantuntijat edustavat puhtaimmillaan aikaisempien teorioiden lähestymistapaa. Heidän kohdallaan sopeutuminen kohdistuu uuteen kulttuuriympäristöön, ja he käyttävät paljon aikaa sen kielen ja kulttuuristen tapojen opetteluun. Heidän viiteryhmänsä koostuu uuden kulttuuriympäristön jäsenistä. Idealistit edustavat tässä tutkimuksessa henkilöitä, joilla kansainväliseen työkokemukseen liittyvät päätökset rakentuvat subjektiivisen hengellisen kutsumuksen varaan. Heistä monet lähtivät ulkomaankomennukselle ilman minkään organisaation tukea tai rekrytointia ja hakeutuivat tehtäviinsä paikan päällä. Heidän sopeutumisensa peilautuu heidän hengellisen näkynsä kautta eivätkä sopeutumiseen liittyvät hankaluudet ole heille relevantteja, koska he ovat joka tapauksessa sillä paikalla, mikä on heille paras tällä hetkellä. Idealistien viiteryhmää edustavat tässä tutkimuksessa heidän hengellisen ryhmänsä jäsenet tai kotiseurakunta. Ajelehtijoille puolestaan kansainvälinen työura antaa puitteet oman identiteetin etsintään. Tämä etsintä on niin voimakasta, että sopeutumista uuteen kulttuuriympäristöön ei varsinaisesti tapahdu. Ajelehtijoiden kohdalla on vaikea löytää selkeää viiteryhmää, johon he samaistuisivat ulkomaankomennuksen aikana.

Tämän tutkimuksen kontribuutio on sen laaja ja rikas kolmannen sektorin organisaatioiden henkilöstöä koskeva aineisto. Tutkimus tuo lisäymmärrystä ekspatriaattitutkimukseen, joka on keskittynyt tähän asti lähes yksinomaan kansainvälisten suuryritysten palveluksessa työskenteleviin henkilöihin. Näiden ”perinteistä ekspatriaattikäsitystä” edustavien rinnalle on viime vuosien aikana noussut näkemys ekspatriaateista, joiden nähdään olevan itsenäisiä aloitteentekijöitä oman ulkomaankomennuksensa suhteen. Heidän joukkonsa näyttää kasvavan. Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että näitä kahta ekspatriaatinäkemystä on syytä edelleen kehittää ja monipuolistaa, jotta pystytään kuvaamaan muuttuvan kansainvälisen työuran moniulotteisuutta.

Tutkimus tuo myös lisävaloa aiempien sopeutumista koskevien tutkimusten ja Kimin mallin perusolettamuksiin. Tutkimus osoittaa, että kulttuurienvälinen sopeutuminen on dynaaminen ja kokonaisvaltainen ilmiö muuttuvassa ja monitahoisessa kulttuuriympäristössä. Tutkimuksen tuloksena esitetään Kimin mallin uudelleenarviointia siten, että ekspatriaattien sopeutumis-kohteina voivat olla useat eri kontekstit eikä vain uusi kulttuuriympäristö, niin kuin aiemmissa tutkimuksissa oletetaan. Kansainvälisten toimijoiden eri luokkien sopeutumis- ja kiinnittymiskohteet edellyttävät jatkotutkimusta ja luovat perustaa henkilöstöjohtamisen ja henkilöstön kehittämisen uusille käytännön ratkaisuille.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: A letter to non-profit organizations

**Mrs. Tuula Siljanen**  
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91680 Jerusalem  
Israel  
Tel: 02-6726489, 02- 6713192  
e-mail: [siljanen@bezeqint.net](mailto:siljanen@bezeqint.net)

**To whom it may concern**

Jerusalem December 2001

#### **RE: Participation in PhD Research**

The purpose of this letter is to introduce myself and to ask you to please consider the possibility of allowing me to collect research data within your organization. My name is Tuula Siljanen and I come from Finland. I have lived ten years in Jerusalem with my family. At the moment I am studying for my PhD. My main subject is Human Resource Management and my research theme is on cross-cultural adaptation and culture shock. I would like to ask your cooperation and assistance in the empirical research.

I would like to interview expatriate employees of third sector organizations (NGOs and NPOs) in Israel and in Palestine. The sample for this qualitative research would be 30 participants. The interviews are individual and will be analyzed anonymously and would take about one and a half hours.

I am sure the results of the research would contribute to practical tools in management and personnel development as well as making the adaptation process easier. It might also be a good opportunity for your employees to reflect their experiences in their international career. Life and work is hectic in the Middle East but I would be glad if this request will be positively received in your organization and by your employees.

Yours sincerely,

Tuula Siljanen

Enclosed:  
CV  
Research Plan

**APPENDIX 2: The Interview sheet****BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Date of the interview	
Place of the interview	
Duration of the interview	
Code of the interview	
The interviewee- Name	
Age of the interviewee	
Gender of the interviewee	
Nationality of the interviewee	
Home country	
Profession of the interviewee	
Organization	
Where are the headquarters?	
Does it have office here? Is your superior from the local office or home office?	
Working in the profession since	
Works in Israel/Palestine	
Area, where lives	
How long time have you been in Israel/Palestine?	
Have you worked/lived here earlier?	
Have you worked or lived abroad earlier, where, when?	
How long do you intend to stay	
Have you family with you? spouse, which nationality? Is your spouse working? children what age? which school do they go?	
What is your educational background	

**1. PREDISPOSITION**

What languages do you speak relatively well?

Maternal language

other languages

- Did your parents travel internationally for their work?
  - Do your sisters or brothers live in your home country or abroad?
- Did you have any cross-cultural training before coming here?

How do you find your way of living here compared to your home-country?

- environment –climate- infrastructure
- ethnic aspects
- food
- other things

If you have family, were they eager to move here with you – was it a joint decision? and how does it go with them?

What are the three main reasons that brought you here?

Do you feel that you were well-prepared to come here? What about the rest of your family?

When you think about the preparation- is there something that you would have done otherwise than you did?

What kind of expectations did you have concerning your work? Is your work like you expected?

Is the culture here similar or different to your home country?

## 2. ENVIRONMENT

What do you see as your host society here? Israel or Palestine?

How have you been received by this society?

How do you describe the general attitudes to strangers in this society?

Is there any ethnic group here where you belong to? What is that? Are they your home country people or some other people?

What is their meaning to your staying here?

How would you describe staying here compared to staying somewhere else abroad – easier or more problematic- why?

What are your ways to manage to live here?

What about your fellow-expatriates – have you discussed with them about the ways to manage to live here?

Is living here different or similar compared to your home country?

What are the three most important things that have helped your adjustment here?

What are the three most important things that have made your adaptation difficult?

How do you spend your spare-time? What about your family?

How does your spouse spend here days? work – other things?

Do you study the host culture or language at the moment? Have you plans for that? Or have you studied earlier?

Do you think that the Israeli society is open for strangers?

Is it easy to express confronting opinions in the Israeli society?



Do you think that the Palestinian society is open for strangers?  
 Is it easy to express confronting opinions in the Palestinian society?  
 Does the political and religious situation in this area have any effect on your life?  
 Do you feel that you are received here as you are, an individual or have you a feeling of trying to be changed somehow?  
 Have you or your family members felt it dangerous living here?  
 What about housing and other terms of your contract. Have they had some affect to you adjustment?

### **3. PERSONAL COMMUNICATION HOST COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE**

What language do you mainly use for your communication here?  
 Do you manage in the language spoken by host members of the society? Which language?  
 Have you studied the languages spoken here?  
 Do you feel comfortable with the non-spoken social rules here? Or do have they any influence at all to your daily life and work?  
 Have you recognized any symptoms of culture shock during your stay here?  
 How do you describe culture shock? What about your family members? Are there any changes in your adaptation process? Do you think that you have adapted to the society? And your family? What aspects were easiest? What were most difficult?  
 Have you found some professional differences in keeping up with your work challenges? Can you define them? Are they more technical or social or what?  
 Is your work new to you or have you worked in the same field earlier? Do you like it?  
 Do you find easy to move from your own home country professional group to here? Why?

### **4. HOST SOCIAL COMMUNICATION (HOST IC and HOST MC)**

Can you draw your communication map?  
 deeper level contacts  
 superficial level contacts  
 Identify yourself in the middle  
 I = Israelis P-Palestinians E= own ethnic groups O= others - specify  
 Use the length and thickness of the line to describe the intimacy of the contacts

Have you people from the host society whom you think as friends? How did you get to know them?  
 How do you keep yourself update about what takes place here?  
 What is your main source of information?  
 Foreign mass media?  
 Local mass media? People, who?

Do you follow regularly some forms of local mass media? If not, why? If yes, what?

How many people work in your work place? Where are they from? Do you have non-work contacts with them? With whom?

## 5. ETHNIC SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

Have you regular contacts with people from your own cultural background ?  
How do you keep the contacts?

Meeting them?

e-mail

phone

When thinking your adjustment here, what kind of support have you got from members of the host society? Members from your own culture? Have you find it important or of less importance in your adjustment?

Do you have regular work or non-work contacts to your home country or somewhere outside Israel-Palestine? How do you compare the amount of the contacts to abroad with contacts in Israel?

Do you travel much in your work? Where?

How many times per year do you travel abroad from Israel-Palestine?

for work?

for other reasons? holiday...

## 6. INTERCULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

Do you plan to continue in an international career? Here or somewhere else?  
Why?

What effects would it have to your life? Work? Cultural Identity? Family?

What is your general impression of the adjustment of other expatriates here?

As to efficiency at work, do you think that you are as efficient as at your home country?

Do you feel stressed at your work here? If yes – more stressed than in your home country?

Have you learned something here?

Professionally

Otherwise - what?

How would you advise someone who plans moving to work in Israel-Palestine?

Do you think that a person can develop towards intercultural identity? How would you describe this kind of identity or in other words an intercultural personhood?

How can you influence yourself on growing to intercultural identity?

Have you met people who have intercultural identity?

Would you like to draw your adaptation process - you can use any form of line and write there the changes you have come through ...

### APPENDIX 3: Narrative abstracts of the interviewees

#### Narrative abstract of interviewee 1

##### Cultural context

She defines her host society as Israel. She lives in a mixed cultural context of people from her own ethnic background as well as Chinese and Thai people. She has fewer contacts with Israeli people and hardly any contacts with Palestinian people. She used to work in Thailand earlier and finds Israel an easier country compared to Finland. She finds Israel very similar to Finland, only there are many different people from all around the world.

The difference with Finland comes from the many cultures, the many languages and many nations and the political situation in the country.

##### Adaptation

*"I would stay it is still more problematic than living in Thailand because I have been there so many years. I like to stay here. If that means adapting somehow, then yes, I have adapted. But of course I don't understand all the things. Easy aspects in adaptation are everyday things but difficult aspects are the values of people."*

She admits having gone through culture shock, having felt as being a stranger in the place where she lives, not feeling at home and not understanding people. She has been irritated and understood why. She thinks that there are changes in the adaptation process. It is easier when you try something new, but when you get into the society, you feel irritated. She says that she does not really know the non-spoken social rules yet or all the signals. For her language is the key to understanding people. She claims that because she does not know the language, she does not know the people or *"read them right"*.

She is now studying the language with a good teacher, whom she also finds to be a friend. For her the language teacher is very important, not only teaching the language but the way of thinking. At the beginning she needed the interpretation of her Finnish countrymen to interpret the culture, but now she does not need them anymore. Now the Chinese and the Israeli people have grown to be more important.

##### Identity

*"I have to choose somehow. I prefer this kind of work. It means I say no to some work offers in Finland. This is first priority. It has effect on my cultural identity. I was back in Finland a few years ago and it was very hard. I feel more home outside Finland"*. She says that when living in a cross-cultural context you do not lose your own personality, you know and value your own background but at the same time you respect other people. You have to accept that you are incomplete yourself and you also have to accept that life is not easy and should not try to find easy solutions to problems. She understands that your way of seeing the world is not necessarily the right one and not the only one but rather there are many ways of thinking and seeing the world.

### **Learning**

She states that she has learned a lot from the people – Chinese people, Thai people and Israeli people. She has learned a new way to work. The second source of learning comes from seeing the country, studying the language, asking questions, having no answers to political questions and problems in the country that you could not have thought beforehand. She tried to prepare herself by reading and finding out about the country she was moving. One thing that she would now use more time for is to study Hebrew.

### **Key aspects**

Committed to her work and intends to continue pursuing an international career. Very analytic and reflects her experiences in the past, in the present and considers possible effects on the future. Very positive and has a realistic attitude to learning and adaptation. *"I think you are on the way to that"* (intercultural identity).

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 2**

### **Cultural context**

S. defines his host society as Israel. He works both in the areas of Israel and Palestine, but lives in Israel in a Jewish neighbourhood. He has been in Israel a relatively short time, only for three months. He worked earlier in Brussels and Germany. His wife is German. He considers living in Israel not to be very different from living in other places. When living in a Jewish area, you have to take into account the Jewish holidays and the culture. Shopping in the shopping centres and supermarkets is also almost the same as in other places. The Israeli society has received him very well. The political situation has an influence on everyday life. His nearest contact group are his colleagues and own ethnic group. He has more contacts with Israelis than with Palestinians. Because of his work he travels a lot in Israel and Palestine and if the political situation gets easier, also more in other parts of the Middle East. His language of communication is English, he does not know Hebrew or Arabic.

### **Adaptation**

He and his wife have adapted very well. Living abroad earlier helps, *"what also has helped is open frame of mind and that we are strong as a couple."* He would not like to use the term culture shock in the adjustment. They were well prepared to come, the organization paid for a one week trip with a hotel to find the house and get acquainted with the conditions before coming here. The job that he enjoys, good neighbours and nice home and a happy family are things that contribute to positive adjustment. Difficulties have come from the security situation, from not knowing the language and the work load.

### **Identity**

He has enjoyed working in an international career and plans to continue in an international career. He clearly realizes that it will have an influence on him

and on the family. While his wife is German, he thinks that *"my English identity will become weaker and more flexible"*. They have also discussed the influence of international work on the children. His wife is pregnant and they already discuss about what kind of education they would like to give their child.

### **Learning**

*"I have learned every day something new professionally and individually"* Already at the university in England he has learned French and German languages as his majors.

### **Key aspects**

He is well adapted. He enjoys his work and sees it as a challenge. He has a very good command of three international languages and has been internationally oriented already since his studies. He has achieved a position that is one of the most wanted in the BBC. He is very committed to his work and enthusiastic about it, and at the same time very family oriented. Very determined to continue in an international career.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 3**

### **Cultural context**

T. defines his host society to be Israel. He has worked seven years in Israel. His wife is Norwegian as he himself. He grew up in Argentina and Japan, where his parents worked. Before coming to work in Israel, he had spent two years there as a student. The family has three children. The two eldest go to the Anglican International School in Jerusalem, which follows the combined American British education system. He sees the Israeli society as a pressure cooker, tense and bureaucratic. Everything is complicated. Israel being a Jewish state makes life complicated for non-Jewish people in official matters. Otherwise, what comes to food and ethical things, the Israeli society, where everybody comes from other place, represents an immigrant culture and is open to strangers. He is a director in a training centre, where the personnel are international. He uses English and Hebrew as languages for work. His closest circle of people is the Norwegian family, the international people from his work and the best family friends are British Jews, who immigrated to Israel when he was studying the Hebrew language. The organization has recently opened an office in Chicago, so he regularly travels there and has contact by phone several times a week. Two people related to the work live in Denmark, so he has regular contacts also to Denmark.

### **Adaptation**

He recalls that it was relatively easy to move to Israel. One reason was that he had spent two sabbaticals in Israel before coming to work. His wife needed more time to adjust. He did not go through a culture shock. He ended up at a stage where he had to give up and accept that there are and there will be things that frustrate him. He is more concerned about his adaptation when going back

to Norway. He has experienced that in Israel people respond to you according to the role you have. People relate to a newcomer through a picture they have about the previous person and about the organization. It is easier to adjust to reactions and to the situation when you are able to distance yourself from the reactions and take them professionally, not personally. Also it is different if you work and live in Israel or in Palestine.

### **Identity**

*"It is more a part of my identity being a Norwegian outside Norway".* This is where he fits by his own words. He says that he belongs to a group of people who ask themselves where they come from because they do not fit exactly into the box. He thinks that because he was transferred to Peru and Argentina as a child, and did not get a solid base for his basic identity, he has grown to see a normality not fitting to any box. If you move as an adult, you already have a more solid base from one culture and only the top layers of your identity are shaking when moving to a new culture. He says that he has a gypsy identity because of his confused background identity. He says that his identity is confused both on an inner level and on the top level.

### **Learning**

He defines learning a process, where he does not identify exactly what he has learned. Professionally he has learned to work in a multicultural environment. As an adult he has had a way to prepare himself to a situation by reading and by achieving new tools for interaction. But it has been difficult. Using his own words *"Nothing valuable comes for free"*.

### **Key aspects**

Role of being a guest in Israel. A gypsy identity, with shaken inner and top levels. Quick to adjust when moving from one place to another. *"There are boxes where we belong to in different places."*

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 4**

### **Cultural context**

R. comes from a monocultural background. He defines his host society to be the Israel Arab community, which is a minority in Israel, only about 20%. This is the working environment. He lives in Israel, in a mixed area where Jews and Arabs live together. His wife is American like he himself. They have lived and worked in Israel for 36 years. Their three children were small when they came; they were all born in the U.S. Two of the children also live abroad as adults. His closest circle of people is his own family. They live and work together with his wife. Their daughter also lives in Israel, she and the Arab-American grandchildren are the closest circle. Everyday life takes place in the mixed community where they live. The work contacts in the church related organization are Arab and American. They live in the Israeli society so all the political and religious tensions of that society are present all the time and have

to be taken into consideration also in daily work. They used to live a long time in Galilee, which was predominantly Arab Christian community. At that time he had daily contacts to Arab people. Now the work has changed and he has more contacts through his network of people. This is also due to the political tensions involved and not wanting to risk the local people.

### **Adaptation**

He says that he and his wife have experienced various stages of culture shock. First when they moved to the North, they had to adjust to the Arab culture. And when moving to Ramle, they had to adjust to a Jewish culture. He defines adaptation as an uphill pool, it takes energy, but you have to continue and they have enjoyed it. He himself had used much time to study the languages and the cultures. Studying has been a part of his career. Every five years he has taken a year off and done the Academic career. He has had a habit of taking time off in order to allow his mind to settle down. It has been important to get away for a few days. Even more difficult than the adaptation to a new culture, was to adapt to the local organization, and its fellow Americans. He uses mostly Arabic and English in his work and manages with Hebrew also. He has used a lot of time for language studies. People receive you first as an American, an outsider, a foreigner. You face stereotypes. You have to go through that barrier, learn the language and the manners and take time. It takes energy to adapt and there are points of stress but they feel adjusted.

### **Identity**

He has spent more than half of his life time overseas. He says that he owes to his own country and people to go back and share his experiences about Israel, Islam and Arab Christians. He says that living in a foreign culture and coming from your own native culture contributes to a combination, a mixture of many different cultures. You learn the host culture and at the same time your own native culture is changing. When you go back to your own country, you have to get used to it.

### **Learning**

*"Every day here is a learning experience."* He says that he feels that much of his life has been preparing him to come to Israel. His work, his studies, his experiences have been a good preparation. He is teaching the Bible and he came with all his Bible commentaries but says now that the Land is itself a commentary. Learning about the history, learning the languages, learning from people- you can get basic understanding. He has also used much time to train other people. His feeling is that you never stop learning.

### **Key aspects**

He appreciates the history and the cultures of Israel and tries to understand them deeply. He uses time for analyzing and settles down. He feels at ease in Arab and in Jewish communities as well as in the U.S.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 5**

### **Cultural context**

I. works in Palestine, in Bethlehem and lives in East Jerusalem. She is German and her husband is Palestinian. They have one 5 year old son. Her host society is Palestine, where she has been received in a very polite way, but always as a foreigner. She first lived two years in West Jerusalem, which was almost like living in Germany. She speaks many languages including English, French, Italian, Spanish and some Arabic in addition to her mother tongue German. She says it is very complicated as a woman to get into the Arab society. Although she is married to a Palestinian, she feels herself as a foreigner. She sees that the Arab society has a lot of norms for behaviour and people are very sensitive towards these norms. It is very black and white in the Arab society – you are either one of them or you are a foreigner. Another thing which is very difficult for her is to live in-between the two very separate societies, Israel and Palestine. The cultural context in Palestine includes the religious situation. She has never been a religious person but as a foreigner she is viewed as a Christian although she has not even been baptized and she is married to a Muslim. She finds her extended Palestinian family to be distant. Recently she has got a contact to the international women's network in Jerusalem which she finds more close to her than the Palestinians or her own ethnic group. This network consists of international women from different European countries and from the U.S. who are working themselves in the area or whose spouse is working there.

### **Adaptation**

She says that everyday life is very different from what she expected. Also the expectations of social norms are very different. She had studied the Arab culture for many years at the university but living on a practical level is very different. She says that she seemed to be well tuned to the Arab society but it was only on a superficial level. When working in the UN she was able to participate in an Arab lifestyle but go home to a German lifestyle. She had a very positive perception of people but this has changed. She has great difficulties in the Arab society as well as in her marriage and she is in the process of divorcing and fighting for the custody of her son. She has got support in her adaptation from German speaking people. When she got married to a Palestinian, she was expected to become an Arab and was not anymore accepted as a foreigner. She feels lonely and depressed in the community, where no one who is a member of a society should feel lonely. She has failed to make herself be a Palestinian.

### **Identity**

Her cultural background is very complicated to define. She says that she does not really fit anywhere. She is a German who as child went to International school in Bonn. The school followed an American curriculum. About 50% of the students were American and the rest from many different nationalities. Germany at that time was a very homogenous culture and is even now. She feels more Anglo Saxon than German. Her father is from Peru. Her son does not



speak German; even she herself does not feel comfortable speaking German. She has found out that many of her values that she thought to be German or American actually are Christian values. In Israel/Palestine she was forced to identify herself as a Christian, Jew or Muslim, which was difficult because she never was religious. She is looking for her identity, *"I don't belong anywhere"*. She is described by her father *"as a ship without a harbour floating here and there, dropping her anchor but having no harbour."* Her feeling from home is from Bonn, when she was at school and Bonn was still an international capital of Germany.

### **Learning**

She has learned professionally a lot of human resource management – leadership. It needs a lot of effort. Personally she feels that she has learned from her experiences that she has been very naive. Her assumption that life is predictable has proven to be wrong.

### **Key aspects**

She is depressed and lonely and in a process of divorcing. She is looking for her identity and feels that her cultural identity is a complete mix.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 6**

### **Cultural context**

J. lives in Israel with his American wife and children. He works both in Israel and in Palestine. He defines Israel and Palestine as his host societies. Most of the work is in Palestine but on the governmental level the work is integrated to Israel, visas, organizational matters, partner hospitals etc. The strongest network consists of people from his own ethnic group, the Christians, not the American expatriate community. They lived five years in Gaza inside a refugee camp. It was a very crowded and visible community where people received them very well. Trust has been built during many years although some fundamentalist Muslims laid suspicion on the work. Overall the people are very open. His girls had to begin to wear a head cover and long garments, also his wife. They also had to try to find a proper way to respect people who visited them. That was culture shock in the beginning. When moving back to Jerusalem, to a mixed society, it was difficult to try to become Western again. He find also the Israelis open, the Israeli society being more like the American society, a consumer society. The most difficult part for him has been the bureaucracy in the Arab society. He speaks some Arabic and Hebrew, which helps. The children also speak Arabic.

### **Adaptation**

He says that they all feel at home. They experienced culture shock when they moved into Gaza. When moving to Jerusalem, they have been able to live more family centred life, sheltered and quiet. But in Gaza they lived inside a very conservative religious area, which brought pressures in behaviour and clothing, especially to his daughters and wife. His family has been very supportive and

they have also got support from the grandparents from the U.S. He and his family have experienced the terror threats and Gulf war from both sides of the society.

### **Identity**

He feels that his identity as an American is weakening. He lays doubts that the identity of his children is at all American. He defines his basic identification with the kingdom of God and not with any particular nation. According to his opinion the major thing is to maintain the balance and not to go to extremes. He has a feeling that they are getting started to do some effective work and hopes to continue in this career. His aim is to continue to work in Israel with both Arab and Jewish people and see them coming closer together. He finds faith in Jesus the ultimate cross cultural tool. He has shared understanding and fellowship as well as ability to work together with people of God from all over the world – this crosses the cultural barriers.

### **Learning**

He has learned new ways to get things done and to work with the system. It has been important to learn the languages. Professionally he never worked in this kind of work in the U.S. so he has learned much and learned how to build the networks in order to put the things together. He says that he came with his own stereotype preconceptions and has seen it destructive when trying to integrate here. He says that he has asked God for a humble and teachable spirit to be able to work cross culturally. He takes an example from the New Testament that we should think of others more highly than ourselves.

He says that especially in Israel where the media reports show only one kind of picture, you have to find out what is true by living and sharing with the people in their lives and friendships. He says that the language skill is the most important factor in integrating with people.

### **Key aspects**

J. says that as a Christian he has a sense of connectedness and familiarity with Israel and Palestine. He feels privileged to live there. His whole narrative of faith and the history of faith are focused on this land. That is why it is easier for him to live in the area than somewhere else. His primary identification is with the kingdom of God and several times he speaks of how important it is to have a humble and true spirit in order to get adjusted.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 7**

### **Cultural context**

G. comes from the U.K. He has worked six months in Palestine in an international organization. Also his family is British but they are all in the U.K. He used to work in international assignments through the same organization in many parts of the world. Usually the assignments varied from a couple of months to the longest one which was three years. He defines both Israel and

Palestine as his host societies. The organization promotes political neutrality, so the employees are not allowed to take any political stand. To be honest, he admits that he feels Palestine to be his host society rather than Israel. He works both with Israelis and Palestinians. He feels that he has been received well; the organization has a long established reputation in the world. His closest circle of people at work is his international colleagues and Palestinians. He has contacts with the Israelis only on an official level and with the IDF and a humanitarian organization in Tel Aviv. He also lives in the Arab area of the city. He is not a part of the British expatriate community in Jerusalem but rather sees his work colleagues to be his support group or own ethnic group. They represent about fifty expatriates from England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Canada, Belgium, Kenya, Somalia, Australia, Finland and Norway – so it is very multicultural.

### **Adaptation**

He said that it was very difficult to move here. People are very tense and the political and the security situations have an effect on everyday work. He did not experience any culture shock because he has been working so many years in many different places around the world. He finds Israel and Palestine the most difficult area of culture surprises that he has worked in. He says that he prefers to talk about culture surprise rather than culture shock. This is because he feels that he accepts that there are very many cultures in the world and he accepts them. He says that he always adapts himself everywhere. Here it has been more irritating and annoying than in other cultures that he has come across. He gets along with English at work and can use translators in his work to interpret from English to Arabic. But the colleagues at work, international and Palestinians all use English. He spends all his holidays outside Israel. During the six months that he has worked here, he has been to England three to four times. He says that he has worked in many places but he has never been anywhere like in Israel. He says it would be easier if it was just Palestine or just Israel but to work and get involved with both of the societies is very difficult. He says that he never feels relaxed; he has to be on guard all the time.

### **Identity**

He still has many options to continue working internationally. This decision of course causes problems because his family is in the U.K. He says that his cultural identity has never changed. His identity has always been British and it will never change. He is not a fanatic Brit and sees the faults British have caused in many parts of the world but anyhow he is British. He says that in general he would accept other cultures and enjoys most aspects of the foreign cultures. During the years abroad he has gained more understanding of different cultures but has not encompassed to any of the cultures to change him.

### **Learning**

G has worked as a logician by profession. He says that he has not learned anything new professionally. He has difficulties to get his logistician staff to

make changes – their attitude is against changes. He has had to find ways to convince people. As to cultural adaptation he says that he has been travelling the globe so many years that he does not find anything to shock him.

### **Key aspects**

Many long and short term international assignments around the globe. G. works in the working environment, where he manages by using English only. His identity has never changed; it has been and will remain very British. The work colleagues are the most important support group for him.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 8**

### **Cultural context**

M. has worked 14 years in Israel with her family. They are all Americans. Two of the four children study in Germany in a Christian American High School. She works in the same organization with her husband. She defines her cultural context in four parts. One includes the American staff of the organization. The second is the associate international staff (Israeli, Palestinian and Chinese). The third is the Israeli community they are working with. The fourth is the neighbours, friends from the neighbourhood and the staff from their children's school. She has used time and effort in learning the Hebrew language. She finds the infrastructure and even the culture in Israel very similar to the U.S. in many ways. For her Israel is an immigrant society which is used to receiving people. The religious Jewish element in the society is strong and although she finds the Israeli society polite and open, she finds the Israeli culture very rude and brusque.

### **Adaptation**

In the beginning she was irritated and says that she experienced a culture shock. It comes from expectations and difficulties. She defines adaptation as a process, where you find things about yourself that the new culture brings out. The process proceeded in different stages. She says that they have learned to live in different kinds of ways, and learned different aspects of life. She sees herself as a very adaptable person and thinks that all the family has adjusted well. The adaptation is easier because people let you live as you want to live; you are free to be yourself in Israel. She says that the adaptation is a choice that you make at the beginning. You decide that you want to adjust and find your friends among Israelis more than among expatriates or people you are very comfortable with. She has relaxed her expectations and has had to put some of them aside. She has realized that in order to adapt to things she has to allow to lots of differences when working with colleagues and also accept that she herself cannot expect to be everything she used to be at home.

### **Identity**

She sees that the longer she is out of the U.S. the less comfortable she will feel back at home. She cannot say that she fits 100 % here or 100% in the U.S. She

has found out that she has to let different parts of her personality come out and to be ready even to become something else. She says that some things that she was good in the U.S do not fit here at all and that there are some things that need to come out now. She feels that *“there is remaking of herself to be able to fit in and not try to take everything she used to be and make it fit in”*.

### **Learning**

She says that she has mainly learned people skills; to communicate with people, to understand where they come from and where you yourself come from, to understand differences and define yourself in relation to others. She speaks about planning on changing to be a tool to adapt and manage with your work.

### **Key aspects**

M. is very analytic and open. She analyzes the aspects of living and working abroad from many perspectives – as a process of learning and change, a process of growth and identity transformation and considers its influence on her family. She has a positive attitude towards herself and towards the people she works and lives with. Her adaptation process shows the starting point in defining differences and the stage where she is now is emphasizing similarities. She is a balanced person and seems to enjoy the challenges in her life. She does not speak very much about the crisis situation but does not ignore it either.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 9**

### **Cultural context**

M. is a young single woman who has worked in Nairobi, Namibia, Ivory Coast and Germany before coming to Middle East. The assignments have ranged from 9 months to two years. She has been in the area only for three weeks. She does not want to define either Israel or Palestine as her host society because of the neutrality of her organization. Anyhow, the organization is in East Jerusalem and she also lives in East Jerusalem, among the Palestinian community. Her main work in the Palestinian territories although she also has some official work contacts to Israelis. The organization has advised its employees to avoid the Jewish neighbourhoods in West Jerusalem because of terror threats. Her work environment is multicultural; half international, and half Palestinian. All her work colleagues live in East Jerusalem and she has many contacts with them also outside work. She finds that working in Jerusalem and in the territories is like working in two different countries. She manages by English in her work. She defines the expatriate group from her organization as her reference group

### **Adaptation**

She says that the practical side in her adaptation is arranged by her colleagues. Psychologically she feels that she is in the process of trying to understand what takes places and building the big picture. Her private way of adaptation is to process things, to write letters and a diary and to talk with people. Since she has

been only three weeks in the area, she does not know how she will manage. Otherwise she feels that she is in the phase where everything is new and exciting. She already knows the basic things of how to get along. Also the fact that she has gone through the adaptation process many times, makes it easier every time. She says that because of living in many foreign countries she does not have only one fixed reference that is Finland. M. says that she came open minded without any fixed setting of how to live and work here in her mind.

### **Identity**

She says that she cannot differentiate her work identity and her personal identity. She has worked all her professional career abroad since she graduated from university. She says that she is not a typical Finn anymore; her cultural identity has been reformed. She sometimes looks at Finland as an outsider and realizes that in some situations she behaves differently than before leaving Finland for the first time. She says that her identity has changed and it is changing.

### **Learning**

She has a positive and open attitude to learning. There are so many new things. Work wise working in an organization involved in human assistance is new to M. and she sees it as a big learning process. The culture, the history of Israel and Palestine also involve many things to learn and she is looking forward to it.

### **Key aspects**

M. is very determined to continue in international career but does not know where and for how long a time. Her reference group is the international staff from her work. She maintains her ties with family and friends in Finland and plans to buy an apartment in Finland in order to settle down in Finland for some time. She is interested in history and cultures of the area she works in but avoids deeper involvement or affection.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 10**

### **Cultural context**

M. has worked in Israel about one year with his Finnish family. He works and lives in West Jerusalem, Israel. His host society is Israel, which he sees to be a tougher and more vivid society compared to Finland. Culture is in many ways different, festivals and feasts are part of the identity of people. All the co-workers in his organization are Finnish and the local staff in facility management is Palestinians. The location of the centre is in the Jewish side. They use Finnish, Hebrew and English as the language of work. In his work he faces the bureaucracy in the society. Also the pressure caused by the political situation is constant. *"You have politics for breakfast, lunch and dinner"* and that makes you tired, he says. According to his definition Israel is a macho culture, you are to be aggressive and be ready to demand for things.

### **Adaptation**

M. worked in Israel ten years ago and experienced a culture shock then. He longed for Finland and missed many things. He defines it as a feeling of strangeness. This time he has not yet recognized any culture shock. He felt the heat of the Israeli summer tiring when they came but otherwise all the family have got into the country without culture shock. They still have to work for adjustment; they have to learn to be more aggressive and learn to fight in order to get things done. The easiest part of adjustment is that he feels that he can be free to express himself here, you can enjoy the culture. His work is new to him so he has many things to learn. He enjoys it but it has many challenges and he is in the process of looking for what it will be. He lives with his family in the centre of the organization and this makes the challenges more demanding. You do not have any working hours. This demands more also from the family. He says that many things in the infrastructure are very Western but in many ways many things do not work as you suppose. He wants to get deeper into the Israeli society. He manages with Hebrew but wants to study more. His wife has not been able to study so much Hebrew.

### **Identity**

M. feels himself more Finnish in Israel than in Finland. He senses his nationality more clearly and has got a new perspective of the Finnish culture. Anyhow, he wants to learn new things and doesn't want to stay the same. He does not want to hide his Finnish nationality and identity but at the same time he is not afraid of learning something new. He wants to continue to work in Israel for a long time – not only for a couple of years. He expects this to strengthen the family ties and to contribute to richness in their lives. Children can learn new languages and get international friends.

### **Learning**

M. has an open attitude towards learning. He started to study the Hebrew language already ten years ago when he first time worked as a volunteer in Israel. He has continued to study the language in Finland during ten years time. He also says that he has learned many new things in his work. He is open to learn some new perspectives to his Finnish culture and identity.

### **Key aspects**

M. is satisfied to work and live in Israel. He speaks a lot about his family. He is committed to continue to work in Israel for a long time. He brings in the spiritual growth in learning to work in a Christian organization but he is also analytical and wants to gain wider and deeper understanding on cultural, political and historical aspects of the society.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 11**

### **Cultural context**

V. is a young Ukrainian woman, married to a Dane. She defines her host society to be Israel. She has been 2.5 years in Israel and before that she studied one year in England. She speaks Russian and Ukrainian as her mother tongues and uses English, Russian and Hebrew in her work. At home they speak Danish with her husband and Russian with her daughter. Also in work they have to relate to many cultures at the same time. Her husband's work is mainly with the Danes. Her own work is with international students at the Hebrew university; Americans, Germans, Scandinavians, Israelis. In a way she finds the Israeli society easier for her than Denmark, where they lived some time after getting married. Israel and Ukraine represent for her the same type of macho cultures, although she sees Ukrainians as less aggressive than Israelis. What is positive compared to Ukraine is that Israelis do not drink like Russians and Ukrainians. Because of the mass immigration of Russian Jews she is many times considered to be a Russian Jew because of her ability to speak Russian. This makes situations sometimes easier. For her Israel is a very multicultural society, where you can speak any language you want and you are respected and understood.

### **Adaptation**

In the beginning when they came, they got very angry because they did not manage with Hebrew. Driving in the city also made them angry. She says that it was their culture shock. She still does not like driving and yelling at people but she has learned to live with it. She says she finds it hard to define Israeli culture shock, since other facts have contributed as well, such as the fact that they had just got married, moved to Israel, they used a third language (English) with her husband. In general they have adjusted to living and working in Israel. They also hope to continue. She has experienced that it is easier to be accepted here than in Denmark. In Denmark if you speak Danish with an accent, people respect her but she is not considered a Dane. People are careful with her. Here she feels that people are very comfortable talking to strangers because there are so many people from different cultures in Israel. The Israelis express themselves freely, they can be aggressive and rude, but they would be themselves and she also is free to be herself.

### **Identity**

V. feels that she is not a typical Ukrainian anymore. From the surface she has a sort of Slavic look but she does not identify with the Ukrainian type of thinking. She has been exposed to the West. She sees clearly the cultural differences when discussing it with her mother. She has two main cultures influencing on her: the Danish and the Israeli. She is definite to maintain her Ukrainian roots and the language. She is positive that it has a lot to do with the language. This is why she speaks Russian with Katja, her daughter. She also reads with her Russian books and wants her to read all the Russian classics. She thinks that in the future she will be increasingly changing and does not know if it is for the best. She has developed cultural flexibility. It is connected with language. If she



speaks English, she is a slightly different person than if she speaks Russian. If they move to Denmark, she has to sink in the Danish culture.

### **Learning**

She has learned a lot professionally. Also she has learned her limits, that there are situations that she cannot help and always solve people's problems. She has learned to listen and just to be there, not to fix all the time. That was something that she did not know before.

### **Key aspects**

V. has many cultural contexts, which challenge her both in her work and in her family. She has learned to approach life and its situations and people from many different perspectives. She is a positive and balanced person, who knows what she wants.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 12**

### **Cultural context**

E. is a young, single woman. She comes from a Lebanese American family. Her place of work is a school in Western Jerusalem in the neighbourhood next to the Orthodox Jewish area. Most of the teachers come from the U.K. There are also employees from other countries and some Jewish and Palestinian employees as well. The students are mostly international and Palestinian. Few students come also from Jewish families. E. has stayed one year in Israel. Before that she worked one year in Beirut, Lebanon. She is engaged to a Jew and they have plans to get married. Although she lives and works in Israel, she does not want to define it as her host society. She finds the ethnicity in Israel different from Minneapolis, America, where she comes from and where there are also many cultures like in Israel.

### **Adaptation**

E. experienced a strong culture shock when she came to Israel. She had difficulties in fitting in with the school and the culture. She went through a bell curve of emotional responses in every day situations. She still has a need to have something American and familiar; American cuisine, books and CD:s. She says that she feels now much better although she has not completely adjusted. She has given herself time to process her feelings, apprehensions, nervousness and instability. She thought it would be easier to adapt because she had stayed one year in Beirut, but she found herself not prepared. Some things were similar and some different. Not knowing Hebrew makes it difficult to adjust into the society. She sees many causes of stress in the Israeli society: potential wars, politics, terror attacks etc. She finds herself stranded in the school because the school is located in the city centre of Jerusalem. She hardly escaped two bombs in the main streets and does not want to go there anymore for safety reasons. Another difficulty in her adaptation comes from the organizations where she works. She expected the framework with curriculum and books to be organized but nothing had been done. She has to teach 30 hours and has

responsibility for many after school activities. The work load is strenuous and she is not well paid. Living and working in the school compound makes the adaptation difficult. Now she spends most of her weekends in Tel Aviv, where her boyfriend lives. This makes life easier.

### **Identity**

Coming from a Lebanese background E. came to Israel feeling very pro-Palestinian. This has changed. She has now mixed feelings. She does not accept killing civilians by bombs in order to build Palestine. She is also very surprised of the feelings of hate which she hears from her Palestinian students. In Jerusalem she feels like an outsider and an international person. In Tel Aviv it does not matter so much. It is more secular than the religious Jewish area where the school is located. She does not identify with the British people at the school. There are not many Americans so there is not a group where she belongs. She foresees her relationships with her Jewish boyfriend to be problematic. They met in Turkey, which was a neutral ground for both of them. If they get married, their children will not be Jewish because she is not Jewish, she is a Catholic Christian. This may cause some identity problems according to her opinion. She wants to continue in international career and to become a global citizen.

### **Learning**

E. says that she has learned a lot professionally. She had to teach many different grades during the same school year and to prepare the material and plan the curriculum. She has organized the curriculum for the English language so that it will be easy for anyone who comes after her. This has made her optimistic for the future challenges which she may face in her professional life. She also says that working in Israel and travelling inside the country and visiting the neighbouring countries has given her a new perspective. She has also learned during her time in Israel what it is like being in America, what is culturally characteristic for Americans. Her trip or move from Beirut to Jerusalem has been a strange trip because what has happened historically and politically between the two countries.

### **Key aspects**

E. claims international post being a continuous choice. She has some mixed feelings about the Middle East. She was not ready to follow the path that was ready for her in the U.S.A. She feels more tuned to live away from the U.S.A. She supposes that she will be more inclined to Americans than Israelis or Palestinians.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 13**

### **Cultural context**

N. has stayed in Israel for 2,5 years. This is her first time to stay abroad. Her host society is Israel. She lives and works in Israel. Her home country is South Africa. Her adult children live in England, her own sisters and brothers are

scattered to Australia, South Africa and England. Her work contacts are with Jewish people and international people from her organization. She has mixed very little with Palestinians. She does not know Hebrew so her language of communication both at work and fellowship is English. Her main contacts are with the Christian people from her organization. In her opinion the Israeli society is a bond of strangers and they seem to accept her. In South Africa she is used to many subcultures and languages. There it is sometimes seen as a culture of white people and a culture of black people, although there are many tribes amongst the black people and each of them has its own culture. In Israel it is different ethnic backgrounds and different cultures and languages.

### **Adaptation**

N. has never really experienced any culture shock. She remembers being very surprised because of the "black hats and peots" of the religious Orthodox Jewish men. She had never seen something like it before and is still fascinated by it. For her it was difficult to face the rudeness or the briskness of the Israeli people, pushing, yelling, getting into the busses etc. She says that she has adjusted and *"walks in perfect peace"* even on the streets of the city centre of Jerusalem after the bomb attacks. The lack of Hebrew language makes life sometimes difficult. Having many English speakers around her helps a lot. She says that she found it very easy to adjust. She says that she had a call from God to come to Israel and God has enabled her to come and live here. She has also received support from her friends and from her Church group. She thinks that *"the Lord has given her a gift to be very able to fit into the society."* She says that she feels that Israel is the place where God wants her to stay and she will stay here till He tells her to move on.

### **Identity**

N. identifies with her Christian fellowship. She thinks that her spiritual growth has alienated her from what she was like in South Africa. She has gotten a deeper understanding of different cultures compared to South Africa. She sees people as people, wherever they are and what they are. When working in a Christian organization, she is more focused on others compared to South Africa where she was focused on herself. *"When I left South Africa, it was me, me and me. Now it is kind alike me, God and the people around me...my hope in the Lord is deeper than it was."* She wants to continue to work in Israel, if the Lord allows her. When asked her to mention three reasons that made her come to Israel she said: God, God and God.

### **Learning**

N. works in computer programming. The work is very much the same that she used to do in South Africa. Professionally she had to learn new programs. She has advanced much in her work in the line of Art and creativity because she has had somebody to teach and encourage her in this field. She has been teaching others to use the programs and has found this to be a challenge. She has also

learned tolerance and how to work under pressure. N. mentions that she has gained a deeper understanding of cultures in Israel.

### **Key aspects**

N. has a very spiritual attitude to her work in Israel as well as to her adjustment and identity.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 14**

### **Cultural context**

D. is a British older lady nurse who has stayed two years in Israel. Her adult children live in England. She works in a multicultural Christian organization, where her superior is Swiss. She worked earlier seven years in Mozambique as a nurse in an orphanage. Her work context is the Jewish people, mainly Holocaust survivors in the Jerusalem area. Her host society is Israel. She feels very connected to Jewish people and does not have much contact with Palestinians. She speaks English, some Portuguese and a bit of Hebrew. She lives in the same flat with two British ladies.

### **Adaptation**

When D. came to Israel she did not know what to expect. Anyhow it was different from what she expected. She feels that people are suspicious at first but when they get to know you and you get to know them, they receive you well. She is used to staying in the countryside and she finds Israel very noisy. She says that she never had any problems in adjusting, not in Africa and not in Israel. She says that in a week she has always settled and has no problems. Also when going home to England she has no problems. It is only practical things, where to buy things etc. She also mentions communication to be difficult because she does not know Hebrew. People in her organization have helped her to get around but the Lord has been her greatest help. *"I feel His presence with me. So I don't have any fear about safety. I just have peace in my heart."*

### **Identity**

D. identifies with Christian people from her work and from her organization. She stays with two British ladies and keeps regular contacts to her family in England. She wants to stay in Israel until she will get a call from God to leave. She thinks that she will not lose her cultural identity. She hopes to get closer to people and to understand them more. She has been affected by the fears and the ache of the people she meets through her work.

### **Learning**

D. has learned a lot about people, about how they feel. She has also learned a way to approach Jewish people. She has learned and tried to find out what takes place in the Middle East between the Jews and the Palestinians. She has had a lot to learn in her work, because it is new to her. D. says that it takes time to learn about the culture of the people. It has been easier for her in Israel than it

was in Africa. She recognizes the need to learn the culture, how people think and how they do things. She has also started to learn the Hebrew language, although she finds it difficult for her age. She has found out that learning is quicker if you have a friend, to whom you can listen to. She has got a very good teacher from one of the Holocaust survivors that she visits.

### **Key aspects**

D. says that she has had no problems in adjusting. According to her own words she had no difficulties to adjust when she moved to Mozambique or when she came back to England. She says that she can always settle down within a week in a new country. The only difficulties come from practical things and communication. She does not know any Hebrew and she is content with her English speaking group of people from her work and from her congregation and says that they care for her and the Lord is her greatest help.

### **Narrative abstract of interviewee 15**

#### **Cultural context**

M. has stayed two years in Jerusalem. She comes from a monocultural Swedish background. She is single and works in a Swedish development organization. The area of her work is Lebanon and Palestine. She uses Swedish and English at her work, she does not know Hebrew or Arabic. Her host society is Palestine. The office of the organization is located in East Jerusalem and she also lives near the office. People connect with her through her work. She says that because of the Intifada and her work load she does not have much of a social life. To be a single, middle aged woman in a Palestinian society makes social life difficult. There is a small group of Swedes, whom she meets at the Swedish Theological Institute. There are some Palestinians working in the office, but they do not live in the same area and it is not easy to meet them after work because of the security situation. The organization only has one Israeli group that they are connected with at their work; otherwise she does not have much contact with the Israeli society, which is according to her opinion, very divided.

#### **Adaptation**

M. has not experienced a culture shock. She has adjusted to live and work in East Jerusalem. She lives in a Muslim dominated area, which brings restrictions on her private life. At work she does not find religion to bring restrictions; they have been able to continue their programs. In the beginning she was afraid of leaving the office late or travelling around. Still it is difficult but now she is not so scared. She even goes to Western part of Jerusalem, where they have suicide bombs frequently. Sometimes she gets tired with East Jerusalem and sees it as a small village but it helps to go to some other places. She has very much work and it prevents her from going out to field visits or to travel on weekends to get fresh impressions. Not knowing Hebrew or Arabic makes communication difficult. M. finds Palestinian people very friendly but admits that it is not easy to have friends there. Both Palestinians and Swedes have helped her in her

adjustment. She needed them to help her to understand and to show the reality of what was happening.

### **Identity**

She would like to continue to work here, if asked. But she does not plan very much for her future. The security situation affects her decision. She finds now much easier to socialize and meet with people from other countries and other cultures and perhaps a little bit less Swedish. She finds a difference in herself compared to when she came to Jerusalem. Even in Sweden she enjoyed to listen to Arab music. In the beginning she used to listen more to Arab music, now she listens to classic music. She allows herself to listen to the music she needs or wants and she does not care if she is in Stockholm or in Jerusalem.

### **Learning**

M. has learned a lot about herself. She has also learned about everything else and about responsibility. She has grown with increased responsibility. She has learned to work in a different way than in Sweden. Here it is more important to sit and have coffee and chat with your co-workers, not just work like in Sweden. She has to write many of her reports in English and it demands more time than writing them in Swedish. She has learned to use the English language.

### **Key aspects**

M. has developed an analytic way to try to comprehend things from many perspectives. She is organized in her work. She has self confidence although it is not simple to live in a Palestinian society as a middle aged, single woman. She has learned to recognize and admit her needs and live accordingly. She clearly sees the restrictions and the chances involved in her work and personal life.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 16**

### **Cultural context**

O. has worked two years in Palestine in a Swedish development organization. He came with his wife, the adult children stay in Sweden. The organization works in Palestinian area, so his work contacts are with Arabs. The family lives in a Muslim area, which has to be taken into account. He is responsible for work for the Middle East region, which means Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt. He has earlier international work experience from Botswana, Tanzania and Kenya. The headquarters of the organization are in Stockholm, the local workers are all Palestinians. They are well educated and used to work with Swedish people and "*according to Swedish work culture*". The contacts with Israelis are limited to official visa and work permits etc. He has regular contacts with other development and human rights organizations, a network of international agencies in Palestine. He also meets with his fellow country men Swedes regularly in different occasions. Lack of language (Hebrew and Arabic) restricts deeper contacts with Palestinians and Israelis.

### **Adaptation**

He and his wife have adapted well. They have not experienced any culture shock during their stay in Africa or here. Having lived abroad earlier has helped and the fact that they have been home to Sweden every year. They have got good support in the adjustment from the Swedish community, in which they are very much involved. O. sees it very important especially in the situation of crisis, when you immediately know what takes place and you get support from the others. The political situation with the security problems has been something that they had never experienced earlier or expected. When they came, they got good friends, who helped them to adjust. This was even more important for his wife, who does not work outside home. O. gets out from Israel-Palestine because of his work and his wife follows him many times. These trips plus the trips inside the country and every year to Sweden, even many times a year, give a chance to breathe some fresh air and help in the adjustment. A good help in adjustment was that the organization was always run by the Swedes and the Palestinians working there had already got used to their way of doing things. Being able to go to the Israeli side, to West Jerusalem, has been an asset in adjustment. There you can jump into the Western life style and have a more European touch.

### **Identity**

O. still has some years left in his work career. He would like to continue in international career but does not find it a catastrophe going back to Sweden and working there. He describes his Swedish identity as a square, which has become smoother and rounder. At the same time he enjoys mixing and socializing with different cultures, and enjoys his Swedish identity and community. He sees that he and his wife are not anymore so strict to his own traditions, e.g. spending Christmas compared to when they stay in Sweden. They are not so important to them anymore. They appreciate and respect the traditions, but they feel free to do it otherwise. Simultaneously they seem to do things together in the Swedish community, which everybody supports and enjoys.

### **Learning**

O. sees that he has got an awareness and understanding of global things and how the decisions made by international organizations affect lives of individual people. During the time he has worked in Palestine he has learned a new approach to development, which he has involved in his work for many years. There are of course similarities but now the questions related to democracy, human rights, social and economic justice, have become even more important. He sees some clues from these in his earlier jobs but here they open up as a challenge for him and his organization.

### **Key aspects**

O. is very committed to his work and although he only has some years before retiring, he is open to new challenges. He has found a balance between enjoying his Swedish identity and community and living amongst foreign cultures.

### **Narrative abstract of interviewee 17**

#### **Cultural context**

Z. comes from a multicultural family. Her father is Lebanese and mother Spanish. She has lived in Lebanon and Spain and studied in Beirut. She worked for a short time in Brussels. The job in Jerusalem is her first real international assignment. She has been in Israel for 1,5 year. She works in the NGO department of the EU office. She is involved in the work of different NGO:s working in the PA area. The office is in East Jerusalem and she also lives in East Jerusalem. Most of her colleagues are international and Palestinians. Her host society is Palestine. She uses English, French and Arabic at her work. She has started to study Hebrew as well, although she does not have much contact with the Israelis. Mostly just officials at the airport. Her nearest contact group is the international young people working in the NGO:s and in the EU. She also has some Palestinian friends and she identifies with the Palestinians through their common Arab background.

#### **Adaptation**

Z. has not experienced any culture shock. She says it has been easy for her to adjust, perhaps because of the common Mediterranean culture, which she is used to from her own cultural background. There are some differences, like the relation to time; it is different from what she is used to. Another thing is the lack of concern with some practical things, like how to present a document etc. In order to adjust to some place you have to understand the value system of that culture, even if you do not share it or it contradicts with your own. But here it is easy for her to understand and she does not find contradictions. Having lived a long time in Lebanon has prepared her to come and live here. She had much knowledge about the society, the history, the wars and the conflict, the security situation etc. she was used to coping with it already in Lebanon. That is the reason why it was easier for her to cope with it. She feels a bit like being in her own home country, although she never felt a hundred percent home neither in Lebanon nor in Spain. Z. feels sorry for not being able to visit her relatives in Lebanon from Israel. She finds herself trapped here and has to get out for some days every three months.

#### **Identity**

Z. says that she belongs with people who understand more than one value system; that there is more than one system to life, beliefs and social codes. The difficult thing for her is to share both and have to synthesize what is hers, to take what suits her, from both systems. She feels like a chameleon, a cultural schizophrenic. Being a woman, makes it even more complicated for her



especially in the Arab culture. She has tried to find out all her life how she can do certain things as a woman while keeping her own personality in course and not shocking people and being accepted. She says that she can now for the first time have her both her fifty percent European side and fifty percent Lebanese side in the same place together. She has learned to understand that she does not have to belong a hundred percent to either of them and be satisfied. It has been a long process. She wants to continue working somewhere in the Middle East, perhaps not in Israel because of the security and the political situation. She feels at home with her friends, who have also chosen international careers, she has learned to cope with distances and differences and the consequences of her choice. She feels herself a bit like a floating person in her sentimental life.

### **Key aspects**

Z. builds systematically her international career. She knows what she wants and has learned to express her opinions and suggestions about the work (like starting her department for NGO:s). She identifies with a group of young people, who want to work in international careers and sees clearly the consequences of their choices. She also analyzes different options for her personal approach to work.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 18**

### **Cultural context**

P. works in an international Christian organization. Her host society is Israel, which she finds to have many diverse cultures. She works mainly among Jewish immigrants from Russia. Her co-workers are from different cultural backgrounds, England, Canada, Hawaii (Zimbabwe) and three Russian speaking ladies. Her friends are Russian Jews and Finns, whom she meets quite often. She uses English, Russian and Hebrew in her work and gets along in the Israeli society. She has hardly any contacts with the Palestinians.

### **Adaptation**

P. has adapted to live and work in Jerusalem. She did not have any culture shock when coming to Israel. She thinks that it is mainly for two reasons: she had visited here many times and knew where she came to. The second reason is that she had lived some years in England and experienced clear symptoms of culture shock there. That experience helped her to come to Israel and settle down here. One thing that she finds difficult in the Israeli society is that it is such a family oriented culture. Being single makes people ask many intimate questions, which she found difficult and offending. She thinks that her cross-cultural training and experience in England has helped her to cope well in the cross-cultural context of her work. She had studied Hebrew and Russian already when she was in England and she says that they have been valuable assets in her adjustment.

### **Identity**

P. says that when she returns to Finland after having lived abroad, there are some things in the Finnish society, which irritate her. She notices them more clearly now, although she has found them difficult even earlier. Finnish people are very reserved and closed, they do not smile easily, and they do not greet you unless they know you well. But she has also found that there are some things that she misses from Finland. She likes going for long walks and go to a Finnish sauna and read Finnish newspapers. She says that during her free time she notices that she is Finnish and she needs to do something in Finnish; read something in Finnish or talk Finnish in order to relax. When she is in Finland, she finds herself missing some things from Israel. She has come to a conclusion that her cultural identity has changed and become a combination of different elements from all the cultures she has been in. She is surprised that she has really found her Finnish roots here; she strongly feels that she is Finnish and she is proud of it.

### **Learning**

P. says that she has learned the Russian language so well that she could easily find a job in Russian language even in Finland. In Finland she worked with computers, here she works with people. She likes it very much and finds this work more interesting and she feels more relaxed. She seems to have learned another perspective to efficiency in work.

### **Key aspects**

P. had visited Israel many times in before making the decision to come and work in Israel. She had prepared herself to come here and started to learn Hebrew and Russian languages already in Finland. P. is well integrated into the Israeli society and has many friends amongst the Russian Jews. She has learned to appreciate her own Finnish culture and sees her identity as a combination of Finnish and Israeli cultures.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 19**

### **Cultural context**

P. works in an international Christian organization. She comes from England and has never earlier worked abroad. She speaks English as her mother tongue and has started to learn Hebrew. Her colleagues are from Canada, Finland, Zimbabwe and three Russian Jews from Israel. She manages by using English in her work and free time. Her host society is Israel and she also lives in Western Jerusalem. She hardly goes to Palestinian areas. She lives in a shared accommodation with some people from her organization and others whom she does not know so well. She has got acquainted with some British Jewish people, who have immigrated to Israel. Her support group in Jerusalem is the international Christian fellowship, where she goes regularly.

### **Adaptation**

P. says that she did not expect it be so difficult to adjust to live here. She finds living very expensive compared to England. Even more different and difficult is the way of life, the manners and the attitudes of people. She finds no chivalry or respect in Israel. Also the attitudes towards women are to her very offensive and upsetting. On the other hand, she finds very much a British influence in Israel. She of course knew about the history of the British Mandate in Palestine but she is surprised to find so many familiar things from England here: mailboxes, telephones, post offices. She expected Israel to be more like the image of Arab countries, but she found it more "civilized". It was also a shock to her to see how secular people were in Israel. Another shock and difficulty in adjustment was the security situation, people carrying guns, terror attacks etc. It took a long time but gradually she has learned to accept and adjust. She says that the Israeli society is hyper active; so many things take place all the time. *"You live on your nerves here"*. The Intifada reflects the way of life here.

### **Identity**

P. says that she knows that she has changed since she came here. Her whole mindset has changed and broadened. If you stay here, you have to cope somehow; you cannot bury your head in the sand. You cannot avoid the tensions and reactions of people. It affects you. She has changed also because she is living with many people and in England she used to live alone. She is happy in Jerusalem and is convinced that this is now her place. She admits that she has some fears of going back to England, where her old parents live, because her whole approach to situations has changed. She puts her trust in the Lord and is devoted to her work. Her identity as a Christian has strengthened. She has experienced that in Israel people put you straight away in a box because so many people from so many nations come to Israel. It is very difficult to be an independent international person and start to break the barriers.

### **Learning**

P. says that she has learned a lot here: a lot about people, about the Middle East, about the mindset of the Middle East, about cultural differences and about herself. Being here has taught her about faults in herself and about her own country. Israel has been to her like a mirror to show things that she did not have any idea of before. She has seen what affect Britain had here and not only good things. It has been a humbling process. She finds it embarrassing to see the attitude of superiority of Britain. She says that she cannot put right the past but she can see it with the eyes of the others and try to see it in a true light.

### **Key aspects**

P.'s core identity is Christian. She has learned to see her British identity and history from another perspective. Her mindset has changed and broadened. She analyzes the difficulties in her adaptation process and sees clearly the things that have helped her in her adjustment.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 20**

### **Cultural context**

S. comes from a French Egyptian family background. Her husband is Algerian. She works in the EU as a lawyer in a development team coordinating programs with the Palestinian Authority. Her colleagues are foreigners and Palestinians. Her host society is Palestine. She feels anyhow being in the middle of the Israeli and Palestinian societies. At work she uses mostly English and Arabic, at home French. She is also learning Hebrew but she does not have many contacts with the Israelis. She says that the political situation affects the cultural situation both in Israel and in Palestine. People are hyper sensitive and it takes time to build confidence. However she feels that for her it is easier to be in the Middle East than in Europe. She feels herself more linked with the Palestinians but finds herself questioning both Palestinian and Israeli cultures.

### **Adaptation**

She says that she experienced a culture shock towards the Israeli society. Her husband experienced a culture shock towards the Palestinian society. She says that the Israeli society is different here from what she expected in Europe. She has felt that it is difficult to differentiate your political convictions from the culture shock in the Middle East. Otherwise she finds this culture in many ways familiar to her because of her Egyptian background. There are also differences compared to Egypt. One is that here you have latent stress about the future and in her work she also sees the Palestinian Authority collapsing and anyhow she has to work with them. Political, social and economical unrest have consequences on social life and culture. S. says that on a daily basis they both have adjusted and are coping. But because they only came for a determined period of time, they do not try to adjust totally. In the difficult circumstances where you cannot be calm, you cannot detach yourself from the situation and you cannot adjust. Having lived a long time in Egypt and being married to an Arab man has helped S. a lot in adjustment. On the personal level her French background has helped her so that she is considered as a foreigner and she is not requested to follow and observe all the social rules. She says that adjusting for her means adjusting to the society or country where she lives, not adjusting to the international or expatriate community.

### **Identity**

S. says that she does not try anymore to see herself as French or Egyptian. She does not try to define herself but says that she is a mix. She has found that her and her husband's principals of life have been questioned and challenged by being here. Being here has both softened and strengthened their principals. They both find this experience to be enriching. It has taken a long time that she has asked herself questions about what she is or what culture she belongs to. This has not helped here and now she has stopped trying to define herself totally. Coming from a multicultural family, she has been integrated to two different places and nationalities. She feels that she is somehow in the middle. She belongs to different places but at the same time she does not really belong

to any of them. Because of her background she could not have married a French person, coming just from a monocultural French background. She needed a husband who would understand her both parts. This process has required a lot time and deep reflections and it is a continuous process.

### **Learning**

S. says that she has learned a lot working with the colleagues from different places and different backgrounds. She has learned about their cultures and their priorities. Living in a place where you are not at home, has been a learning experience for S. It has made it possible to discover many new and different things, whether they are political, cultural or social and she has learned a lot from them. Being in the Middle East has also questioned her life principles as well as her husband's.

### **Key aspects**

S. has a multicultural background. She has gone through a long process of defining herself but has come to a conclusion to stop defining and she is satisfied to have herself in the middle. She is building an international career with her husband, preferably in the Middle East and at the moment does not want to go to France and work there.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 21**

### **Cultural context**

B. is an American Jew who works in an International School. His host society is Israel. He manages well with English and knows some Hebrew from his childhood. Because B. is Jewish, he has been received as a part of the community although he is not religious at all. Anyhow he says that it is a sense of Jewishness that unites. He lives in a shared flat with another American. He has a couple of good Israeli friends. At his school there are about forty to sixty employees, who are American, British, Israelis, Arabs, Jewish, Christians and Muslims. The students are from different countries around the world plus quite many Palestinian students. B. has contacts with some of the teacher also outside his work. He has found the school a tense place because of the national feelings of some grade 12 students, feelings that showed even hate, not only nationality. Being a history teacher and a Jew he has found the situation sometimes personally difficult although he is not politically active.

### **Adaptation**

B. says that he is very easy to adjust. He has travelled a lot and has worked some summers abroad in China and Poland. Being a Jew has helped him to adjust. He finds the Israeli culture somehow closed and being afraid of the outside world. It may be because of the political problems. B. finds Jerusalem an unpleasant place to live and likes to travel to Tel Aviv during his free time. He says that they are like two totally different places. The security situation in Jerusalem has been hard for him. He considers many times, which street to go

and tries to avoid some central places. But the school is located in the city centre and there have been many bomb attacks very near the school. B. has felt depressed at times to the point that he was considering leaving his job. Till the end he decided to continue and stay. He says that he has adjusted but says that you never adjust to being blown up in a bomb. One of his expectations was to have a friendship with a female Jew but this has not been easy. People are tired and reserved of starting a close friendship with someone who is planning to leave the country within a year. There are so many Jews coming and going all the time and this makes people cautious.

### **Identity**

B. has defined himself as American and Jewish. Working in an International School based on Christian values makes it a mix. He is tolerant and open and not religious. He says that in Israel the stereotypes of American, Jew, Christian, Muslim, pro Israel, pro Palestine, define your standpoint easily. People are very judgmental and B. thinks that they should challenge their own viewpoints but find the discussion unproductive. B. would like to continue in international education. He is ready to resign his old job, if he finds something interesting to work with. He also finds himself a bit worried to go back to America and is afraid of how he will adjust there. Going back and working in the old school is for him like going backwards in his life, working with the same old people, to whom he does not feel connected to. He is afraid that his life will go to a minimalist direction. B. says that being intercultural means that you have tolerance, you embrace other cultures and you are not afraid of different people. He thinks that he has this kind of attitude. The negative side of it is that you lose a sense of home, a base and you lose a sense of roots.

### **Learning**

B. claims that international work opens up your eyes and you realize all the biases that have been put on your body unconsciously during your childhood, your culture and religion. He says that travelling and working abroad is one of the best ways you learn about yourself and the world. It makes you to challenge your own perceptions and see that some of them are not as real as they were portrayed. Also professionally B. has learned a lot. He is now much more prepared to go and work in another international school. If he returns to his old job, he does not have much of a chance to apply these things in his teaching.

### **Key aspects**

B. is a very intellectual American Jew. He wanted to have a change in his life and moved to Israel. He has adjusted but finds living in Jerusalem unpleasant. He is a bit worried about going back to America and sees another international job as a more probable option.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 22**

### **Cultural context**

G. has lived seven years in Beit Jala, Palestine, with his German wife and step daughter. His host society is Palestine. He works in a Christian school for Palestinian children. He and his family live in the school compound. The school has 850 students, fifty teachers and fifty other employees. They are all Palestinians. The school is located inside a Palestinian area and they are sometimes stranded behind the army roadblocks. The distance to Jerusalem is not long. Their daughter goes to school in Jerusalem. They can also use the shopping and cultural facilities of Jerusalem. G. has a good friend who is an educated Palestinian Muslim. Otherwise he is working with the Palestinian Christian community. G. is also a representative of German government in Palestine and has regular contacts with German nationals in the area. G. has been involved in the German – Israel history and its problems and built good relations with some Israeli Jewish schools to have dialogue with his Palestinian School. He says himself that his work of four years was ruined in a couple of months when El Aqsa Intifada started in 2000. After that cooperation between Jewish and Palestinian schools was not possible anymore.

### **Adaptation**

G. had a dream to work abroad for a limited period of time. He had been working more than 20 years as a headmaster in Germany when he noticed this open vacancy. He was very motivated to come and it has been quite easy to settle down at the school, because it is known as a German school and it is respected to be run by the Germans. The staff knows the German working culture. He has had some practical and cultural things to learn like the relationships between boys and girls but otherwise he has not experienced any culture shock. He has been surprised about some reactions of the people, but not shocked. He has had to learn a new way to solve problems between people, not only on the level of business but also on the level of human conciliation and dignity. What has been new to him is the role of the headmaster as a representative of an institution compared to German where he could be treated also as a private person. The political and the security situation have been difficult. He is satisfied on working and staying in the school compound. They go to Germany for summer holiday and every year in February for reporting to their German government organization. The adjustment has been step by step, not really by going down and up.

### **Identity**

G. thinks that he has changed a lot. He has seen the experience of working in Palestine as enrichment of understanding other priorities in his life. He has found out when living here that he and his wife have changed, he sees the social competition between living standards and holidays. He has developed more inner values while living here. He feels a little bit in between. You never forget where you were born but you get a look of inside and outside. You start evaluating in another way.

### **Learning**

G. has learned a lot professionally. He has learned to cope and adapt to the rules of leading an institution and adapt the local culture. He has learned a lot about people and their behaviour and about the emotional aspects between teachers and students. He has learned that there are some cultural differences in running the school and that they are not questions of efficiency. He has learned how important it is to keep the dignity of a person in a situation of conflict. He has learned human reconciliation and management; to use time for reconciliation, drinking coffee, sitting together, shaking hands and solving the conflict. G. has also learned how important in this cultural context it is to respect an institution; that he is identified with the institution he is running. He also had to learn to respect the religious rules of the community for having boys and girls in the same school, because in Palestine they usually have separate schools for them.

### **Key aspects**

G. started his international career in a mature age. He was at the age of 54 when starting his first international assignment. This had anyhow been in his thoughts for many years. He has an open mind and has learned a lot both professionally and personally. He is a balanced and satisfied person and content in living in a rather restricted area of the school compound.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 23**

### **Cultural context**

G. works and lives in a Palestinian school, which is run by a German organization. Her host society is Palestine. The school has about 850 students and one hundred employees, all are Palestinians except her and her husband. Her 18year old daughter lives with them and goes to an International School in Jerusalem. The distance to Jerusalem is short but sometimes they are stranded because of curfews and roadblocks. Most of their contacts are with the Palestinians but she also has some regular contacts to German people living in the area. One Palestinian intellectual family has become their friends and they meet regularly, even with the children. At the time of the interview the Intifada and violence and the army invasions had made it difficult to move around in the Palestinian area, so they go more often to Jerusalem and meet their German friends.

### **Adaptation**

G. says that she has adjusted to live and work in Palestine. She has been impressed by some things in the Arabic culture, like bringing up children and educating her daughter. She feels that the social adjustment has been a fast procedure and her colleagues in the school have helped her in that process. She has had to learn a new approach to dressing and to teaching. In Germany everyone has a freedom to dress just like she wants and to do what she wants. Here they have certain behavioural and dressing codes that you have to follow.



The Arabic people dress up always when they go outside their home. That has been new to her. The students respect you and they are very polite. The behaviour is much more emotional with kisses than ever in Germany. She has had to adjust her way of teaching to the expectations of the students and the colleagues. She was expecting that the Arabic culture would be very different from the German culture but thought that the Israeli culture and way of living would be more like the German. Her experience, however, is that there are only few things in Israeli that run smoothly and orderly, but in order to adjust, you have to accept a certain amount of chaos.

### **Identity**

G. recognizes a change in her identity. Before coming to work here she did not think much about her German identity. She had lived a short time in the U.S.A and travelled in many countries but she just took the German identity for granted. Now she realizes how relative her own identity is. She enjoys being with German friends and relaxes in sharing things that she can share only with Germans. She has learned that it is important to be a German but sees something good in every culture she has met, something that she would like to adopt to her own identity. There are some things in the Arabic culture that make her reflect and rethink her German identity. She thinks that her German identity has become less important, it is still important but she considers herself as a world citizen. She is ready to adopt something from here and from there and not to get mixed up. Her German identity is not anymore so strict or fixed.

### **Learning**

G. has learned a lot professionally. She has been teaching German as a foreign language. She has also learned a lot from the side of the work and to see some things begin to look less important than they used to be in Germany. She has learned or adopted a new style to work, which may seem less efficient from the German point of view. In Germany everything is very organized but another way which seems less organized or efficient may prove to bring more quality.

### **Key aspects**

G. has worked seven years in Palestine. She and her family have a plan to move back to Germany after two years. She has planned her work and would like to go to a bigger city after having lived so many years in the school compound. She is satisfied with her life and her work and clearly sees the differences and the change that has taken place in her identity. She is happy to go back and open to new options.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 24**

### **Cultural context**

D. works in a French Catholic Hospital. Her host society is Israel. She also lives in West Jerusalem. The patients in the hospital are Jewish, Palestinians, Muslims or Christians. The staff is mostly international. There are also many

Palestinians and some Russian Jews working in the hospital. The hospital is like a big family for her. She lives in a shared accommodation with two other foreign nurses who work in the hospital. She lives in an Israeli neighbourhood and has some contacts with her neighbours. She has friends in Europe, i.e. in Germany, and in other parts of the world and she keeps regular contact with them. She has learned Hebrew, which makes it easier for her to communicate in the Israeli society and of course in her work. In the hospital she uses also English, French, German and Yiddish with the patients. At work she has to change languages and cultural approach very quickly from patient to patient.

### **Adaptation**

D. says that she has adapted well. She says that as a foreigner there is always a question of how much you really can be a part of the society. In Israel the question goes further; to what culture you should adjust, because there are so many of them even in the Israeli society. The main thing for her is that she feels comfortable and at home here. She likes the hot climate. In the beginning she felt that she had to get out from Jerusalem and noticed how she always had to travel to the beach in Tel Aviv. But she says it was nothing like the culture shock she experienced in Cambodia and Thailand when she worked a short time in those places. For her it has always been a bigger culture shock to go back to Germany. It has been difficult. The thing that has been difficult in Israel is the aggression in the society and the fact that there is no politeness. In the Palestinian society it has been difficult to experience how you are treated as a woman by Muslim men. That has been the most difficult thing for her. In the hospital politics and religious matters are not discussed publicly to avoid tensions. She says that it is one of her strengths to adapt very easily to other cultures. She recognizes that she needs a certain frame for herself.

### **Identity**

During her years abroad D. has learned to appreciate her German identity in a different way. When she has experienced other cultures, she has seen them in comparison to German culture. It makes her realize more her own German way of doing things, the weaknesses and strengths. In Israel the specific relation between German and Israel has also be dealt with. D. sees her responsibility as a German towards Israel. She knows that she cannot take the history away but she is here to seek relationship and to do what she can. She lives without being proud of some things in German history but she cannot deny her roots, she is aware of them. Coming to Israel has made her to see many things as a mirror about what she has studied in Germany about her history. She has learned to embrace her own German identity more.

### **Learning**

D. says that she has learned a lot, especially professionally. For example, professionally she has learned to have a new approach to work, much more relaxed than in Germany. Also culturally and as to human relations she has learned a lot. Some of the things she would have learned also in Germany while

gaining work experience, some of the things are related to the cultural context in Israel. She has learned to manage by using the Hebrew language. D. says that the most important thing that she has learned is to live in a cross cultural context. She feels that she was well prepared to it after having stayed 3-4 years in England and after her short assignments in Cambodia and Thailand. That has helped her in her adjustment. She says that you can learn the details you need about the country, but you have to be prepared to live in a cross cultural context in order to learn the style of working and relating to people and all the things that are necessary for working and living abroad.

### **Key aspects**

D. has gained international experience already before coming to Israel. She intends to continue working in Israel and cannot imagine going back to Germany. For her it is easier to get used to something new than to be disappointed with some things that you expect or remember from your own country.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 25**

### **Cultural context**

A. works in a British development organization for Palestinian people. Her office is in East Jerusalem, where she also lives. Her host society is Palestinian. She has learned some Arabic. At work she uses 60% English and 40% Arabic. She does not read or write Arabic, she knows only spoken Arabic. Her colleagues in the organization come from England, Kenya, Egypt, Jordan, Greece, U.S.A, Canada, Norway, Belgium and France. They always work in cooperation with Palestinian NGOs. She has also some Israeli friends, Jewish people who have come to Israel a couple of years ago. A. visited Palestine during her studies for Master's research in Political Sciences. She has also stayed some time in India and Scotland for her studies. She came here also for her studies and to study Arabic but was later offered an opportunity to work. She spends much time with the international community. She feels that she needs it here.

### **Adaptation**

A. says that she is adjusted. She functions well and integrates with people. She says that it has helped when she has been abroad earlier and she came to Palestine without prejudices. The political situation makes the adaptation difficult. It has an influence on her work; they cannot reach all the places where they would like to go. It is also difficult to travel during free time. She has had ups and downs in her adaptation. There were occasions she wanted to avoid her neighbours and just stay inside her own house and read Norwegian books and eat Norwegian gold cheese. She felt that everything was too much for her. The sexist attitude of Palestinian men towards Western women has been irritating and difficult for her. Now she feels that she is adjusted but A. says that she will always be a foreigner here. She will integrate to a certain degree

and not go further, she has her own boundary. She wants to keep for herself her own culture but still integrate with people and her job. One thing that was difficult to adjust to was the organizational culture in her organization. It is a British organization and it is different in many ways to working in a Norwegian organization.

### **Identity**

A. says that staying in Palestine has affected her cultural identity. Norwegians are in general quite nationalistic, you are born with it. For her Norway is a safe place where people seem to be naïve and trusting. This has changed here. She is not naïve anymore. She defines herself suspicious and does not trust people easily. She has also noticed that she has become bitchy here, which she never was in Norway. A. has figured out that when she came here, she had only short stays of international experience; she was quite fresh and open minded. If she will go and work in another country, she goes now with a lot of luggage from her stay in Palestine. In one way it will be easier to go to a new assignment, in one way she will go with her prejudices from here. She has seen from the international people working in Palestine that many are good in their work, but otherwise they live aside from the society, where they are working in.

### **Learning**

A. has learned a lot in Palestine. This has been her first real international assignment on her field. She has got management experience and organizational experience. She has learned the Arabic language, which is a great asset for her. She has learned how to handle conflicts and stress. She has learned a lot from the Palestinian organizations they work with as well as from the consultants they use for crisis management for their employees. The organization she works in is involved in development on many fields; agriculture, water and other issues and she has learnt about all these projects through the experts working in them. She has a feeling that the expatriates come to work and share their skills but they also return with a lot of experience.

### **Key aspects**

A. would like to continue in international career. She thinks that she would like to continue working somewhere in Europe, not here because this situation is wearing her down. She thinks it will be good for her professional care.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 26**

### **Cultural context**

M. has lived in Israel about one year with his Danish family. It is his first time to work abroad; he has visited here a couple of times shortly. His host society is Israel; he even says that there is no Palestine. He works with Danish volunteers through a Danish organization. He needs Danish and English in his work, he does not know Hebrew. He has studied a bit of Judaism and Biblical culture. His daughter goes to a Jewish kindergarten in the neighbourhood. The family

lives in West Jerusalem, in a Jewish area. They host Danish volunteers in their home. They also have their office at home. Part of their work is to organize trips for the Danish volunteers. There are not many volunteers from Denmark at the time of the interview because of the Intifada and the violence. Even the employees of the organization have been told that they can return to Denmark and their work contracts will not be terminated. All their colleagues are from Denmark. The network they are connected with in the Israeli society consists of Messianic Jewish congregations, where they participate regularly. They have some Israeli friends also through the kindergarten of their daughter. Otherwise the main contacts are the Danes.

### **Adaptation**

M. says that he and his family did not experience any culture shock when they came to Israel. They have adjusted. His wife had been here in 1991 and since then she wanted to come back. Only their daughter had difficulties when she went to a Hebrew kindergarten and she expected the children to speak Danish. They love the multinational culture of Israel. For him it is a mixture of the Middle East and America. He likes the freedom to express you feelings here. And that the people are friendly to accept and receive foreigners. M. says that the main reason that they are here is because God called them to work here for a certain period of time. He also recognizes God's special plan for choosing Israel and asking us to bless Israel. In his own words he says that *"In these days if we didn't have a call from God to come here we wouldn't stay here because of the situation."* For M. Israel is a special place compared to other countries.

### **Identity**

M. says that in Denmark his identity was more related to work and money than here. This has changed here. Here M. thinks that the most important thing is to let God lead your life and give Him the first place. Although he has been a Christian already in Denmark, this experience has changed his view of life.

### **Learning**

M. has learned a lot about human relations in Israel. In Denmark he worked as a building architect.

The work he is doing in Israel is quite different. It takes place in the house where they live and starts in the morning when they wake up. They work basically 24 hours a day and have only one day off per week. They work with Danish people and they have to be available for them when they need help. In Denmark M. was a manager in a building team, here he has learned to be a part of a working fellowship.

### **Key aspects**

M. says that he has had a call from God to come and work in Israel already for ten years. For him Israel is a special place chosen by God knowing that it is God's will to be here, makes it easier to adjust and to stay here.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 27**

### **Cultural context**

W. works in the Anglican International School of Jerusalem. His host society is Israel. The school is located in the city centre of West Jerusalem. W. also lives in the school compound. He uses English in his work and Hebrew in the town. He is studying Hebrew and has now started to study also Arabic. He has regular contacts also with the Belgian community of Jerusalem and there he naturally uses Flemish, Dutch and French. The school is an international school, where the students come from many different countries. There are also quite many Palestinian students and few Jewish students. The teachers come mostly from England, U.S.A, plus some Palestinian and Israeli teachers. Other employees are mostly Palestinians. W. has social contacts with the staff that live in the compound. He has some Israeli friends because for many years he has spent all his holidays in a kibbutz in Israel. He travels to Belgium once or twice a year for a couple of weeks' holiday.

### **Adaptation**

W. had been in Israel many times before starting to work in the school. He had also worked in France while living in Belgium and studied in the U.S.A. He says that he has adjusted to live and work in Israel. For him the only culture shock was to work with the British people and the British organization. It was difficult for him to adjust to the non professionalism and the bureaucracy of the British people. Also he sees the level of education to be of lower standard than what he was used in Belgium. He expected the IT to be well developed and of high quality in Israel but that has not been the case. That has been a surprise to him. He had no problems to adjust to the security situation earlier in the beginning of the Intifada but has had to make now some adjustments. He still goes out to restaurants but considers more what time to go. He has stopped going to the market and goes to supermarket instead and uses his own car.

### **Identity**

W. says that when you have moved from one country to another, it makes you more prepared to move again. He defines his national identity to be a core, like a small globe. The more international experience you gain, the more shells you build around the core. The globe comes bigger but he thinks that the shells do not hit your inner identity. Different international experiences make different channels but W. thinks that the channels do not affect each other. They only help you go from one stage to another. But they will not overlap. What he thinks will happen is that when you go back to your home country, all the channels will be reduced and you will fall back to your own home identity. This he says takes places as to habits and manners but what remains is your world view. This will be different. Once your world view has been liberated it is free and cannot be compressed back. On the other hand when you go back to your own culture, its old habits are almost forced upon you. W. says that he has become a global citizen. His world view has broadened and it cannot be crushed back anymore. You relate to global issues after having lived many

years in the Middle East. This experience has been for W. a different one compared to working in France. He did not relate to France or become more European. But the Middle East is different. The whole world is focused on this country and this affects you.

### **Learning**

W. says that he has learned to manage people. But as to his own profession computers and technical things, he has not learned anything new in Israel. He has become confident with himself here. Of course he has learned Hebrew and Arabic and the history and the places of the country. W. has begun to relate to global issues and his entire world view has broadened.

### **Key aspects**

W. thinks that he will continue in international career most probably in Israel but not in this organization. If his parents will need some help, he will take care of his responsibility and go back and take care of them. However he thinks that he has to make up his mind before he reaches forty years whether to continue here or go back to Belgium.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 28**

### **Cultural context**

N. works for a Canadian news agency CBC. He lives in west Jerusalem with his Canadian wife, who has an Egypt Arab Christian background. He says that he has no host society here. He is just covering stories and if he has to define a host society it would still be Canada. He and his family are detached from the Palestinian and Israeli societies. They just live here temporarily. They work here but they do not participate in the society or economy. The organization pays them a trip abroad every two months. They also spend all their summer holidays outside the Middle East. They do not want to visit even the neighbouring countries. They never take their children to public places. They drive them to French school and after that they take them to a health club. Otherwise they spend their free time at home. They do not have social contacts with Israelis or Palestinians. All of his social life is with the expatriates. N. is the director of their team in Jerusalem. The team is international and includes him, one Israeli born, one Palestinian, one Arab Christian, one British man and his own wife, who works as a freelancer journalist. He has to travel around the area of the Middle East for his work, because their office is a regional office. Sometimes he also has to go visit the London office.

### **Adaptation**

N. says that he was very depressed within three to four months since he came here. Now he has struggled it out. He finds the place very alien. He says that professionally this is a very good experience for him as to his career but it is also costing him and his family a lot. He says that you just have to accept the situation and continue living. N. had studied Arabic and contemporary Middle

East history and this has helped him to advance professionally and travel around to Baghdad and Jordan and Egypt very easily. Nothing seems foreign to him. The children had to adapt to a new way to behave at their school. He finds the children tougher here than in Canada and has told his own children the rules to survive: *"to fall up your face and hit back- as simple as that."* He finds the Israeli society very suspicious towards strangers; on the individual basis people are friendly. For him the Palestinian society is just a self delusion about the reality of their existence and no discourse is possible. The fact that he knows that he will be here only temporarily has helped him to accept the situation. Otherwise he feels that he would be lost in despair. He and his family live a very sheltered life in Israel, they never travel inside the country, they do not leave the house. They only leave for their holidays.

### **Identity**

N. says that he has a Protestant Canadian identity. He is not religious at all but all his family comes from Scotland. N. says that four years in the Middle East have not changed his identity. He does not like kissing and hugging very much, which are common in the society here. On the other hand Canada is very multicultural and he considers his identity being more North American. After completing his assignment here he will move to Washington where he will easily be considered an American.

### **Learning**

N. says that he has learned a lot professionally. Having worked in the Middle East has made him very marketable and desirable for media organizations. It has been very good to his career. After having worked five years in the Middle East he can choose where he wants to go and work. He can navigate easily in the Middle East and knows how to work here. N. thinks that he has learned to be a bit rude and aggressive, which is something he has to pay attention to, when moving to Washington, he has to learn to be more polite. The tense political situation and the problems in the society have made him more intolerant than he would be somewhere else.

### **Key aspects**

N. came to the Middle East only for professional reasons. He has had longstanding interest in the Middle East. His desire to report foreign matters in the Middle East has been a great advancement in his career. On the other hand he feels that he is somehow throwing out the best years of his life.

## **Narrative abstract of interviewee 29**

### **Cultural context**

P. lives in Tel Aviv with his Finnish wife. This is his second assignment to Israel. He comes from Brazil. His host society is Israel. He speaks English and Hebrew in his work. He does not have much contact with the Palestinian society, only with Arab Christians. He works in a British church led organization, where



his superior is from England. He has got used to the British work culture while staying some years in England before coming to Israel. P. says that he felt more uncomfortable in England than here. He works with around thirty colleagues. Most of them are Israelis; some have originally come from Europe or America. The organization has also short time volunteers from many countries. Most of their family friends are Israelis. They have got to know them from the neighbourhood, from kindergarten and school and from their congregation. At home P. communicates using English with his wife and Portuguese with his children.

### **Adaptation**

P. says that for him the adaptation was easier when he came to Israel for the first time in 1990. That time he was single and he came directly from Brazil. His organization also provided him with cross cultural training before he came. Brazil was more like Israel in many ways. P. defines them as *"third world countries with first world technology"*. Coming from England was different. He came with his wife and two sons. In England everything was much more organized than in Israel. They had to think more about the children and they tried to prepare everything as well as possible. P. says that when he came the first time to Israel he didn't experience a culture shock but when he came the second time, he definitely experienced a culture shock. Somehow it helped very much that he and his wife had been living in Israel before and they knew the country and the society. What were shocking were the simple everyday things that took so long time and were complicated.

### **Identity**

P. says that in the beginning that his Brazilian identity was *"kaput"*. He continues to define that he is more anything than Brazilian. He thinks that his identity is a mixture of Brazilian, British and Israeli. Brazilian culture itself is a mixture. That background helps to accept people and situations as they are. P. thinks that he perhaps does not feel so much in place in Brazil because he goes there only every second year. Then he surely feels a part of the culture. When you are out of your own country, many things change there. You also change yourself. That is why it takes some time before you find out how things are and feel part of it again. After having lived in Brazil, Israel and England, P. thinks that there are some values like honesty and family, the relationship to people, that are universal. Being a Christian and adopting Christian values to your practical life helps to get along well. Later when the interview was over P. said that his Brazilian culture is like a bag that goes with him and he can take it on when it is needed.

### **Learning**

P. says that working with people from different backgrounds has taught him very much human management. You have to learn to work with people, some of whom are aggressive and very outspoken. If you do not learn to deal with it you cannot be functional in your work and life. The team in their organization

has learned to work together because there is new leadership and some of the old work processes had been established many years ago. It has been difficult and they have been struggling.

### **Key aspects**

P. thinks that he will continue to work in Israel. He analyzes the decision of staying in Israel from the personal point of view, from the point of view of his family, especially the children and from the point of view of his work. He is a devoted Christian but does not idealize the affect of his faith in his adaptation or identity. He is a positive and an open person.

### **Narrative abstract of interviewee 30**

#### **Cultural context**

S. has worked 2,5 years in a Danish organization. His host society is Israel. He lives in West Jerusalem. The location of the organization is in West Jerusalem. S. lives in the same location. He works mainly with Danish people. Now there are not so many Danes in Israel because of the political situation. This gives S. a chance to get away from the Danes and to meet with Israelis. When there were a lot of Danes, he felt sometimes that he was living within a Danish ghetto; speaking Danish all day long, eating Danish food, doing Danish things and not having much contact with the Israeli society. Now he feels more comfortable. He uses Danish and English in his work. He has now started to learn the Hebrew language and slowly starts to speak it.

#### **Adaptation**

S. thinks that his relation to the Israeli society has changed. In the beginning it was difficult. After being here more than one year he feels more comfortable with the society. He feels that the lack of Hebrew language is still a big stumbling block in his adjustment. S. says that he thinks that if he manages to learn the language, he thinks that many new things would open to him. He would be able to understand what people are talking, what they speak in the radio etc. Now he feels like having to rely all the time on second hand information when people explain to him what takes place. It is difficult for him to understand the Israeli irony and humour. In a way it has been easy for S. to come here. He had a job and it was easy to get a visa and the organization has established contacts. For him, it feels good to be here.

#### **Identity**

S. plans to go back to Denmark and begin to study in the University. He wants to study the Hebrew language, culture and Jewish religion. He has had an opportunity to look at his own Danish culture from a distance. It has made it easier for him to see what things he can agree with in his own culture and what things he does not agree with. He has adapted new things to his life style. It is not easy for him to say, what they are exactly, it might be easier for other people to answer. One thing that he already now knows that he would like to take

from the Israeli culture is the relation to family. It is more important in Israel than in Denmark. Denmark the career is more important than the family. S. was only 20 years old when he left Denmark, so his identity was still developing. He was brought up in a certain way but he was able to absorb new things. S. recalls his visit to the Bedouins. He has a feeling that he cannot become a Bedouin but when he goes to a Bedouin camp for some days he can live and feel good but when he comes back from there, he feels again comfortable in the Israeli society. For S. the actual reason to be in Israel is that he is personally a Christian and his main adjustment is to be a Christian more and more every day. That is part of his Christian life, to adjust to be a Christian. He is proud to be a Dane and to live in Israel. However, for him the priority is not where to live or what nationality he is, but rather the priority for him is to be a believer, a Christian.

**Learning**

S. has learned to see the Danish culture from a distance, from a new perspective. He has learned the Hebrew language. He has also learned to take care of sick and handicapped people. This was new to him. He has also learned to work in a Christian ministry, to prepare lessons, to work with young people, plan trips etc. He has learned very much about the Israeli culture, the Bible and the land.

**Key aspects**

S. is a young Danish man. He has already spent 3,5 years in Israel. His main reason to come to Israel was that he wants to grow as a Christian. He works in a Danish Christian organization mainly amongst the Danish youth. He plans to go back to Denmark and start his studies.