

NATIONILISM

BELONGING TO THE SPACES BETWEEN



Conceptualizing Nation-less Identity and Belonging

Master's Thesis

Yoshi Joanna Grote

Intercultural Communication

Department of Communication

University of Jyväskylä

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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>This qualitative study links the cultural identity of Adult Third Culture Kids (ATCKs) to the field of intercultural communication by demonstrating that new identities are emerging that are characterized by a sense of belonging not linked to the boundaries of nations or tied to physical location. As initial self-disclosure and knowledge about the identity of one's counterpart have been proved essential in intercultural interactions, understanding with regards to new forms of identity are of interest to the field.</p> <p>The aim of this study is to explore the concept of nation-less belonging within the cultural identities of Adult Third Culture Kids, something I term "natioNILism".</p> <p>In order to examine this concept, an alert was posted on online Third Culture communities and selected International School networks in order to discover a target group who felt a sense of natioNILism. 70 participants completed demographic surveys and subsequently, 29 ATCKs willingly participated in qualitative interviews which asked respondents to consider the concept of their belonging, especially in reference to how they answer the question, "Where are you from?" Participants who spoke in depth about the concept of nation-less identification were sent follow-up questions on this topic via e-mail and twelve responded.</p> <p>The findings show that ATCKs identify with the concept of nation-less-ness to varying degrees and yet there are ATCK individuals who feel a strong sense of belonging to NatioNILism and are both proud and empowered by it. These ATCKs are comfortable with a plurality of identifications, including placing themselves outside nations, in-between them, and / or identifying with an imagined community of others like themselves.</p>	
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“Most people have a place they think of as home all their lives but for some, home is not a place, it’s a state of mind.¹”

¹ Musil, D. (2008)

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Purpose of the Study

In today's continually globalizing and ever shrinking world, it is becoming increasingly difficult to live in any form of isolation. Technological advances and worldwide mobility mean we encounter intercultural situations on a daily basis, even if we do not leave our "home" countries and in some cases, even if we do not leave our *homes*. This climate is a catalyst for change; change in terms of the way we live, the way we perceive, the way we think of others, and even in the way we think of ourselves.

The question, "Where are you from?" is one commonly asked in many situations. In intercultural contexts, it is often one of the first questions and is used to mentally categorize others in a seemingly effective way. Unobtrusive in nature, it is a question that many people may be able to answer quickly and with confidence. Yet for others, this question provokes convoluted answers of varying complexity that may be context-dependent. Some of these people are Adult Third Culture Kids (hereafter referred to as ATCKs). In brief, ATCKs are people who spent a significant part of their formative years overseas².

This study builds on and contributes to work in the field of ATCK identity and aims to explore the concept of NatioNILism³ as an emerging phenomenon in the cultural identities of some ATCKs. Research thus far in the field has already highlighted the fact that ATCKs may position themselves differently in relation to the concepts of 'nation', 'nationalism' and 'home' than those with a less mobile background

² A more detailed definition follows on pp. 14 - 15

³ Grote, Y.G. (2009) A sense of belonging not tied to a nation. Please see definition pp. 16 - 17

(Pollock and Van Reken, 1999; Useem, 1993). ATCK literature has already highlighted the characteristic of liminal belonging (Useem, 1993; Pollock and Van Reken, 1999; Bell, 1996; Fail et al., 2004) shared by some ATCKs. Liminal belonging refers to a sense of identification to the spaces between things that others affiliate themselves with, a sense of simultaneously belonging both everywhere and nowhere. It has been suggested that this belonging can manifest itself either in encapsulated or constructive marginality (Janet Bennett, 1993). Bennett's (1993) concept of encapsulated marginality refers to a feeling of belonging nowhere. An encapsulated marginal suffers from a feeling of 'terminal uniqueness,' finds it hard to relate to others, feels perpetually different from everyone else and thus cannot find a place s/he can call 'home.' Contrastively, constructive marginality refers to a feeling of belonging everywhere. A constructive marginal exists within a more empowered state, a term Bennett borrows from Muneo Yoshikawa, of 'dynamic inbetween-ness' (As quoted by Bennett, 1993: 118). Constructive marginals find a place for themselves within the world, feel at home everywhere and identify with a multicultural sense of self. Although these terms have been liberally employed with regards to ATCKs, as of yet there has not been an in-depth focus on the nature of this liminality and ATCK sense of belonging to it. As the phenomenon of ATCKs grows ever larger, does liminal belonging take on a new meaning? Does belonging "between" still mean "between" or at a certain point of saturation does this "space between" gain substance and become tangible, perhaps as something we could define as a culture?

Hence, the purpose of this research is to discover whether a diminished or absent sense of nationalism among ATCKs merely leads to liminality, marginality and an infinite plethora of various senses of belonging to

other people, places and things, or if these ATCKs feel empowered by a sense of belonging to each other and/or a global third culture or something else entirely.

This study is scientifically relevant as by doubting that the concept of identity must always be intrinsically connected to territory and location; it places in focus a question that has not often been asked: "Has the impact of global mobility created an environment ripe for the creation of an imagined community of nomads, a third culture not grounded in place but defined by mobility of habitat?" As Portes (1997: 20) argues, *"...what common people have done in response to the process of globalization is to create communities that sit astride political borders and that, in a very real sense, are "neither here nor there" but in both places simultaneously."* The dawn of such a culture marks a change from conventional forms of identification and introduces a new form of contact. It questions our traditional concepts of belonging and home, nation and nationalism and even the vocabulary we use to describe these phenomena. As such this study challenges the validity of the questions we currently ask, and gives us new questions to ask for the future.

This research is particularly relevant for the field of intercultural communication which recognizes that initial self-disclosure and a clear understanding of where a counterpart is "from" are imperative for successful first contact communication. As Tiny-Toomey (1999: 3) highlights, *"As we enter the 21st century, there is a growing sense of urgency that we need to increase our understanding of people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds."* If the field of intercultural communication remains relatively unfamiliar with the concept of Nationlism then the methods discussed for promoting successful intercultural exchanges will continue to consider all interactions in terms of national identifications, hence

creating a gap into which an increasing amount of people will fall. If NationIILism remains an unknown phenomenon, in intercultural communication chances for misidentifying one's counterpart and thus misunderstanding are heightened. Thus awareness of the concept would be of benefit to the field which should, in turn, influence society's knowledge as a whole. As Kim and Ebesu Hubbard (2007: 232) warn, *"...when culture and individuals are presented in black-or-white terms, not only does this cloud our understanding of them, but inevitably leads to our making good/bad comparisons."*

In terms of personal motivations, this paper makes no qualms about the fact that one major impetus towards its conception was the author's own curiosity about the topic. As a diplomat's child, I spent only a few months in the country of my birth (England) before growing up and schooling, ages one – seventeen in, Poland, Germany, Japan, Hungary and Singapore. At seventeen, I went "back home" to England for university, whilst a few years later, my parents moved on to Egypt. After completing my bachelors, I worked within various fields in the UK for a few more years before the inevitable itchy feet set in and I moved to Tanzania as a primary school teacher. After Tanzania, I headed for Japan as a teacher on the JET⁴ Programme and two years later I was in Finland commencing a Master's in the field of Intercultural Communication. Within this two year period, I spent only eight months within Finland, finding opportunities to do a semester overseas in Switzerland, and a three month internship in London. For the data collection and writing up of my thesis, I moved to the Netherlands. Having spent a lifetime living the ATCK phenomenon, and speaking with others about their own feelings of identification, I felt sure that

⁴ Japanese Exchange and Teaching Programme

there were more out there who felt like me – those who did not identify with any particular nation, but were not lost, confused and to be pitied. I set out to find these people who may actually feel empowered by their sense of nation-less belonging.

Furthermore, this research is relevant to the field of ATCK identity as up until now, the concept of ATCK belonging has been largely problematised, whereas this paper seeks a more empowered angle. As such, this study provides additional insight into those ATCKs who do feel a sense of nation-less belonging, or NatioNILism and asks; if not nation, what/where/when or who *do* these ATCKs feel a sense of belonging to, and *how* do they feel they belong to it? Is this sense of belonging shared by all ATCKs and is it towards a common focus? Is it tangible or conceptual? Is there any imagined or virtual community to which ATCKs feel a common sense of belonging that could be interpreted as a culture within its own right? Perhaps a global third culture that exists outside of geographical place but is very real in the space it inhabits? Therefore, the research question posed by this thesis is: **When Adult Third Culture Kids do not identify with a sense of belonging towards nation, do they feel a common sense of belonging to something else, and if so, how?** In order to answer this question, the following sub-questions will also be posed:

Sub-Questions

1. In what way do nation-less ATCKs feel a sense of NatioNILism?
Where does this come from?
2. To what/where/who and how do nation-less ATCKs feel they belong? How proud / empowered are they by this sense of belonging?

3. If nation-less ATCKs ever identify with nation or nations, in what way is this identification contextual?
4. How do nation-less ATCKs conceptualize and define “home”?

1.2 Terminology

Before beginning to consider these questions, it is first imperative to accurately pin down definitions for three key terms within this thesis: Adult Third Culture Kids, NationILism and Identity.

1.2.1 Adult Third Culture Kids (ATCKs)

The term ATCK has its own origins in the related phrase, “Third Culture Kids” (often referred to as “TCKs”) which was originally coined by scholars John and Ruth Hill Useem in the early 1960s, who pioneered research with regards to this phenomenon, simply defined TCKs as *“children who accompany their parents to another society”* (According to Pollock, 1999). Since then, Pollock and Van Reken (2001: 19) popularized the term in their seminal work *“Third Culture Kids – The Experience of Growing up Among Worlds”* and put forward the following definition which is currently more widely known and understood:

A Third Culture Kid (TCK) is a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents’ culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK’s life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background.

Acknowledging that being a TCK is an identity equally relevant once one grows past childhood, Pollock and Van Reken (2001) later added the “A” for “adult.”

At this point, it is worth noting that in 1992, the term “Global Nomad,” was coined by McCaig who was herself a TCK. She defined a Global Nomad as, *“A person of any age or nationality who has lived a significant part of his or her developmental years in one or more countries outside his or her*

passport country because of a parent's occupation." (As quote by Schaetti and Ramsey: 2007) The term has, for the most part, been used interchangeably with that of ATCK. Whilst this term is equally valid and certainly more poetic, for the purpose of this study the term ATCK will be used instead, due to the fact that it specifically refers to adults who grew up as TCKs, the focus of this research.

Upon closely examining the current definition of an ATCK, Schaetti (2008) makes the following observations:

- One is an ATCK until death and the effects of childhood international mobility exert themselves throughout an ATCK's life.
- Although most of the research into ATCKs has been focused on the "American" experience, the term refers to individuals who fit the description, regardless of where they were born.
- The definition includes those who have spent a "significant" part of their developmental years overseas. Schaetti questions what is meant by "significant" and concludes that this should be left to an ATCKs individual interpretation – namely, if a person believes the experience to have been "significant" then it was.
- The definition also includes the term "developmental years." Schaetti (2008⁵) further defines this to meaning "*the years from birth through adolescence, the years during which an individual's fundamental sense of self is in development.*"

⁵ Accessed from: <http://www.incengine.com/incEngine/sites/figt/information/gn-tck-atck-schaetti.htm> 12 April 2010.

1.2.2 NatioNILism

NatioNILism is a term coined by the author of this thesis to define a sense of belonging strongly tied to nation-less identification. Etymologically the stem “natio” is derived from the Latin, “nationem” (nom. Notion) referring to “nation, stock, race⁶”. The first two dictionary definitions of “nation” are often closely linked to the concept of “territory”:

1. A large body of people, associated with a particular territory, that is sufficiently conscious of its unity to seek or to possess a government peculiarly its own.
2. The territory or country itself⁷.

The capitalized “nil” stands to highlight the contradiction of this word to its derivative: “Nationality”. “Nil” stems from the Latin contraction of *nihil, nihilum* “nothing,” and *ne-* “not” + *hilum* “small thing, trifle⁸” and is defined as:

1. Nothing, naught, zero.
2. Having no value or existence⁹.

The suffix “ism” is a suffix used to denote “nouns of action, state, condition, doctrine¹⁰”

⁶ Online Etymological Dictionary
<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=nation&searchmode=none> Accessed 17/02/2010

⁷ Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/nation> Accessed 17/02/2010

⁸ Online Etymological Dictionary
<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=nil&searchmode=none> Accessed 17/02/2010

⁹ Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/nil> Accessed 17/02/2010

¹⁰ Online Etymological Dictionary
<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=ity&searchmode=none> Accessed 17/02/2010

The term NatioNILism comes together in the following way:

Natio	NIL	ism
Nation, Territory	No value	Action or condition of

Therefore, based on an idea of creating a word that illustrates a sense of identification with no particular nation, and taking the above into consideration, the author would like to put forward the following definition.

Definition of NatioNILism:

1. The action or condition of attributing no value or sense of belonging to a nation or territory.
2. A sense of belonging tied with nation-less-ness.

1.2.3 Identity

Few would argue that the question, “Who am I?” is one that has reverberated throughout time and maintains equal importance to each individual to this day. The concept of identity is so imperative for this paper that it will be considered in depth in chapter three. At this stage, it is only necessary to highlight that that each individual has a need to conceptualize their own identity and feel a sense of ownership and belonging towards that identity. Equally, each individual likes this identity to project itself effectively upon others in a way that it is understood. As Bauman (1996:19) clarifies:

One thinks of identity whenever one is not sure of where one belongs; that is, one is not sure how to place oneself among the evident variety of behavioural styles and patterns, and how to make sure that people around would accept this placement as right and proper, so that both sides would know how to go on in each other’s presence.

II. FIELD RELATED TERMINOLOGY

2.1 Culture and Intercultural Communication

As this is a thesis within the field of intercultural communication, before going much further it is necessary to first consider the multifaceted concept of culture in order to create a context within which to consider the nature of belonging in Adult Third Culture Kids. Further, as reflecting upon an identity founded outside of nation, it is also imperative to define what is meant by nation, nationality and nationalism.

2.1.1 Culture

Culture is one of those terms that scholars recognize the importance of defining, yet lament the near impossibility of doing so. For the most part, when we informally think of culture, we often include high culture, counting pursuits such as art, theatre, and music. Aside from this, we often loosely think of culture as behavior, as a way of doing things, one that is passed on from previous generations, evolves and yet remains distinguishable. The terms “American culture,” “French culture” and “Japanese culture” all conjure up images and concepts within our minds, regardless of how accurate they might be. Yet when it comes to an academic definition for culture, scholars offer differing perspectives. In order to come towards a working definition for this thesis, let us consider a few of these ideas put forward by leading theorists.

Hofstede, a Dutch sociologist, influential in the field of intercultural communication, famously defines culture as *“the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another. Culture in this sense is a system of collectively held values.”* (Hofstede, 2001: 9) Although Hofstede has come under much criticism

for some elements of his research and findings, this definition of culture still presents us with a strong basis for understanding. To this definition, I would only add an element of flexibility, an understanding that this programming of the mind is not a constant fixed for all time, but subject to evolution and change. Indeed, Sarangi (2009: 91) speaks of culture as a motion and argues, *“culture is in a constant flux and its boundaries are not as rigid as many cultural analysts would like us to believe.”* Keeping this movement in mind, we can better accept Sussman’s (2000: 356) explanation of the function of culture which is to form a *“...mental framework through which individuals define their ontology, motivate and select their behaviors, and judge and evaluate the actions of others.”*

Our culture is something we identify with, it informs us and others about ourselves, and therefore it is important that others do not attribute a culture and the corresponding cultural values to us, as by doing so they misattribute our identity and where we see ourselves as from. Ting-Toomey (1999: 12) elucidates:

First, culture serves the *identity meaning function*. Culture provides the frame of reference to answer the most fundamental question of each human being: Who am I? Cultural beliefs, values and norms provide the anchoring points in which we attribute meanings and significance to our identities.

For the purpose of this thesis, we accept culture as fluid or even, visually speaking, as an ocean¹¹ in which all elements exist simultaneously, and situation and context dictate which surface. Equally, in accepting that culture is fluid, rather than fixed, we recognise that cultural identity can also exist in flux and that introspectively considering ourselves and how we might be perceived by others may be yet another effective exercise in intercultural training. We need to consider that intercultural communication may be less about adapting ourselves in order to be

¹¹ Fang (2006)

understood by the other but more about creating a third space between two parties in which new rules are created in what can be termed a third culture space. Scollon (1997: 4) touches upon this idea of creating a medium between, *“Intercultural communication not only bridges or stands astride two different cultures, it creates an intermediate culture at the same time for the participants in the interaction.”*

2.1.2 Intercultural Communication

Culture can be defined in a multitude of ways and exists in an equal plethora of variety. It seems that most instances of communication could be categorized as intercultural in some way or another yet the field of intercultural communication is primarily concerned with the question, *“How do people understand one another when they do not share a common experience?”* (Milton Bennett, 1998a: 1) As our exposure to difference grows on a daily basis, so does the frequency with which we face this question. Equally, in general, we are becoming more and more aware that our experiences of the world *are* different, and that these experiences are not to be ranked, but to be appreciated as equally valuable perspectives. As Barlund (1998: 41) elucidates, *“These patterns or grids which we fit over the realities of the world are cut from our own experience and values, and they predispose us to certain interpretations.”*

Our current climate calls for a different orientation towards difference; one in which we must not only learn to face and accept difference, or even to “tolerate” it, but to respect, appreciate and ideally, benefit and learn from it. In practice, this can only be achieved through interaction, and the truest meaning of the word, dialogue. The focus of intercultural communication is to *“understand the influence of culture on our attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in order to reduce misunderstandings that result from cultural variations.”* (Chen & Starosta, 2005: 28) Therefore in practice, one

tries to create a third space between the two or more cultures in dialogue, within which effective exchange can occur. This space can only be created through awareness and understanding of one's own and others' cultures and the ability to assume the perspective of others.

As Salo-Lee (2009a) concludes:

Intercultural communication is at best intercultural dialogue, a jointly travelled path towards learning and understanding, respect and responsibility. Different opinions become a source for new solutions, and culture turns to a valuable resource. In the multicultural and interdependent world, intercultural dialogue is our chance to make a difference.

In dialogue, we can be made aware of the identity of the other, equally, we can learn to become competent in how to use this knowledge, and how to portray our own identities in forms in which they can be understood. As Ting Toomey (1999: 7) affirms with reference to her concept of 'mindful communication':

In order to communicate effectively with dissimilar others, we need to be mindful of how others prefer to be "named" and identified. Other people's perceptions and evaluations can strongly influence our self-conceptions, or our views of ourselves. Mindful intercultural communication requires us to be sensitive to how others define themselves on both group membership and personal identity levels. The feelings of being understood, respected, and supported are viewed as critical outcome dimensions of mindful intercultural communication.

2.1.3 Intercultural vs. Cross Cultural

Upon reading the above words with regards to Intercultural communication, the reader may be evoking the term "cross-cultural" and wondering whether these terms can be used interchangeably. Although these terms undoubtedly *are* often used interchangeably, there are some subtle differences.

The term "cross-cultural" holds more comparative connotations. In today's business world where an American takes part in a training session on Japanese culture and etiquette, learning different forms of

behavior and customs, this can be described as *cross-cultural* as two cultures are essentially being compared with one another in terms of similarities and differences. *Intercultural*, on the other hand, can almost be seen as a verb in that it refers more to the interaction between two or more people of different cultural backgrounds. These cultures do not necessarily have to be national cultures, but can be based on corporate culture, ethnicities, sexuality, gender and an infinite variety of other factors. An intercultural interaction is concerned with creating a new space between the two cultures in which to operate.

This thesis is concerned with both the cross and inter-cultural aspects of communication. In terms of introducing a new response to the question, “Where are you from,” one that is not grounded in nation, I am essentially introducing a new culture and comparing it to our existing concepts of how people identify with nation. In this sense, we are dealing with the cross-cultural. However, the scientific and social motivations of this thesis, to improve the understanding of new identities and hence improve communication, are intercultural.

2.1.4 Intercultural Competence

As our world evolves, with movement accelerating and boundaries blurring, at least one thing remains starkly clear – intercultural competence is fast moving from the realm of luxury to that of necessity. Although we may concur with regards to this fundamental, after we move past this initial statement, clarity begins to dissolve. The field of intercultural competence, perhaps due to its relative youth and interdisciplinary nature, is one in which no real agreement between researchers has been reached. Different terms, definitions and models are employed when various theorists describe the term competence, effectiveness, sensitivity or otherwise. Kim (2001: 11) summarises,

“Although the field has benefited from rich information and insights, it suffers from increased disconnectedness and confusion as well.” Yet this is not to say that no value comes from this disconnectedness and that no knowledge stems from confusion. As Fitzgerald reminds us, *“Intelligence is the ability to hold two conflicting ideas in mind and retain the ability to function.”* (Fitzgerald 1936, as quoted by Schneider & Barsoux 1997: 190) With this in mind, let us now consider the nature of intercultural competence.

Firstly, competence is contextual. When one initially thinks of the word ‘competence’ one would be forgiven for thinking it is an absolute on a black and white scale – one is competent or one is not. Indeed, if we apply this term to other situations, we can see it is commonly used in this way: one is either a competent driver or one is not, one is either competent at speaking French or one is not. However, if we stop for a moment to consider *context*, the black and white nature of the scale is rendered useless. For example, one may well be a competent driver in England where one drives on the left, but how about in France where one drives on the right? What about in Finland in icy conditions, or after a night out and a few too many drinks? Equally, although one could be referred to as a competent ‘French speaker’, are they as competent in France as they are in Canada, or in French speaking areas of Africa? Are they competent in a ‘tourist ordering a pizza in Paris’ environment, or as a United Nations translator? We can see that context has a huge part to play when we discuss the term, ‘competence.’ This is similarly applicable in intercultural situations and although several intercultural competence models list required skills and others portray competence as a multi-level linear scale (such as Hammer & M. Bennett’s IDI¹²: 1998),

¹² Intercultural Development Inventory

we can understand that just because we are competent in a particular situation, does not necessarily mean we will be in another.

Secondly, competence is not linear. Just as competence is not static it is also not an end-goal that one can reach and then stand triumphantly at. Salo-Lee (2006: 83) writes in depth about new competencies that are required for a changing world and encourages us to take an inclusive globalized perspective, one she terms, "we all here and there." Yet if we accept that new competencies are now required and that the world is constantly changing, we must also accept that intercultural competence will be in a state of continuous flux and therefore, *"To become intercultural competent is a continuous interactional learning process."* (Salo-Lee, 2006: 80)

One final point about competence is that it doesn't necessarily exist within us but is found in the space between people – yet again, in dialogue. Communication with all individuals is different and therefore we ourselves can never really measure our own competence in isolation. An understanding of how each party conceptualizes their own identity is key, hence the research aims of this paper. In good dialogue we negotiate our identities and attempt to come up with shared meaning. This is more eloquently stated by Tannen (1999: 26) who writes, *"...in dialogue there is opposition, yes, but no head-on-collisions. Smashing heads does not open minds."*

In sum, the nature of intercultural competence is that it is contextual, fluid, cyclical, in a constant state of flux and negotiated through dialogue.

Even if we accept the contextual and fluid nature of competence, in order to speak of it, or in order to attempt to train it, we must temporarily pin it down and extract from it some identifiable aspects; one such aspect is the importance of self-disclosure.

2.1.5 Importance of Self-disclosure in Intercultural Communication Situations

We negotiate who we are through our communication with others. It is important to understand the individual identity of a counterpart in intercultural interactions. Lindsley (1998: 202) argues that *“individual identity is negated when individuals are stereotyped and characteristics are attributed to them based solely on group membership.”*

This is a strong reason why the cultural identity of ATCKs must be highlighted and understood, as simply attributing an identity to others based on memberships to groups they themselves feel no belonging to (e.g. nation) may well result in communication breakdown.

2.2 Nation

In everyday life, we seldom question the concept of nation. Nations are the places we live, the places we travel to, demarked by borders, assigned language or languages and responsible for the cover designs on our passports. Yet, beyond this, nations are entities that many feel a real sense of belonging to, a belonging tied intrinsically so closely within a nations' boundaries, and to the ideals held within them, that they are prepared to sacrifice their lives. As Poole (2003: 271) elucidates:

For the past two centuries or more, a good deal of rhetoric and a not inconsiderable amount of blood have been expended to demonstrate that our national identity is the primary form of identity available to us, that it underlies and informs all our other identities, and that in case of conflict it should take priority over them.

2.2.1 What is a Nation?

What then, really makes a nation? Poole (2003) believes that the concept of a nation has so entered our consciousness that we find it difficult to understand who we are, except in terms that presuppose we have a national identity. Etymologically, the term “nation” is derived from the Latin word “natio”, meaning birth or decent. According to Anthony D. Smith (1991: 14), one of the founders of the field of nationalism studies and a prolific writer on the topic, the preconditions for the formation of a nation are as follows:

- A fixed homeland (current or historical)
- High autonomy
- Hostile surroundings
- Memories of battles
- Sacred centers
- Languages and scripts
- Special customs
- Historical records and thinking

Smith’s (1991: 14) definition of a nation is, *“a named population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for its members”*. Both Smith’s preconditions and definition seem to rely heavily on the creation and maintenance of a physical space for a nation. Indeed, although definitions of what a nation is often include such notions as shared language, culture, customs, stories, myths, practices and rituals; most also include a spatial element to their definition. As Leerssen (2007: 377) states, a nation usually refers to the population of an entire country and signifies a *“human aggregate united by common decent, or, more loosely, by common history, language or (place of) origin.”*

2.2.2 The Protection of Nation and Nationalism

Therefore we see that the word “nation” is most often defined, at least in part, in terms of location and this sense of belonging, something we refer to as ‘Nationality’ (ascription of belonging) or, more fervently, ‘nationalism’ are still strong and pervade our sense of self. Nationality is usually received in one of three ways, by being born within the jurisdiction of a state, by inheritance from parents or through a process of naturalization. Equally, it is the right of each state to determine who its nationals are.

Globalization seems to be a force often blamed for a crisis of national identity. Although national identity might be weakened by processes of globalization, in which nations become more heterogeneous and borderless, it has kept a certain power: First, national identity is somewhat inescapable, because in most cases people are born in a certain country and spend their first years there, learn the national language(s) and are socialized in its culture and community. And second, a nation has a richness of cultural resources, such as the feeling of a home country, the national history, and a vast cultural heritage.

Nationality is seen somewhat as a right, as something that should be afforded to each individual and as such, there are many documents that set out to protect it. For example, Principle 3 of the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child states, “*The child shall be entitled from his birth to a name and a nationality.*”¹³ Equally, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms, in Article 15 that, “*Everyone has the right to a nationality. [and] No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.*”¹⁴ This sentiment is furthermore compounded by the European Convention on Nationality

¹³ Retrieved from: <http://www.cirp.org/library/ethics/UN-declaration/> 03/12/2009

¹⁴ Retrieved from: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/> 03/12/2009

where the first essential principles of Article 4 are to do with the right to claim a nationality and the prevention of statelessness¹⁵.

Thus far we have identified what a nation could be defined as and that the concept of nationality is seen as something imperative to each individual. Then, what of nationalism? The online etymological dictionary makes the following distinction between the meanings of the two terms. Whereas nationality is seen as the “*fact of belonging to a particular nation*,¹⁶” nationalism is “*devotion to one’s country*.¹⁷” Therefore, one could argue that nationalism is the *feeling* the individual prescribes to oneself and their own identity when considering the concept of belonging as tied to nation. According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, the term nationalism describes “*the attitude that the members of a nation have when they care about their national identity*¹⁸”

This is again, quite an emotive definition pertaining to feeling: the *attitude* that members of a nation have when they *care* about their national identity. This shows a clear link between the individual and their perceived belonging to a nation. This concept is still necessary in today’s world, and many would argue, current. Additionally, nationalism manifests itself in both negative and positive light. The pictures below show these positive and negative takes on nationalism in stark contrast. In figure 1, nationalism is portrayed as a blind faith in a person or idea, equated to a stupid act such as following someone off a cliff. In figure 2, nationalism is celebrated through the waving of a flag at a sporting event.

¹⁵ Retrieved from: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/166.htm> 03/12/2009

¹⁶ Retrieved from: <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?l=n&p=1> 06/12/2009

¹⁷ Retrieved from: <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?l=n&p=1> 06/12/2009

¹⁸ Retrieved from: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nationalism/> 07/12/2009



FIGURE 1. Negative Depiction of Nationalism



FIGURE 2. Positive Depiction of Nationalism

The concept of nationalism is often seen as an excuse for war or allied with far right political sentiments. However, it is also seen as a positive element when examined in the concept of pride, especially in sporting contexts.

It cannot be denied that nationalism is still in existence and still relevant in today's world, yet what is interesting to note is the evolution of a new form of identification, one that sets itself in opposition to nationalism.

Furthermore, it is important to recognize that the field of intercultural communication commonly refers to cultures within national terms and tends to regard the unit of nation as useful. As Dahl (2004: 7) states in his paper entitled, *Intercultural Research: The Current State of Knowledge*, "...there is considerable support for the notion that people coming from one country will be shaped by largely the same values and norms as their co-patriots (Hofstede, 1991; Smith and Bond, 1998)" Although admittedly, the comparative approach still has its uses in terms of giving us general trends to consider, for as Schwartz (2003: 5) highlights, "...almost all large, comparative, cross-cultural studies treat nations as their cultural unit." there is certainly the need to explore beyond the unit we are most comfortable with, that of nation.

Considering the force with which the concept of nation is defended, it could seem almost foolish to question whether superseding this concept

could ever be a possibility. Yet, at the Intercultural Centre at Georgetown University there sits a plaque that reads:

The Age of Nations is past.
It remains for Us Now,
if We do not Wish to Perish,
to Set Aside the Ancient Prejudices
and build the Earth

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. (As quoted by Salo-Lee: 2009b)

It is with this sentiment that we can begin to take a new perspective towards nation.

2.2.3 Imagined Communities

Perhaps it is too much of a leap, at this moment, to say that the age of nations has passed, yet our way of conceptualizing the nation has certainly changed, and should continue to do so. For both encapsulated and constructive marginals, it seems as though their sense of belonging could be allied more strongly to an invisible community of others with similar backgrounds. Researchers such as McCaig (1996: 115) have outlined this idea by saying:

That global nomads share a common heritage with other global nomads is clear when they meet. Regardless of their passport country, the countries lived in, the parents' sponsoring agency, age, or any number of other variables, there is a sudden recognition of kinship, a sense of home-coming that underlines the powerful bond created by their shared culture. Each has more in common with the other than with those who have not had a childhood abroad.

And personal anecdotes such as this one from ATCK parent would lead us to believe that a sense of nation-less-ness goes part and parcel with the ATCK lifestyle:

...This [*lack of nationalistic feeling*] became clear one day when our fourth-grader came home from the international school in Tehran and asked, "Mom, where's my home?" In geography class the students had been asked to identify their hometown. Our son had responded that his "home" was the small apartment in Tehran where he lived with his dad, his mother, and his siblings. When the teacher continued to ask where he was "from," he was stumped. Home leaves were spent in his grandparents' small apartment in New York or in his other grandparents' big old house in New Hampshire. He had no idea at all how to answer the question. (Merrill-Foster, 1996: 152)

So much has been written along this vein that it has even lead some researchers to far sweeping conclusions such as, (Schaetti, 1996: 184) *"Indeed, national identity means little to many global nomad children."*

Ahmed (2004: 38) continues this concept by illustrating how conversely it is not national identity, but an imagined global identity which binds ATCKs: *"Rather than belonging here or there, global nomads now belong everywhere, in the imagined space of globality itself."*

However at this point it is important to recognize that not all ATCKs become either encapsulated or constructive marginals as some do actually reclaim a sense of nationalism later in life. Equally, not all research in the field of ATCKs points to a lacking sense of nationalism amongst ATCKs. Toronto based researcher Kano Podolsky (herself a Third Culture kid from bi-cultural parents) who currently researches the phenomenon of Japanese third culture kids (Kikokushijo) and is simultaneously translating the Pollock and Van Reken Third Culture Kids text into Japanese, states:

I do feel that some TCKs and ATCKs become very "nationalistic". This is not an unexpected phenomenon, as a similar pattern emerges among second-generation immigrants. Some become attached to their host society, some become "universalistic", others "aloof to every and any attachment", and yet others become fiercely "ethnic/nationalistic". I myself tend to be very much aware of my Japanese identity, even though I have spent 10+ years in France (age 4-15) and 15 years in Canada as an adult. It really depends on what one's experience has been in the host/home societies, when the international mobility took place in one's

life, and the kinds of interpersonal relationships one has developed in various locations. (M.K. Podolsky, personal communication, 2008)

Hence it becomes clear that multiple orientations towards home and nation exist within ATCKs around the globe. Equally, it is important to distinguish between the concepts of citizenship and nationalism. As Smith (1996: 193) clarifies:

I have long been interested in the effects of overseas life on people's concept of nationality... In exploring this question, it is necessary to distinguish between citizenship and national consciousness. Citizenship is easier to quantify, in that it is represented by a passport. It entails membership in a particular political unit – a nation in this case – and is accompanied by a specific set of rights (civil, political, social) and responsibilities. National consciousness is much broader and hazier, with vast social and psychological ramifications.

Therefore it is not citizenship, but national consciousness that this research focuses on.

III. IDENTITY

3.1 Salience of Identity

As this thesis questions an aspect of ATCK identity, i.e. cultural belonging, it is imperative to consider the nature of identity itself. In simple terms, when we think of the concept of identity, we usually find it linked to the questions, “Who am I?” and “Where do I belong?”

The term “identity” derives from the Latin word “idem” (= the same) and fundamentally expresses the way in which something is the same as itself. Although identity has been traditionally viewed as a static concept, one that once formed remains as a defining part of a person’s core, it is currently more widely accepted that identity is more of a fluid construct, fragmented and multiple in essence and continually evolving. As Hall (1996: 4), cultural theorist and prolific writer on the subject of identity, writes

It [*modern definition of identity*] accepts that identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation.

Within this fluidity there is, however, an element that remains identifiable and if not fixed, at least easily discernable at any one time. Identity thus concerns the meaning of ‘*being identifiable*’ (Leerssen, 2007: 335) and is closely linked to the idea of permanence through time: something remaining identical with itself from moment to moment. Not only is there an element of permanence within an otherwise transitory and continually developing identity, but this aspect is initially formed during one’s earlier years of life. As Fail et al. note, “*Establishing one’s identity is usually the work of adolescence*” (Erikson, 1959; Marcia, 1966, as

quoted by Fail et. al (2004: 325). There is a certain amount of evidence to suggest that at least a part of one's identity that begins its creation in the formative years of life. Hofstede (2001: 4) states:

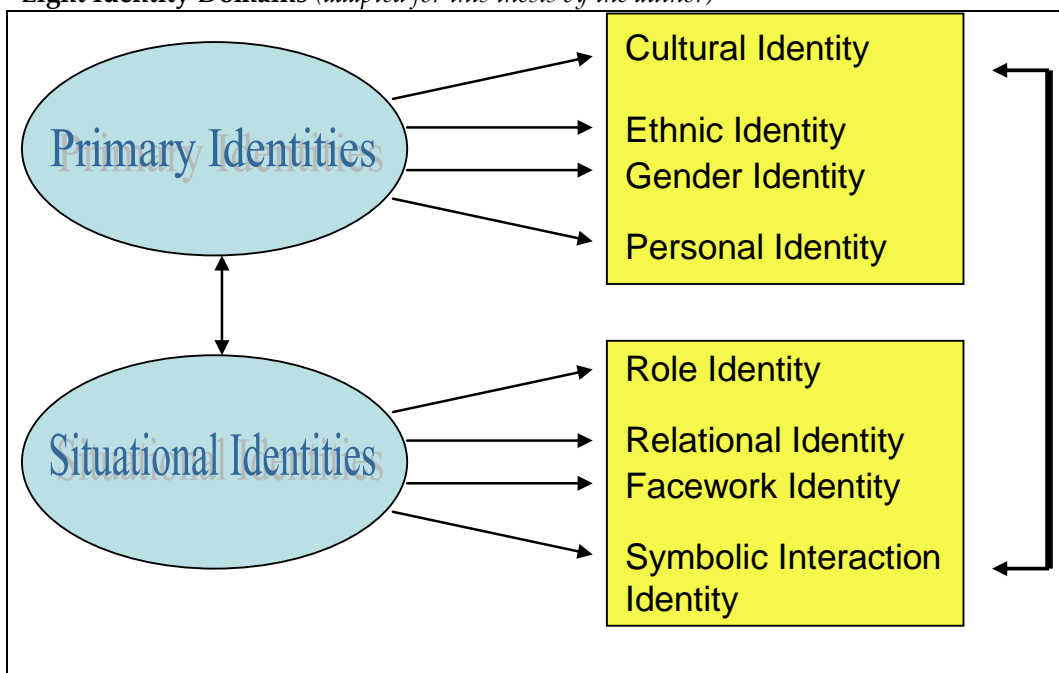
Learning through the transfer of collective mental programs goes on during our entire lives, but as most of it deals with fundamental facts of life, we learn most when we are very young. Humans, like other higher animals, are born very incompletely preprogrammed. To be equipped for life, humans need a period of intensive programming by their social environment.

Furthermore, Erikson (1959, 1968, 2008) argues that adolescence is an important stage in a person's development as they experience a process of establishing who they are internally, as well as who they are in terms of the larger societal picture.

Ting-Toomey writes at length on the subject of cultural identity, which she stresses is very different to 'national identity (i.e. your legal status in relation to nation) and defines it as (Ting-Toomey, 1999: 30) *"the emotional significance that we attach to our sense of belonging or affiliation with the larger culture"* and also believes that a significant part of this identity (especially cultural group memberships) is cemented during an individual's 'formative years' (Ting-Toomey: 1999).

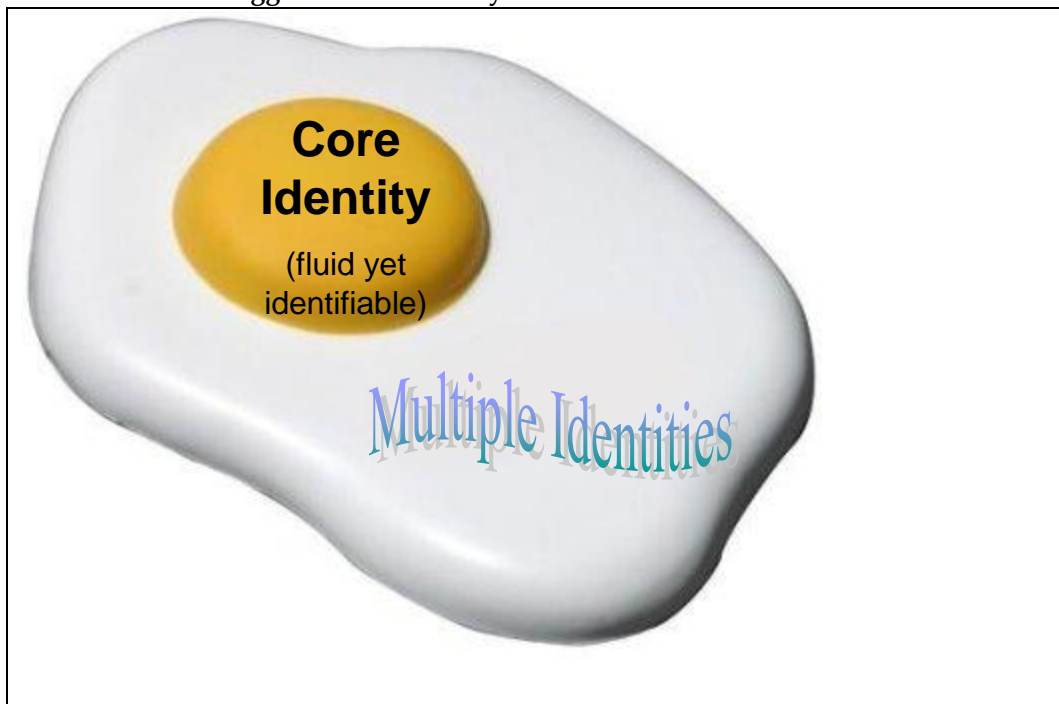
Ting-Toomey's conception of identity, concerning the static vs. fluid aspects, is visualized by her separating what she terms "primary identities" from "situational identities." Although these identities inevitably influence each other in interaction, the primary identities (said to be comprised of cultural, ethnic, gender and personal identities) are painted as more stable than the situational identities (comprised of role, relational, facework and symbolic identity). Figure 3 below is a visual representation of Ting-Toomey's eight identity domains.

**FIGURE 3. Ting Toomey's (1999) Identity Negotiation Perspective:
Eight Identity Domains** (adapted for this thesis by the author)



I find Ting-Toomey's concept of identity a very useful one as not only does it illustrate that identity is made up of multiple *identities*, it also focuses on the degrees of fluidity and stability of each of these identities contextually. I will consider this point in more depth in chapter 3.4. For now, as we have spoken of these seemingly juxtaposed concepts of identity as both fluid and fixed, these tangible and continually evolving aspects of identity, it may be useful for the reader to imagine the result looking somewhat like a fried egg.

FIGURE 4. Fried Egg Model of Identity



The yellow of the middle signifying a fluid yet identifiable core, with the white of the outside representing the ever changing nature of identity. For whereas the yolk, if carefully handled, always forms as a circle, the perimeter of white never forms the same shape twice. Although the yolk is identifiable, it consists of a material that is fluid within. One knows that when frying an egg, the centre is influenced and held together by the outside, it is liquid and held separate only by a thin film that easily breaks and becomes indistinguishable from the whole.

The importance of understanding identity itself, is not usually put to question. If we do not know who we are, or who others are, we cannot hope to communicate. As Leerssen (2007: 335 – 336) concludes, *“There is no cognition without recognition; confidence in our place in the world is impossible if we cannot trust our memories; amnesia destroys identity. All human affairs presuppose the individual’s permanent and continuing identity over time.”*

3.2 Identity Negotiation

In effective communication with others, it is important to be able to ascertain certain salient aspects of the other's identity, as well as comprehensively disclosing our own. Ting-Toomey (1999: 40) defines the concept of negotiation as "...a transactional interaction process whereby individuals in an intercultural situation attempt to assert, define, modify, challenge, and/or support their own and others' desired self-images." Self image, or self-schema, can most simply be understood as what an individual believes others think about them and this influences the way each individual perceives and interacts with the world. Ting-Toomey states that it is important not to conduct this negotiation on 'autopilot' but to attempt to be mindful about the process, as this is imperative for successful communication. Ting-Toomey (1999: 41 – 42) concludes:

...in order to understand the person with whom you are communicating, you need to understand the identity domains that she or he deems as salient. For example, if she strongly values her cultural membership identity and gender membership identity, you need to find ways to validate and be responsive to her cultural and gender identities...

The ability to do this is what Ting-Toomey refers to as 'mindful communication'.

3.3 Individual, Social and Collective Identity

Although the fundamental definition of identity still has to do with who we are, what we are named, where we are from and where we belong, in other words, 'individual identity'; it is recognized that these things cannot exist in isolation and thus who we are depends on where we are, who we are with and what the context is, thus spawning the concept of 'social identity'. Petkova (2005: 12) explains, "...the individual sense of "self" is formed not only on the basis who the individuals are and think they are but also on the grounds of their belonging to different social groups or collectives." Indeed a sense of identification or belonging towards a group

is required by all individuals to develop a sense of well-being (Petkova, 2005; Sussman, 2000)

Tajfel (1978: 63) first defined this concept of social identity as, *"...that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership."*

When it comes to ATCKs, the question researchers ask concerns this aspect of social identity.

3.4 Identity and ATCKs

It is precisely because much of one's core identity is first developed in formative years and in response to one's environment that ATCKs' formations of identity is often called into question. The nature of the ATCK lifestyle translates to the fact that their social environment is usually transient and thus societal norms, traditions and cultural environment are in continual flux. Is it possible, then, for ATCKs to create identity and a sense of social belonging without confusion? Fail et al (2004: 324) sum this concern up by saying:

The issue of identity is critical because the identity of the TCK is challenged with every move. Brislin (2000) comments that culture consists of ideals, values and assumptions about life that guide specific behaviours. In the case of TCKs, those specific behaviours may change from place to place and so the question of identity must surely be challenged as their cultural values and appropriate behaviours are challenged.

Indeed, traditionally, it could be argued that a significant part of one's identity can be traced back to where someone is from. 'Roots' as we call them, inform an individual of their home country, their traditions, celebrations, climate, food, language and even behavioral norms and values. This cultural code (Barlund, 1998) is learned through modeled behaviour. As a child grows up, they are surrounded by people who

continually and consistently model the appropriate behaviour for the culture to which they have been born.

Barlund (1998: 50) states:

People acquire personalities and cultures in childhood, long before they are capable of comprehending either of them. To survive, people master the perceptual orientations, cognitive biases, and communicative habits of their own cultures. But once mastered, objective assessment of these same processes is awkward.

Indeed, this process is so successful, that few recognize the assumptions on which their lives are built. *“As one observer put it, if birds were suddenly endowed with scientific curiosity, they might examine many things, but the sky itself would be overlooked.”* (Barlund, 1998: 49)

Therefore, the challenge ATCKs face in terms of identification is now apparent. Like all others, they must come to terms with their own identities; yet their identities are born in flux, and continually evolving in change. The behavior that is modeled around them, is not consistent, as the cultures of parents, teachers, peers, institutions and authorities around them may all be different and change several times before an ATCK even becomes 18. Therefore, the ATCK is placed in an active role, in which they must actively choose which behaviors to follow, and actively create their identities from the patchwork which they are presented. The speeds and methods by which ATCKs succeed in doing this vary. Literature points to negative consequences such as “unresolved grief”, depression, loss of sense of self and belonging, (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001) as well as more positive results. Equally, relationships towards the concept of nation vary – with some who find a way to reclaim a form of nation-identification within their identities, and others, perhaps more comfortable with ambiguity, who extract the element of nation from their identities. Once they come to terms with

their own identities they are faced with a further challenge as they must present these identities to their counterparts, in ways in which they will be understood. Anthropologist and cross cultural researcher, Hall (1998: 65) reflects:

Furthermore, there are many others like myself, most of whom have grown up in more than one cultures. Most of us remain lonely until we meet someone else who also knows that other people are real and not the paper cutouts that those who do not know make them out to be. This kind of loneliness is impossible to describe but is experienced as a kind of hunger - a hunger for the lost part of the self longing to be reunited.

When we consider Ting-Toomey's identities in depth, it becomes apparent how an ATCK identity can be formed so differently to a non-ATCK identity. Let us first consider the ATCK phenomenon with reference to the primary identities. Lacking a singular consistent culture during their formative years, it is possible that instead of an ATCK feeling a sense of belonging to any one culture, they instead feel a sense of belonging to all the cultures they have experienced, as well as a sense of not really belonging to any of them. Equally, an ATCK's cultural identity is bound in a sense of belonging towards other ATCKs. As ethnic identity is based on 'ancestry', an ATCK's development of this aspect should be quite comparable to a non-ATCK. As for gender identity, the meanings of gender terms "feminine" and "masculine" may be in constant flux during an ATCKs formative years as different cultures have different gender role expectations. It is likely that ATCKs will form their own gender identities on the basis of all those they witness in both their immediate families and their surroundings. In terms of personal identity, which Ting-Toomey (1999: 35) describes as *"our conceptions of a 'unique self' – via our observations of role models around us and our own drives and reinventions"* it is likely that this too, will develop differently in an ATCK context than it would in a non-ATCK context due to the fact that role models will probably differ from country

to country and the need to reinvent oneself is a real constant in the ATCK world.

When we consider situational identities, we can also observe how an ATCK may develop these in a different way to a non-ATCK. In terms of role identity, which Ting-Toomey (1999) defines as having to do with how our culture defines values and expected behavioural norms, what we 'should or should not' do in various interactive situations. It is likely that in an ATCK's highly mobile environment, the societal behavioural norms that ATCKs are exposed to will differ from place to place. Although some of these norms will be solidified by the family expectations, it is probable that ATCKs will have had exposure to different norms of behaviour in different societies that vary in terms of their being more collective or individualistic, more high context or low context environments, more monochronic, polychronic environments etc.

As relational identities pertain to how we acquire beliefs and values from within our family system, it is possible that ATCKs will not differ so much from non-ATCKs in this aspect. However, it is still important to consider that ATCK family systems are often a lot smaller (with extended families and relatives often living 'home' rather than overseas) and that ATCKs may be influenced by the fact that their family unit has usually chosen to live overseas (which may have an impact) and often have bi-cultural parents.

In terms of facework identity and symbolic interaction identity, these will vary as much for ATCKs as non-ATCKs. The only difference may be in the fact that ATCKs may already be very aware of their out-group identity and therefore may find it easier to be mindful of the fact that others' identities may not be what they immediately seem.

IV. OUR CHANGED AND CHANGING WORLD

Before reviewing relevant literature on ATCKs and discussing the nature of belonging within their cultural identities, it is first sensible to examine the context in which these concepts are evolving, the environment in which these identities are becoming prolific - an increasingly multicultural and global village – and discuss to what extent the field of intercultural communication reflects the characteristics of our rapidly changing world.

Globalization, a common buzz-word in our modern lives, has meant we encounter difference, and the varying values that follow, on a much more frequent basis. According to Morley & Robins (1995: 115):

Globalisation is about the compression of time and space horizons and the creation of a world of instantaneity and depthlessness. Global space is a space of flows, an electronic space, a decentred space, a space in which frontiers and boundaries have become permeable. Within this global arena, economies and cultures are thrown into intense and immediate contact with each other – with each ‘Other’ (an ‘Other’ that is no longer simply ‘out there’, but also within).

This climate in which new values are emerging, and an environment in which our exposure to difference continues to increase, inevitably results in greater self reflection and questions of self-identification. Equally, it has created a necessity for intercultural competence, for even when one understands oneself, there is a real skill in being able to accurately project and explain this self to others. Additionally, an understanding of the potential complexity of the selves of others is imperative and we must assume difference and learn the skills of keeping an open mind, heart and ear.

As Barlund (1998) points out, the global village that McLuhan predicted is now in existence and this has fundamental implications for the field of

intercultural communication. He speaks of the necessity of cultural frames of reference and asserts that the language and gestures that we are taught as children shape us towards a particular way of viewing the world and are our way of identifying others as 'like ourselves' or as outsiders. In their seminal book, *Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing Up Among Worlds*, Pollock and Van Reken (1999) cite various studies (such as that of over 200 ATCKs done by Useem in 1993) and personal anecdotes to argue that ATCKs often identify with other ATCKs more so than they do with members of any particular nation. Kim and Ebesu Hubbard (2007: 223) predict, "...future endeavors will move beyond the study of culture-typed identities and question the very notion of cultural boundaries." Yet has the field of intercultural communication reached this point? On the contrary, this thesis would argue that the majority of intercultural communication research still focuses on mono-cultural individuals and utilizes the nation as the most common unit of comparison. Jameson (2007: 203) sums up:

Scholars often define culture in general, inclusive ways but operationalize it in narrow, specific ways. Hofstede (1980), for instance, saw culture as the "collective programming of the mind" (p.13) but primarily studies cultural differences related to nationality. Gudykunst and Kim (1992) defined culture as "systems of knowledge shared by a relatively large group of people" (p. 13) but identified groups in terms of political boundaries between countries. Haworth and Savage's (1989) channel-ratio model of intercultural communication seemed applicable to any context, but all their illustrations related to differences in nationality.

4.1 Multicultural Man

However, it is increasingly becoming apparent that the current climate of our post-modern and globalizing society has created conditions ideal for the emergence of a new kind of human being; one that Adler (1998) terms 'Multicultural Man'. This concept may have been akin to what

Danau (2008: Speech) had in mind as she opened her recent conference paper with the statement:

While nation-states still command authority over the demarcation of their borders, the increasing global flow of capital, goods and people means that the development of our attitudes toward identity is outstripping the ability of the nation-state to keep the definition of our identity tightly under its control. It can control what gets printed on our passports, but not what gets printed in our minds and hearts.

As profiled by Adler (1998: 228), 'Multicultural Man maintains a cultural identity in which beliefs, values and worldview are relevant only to a given context, and otherwise in continual flux. Furthermore, 'Multicultural Man' is defined as a being *"whose identifications and loyalties transcend the boundaries of nationalism and whose commitments are pinned to a vision of the world as a global community."* (Adler, 1998: 225) Recognizing that no one could be completely free from the influence of culture, Adler describes Multicultural Man as a new kind of person, someone who was socially and psychologically a product of interweaving of cultures. The emergence of such a being, argues Adler, would significantly alter the way in which we view ourselves, and others' places within the cosmos. In speaking of Multicultural Man's identity, Adler states it is based not on a 'belongingness,' owning or being owned by a culture but *"...on a style of self-consciousness that is capable of negotiating ever new formations of reality."* (Adler, 1995: 228) Tellingly, Adler also speaks of the ability to maintain indefinite boundaries of self which equates to a "homeless mind." There are significant parallels between this description and the ATCK profiled by Pollock and Van Reken (1999), further making the point that ATCKs may represent the prototype for a new way of understanding one's identity.

Further, Bennett describes the desired and last stage of identity as one in which people are *“outside all frames of reference by virtue of their ability to consciously raise assumption to a meta-level level of self-reference. In other words, there is no natural cultural identity for a marginal person”* (J. Bennett, 1993: 63).

4.2 Bauman’s Tourist

Another orientation towards identity, in some ways similar to Adler’s profile, is that of *“The Tourist”* as illustrated by Polish sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman. Bauman speaks of the concept of a *“tourist”* as an emerging new identity. The tourist, according to Bauman (1996), is always on the move and a part of everywhere, yet of nowhere in particular. The tourist is a purposeful and conscious seeker of new experiences, but one that can choose the depth to which s/he immerses him/herself in those experiences *“...everywhere he goes in, but nowhere of the place he is in”* (Bauman, 1996: 29). He states the problem of such an identity as the following:

The problem is, though, that as life itself turns into an extended tourist escapade, as a tourist conduct becomes the mode of life and the tourist stance grows into the character, it is less and less clear which one of the visiting places is home. The opposition, ‘here I am but visiting, there is my home stays clear-cut as before, but it is not easy to point out where the ‘there’ is. ‘There’ is increasingly stripped of all material features; the ‘home’ it contains is not even *imaginary* (each mental image would be too specific, too constraining), but *postulated*; what is postulated is *having* a home, not a particular building, street, landscape or company of people. (Bauman, 1996: 30)

Bauman’s connections of this kind of identity with the concept of ‘home’ are interesting and relevant with regards to ATCK identity and orientations; thus we will return to this aspect later (ATCK’s orientations towards home are dealt with in section 5.4). Another fascinating Bauman concept is that of ‘home-boundedness’. He elaborates (Bauman, 1996: 31):

Homesickness, as it were, is not the sole tourist's sentiment: the other is the fear of home-boundedness, of being tied to a place and barred from exit. 'Home' lingers at the horizon of the tourist life as an uncanny mix of shelter and prison. The tourist's favourite slogan is 'I need more space'. And the space is the last thing one would find at home.

As mentioned above, this thesis will later put into question the idea of 'home' and ask to what extent geography still plays a prominent part in its definition. Bauman's idea of 'home-boundedness' is exceptionally interesting with reference to what could be termed the ATCK 'migratory instinct', something that will be touched upon in section 4.4.1.

4.3 Why are ATCKs Different to Multicultural Man and the Tourist?

Due to the similarities that can be drawn, some understandably question the difference between an ATCK and a well traveled, international individual that would fit into Adler's profile of a Multicultural Man. The most salient difference lies in the fact that multicultural adults who are not ATCKs may travel the world to the point of obtaining a multicultural identity, but they do this with a pre-existing frame of reference. An 18 year old Eritrean may leave Eritrea never to return again and may spend her life in constant flux, moving from place to place and yet no matter how diffused her own national identity may become, the fact remains that she approaches the world through an Eritrean screen. ATCKs, on the other hand, have often never lived in the country of their birth or the passport country(ies) of their parents and therefore their screen has a different tint. McCaig (1996: 110) elaborates on this difference as she describes re-entry feelings for the children and parents of a returning family:

...parents returning to their country of origin are coming home; their children are leaving home. There is no doubt that parents are changed by their international sojourning and certainly experience the impact of reentry; nevertheless, they are usually on more familiar cultural and geographic ground, owing to their rooted upbringing in that culture,

than are their offspring. Their children's culture, on the other hand, is basically an international one with an overlay of the passport culture. They therefore often feel like hidden immigrants when they reach "home".

Although a Multicultural Adult's identity may harbor many third culture layers, the very core of ATCK identity is founded on transience, difference and liminal belonging. As Bell (1996: 169) elucidates:

What is far more pervasive is their own [ATCK's] definition of themselves as "different." As they move from one culture to another, their sense of being on the outside of that culture is the only thing that remains constant and defines them. They are used to being set apart by all those things that identify foreigners – their looks, their language, their clothes and customs, their habits and actions. They play baseball in Hyde Park and wear loafers to Asian bazaars. They team up together by language, not nationality. Affiliations to countries, religions, racial groupings, economic classes – identifiers that might mark them in their own culture – are lost to them. Instead it is their sense of being different and transient that binds them together.

In Sparrow's article "Beyond Multicultural Man" (2000) she attempts to provide a newer definition of a multicultural being, created in contrast to Adler's that was anglo-American male dominated, by conducting research more inclusive of women, and people of colour, with each of her respondents having lived for at least two years in at least three different cultures. Nonetheless, one can still see the difference between an ATCK and Sparrow's new definition by the facts that a) Sparrow terms a two year sojourn overseas "extensive" and b) She was still able to list (one nation per list) where all her respondents originally came from, which would not be possible for ATCKs. In sum, as can be seen in the table below, the main difference between an ATCK and the other multicultural beings defined above is that an ATCK's intercultural experiences must begin during his/her formative years. By "intercultural experience" we mean the phenomenon of living abroad in cultures different to one's birth culture, for extended periods of time.

TABLE 1. Comparison of Adler's Multicultural Man, Sparrow's Beyond Multicultural Man, Bauman's Tourist and an ATCK

Multicultural Being	Adler's Multicultural Man	Sparrow's Beyond Multicultural Man	Bauman's Tourist	An ATCK
Intercultural Experience	At any point in one's life	At any point in one's life	At any point in one's life	Must begin during formative years

4.4 Characteristics of ATCKs

At this stage, as we have painted many aspects of an ATCK in opposition to other 'cosmopolitan' profiles of Multicultural Man and Bauman's Tourist, it may be useful to present a more detailed image of ATCK characteristics. Significant work has been done in the area of ATCK profiling and various dominant characteristics have been identified. The characteristics regarded as salient for this study are firstly that ATCKs do not relate well to their peers and that ATCKs often maintain a migratory instinct throughout their lives (Useem, 1999; Pollock & Van Reken, 1999). Research has shown that the experience of growing up overseas has an undeniable effect on how ATCKs relate to others who share their country of origin. Useem (1999) who initially coined the phrase "Third Culture Kid" and pioneered research into the phenomenon of ATCKs, found, in another aspect of her study, that three-fourths of her sample of almost 700 ATCKs feel different from people who had not had overseas experience (Useem, 1999). She writes, (Useem, 1999: TCK World) "...as one woman put it, "I don't feel different, I AM different." Useem's research also finds that 90% of her sample group feels "more or less out of synch with their age group throughout their lifetimes."

Although Useem's sample group did not feel in-sync with peers from the country of their birth, they may well have felt some kinship with other ATCKs. As Eakin Kay (herself an ATCK) states:

Part of the problem in making new friendships, of course, is finding friends with whom one has something in common. Unicultural students may not understand what it's like to live in Chiang Mai; they may not even know what part of the world, let alone in what country, Chiang Mai is located. Students who are able to hook up with other TCKs, even those who don't know where Chiang Mai is, find others who understand the lifestyle. They can share tales with peers who are accepting and are themselves anxious to find someone to talk to about their experiences. If there is no one in the community with expatriate experience, reentering students often hook up with international students as their first contacts. (Eakin Kay, 1996: 76)

4.4.1 Migratory Instinct

The inability of many ATCKs to relate to more uni-cultural individuals may also be due to the fact that many ATCKs maintain a migratory instinct which results in their feeling restless after staying in one place for more than a few years. As Fail et al. (2004: 326) iterate:

82% of respondents [ATCKs] retained an international aspect to their lives, which just under half now live in a country other than their passport country. Global nomad children develop the habit of being constantly on the move. They tend to repeat their upbringing and, as adults, still have a migratory instinct. This manifests itself as a confidence and ability to cope with change.

Change itself is a concept which lends comfort to many ATCKs, and as Schaetti and Ramsey (1999) state, one of their only constants. They elucidate (1999: 2), *"It is not uncommon that they develop a measure of confidence in the process of change, and perhaps even become so accustomed to change that life without it seems somehow incomplete."* Furthermore, not only are ATCKs often comfortable and accustomed to change, but often change forms a very real part of their identity. As Ahmed (2004: 38) mentions:

Not only is global nomadism about the production of a mobile and flexible skilled workforce (or about the bodily capital required by the

mobility of global capital), but it also involves forms of *attachment to movement*, such that 'movement' becomes a new ground of membership in a collective, and a new way of differentiating between others.

4.4.2 **Worldview**

The term world view refers to the orientation, perspective or philosophy an individual holds in reference to interpreting their surroundings and experiences. Words of English political writer, theorist and activist, Thomas Paine, are often conjured up by ATCKs when attempting to define their worldview: *"The world is my country; all mankind are my brethren* ¹⁹ *"* This is often cited as symptomatic of ATCKs and a perspective many are comfortable with when determining an orientation towards and within their worlds. Schaetti and Ramsey (1999: 2) extend this profile in the following way:

Global nomads typically have a high sense of security in their understanding of the world and a high motivation to affect the international arena. Although they may not be able to enumerate specific intercultural skills, one of the advantages of growing up internationally is the opportunity to develop those skills without conscious effort. Their "birth right" includes a comfort with ambiguity; an ability to see a situation from several points of view and to hold inquiry and curiosity in relationship to judgment; refined observational skills; bi/multi-lingualism; and a capacity for working effectively with many different people in many different situations.

Perhaps there is an element of their upbringing which through its very nature affords ATCKs to unconsciously acquire such a perspective. This is an aspect later covered in interviews with the focus group.

4.4.3 **ATCKs and Encapsulated / Constructive Marginality**

Having profiled some characteristics prevalent in ATCKs, including their orientation towards the world, it is important to move towards the concept of belonging with regards to smaller units, such as nations and cultures. How these migratory individuals identify themselves with a culture is an issue that has been considered in great detail by Janet

¹⁹ From memory

Bennett. Bennett (1993) ascertains that spending a significant time of their formative²⁰ years overseas affords individuals either encapsulated or constructive marginal status. According to Bennett (who coined the phrases) an encapsulated marginal is someone who feels stuck between the multitudes of cultures they have experienced and therefore never feels at home anywhere. She states, *“this captive state can be called ‘terminal uniqueness,’ for it seems irresolvable to the encapsulated marginal.”* (Bennett, 1993: 115)

Conversely, a constructive marginal is someone who has come to understand their cultural marginality and has yet managed to construct a clear sense of who they are. These people, therefore, have the ability to feel at home everywhere. Bennett (1993: 115) concludes that these individuals are able to *“form clear boundaries in the face of multiple cultural perspectives.”*

Although researchers have recognized that ATCKs often identify with this phenomenon of encapsulated or constructive marginality, they are quite divided in their opinions of which extreme ATCKs tend to gravitate towards. Additionally, few conclusions have been drawn as to why some ATCKs become encapsulated whilst others become constructive. Most researchers straddle both options in a similar view to Useem & Cottrell (1993: 3) who state:

Most do not identify with members of their ethnic group, and nearly half do not feel central to any group. For some, especially the recently returned, such feelings are painful and create a profound sense of isolation; such ATCKs emphasize feeling at home nowhere, and for some, this feeling lasts a lifetime. Others recognizing their feelings as part of broader more global identities, stress feeling at home everywhere.

²⁰ We assume “formative” to mean the same as “developmental” therefore referring to Schaetti, B. (2008) *“the years from birth through adolescence, the years during which an individual’s fundamental sense of self is in development.”*

Fail (2004: 1) reiterates this straddling of the middle ground by stating, *“Some mobile children feel at home everywhere. Others feel that “home” is always elsewhere and constantly search for somewhere to “settle down” in.”* Regardless of whether ATCKs feel at home everywhere, or whether they feel they belong nowhere, we can conclude that this sense of belonging is, at least to some extent outside the frames by which people identify themselves as belonging to a particular nation. Therefore, the question of belonging for ATCKs becomes very interesting. First, how do they conceptualize the notion of belonging, and second, who, what, when, do they belong to, or do they even consider ‘belonging’ necessary?

V. BELONGING

Culture serves as a vehicle for belonging. If we, as individuals, can identify with a larger group who share various aspects of culture – behaviors, traditions, worldview and values, we feel as if we have a space to which to belong. Ting Toomey (1999: 13) explains this function of culture as:

...the group inclusion function, satisfying our need for membership affiliation and belonging. Culture creates a comfort zone in which we experience in group inclusion and in-group/out-group differences. Within our own group, we experience safety, inclusion and acceptance. We do not have to constantly justify or explain our actions.

5.1 Hybridity and Liminality

Having concluded that belonging is a human need, and that there is a sense of liminality in belonging orientations of ATCKs, let us at this stage consider the concept of liminality itself. Turner (As quoted by Greenholtz & Kim, 2009: 67) *“coined the term liminality to describe the state of existing in the gap between fixed realities; a state of ambiguity and indeterminacy.”* These words, ‘ambiguity’ and ‘indeterminacy’ feel so lacking in substance, and solidity, that the author’s sense is that we often ascribe negative connotations to them.

Bridges (1998) wrote about three developmental phases that each individual moves through in transitional experiences: the ending, the neutral zone and the new beginning. Stage one, “the ending” is about letting go of the old experience, accepting the reality of being at the final stage, identifying what you are losing, and accepting the importance of these things. Stage two, “the neutral zone” is entered when one accepts and comes to terms with the losses of “the ending.” The old has finished but one is not yet comfortable with the new. The positive aspect of the neutral zone, according to Bridges (1998: 3), is that *“The gap between the*

old and new is when innovation is most possible – it's the time when old habits are extinguished and new ones take their place." The final stage, "the new beginning" happens only when the timing of the transition is ripe for it to occur. Within the new beginning, people must understand their purpose and their role in the bigger picture. Schaetti and Ramsey (2009: 4) expand a little with regards to the second phase:

What Bridges called the "neutral zone" is what we are calling liminality. When a person is in liminal space, he or she is on the threshold, no longer part of the past and not yet part of the new beginning. For many global nomads and their families, in particular for multi-movers, the experience of liminal space becomes the most constant, lived experience.

Yet is this, in itself, something that we should invariably consider in a negative light? Conversely, Schaetti and Ramsey (2009) conclude that this liminality serves as a powerful liberating force for global nomads, for understanding it allows them to celebrate their marginality and multiplistic perspectives and not to be confined by either/or thinking. Those ATCKs who feel nationless and yet still comfortable with their place in the world may well have found or built a home in liminality.

"Lee Knefelkamp, a professor of higher and adult education at Teachers College, Columbia University, NY, was asked about mobility, cultural marginality, and the human need for roots. She responded, 'Living in the liminal without a home is different from living in the liminal as a home.'" (As quoted by Schaetti and Ramsey (2009: 5) Keeping this in mind, let us assess what we already know from the literature available on ATCK belonging.

5.2 ATCKs and Belonging

Hofstede's (1991: 5) definition of culture goes on to say, *"Culture is always a collective phenomenon, because it is at least partly shared with people who live or lived within the same social environment, which is where it was learned. It is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the*

members one group or category of people from another." As ATCKs, by definition do not live within a social environment for more than a few years, they cannot therefore share the culture of those who do. However, when it comes to belonging, is it possible that ATCK's social environments transcend locality and instead move to include other ATCKs virtually, no matter where, geographically, they may be? Research points to the fact that ATCKs have varying orientations. Fail et al (2004: 321) sum up:

Gleason (1970) examined where TCKs felt most at home. One third to one half of all his respondents cited more than one country. Some say TCKs are at home everywhere and nowhere (Pollock and Van Reken, 1999; Useem, 1984; Wertsch, 1991), that they are rootless (Bushong, 1988; Leowen, 1993; Pollock and Van Reken, 1999)

Fail (1995) herself conducted research where she used a Likert scale to measure participants' senses of belonging to a place, community or towards a relationship. Her findings concluded that ATCKs' sense of belonging was three times stronger to relationships than to any particular nation. When we consider why this might be, we realize it is again down to a disconnect with physical location and place and in essence because ATCKs do not discover the concept of nation in the traditional sense. Poole (2003: 275) *"We discover our nation – as we discover ourselves – in the bed-time stories which put us to sleep, the games we play as children, the heroes we are taught to admire and the enemies we come to fear and detest."* As ATCKs are born and live outside the comforts of being surrounded by just one nation and the corresponding culture(s) all their lives, are they therefore rootless? This, again, is a question that perhaps interviews with the focus group may shed some light upon.

5.3 Belonging Outside of Place

The question, "Where are you from?" is tricky for most ATCKs because it is intrinsically linked to place. Schaetti recalls a time where she was

introduced as an “American” and writes, “*My aunt introduced me as her American niece. I felt my body stop; I wanted to cry out “no!”.*” – (Schaetti, “Phoenix Rising” published on Transition Dynamics) Schaetti’s emotional reaction to this introduction was due to a disconnect between how she conceptualized her own identity (more complex as simply “American”) and how her identity was being presented to another (as American). Therefore Schaetti may have felt upset by how her own perception of her own individual identity had been negated. As Lindsley (1998: 202) elaborates, “*individual identity is negated when individuals are stereotyped and characteristics are attributed to them based solely on group membership*”.

Thus far we profiled an individual with an identity based on formative years being spent in a state of constant flux, change and migration. We have illustrated how this transitory state may form an aspect of their identity and alluded to a strong sense of belonging to a third culture and to other members of such a culture. Is it possible that this belonging towards other ATCKs could be seen and defined as a culture; without the reassurance of a geographical place, a common soil? How can we affirm the existence and further the tangibility of something we might term a ‘third culture’? Unquestionably one of the surest signs of a culture is tied to members’ own recognition of a sense of belonging to that culture. There is perhaps, within all people, a certain need to orient towards another, to find commonalities, to share in a collective and ultimately to belong to a group. As Geertz (1973: 237) phrases it, “*...the desire to become a people rather than a population*” People who share a particular *lifestyle* may not necessarily feel they also share a common heritage, they may not share a sense of kinship, yet people who share a *culture*, may.

Does it matter that there is no physical geographical locus or focus for this culture? Ahmed (2004: 37) speaking of a community of Global Nomads connected by the website, Global Nomads Virtual Village (GNVV) argues that it may not be: *"The collective of global nomads, in other words, despite its apparent lack of a shared ground, still grounds itself in a version of identity as selflikeness, an identity that is brought into existence through the ontologizing of movement."* I would concur that space, rather than place is a necessary condition for culture. Sloterdijk's (1998 – 2004) work on 'Sphären' touches upon this concept of space. This concept of 'sphereology' discusses how masses of solitary individuals will inevitably construct their own spaces or 'spheres' that *"...always assume the possibility and realization of inspired communities."* (Sloterdijk, as quoted by Ren Bos & Kaulingfreks, 2002: 142) Sloterdijk argues that all human life, throughout the duration of history has always been lived within spheres. Why? Because the concept of human togetherness fosters *"conditions that encourage solidarity between people."* (Sloterdijk, as quoted by Ren Bos & Kaulingfreks, 2002: 140) The places and spaces, geographical or otherwise where these conditions exist, that these spheres circumvent, surely mark the breeding grounds for cultures and thus, if we are able to conceptualise a worldwide community of ATCKs as a culture, we may also find we are not miles away from the modern way by which we envisage 'nation'.

Nation scholar Anderson (1991: 5) argues that all nations are essentially "imagined" in that *"...the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."* The difference between an actual and imagined community being that it is not (and cannot be) based on daily face-to-face interaction. Instead, members of a nation

hold the affinity to each other as a mental concept. If this is true, and a nation really can be conceptualized in this imagined state then surely this suggests that belonging, too, can exist outside of location. What of 'pride', is that also possible? Morley and Robins (1995: 121) may concur with this concept of imagined communities as they argue that globalization:

...is profoundly transforming our apprehension of the world: it is provoking a new experience of orientation and disorientation, new sense of placed and placeless identity. The global-nexus is associated with new relations between space and place, fixity and mobility, centre and periphery, 'real' and 'virtual' space, 'inside' and 'outside', frontier and territory. This, inevitably, has implications for both individual and collective identities and for the meaning and coherence of community.

Indeed, many parallels can be drawn between the ATCK community, and that of a modern-nation. As Poole (2003: 272) elucidates, *"A nation – like all "imagined communities" – is not merely an extended web of relationships between those who share a certain identity; it also involves a conception of the community to which the members of the nation belong."*

5.4 Home

Finally, from the immense, we make our way towards the small – From belonging in terms of our identifications within communities that straddle the globe, to the very concept of home, our sense of belonging on the most individual scale. What is home, in such a world, and what meaning does it hold for ATCKs? When you look up the meaning of the word "home" in a standard dictionary, you are faced with many results. See this example from dictionary.com:

home²¹

adverb, verb, homed, hom·ing.

–*noun*

1. a house, apartment, or other shelter that is the usual residence of a person, family, or household.
2. the place in which one's domestic affections are centered.
3. an institution for the homeless, sick, etc.: *a nursing home*.
4. the dwelling place or retreat of an animal.
5. the place or region where something is native or most common.
6. any place of residence or refuge: *a heavenly home*.
7. a person's native place or own country.
8. (in games) the destination or goal.
9. a principal base of operations or activities: *The new stadium will be the home of the local football team*.
10. *Baseball*. home plate.
11. *Lacrosse*. one of three attack positions nearest the opposing goal.

Although the definitions are many, all still pertain to place or location. Yet the very notion of such a grounded home is being called into question, and not just for ATCKs. (Morley & Robins (1995: 103)

Where it is in terms of a national home, a regional home or a common European home, the motivating force is a felt need for a rooted, bounded, whole and authentic identity. And yet Heimat is a mirage, a delusion. As Edgar Reitz recognizes 'Heimat is such that is one would go closer and closer to it, one would discover that at the moment of arrival it is gone, it has dissolved into nothingness'

It seems that the most intrinsic aspect of 'home' is tied with the notion of the individual's ability to find a place for themselves, a place to belong. Bauman's profile of the "Tourist" also contains aspects of orientations towards home. Bauman (1996: 30) states that a tourist, although continually mobile, does have a home and defines it as such: "'The home'

²¹ Dictionary.com accessed 01/04/2010 from: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/home>

is the place to take off the armour and to unpack – the place where nothing needs to be proved and defended as everything is just there, obvious and familiar.” In the place-less environment we have described above, how do ATCKs define home? Perhaps "home" can also be viewed as a concept related to where one's relationships are, or where one feels most comfortable. These questions, too, are posed during interviews with ATCKs.

We have come now to the end of the theoretical section of this thesis. Through these past five chapters, we have briefly summarized much of the relevant literature available with regards to the field of intercultural communication and salient concepts such as nation, identity, multicultural identities, belonging and related these to our focus group: Adult Third Culture Kids. We will now move to the actual study with regards to ATCKs and their concepts of belonging outside of nation.

VI. METHODOLOGY

6.1 Research Questions

It is clear from the above that the research done thus far points to the fact that there is no homogenous ATCK experience. ATCKs are born of missionaries, military, diplomats, business and other families, they exist worldwide, hold different beliefs and attend different schools in different host cultures. Above all else, they are united by how exceptional all their experiences must be. Yet, whilst conducting interviews with ATCKs across the globe, throughout different time zones with a multitude of personalities, I was surprised by a strong feeling of commonality, a shared concept of being part of a group that “got it” and understood who they each were, who the others were, where they were from, and where those they were speaking with were from.

Research illustrates that ATCKs have varying orientations with regards to national consciousness. As such, this study provides additional insight into ATCK concepts of belonging and asks how they consider belonging, whether they feel they need to belong, what they belong to and whether there is any imagined or virtual community with which ATCKs feel a common sense of affinity? Therefore, the research question and sub-questions posed by this thesis are:

R.Q.: WHEN ADULT THIRD CULTURE KIDS DO NOT IDENTIFY WITH A SENSE OF BELONGING TOWARDS NATION, DO THEY FEEL A COMMON SENSE OF BELONGING TO SOMETHING ELSE, AND IF SO, HOW?

SQ: In what way do nation-less ATCKs feel a sense of NationILism?
Where does this come from?

SQ: To what/where/who and how do nation-less ATCKs feel they belong? Are they proud / empowered by this sense of belonging?

SQ: If nation-less ATCKs ever identify with nation or nations, in what way is this identification contextual?

SQ: How do nation-less ATCKs conceptualize and define “home”?

We will now consider these questions in more depth.

When Adult Third Culture Kids do not identify with a sense of belonging towards nation, do they feel a common sense of belonging to something else, and if so, how?

This question is important because previous studies have highlighted that ATCKs often feel like they belong “everywhere and nowhere” in reference to their *place* on the globe (Useem, 1999; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001) This study attempts to consider the question of ATCK belonging from a new perspective, not tied to physical geographical places, and to question whether some ATCKs sense of belonging can be pinpointed, once we consider it in terms of identification with a concept, a people or a space not grounded in place. Introducing the concept of “NationILism” (by the author) gives ATCKs the opportunity to ponder a sense of belonging to something intangible yet equally, potentially, empowering.

To obtain answers to the main research question, the following sub questions will be posed:

In what way do nation-less ATCKs feel a sense of NationILism? Where does this come from? This question expands on the previous conclusion that some ATCKs feel like they belong “nowhere” and asks, has “nowhere” itself taken on a new meaning? Is it, in a sense, a “place or space” that ATCKs can identify with? The concept of belonging “nowhere” is one many readers will agree, has negative connotations, yet introducing this concept of “NationILism” which carries within it a connotation of choice in such an identification, and satisfaction within such an identification, asks whether nation-less belonging is something ATCKs claim with an element of pride, rather than pity.

A second salient sub-question is: **To what/where/who and how do nation-less ATCKs feel they belong? Are they proud / empowered by this sense of belonging?** This question aims to probe deeper into the sense of NationILism and asks, within that identification, how do ATCKs feel a sense of belonging? Are there specific places, symbols or people within this concept of NationILism that ATCKs feel they share? Is NationILism an empowering concept?

Also, as one recognizes that we have multiple identities and thus multiple senses of belonging, it is possible that ATCKs who do identify as nation-less may also identify or feel a sense of affinity with nation(s) in certain ways. Therefore, it is imperative to ask: **If nation-less ATCKs ever identify with nation or nations, in what way is this identification contextual?**

Finally, as we are dealing with the concepts of belonging outside of physical location, it is relevant to consider how ATCKs consider the traditionally tangible idea of “home” and therefore to ask: **How do nation-less ATCKs conceptualize and define “home”?** If nation-less ATCKs really do feel a sense of belonging to something outside of place, how do they define home – the meaning of which is often tied to sense of rooted-ness?

6.2 Data Collection

In order to begin answering these questions, I needed to find a target group to ask. To assure a good balance of perspectives, I wanted ATCKs who represented a diversity of ages, experiences of native tongues. For these reasons, the only limitations I put on my participants were that they were over the age of 18, identified as Adult Third Cultures Kids and were interested in participating in a study with regards to ATCK senses of belonging, especially with regards to nation. In order to target a global community, the internet was my obvious choice for making connections.

I initially cast a wide net with a series of alerts posted on social networking sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn. As a result of these alerts, I was contacted by ATCKs worldwide, who were willing to fill in a demographic survey. On the demographic survey, participants also indicated whether they would be willing to be interviewed over chat. Chat-style interviews were held with willing participants and these interviews were then analyzed. Twelve of these interviewees participated in a further e-mail interview to glean more in-depth information about their feelings on nation-less belonging. In order to assure the confidentiality of all the participants’, a list of all 70

participants was created (in no particular order) and the initials “AB” were given to the participant at the top of the list, followed by “BC” for the second, “CD” for the third and so on. Upon reaching the initials “YZ”, I simply reversed the order of the initials and went backwards so the next combination was “ZA” followed by “BA”, “CB”, “DC” and so forth. No significance can be attributed to these initials or the order in which they were assigned. For a full list of the participants’ given initials along with their country of birth, age and gender, please see table 2 below. Further information with regards to data collection methods will be discussed in 6.2.3.

6.2.1 Overview of All Participants

This research focuses on Adult Third Culture Kids and their sense of belonging. Table 1 below lists all 70 participants (with given initials), their gender, age and birth country.

TABLE 2. Participant Data Overview

Initials	Gender	Age	Birth Country ²²
A.B.	F	32	UK
B.C.	F	19	Hong Kong
C.D.	F	38	USA
D.E.	F	43	Japan
E.F.	F	18	Columbia
F.G.	F	19	UK
G.H.	M	42	France
H.I.	F	20	USA
I.J.	F	22	Tanzania
J.K.	M	35	Surinam
K.L.	M	29	Canada

²² Please note: As participants are ATCKs, they may not have spent any significant time in their birth country so this data is for reference only.

L.M.	M	22	Canada
M.N.	F	30	UK
N.O.	M	42	Australia
O.P.	M	35	Spain
P.Q.	F	51	England
Q.R.	M	46	Zimbabwe
R.S.	F	50	Sweden
S.T.	M	20	Germany
T.U.	M	19	P.R. China
U.V.	F	32	Switzerland
V.W.	F	22	UK
W.X.	F	58	UK
X.Y.	F	32	Norway
Y.Z.	M	25	Canada
Z.A.	F	47	USA
B.A.	F	31	USA
C.B.	M	24	UK
D.C.	F	44	Zimbabwe
E.D.	M	56	UK
F.E.	F	37	Malaysia
G.F.	F	19	Myanmar
H.G.	M	23	Germany
I.H.	F	19	Sweden
J.I.	F	23	Australia
K.J.	F	56	USA
L.K.	F	27	Denmark
M.L.	F	21	Finland
N.M.	M	26	Australia
O.N.	M	26	Japan

P.O.	F	26	USA
Q.P.	F	25	India
R.Q.	F	22	New Zealand
S.R.	M	36	Australia
T.S.	M	55	Lebanon
U.T.	F	49	South Africa
V.U.	F	19	USA
W.V.	F	43	Germany
X.W.	M	36	PNG
Y.X.	F	25	Italy
Z.Y.	F	21	Japan
A.C.	F	26	Denmark
B.D.	M	28	India
C.E.	F	39	Indonesia
D.F.	M	20	USA
E.G.	F	22	The Netherlands
F.H.	F	53	Luxembourg
G.I.	M	20	India
H.J.	F	19	USA
I.K.	M	45	Malaysia
J.L.	M	34	UK
K.M.	F	40	PNG
L.N.	F	35	UK
M.O.	F	53	USA
N.P.	F	29	Japan
O.Q.	F	28	UK
P.R.	F	37	India
Q.S.	M	18	USA
R.T.	F	52	The Netherlands

S.U.	F	24	South Korea
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Criticism with regards to previous research on Adult Third Culture Kids has often included the fact that much of the data collected has been from ATCKs with “American” backgrounds/roots. As Cottrell (2005: 7) highlights in a 2005 article outlining TCK research needs:

Currently, much of the research and many of the books written about TCKs appear to have an American emphasis. That may be due to America’s large migratory, multinational population. Nevertheless, there should be and indeed there is a growing interest and need for data from other countries.

Although a proportion of the participants within this study also have some North American links (11 with the USA as their “country of birth” and 20 holding American passports) the majority represent a plethora of nations and affiliation, reflecting to a greater extent, the diversity of the ATCK phenomenon itself. In order to illustrate this diversity, some demographic information with regards to the participants follows²³. 70 participants completed and returned demographic surveys. Of these, 19 had not been born in the same country as the passport they held, 38 had at least one parent born in a different country to them, 26 had bi-cultural parents and only 29 of the 70 (41%) had been born in their passport country and had parents born in that same country. Table 3 below illustrates the participants by birth country and Table 4 details the passports held by the participants. Note: 70 participants held 89 passports as some had dual nationality. For a pie chart visualizations corresponding to these tables, please see Appendix 1.

TABLE 3. Participants by Birth Country

²³ As this thesis uses the definition of ATCK to mean those who have spent a *significant* proportion of their *formative* years outside their parents or their birth country, three participants who had indicated that they had only lived in one country for the years 0 – 18 in their demographic surveys were discarded.

Birth country	# of participants	Birth country	# of participants
USA	11	France	1
UK	11	Tanzania	1
India	4	Spain	1
Australia	4	P.R. China	1
Japan	4	Switzerland	1
Germany	3	Norway	1
Canada	3	Myanmar	1
Zimbabwe	2	Lebanon	1
Sweden	2	South Africa	1
Malaysia	2	Indonesia	1
Denmark	2	South Korea	1
The Netherlands	2	Suriname	1
Papua N.G.	2	Columbia	1
Luxembourg	1	Finland	1
Hong Kong	1	New Zealand	1
Italy	1	Total # of participants:	70

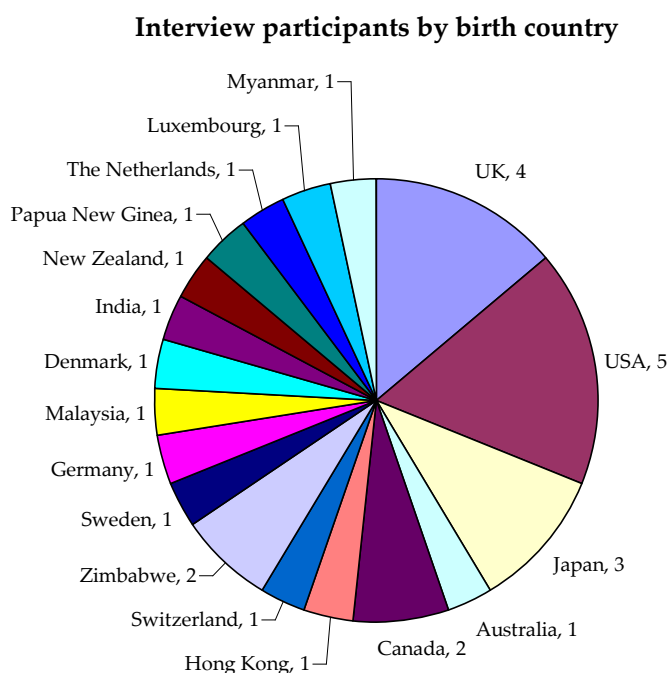
TABLE 4. Passports Held by Participants

Passport	# of participants	Passport	# of participants
USA	20	Tanzania	1
UK	14	Sweden	1
Germany	8	Myanmar	1
Canada	6	Japan	1
Australia	5	South Africa	1
India	4	Indonesia	1
Switzerland	4	South Korea	1
The Netherlands	4	Former Yugoslavia	1
New Zealand	3	Montenegro	1
Italy	3	Finland	1
Spain	2	Hungary	1
Norway	2	France	1
Denmark	2	Total # of passports:	89

6.2.2 Chat-style Interview Participants

Out of the 70 participants who had filled in the demographic survey, 29 also agreed to take part in a type style chat interview. Of these 29 people, 20 were female and nine were male and ages ranged from 19 to 56 with the average age around 33. Table 5 below illustrates the birth countries of the interview participants.

TABLE 5. Interview Participants by Birth Country



Out of 29 participants, only 11 had both parents born in the same country as them, 7 had one parent who was born in a different country to them and 11 had both parents born in countries different to their own birth country. Additionally, only 18 had passports that matched their birth country. The average number of countries lived in before the age of 18 was 3.7, with the average number of schools at 5 and the average number of languages participants indicated a competency in was 3.7.

For a table contrasting interview participants' birth countries with their passport countries and whether or not the birth countries of their parents are both the same, one different or both different to that of the participant, please see Appendix 2. Appendix 2 also details the number of countries each participant lived in during their formative years (not including a move to university at age 18), the number of schools attended and the number of languages each listed as having some proficiency in.

As mentioned above, in order to protect privacy of all participants within this study, names have been changed to random sets of initials. From this point onwards, when I quote participants, I will use their initial set plus the letters “ds” to indicate the quote is from the demographic survey, “ci” if the quote is from the chat interview or “ei” if the quote comes from the e-mail interview. The only initials that have not been disguised are mine, so when you see “YG” this refers to me, the interviewer.

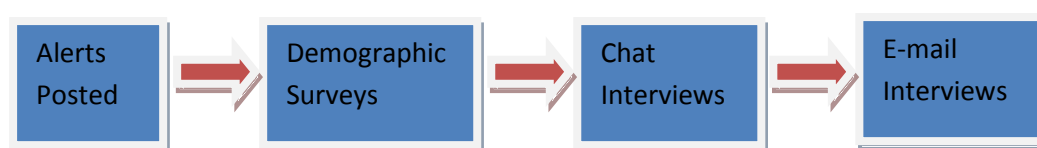
6.2.3 E-mail Interviews

From the 29 interviews conducted, a smaller group of 15 participants were identified²⁴ due to their previously having described a strong identification with the concept of nation-less. In order to understand this phenomenon to a greater extent, a few more specific questions on this particular question were sent via e-mail to these participants.

6.3 Data Collection Methods

To collect data for this study, the following procedure was employed. (For a visual representation, see Figure 5 below)

Figure 5. Data Collection Procedure



1. Alerts

Alerts were posted on various online communities frequented by Adult Third Culture Kids. These alerts were posted on ATCK common interest

²⁴ Through the analysis of transcripts and prevalence discussion on nation-less-ness. In some interviews, interviewees clearly stated they did not feel a sense of belong to nation. At this stage, I asked them, "Would you say you feel any sense of belonging to the concept of nation-less-ness?" and those who answered in the affirmative make up the fifteen above.

groups on both Facebook and LinkedIn, inviting interested participants to contact me. Please see Appendix 3 for copies of these alerts.

One of the alerts posted on LinkedIn Group: “The Official UWCSEA Alumni Group” was seen by the editor of the UWCSEA (United World College of South East Asia) Alumni Newsletter and she subsequently published my alert within the next edition of her newsletter, which generated a lot of interest and many participants contacted me as a result of reading that. Equally, some participants who had seen the alert, sent details of it to their friends by e-mail, or other means.

2. Demographic Surveys

To those that contacted me within the months of February, March and April 2010, I sent a copy of a demographic survey (see appendix 4) asking them to fill it out and send it back to me.

I reviewed all the demographic surveys sent back to me, checked they qualified as ATCKs (ie. had lived and schooled in at least 1 country outside of their birth country in the years 0 – 18) and asked eligible participants²⁵ if they would be willing to schedule a 1 – 2 hour type-style chat interview over facebook, skype or g-mail chat. From this, I was able to interview 29 ATCKs. (See Appendix 5 for the initial semi-structured interview questions)

3. Chat Interviews

The fact that my participants were spread all over the globe and throughout different time zones made face to face interviews impossible. Therefore computer mediated communication was the obvious choice. I chose to conduct the interviews over chat for several reasons. Firstly, for

²⁵ I received three demographic surveys from people who would not qualify as Adult Third Culture Kids, and have omitted them from this research.

the purpose of later analysis, I wanted to keep some consistency in the questions I asked each interviewee, and thus held a semi-structured interview. Asking these questions over type-chat, rather than over the phone, lent a greater consistency to the wording (on my part) of each question and also negated differences that would occur due to tone of voice etc. Additionally, there is a clearer turn-taking system over type-chat which means the interviewer's level of input is controlled and the interviewee is not expecting as much feedback as they are answering the questions – also heightening the level of consistency. Furthermore, as the majority of my participants were not native speakers of English, I wanted to minimize any misinterpretations that may have arisen if I had recorded a verbal interview and then transcribed this interview myself. Having interviewees type their responses left little ambiguity as to the meaning and also gave them additional time to think about what they wanted to say. Type-interviewing does, moreover, have the added flexibility of interaction that e-mail interviewing does not. As the format of the interview is “live” with the interviewer and interviewee online at the same time, both sides are able to ask sub-questions as and when they come up, and ask for clarification when necessary. The interactive nature of the interview also allowed the interviewer to build more of a rapport with the participants, yielding perhaps more trust and more elaborate results.

The chat-interviews were held in order to answer the research question, **When Adult Third Culture Kids do not identify with a sense of belonging towards nation, do they feel a common sense of belonging to something else, and if so, how?** Therefore, all of my interview questions correlated to my sub-questions. To remind the reader of my sub-questions, I have re-written them below.

1. In what way do nation-less ATCKs feel a sense of NationILism?
Where does this come from?
2. To what/where/who and how do nation-less ATCKs feel they belong? How proud / empowered are they by this sense of belonging?
3. If nation-less ATCKs ever identify with nation or nations, in what way is this identification contextual?
4. How do nation-less ATCKs conceptualize and define "home"?

My first interview question, "Where are you from" was one that touched upon all these sub questions. The answers to this questions often gave clues to sub question 1 as interviewees explained why they were not answering with a nation response. Equally, interviewees who chose to answer this question with a non-nation response gave some information about their alternative sense of belonging (sub question 2) and those that *did* answer with a nation either immediately, or in their answer to the next question, qualified how this sense of belonging was contextual. Finally, some interviewees answered this questions with regards to how they defined their own homes, which also touched upon sub question 4.

My second interview question, which I usually *did* ask directly after the first (although I often did not ask the other interview questions in order but tried to weave them more naturally into the discussion depending on the direction it took), was, "Does your answer to that question depend on context? If so, how?" This interview question is linked with sub-question number 3 and was asked in order to determine whether a participant answered differently depending on factors such as, what country they were in at the time, who was asking, their relationship to

the person asking, or any other determining factors as identified by the interviewee.

The third interview question, "How satisfied are people with your answer?" indirectly informed sub question number 1. NationILism was defined as a sense of belonging towards the concept of nationlessness. If someone feels a sense of belonging towards something, it usually follows that they take an element of pride from this belonging. Belonging and pride, according to the author, are both reciprocal feelings. It is difficult to feel a sense of belonging to someone/something that rejects you. Equally, it is difficult to feel a sense of pride in that belonging if one is rejected. Therefore, the question, "How *satisfied* are people with your answer?" gives some clue as to where a sense of NationILism (or lack thereof) could originate from.

Interview question number four, "Can you recount to me a few instances of how the dialogue goes, from your experience" was for the purpose of probing deeper into sub question 3 – in order to get participants to recount (if they could) real instances where I could see how their responses could be contextual (or not) and in what situations this would occur. This question also proved interesting for flagging other issues the interviewee would later discuss at more depth.

The fifth interview question was related to sub question two. Asking interviewees, "Do you feel the answer you most often give (if it was that of their birth country) accurately represents your identity?" In answering this question, interviewees elaborated significantly on their own sense of belonging. Some interviewees were able to separate their feelings of identity and belonging from the question, "Where are you

from?” and answer factually with their birth country or passport country. Yet when asked about how this response reflected their identity they all stated that it did not. The details that followed shed a lot of light on how ATCKs felt they belonged and what/how/to whom they felt this sense of belonging to. Some interviewees also touched upon aspects of their feelings of pride towards these senses of belonging.

Interview question number six, “Please explain any sense of belonging you have tied with a nation or nations” was directly related to sub question three and tried to determine:

- a) Whether ATCKs did feel a sense of belonging towards their birth nation and how this sense of belonging strengthened or weakened depending on contexts
- b) Whether ATCKs felt a sense of belonging towards other nations such as those they had lived in, the nations their parents identified with, or other nations they had no direct physical experience of.

The next interview question, number seven, “Please explain any other sense of belonging you might have” was an opportunity for interviewees to talk about their identity and belonging outside of any confines I had placed upon them with previous questions. This interview question was phrased in order to enrich answers to research sub-question 2.

As this thesis is particularly concerned with ATCK belonging, I not only wanted to get as many diverse answers to sub-question 2 as possible, I also wanted to get to a more detailed level, and also ask whether ATCKs felt any kind of belonging towards an invisible community of others like themselves. For this reason, interview question number eight was:

Do you feel a sense of belonging to any of the following?

- a. Expatriates
- b. Travelers
- c. Other ATCKs / Global Nomads
- d. People who have attended international schools
- e. Citizens of countries you have lived in
- f. Other – Please explain:

In order to make sure that the previous question had not left out any groups or people that my interviewees may feel a sense of belonging or kinship to, the more general question, “In general, what kind of people do you find you relate to the most?” was my ninth interview question.

Finally, because I was curious of how continually migratory or mobile Adult Third Culture Kids would conceptualize a traditionally grounded concept of “home,” (sub-question number 4) Interview question number ten, “What meaning does the word “home” have to you?” was asked. Interesting comments with regards to pride and empowerment in their identity also surfaced during answers to this question.

For a list of these semi-structured interview questions, please see Appendix 5.

Interviews were conducted on a date and time suggested by the participant over Facebook, Skype or G-mail chat. Participants were informed that the transcripts of their interview may appear in the appendices of my thesis but that their names would be reduced to initials and any major identifying factors would be blacked out. Participants gave their consent to these terms. After each interview, the chat was copied and pasted into a word document and saved for later analysis.

Data analysis of the interview transcripts took a thematic form. After reviewing the transcripts it became apparent that the following themes were discussed in most interviews:

1. The nature of the question, "Where are you from?"
2. Responses to the above question and how this answer differed in different contexts
3. Identification with nations
4. Identification with nation-less-ness
5. Other senses of belonging
6. Belonging to Adult Third Culture Kid community, other like-minded communities
7. Characteristics valued in other human beings
8. The meaning of "home"
9. The migratory instinct
10. Relationships

Many of these themes unsurprisingly correlate to the interview questions, which is to be expected in a semi-structured interview, yet a few of these themes seemed to surface several times with no instigation from the interviewer.

For the purpose of analysis, these themes were colour-coded and each transcript was highlighted accordingly. This method allowed for a close reading of the transcripts and a holistic overview.

Further, in order to hone in particularly on the commonalities between ATCK responses, I created a table with the main themes running on one axis, and the interviewees running on the other axis. As I went through each interviewees transcript, I highlighted the main words and concepts that illustrated their answers and placed them in the table under the relevant question. By reviewing this table, I was able to look down at responses to each question and compare similarities in terms of which keywords featured the most. This system of key words made it easier to compare answers for similarities, with some interesting results.

For example, for theme number 8, “The meaning of home,” I was able to identify some keywords or umbrella phrases under which many interviewees responses fell under. One such keyword was “comfort” or “comfortable as six different interviewees mentioned it during their response. Another such word was “where” or “wherever” as by highlighting this word I was able to clearly see how 20 interviewees made a point of the fact that home was an impermanent concept, one that changed location or place based on other factors. For example in statements such as, “Where my heart is” or “Wherever my family is”.

Another keyword that featured many times related to theme 7, “Characteristics valued in other human beings”. When I asked interviewees about the kind of people they related to in general, I was able to identify that many of them used the word “open,” as in “open-minded” or “open to other cultures.” For an example of how a few entries in my theme-table looked, please see Figure 6 below.

FIGURE 7. Example Entries from Theme-table

Theme	Keyword(s)	Quotations from transcript
The meaning of home	Comfort,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “...where you feel comfortable, where you can be safe with family, accepted by

	comfortable	<p>others, state of well being..." (QR: ci)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Where the heart is, somewhere you feel comfortable in..." (ZA: ci)
	Response to do with 'people'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Wherever I am surrounded by people I love" (BC: ci) • "Wherever my family is located..." (HI: ci) • "...with my partner..." (FH: ci)
Identification with Nation-less-ness	Nation, belong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I don't "belong" with any nation in the best possible sense--I don't go in just one drawer of the dresser and therefore also don't "not belong" anywhere either. (CB: ci) • "On my FB page, I write that I am multicultural and stateless. I don't feel that I belong to any particular nation or culture. I am a combination of the cultures I have been exposed to, but can never claim any one of them to be my own as I do not know enough of each to be able to subscribe to them, if that makes any sense." (ZY: ci)
	Identify + nation, belong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since I feel I can't completely identify with any nation, and especially now that I do not feel much belonging with Canada, and have not lived in Singapore for a while (which means my sense of belonging to it has decreased a bit), I'm not quite sure where I 'belong'. I guess that wouldn't be too bad if it was common, but since most people expect you to have a 100% feeling about a place, or several places, it's strange not knowing completely "where you're from".

4. E-mail Interviews

E-mail interview questions focused entirely on the concept of nation-less-ness and therefore correlated strongly with the main research question and sub-question number 1.

As these participants had already stated they harbored some form of nation-less identity, the first e-mail interview question was, “What are you overall feelings concerning your nationless identity? What are the positive and negative aspects? How proud are you of it?” The purpose of this question was to allow participants some freedom to write whatever they wanted regarding this sense of belonging as well as getting targeted answers concerning positive and negative aspects and levels of pride in this belonging. The answers to this question informed sub question 2 but also touched on sub question 1.

The next interview question took a bit of a tangent from the research question and asked, “Do you believe that are any common characteristics shared by people who identify with nation-less belonging? If so, what kind of characteristics?” I asked this question because interviewees had alluded to such characteristics within the chat-interview and I wanted further information on what these characteristics could be. If there *were* some identifiable common characteristics between nation-less ATCKs, that would lend further information with regards to why they felt a sense of belonging to one another.

The third interview question was indirectly tied to sub-question 1. It wanted to determine whether the nature of participants’ belonging to the concept of nation-less-ness could be interpreted as tangible in the way others feel a sense of belonging to nation. Therefore this question was

asked: “Do you feel that your sense of belonging to the concept of nation-less-ness could in any way be compared to what other people feel towards nation, or towards people within that nation? If so, how/why?”

Finally, in order to gain more information about ATCK belonging towards any kind of invisible community of other ATCKs, other expatriates or another form of “imagined community” (Anderson, 1991) interviewees were asked to:

“Please rank (in order of strongest to weakest) your sense of belonging to the following: (if you feel no sense of belonging to one / several or / any of the below, please indicate this in your answer):

- a. Other people who identify as nationless
- b. An invisible and global community of ATCKs/Global nomads
- c. Nationless ATCKs / Global nomads
- d. Citizens of your birth country
- e. Citizens from the countries in which you have lived
- f. Members of your profession
- g. Those who share your beliefs
- h. People who travel a lot and have many international experiences
- i. Expatriates
- j. A university, club, team you belong to
- k. Other(s), please mention and rank accordingly”

and by doing so, I was able to learn a lot about their senses of belonging as a whole, thus bringing us back to sub-question 2.

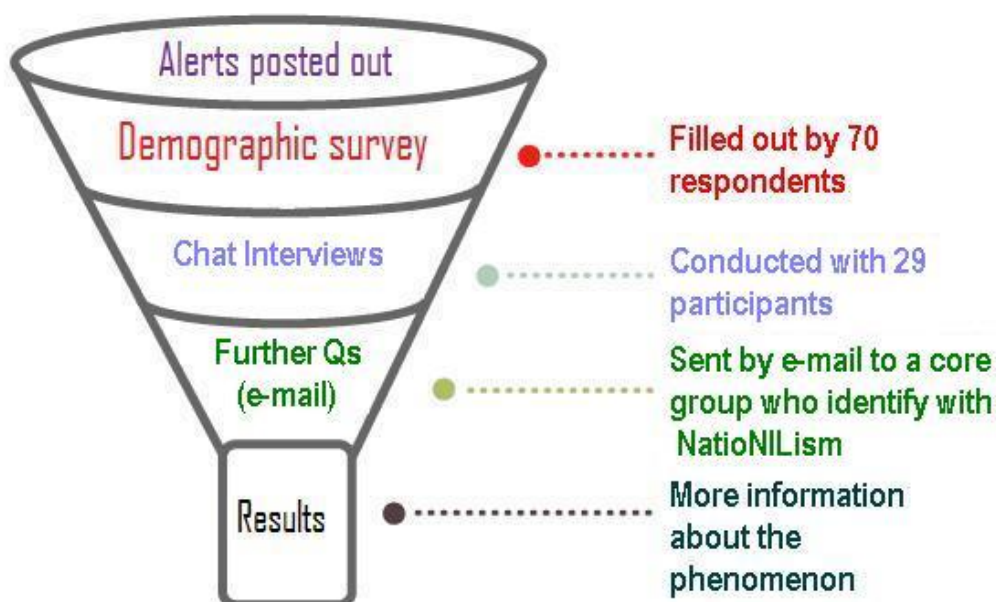
At the end of this e-mail interview, I left a space for other comments which simply stated: “Please write any further comments you might have.”

Responses were received from twelve of these participants. Please see appendix 6 for a list of these e-mail interview questions.

Due to the fact that the level of participants' English was either native or very high, I did not correct any of the typos, spelling or grammatical mistakes in the transcripts of the interviews. I believe these mistakes do not hinder the readers' comprehension yet my well-intended corrections would have required a level of interpretation which may have altered the intended meaning.

In conclusion, my data collection process can be best visualized in the form of a funnel which started with a large net being cast and ended with a small focused group that were asked specifically about one phenomenon. Visually, it looks something like this:

FIGURE 6. Data Collection Process



VII. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The main research question that this thesis asked was, “When Adult Third Culture Kids do not identify with a sense of belonging towards nation, do they feel a common sense of belonging to something else, and if so, how?” From analyzing the data collected, it is clear that a large majority of ATCKs do feel a strong sense of belonging to concepts or people outside of nation. Furthermore, it was interesting to note that there was significant overlap in *what* most ATCKs felt a sense of belonging to, as most felt a very clear and strong sense of belonging towards other ATCKs, Internationals, and often to the concept of nationless-ness.

7.1 Additional information from Demographic Survey

As the demographic surveys were just a tool for checking that participants did indeed qualify as ATCKs, an in-depth analysis of the information provided within the surveys was never my intent. However, upon reviewing the information provided, I was able to paint an overall profile of the participants, including details about their birth countries, that of their parents, the passports they held, the number of schools they attended and number of countries they lived in during their formative years. A summary of the most interesting information follows but for further details, please see the completed demographic surveys in Appendix 7.

The demographic survey asked participants to list the countries that they had lived in between the ages 0 – 18. When the participant lists a country in which they went to university in, at age 18, this country is discounted as it is not considered as one of the countries the participant “grew up and schooled in during their formative years”. Analysis of these responses found that the participants lived in at least two different

countries (otherwise, they probably would not have qualified as ATCKs in the first place) and some had lived in as many as nine countries before turning 18. The average number of postings for the group was 3.6. For a complete list of countries lived in by participants, please consult Appendix 8.

Due to many overseas moves, it also follows that participants changed schools several times, the fewest number being one (the participant had moved several times before being school-aged and then stayed in one posting for schooling) the greatest being 13. The average number of schools attended being 4.7.

The demographic survey also asked participants to list languages they felt they could claim any level of competence in (it also reflects a self-evaluation of level of competence in each language) and overall the 70 participants claimed some level of competence in 41 different languages with the average number of languages listed at 4.

The survey also asked participants the question, "How do you usually answer the question, "Where are you from?"" and noted that only nine out of the 70 responded with a simple one-country answer.

In order to obtain more information, please see the complete collection of demographic surveys in appendix 7.

In order to provide a brief overview of the data collection results, let us look at each sub-question in turn.

- 1. In what way do nation-less ATCKs feel a sense of NationILism? Where does this come from?**

Those ATCKs who confessed to a sense of NationILism said they felt proud of their nation-less identity. Some expressed strong patriotic sentiments towards this concept of nation-less-ness in stating that they wished there was an ATCK passport, or that nation-less people could have representation in the United Nations. This sense of NationILism seems particularly prevalent in ATCKs who have not spent a significantly large portion of their formative years in any one country. The fact that some countries would never consider someone as "belonging" within their boundaries, unless matching the skin colour, birth-place, ethnicity, and linguistic acquisition etc. was also a catalyst for feelings of NationILism.

2. To what/where/who and how do nation-less ATCKs feel they belong? How proud / empowered are they by this sense of belonging?

Primarily, nation-less ATCKs seem to feel a sense of belonging to people. Many cited the global, virtual ATCK community as a body to which they felt they belonged, families and friends as well as, to a lesser extent, citizens of countries they had lived in. Many ATCKs mentioned a sense of pride in their nationless belonging as they attributed a value-set towards this belonging, which included characteristics such as "open-minded-ness" which many were proud of.

3. If nation-less ATCKs ever identify with nation or nations, in what way is this identification contextual?

Many nation-less ATCKs do identify with nations, even if they don't feel a sense of belonging to them. Many preferred the word, "affinity". Most ATCKs had some sense of affinity for the nations in which they spent their formative years and said these nations would always be a part of

them. Equally, many spoke of a contextual feeling of identification towards nations. For example, an ATCK born in the UK may feel more "British" when in Japan, yet more "Asian" when in Britain.

4. How do nation-less ATCKs conceptualize and define "home"?

ATCKs view home as a concept outside of place. A great majority connected the concept of "home" with that of security and comfort, a place where you could be yourself, and somewhere where friends and family were, regardless of geographical location. Others mentioned the ability to make and feel at home anywhere, quite quickly, a skill borne out of necessity.

7.1 ATCKs and the Question, "Where are you from?"

A simple and very common way of identifying an ATCK is by asking the question, "Where are you from?" The question is one often used in first contact situations and probably has less to do with a real interest in the identity of one's counterpart than its use as a categorizing tool, a memory aid with which one person can identify another, and a lens through which they can view them. Our experiences teach us something about the values and types of people who come from different parts of the world, and therefore knowing where someone is "from" allows us a quick leap towards other assumptions, which may help lead the subsequent conversation. Kim and Ebesu Hubbard (2007) speak of a natural instinct that we have to distinguish between "us" (the in-group) and "them" (the out-group). It is because of this natural tendency that ATCKs have troubles answering the question "Where are you from." Cockburn (2002: 479) identifies that even this single difficulty is a binding factor for ATCKs:

TCKs usually struggle with this question and immediately move to the thought, 'do they want the long or the short story?' The question of

'where is home?' is a difficult one for the TCK but when amongst other TCKs the recognition that all share this genuine lack of understanding of a traditional 'home' provides relief.

7.1.1 Responses to "Where are you from?" in Demographic Surveys and Interviews

The initial demographic survey that was returned by 70 participants asked the question, "How do you usually respond to the question, 'Where are you from?'" Interestingly, upon analysis of these answers it is apparent that even at this stage, only nine people gave simple, one country answers to this question, without feeling the need to qualify it at all. The other 61 answers ranged from the very general: "*Planet Earth*", "*Homeless nomad*" (QR: ds) to the detailed: From the helpful: "*Depends what you mean? If you mean where was I born – then UK if you mean where have I lived the longest then NZ but if you mean where do I consider home- then Singapore*" (PQ: ds) and "*I say, 'That's a good question. I was born in Hawaii, but my father was in the military and so I have lived several places, most recently in the US, Indiana, but I would not say I am from there. I don't really consider myself from anywhere'*" (BA: ds) to the more ambiguous:

To a monocultural asker I usually say "I'm from everywhere" followed by a rapid partial list blurring municipal, regional, national and temporal distinctions so that the person can pick up particular places they might be connected to but won't assume the list is exhaustive." "Sometimes I ask, "What do you mean?" and cue facially that they're being weird" "On non-official forms / online stuff I usually just put Earth. (YZ: ds)

Other people's responses illustrated their continued amusement or confusion with regards to the question: "*With a blank stare, a laugh, or a convoluted explanation which usually leaves the other person rather confused.*" (CB: ds) Many highlighted the fact that the question itself was problematic and didn't have a clear meaning to them:

If I think they mean "Where are you from in the world?" I'll either say "I'm not really from anywhere" or, most often, I'll ask the person to clarify the meaning of their question. It's a pretty ambiguous, meaningless question to me, and I usually find that people actually don't know what they mean by it either." (BC: ds)

This sentiment was compounded in the interviews. When asked the first interview question, “Where are you from?” only two interviewees felt comfortable answering with a clear, one nation response, without any further comment. What is even more interesting is that both of these participants later explained that they didn’t feel the one nation response accurately represented their identity, but that they preferred to see the question as a factual one, rather than one concerning their identity. As phrased by KL (in response to a question asking how accurately the answer “Montreal, Canada” reflects his identity): *“Not too accurately. I find it more difficult to answer questions of identity than simply answering a question of where I come from...which I try to associate with a city and not with a nationality.”* (KL: ci)

Other answers to the question again ranged from the very general, *“Nowhere in particular”* (BC: ci) to the more specific:

I am half Swedish half Italian. I grew up mostly in Europe, but also in Asia and Australia. I have lived in the US for the past 13 years, and have US and Italian citizenship (my husband is American). I have lived in Brooklyn for the past several years and am starting to consider myself a New Yorker. (RS: ci)

Some responses were clearly contextual in that they probably would not necessarily give the same responses to someone who was not a fellow ATCK for fear of being seen as facetious. For example: *“No particular place – lots of places”* (DC: ci), *“I was born in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. But am I ‘from’ there?”* (SR: ci), *“I am from earth. Some places I have lived there include Canada, Ethiopia and Kenya.”* (YZ: ci), *“Yeah, that’s a hard one.”* (CB: ci)

One interesting point to mention is that most interviewees either knew (from responding to alerts in which the fact that I was at an international school was detailed) or strongly suspected that I was also an ATCK, or at

the very least, knew a lot about the ATCK phenomenon and therefore their response to the question “Where are you from” was often one of laughter, as if I was knowingly playing a joke on them. Such responses were: “Haha, I love this one...Um...Nowhere?” (BC: ci), “Ha. No fair.” (DE: ci), “Hahaha trick question right from the start!” (ZY: ci)

7.1.2 Responses to “Where are you from?” in Real Life

Within the interview, I asked participants to try to recall a dialogue in which they were recently asked the question, “Where are you from” and retell it to me. An interesting pattern emerges which illustrates the need the questioner often has to assign a one-country-label to the person they are talking to. For example, this dialogue was related to me by BC in an interview on March 27 2010:

Friend: So where are you from?
BC: What exactly do you mean by that?
Friend: Like where were you born?
BC: Hong Kong
Friend: So you grew up there
BC: No, I grew up in a lot of places
Friend: So you’re not from Hong Kong?
BC: Not really, no
Friend: But you have a Chinese passport?
BC: No, I have a British passport
Friend: So you’re English
BC: No, my dad’s British and my mum’s Singaporean.
Friend: So you’re from Singapore?
BC: Well, no.

From this it would seem that the question, “Where are you from” is used as a categorizing tool in order for the questioner to be able to place a certain set group of assumptions on the person with which they’re conversing – perhaps in order to come up with some suitable questions within the conversation. For example, if you tell me you are from the U.S., my mind automatically brings to the fore all things I know about the States from popular culture, other Americans I have met, my travels there, etc. and I can use this information to find some common ground in

the subsequent conversation. However, if a simple answer does not come to the question “Where are you from” – the categorization process fails, sometimes to the frustration of the questioner.

It is also apparent, from some of the dialogues recalled by ATCKs during the interview, that people expect someone’s answer to ‘Where are you from?’ to give them a clue as to their identity. The following dialogue was recalled to me by a 29 year old woman, born in Japan (of Japanese parents) who has lived the majority of her life overseas and only lived in Japan for eight years in her childhood. The dialogue takes place between her and a taxi driver as she travels between the train station and her grandmother’s house, having just arrived back from Canada. (Participant: NP, Taxi driver: T)

T: Where did you arrive from?
 NP: From Canada
 T: How was your visit?
 NP: I actually live there.
 T: Oh, working holiday? That thing is so popular these days.
 NP: no, no, I actually have been living there for about 10 yrs.
 T: Oh, I didn’t know you can reapply for visas that long.
 NP: No, no, I went to school there, and now I Have my permanent residency.
 T: Huh? You are Japanese right?
 NP: I was born here, yes. But I’ve only lived in Japan for eight years of my life.
 T: Oh..... your Japanese is good!
 T: So, what are you?
 NP: I moved to other countries (I mention ‘kikokushijyo’²⁶) when I was young but I still have my Japanese passport.
 T: But you are a Canadian?
 NP: No, I have PR²⁷ there.
 T:.....

This brief exchange illustrates well how the country where someone is from is something people use in conversation to assume something about the other’s identity. It also portrays how we are very used to polarized thinking – someone is either A or B, but it is more difficult to

²⁶ Japanese term for “returnee”

²⁷ Permanent residency

conceptualize when that person does not identify with either, or does so with both. In this particular dialogue, the taxi driver sees NP and immediately assumes she is from Japan. She speaks Japanese so the fact that she would be “from” Canada is strange for him. Once she says she has only lived in Japan for eight years, he then switches to thinking of her as “non-Japanese” and compliments her on the level of her language acquisition. Then, not knowing what to assume he asks her what she is, only to be faced with another quite ambiguous answer... he tries again to categorize by asking her “But you are a Canadian?” and is again confused when she refuses to commit to that as her identity. Adler (1995: 237), in profiling Multicultural Man, mentioned the problem of living outside clear boundaries as the problem of not having lines by which we can differentiate between things. He states: *“The multicultural person is vulnerable. Boundaries, however indefinite, give shape and meaning to the experience of experience, they allow us to differentiate, define and determine who we are in relation to someone or something else.”*

When discussing how these conversations make people feel, ATCKs often tell of how the questioner sometimes seems to get angry or frustrated that they cannot pin down a simple response to a simple question. Equally, ATCKs often mention how they get tired of continually justifying their answer to the question, or how embarrassed they feel at not being able to give a simple response. The following section from an interview with BC on March 27 2010 illustrates this:

BC I think I’m usually highly dissatisfied with my answer

YG Why?

BC Though I’m not sure if that’s due to my frustration at the question asker or my desire to have a clear-cut answer to give. I think mostly I just want to be able to answer the question without the conversation becoming ridiculous.

YG Do others seem frustrated that you don’t have a clear cut answer?

BC Sometimes, yes

YG In what way?

BC I talked to someone who grew annoyed that I wasn't giving a clear answer. I think he thought I was just trying to be difficult. I can't remember the specifics of the situation though. I think mostly it just makes me sad that other people find it so easy to just name a place. Like, the answer's always been very definite to them.

This phenomenon of ATCKs facing people who think they are "just being difficult" is not an unusual one. Many interviewees said that people tell them they should just choose a place, and often they wish they could but the very nature of the question, and its intrinsic link to identity makes it just as hard for an ATCK to choose a one – country answer as it must be for a German to say they are from the Sudan. I asked why responding with one nation, perhaps their birth country, was not an option for them. Here are some responses: *"How can a place that I have never lived in, know nothing about, "represent" my identity?"* (MO: ci), *"...why do you have to choose?... If you go to a chocolate buffet, do you just keep eating the same one or do you try many and be happy that you did, and like different ones for their different tastes?"* (NP: ci)

(When questioned why she doesn't feel comfortable with the response, "England", her birth country, as an answer to 'where are you from?'):

Because I have only ever lived there for two out of 28 years. One year was the year that I was born and the second year was two years ago. I don't know anything about England as in the geography of the country. The place where I was born, I never go to anymore as most of my relatives have moved out of there and I have never lived there, so when people ask me where in England am I from and I tell them Bournemouth and if they happen to know it and start asking me all these questions about it, then I'm in trouble!!!! (OQ: ci)

None the less, it does seem apparent that although ATCKs usually don't believe the one nation response accurately represents their identity, they do modify and alter their responses depending on contexts. Contexts include whether they think they are going to know that person in the

future, whether it is a brief or lasting encounter, where they are (geographically), who is asking, and other such factors.

Several ATCKs said that they give different responses depending on whether the person questioning them is in any way international or multicultural. For example, one participant made the following distinction about giving her answer to other ATCKs:

First, if a TCK is asking, I know I can be honest... I can be honest because with TCKs having lived in 15 locations in 18 years doesn't make you look more "cool" or less so, nor does having lived in three locations in 18 years make you less of a TCK. (DE: ci)

Another participant underlines how difficult it is to answer the question in a place where people are not familiar with the concept of ATCKs, *"I've had to prove myself much more over here and feel world's apart from everyone else because of my ATCK identity that very few know about."* (FE: ci)

The resounding conclusion that most seem to come to can be summed up in this one line from one of my interviewees, *"I think I've learned that my identity has, more and more, very little to do with the question, 'where I am from'"* (ML: ci)

The problem seems to be that the question "Where are you from" simply asks a fact concerning your birth place, nationality and where you grew up, which for many people boils down to just one country, which thus has had some impact on their identity formation. However, the current state of the world means that the phenomenon of mobility is becoming a reality for more and more people and hence the answers to all these questions are very different for some people and therefore do not lend anything to the concept of their identity at all. The fact that the question is so intrinsically tied to identity may be the issue, and this is something

several ATCKs have highlighted. One ATCK illustrates this disconnect by saying:

...that's the problem with the question. It asks "where" but rather than where lived or where travelled it asks where "you". For me it is a type mismatch, like if someone asked me "what colour do you hear?" Nonetheless I try to dig into the conversational context and find something useful to say anyways. (CB: ci)

The challenge, thus, for intercultural communication is that a lack of awareness as to how difficult this question may feel for some, may lead to a breakdown in communication, early on. The very fact that there are many people, and the number is increasing, who do not identify within the boundaries of nation is something this study attempts to bring more to the fore.

7.2 Belonging Toward Nation

Just because ATCKs often do not feel a sense of belonging to any one nation does not mean that they feel no sense of affinity towards nations at all. Indeed, the nature of ATCKs means they have lived in several nations before the age of 18 and therefore many do retain feelings towards those nations. However, as belonging is a two way process (people find it hard to belong to something/someone who doesn't accept them) the word "affinity" is quite often chosen over "belonging".

Reasons for not being accepted as "one of us" by citizens of a particular nation vary, not being able to speak the language, not having lived there long enough, not having parents from that nation or not having the appropriate skin colour are a few of these reasons. Another reason is quite often political or bureaucratic, as one interviewee elaborates:

I feel tied to PNG²⁸ because it was my entire life growing up. The people of PNG have a VAST amount of pride in their country and themselves, and that pride was my pride as well. If I were to return to the village

²⁸ Papua New Guinea

where I grew up and request permission to build a home & live there, there is absolutely no speck of doubt in my mind that every single person would beg me to live on their land. On the other hand, by government regulation I am only permitted to visit the country on a tourist visa because my parents chose U.S. citizenship for me and PNG does not allow dual citizenships. Hence I feel exiled from PNG. (XW: ci)

One interviewee explains how belonging is often coloured by one's ability to match the accepted ethnic or racial norm for that country. He speaks of traveling in Asia and saying he is from, "Singapore".

...it's tied, in Asia especially, very closely with race and ethnicity. For example, when I was in Vietnam, people there would never accept me as being from Singapore. Despite the ID card, despite any evidence I showed them. To them: "Singapore people are yellow. You are not yellow. You are not from Singapore." (CB: ci)

Hence, although many ATCKs are able to list reasons why they feel an affiliation or belonging to a plethora of nations they have experienced, some prefer to decline any sense of belonging to nation. For example, "I don't think I've ever felt a sense of belonging as such." (BC: ci), "I've never been at a point in my life where I felt I belonged in a country" (BC: ci) and:

I can't really say that I identify too much with nations. I think that I feel a societal need or requirement to identify with a nation to a degree. Whenever people introduce themselves, nationality or at least their nation of birth/residence comes up very quickly as a key factor. (KL: ci)

7.3 Worldview

Cockburn (2002: 478) concluded that "The TCK is more likely to present a 'world view' as a result of his or her exposure to different cultures and countries" and this was a factor that very much presented itself as evident within the interviews. One question I asked all my interviewees was "In general, what kind of people do you find you relate to the most?" All but one mentioned global nomads/other ATCKs as people they feel a strong sense of belonging to. 19 out of 29 listed at least one of the two characteristics, "open-minded" and "international" although many listed both. Other key word characteristics that featured highly

included, “different,” “diverse,” “not-judgemental,” “well-informed,” and “curious and willing to explore/expose themselves to new cultures.”

These keywords are all characteristic of a worldview that many ATCKs recognize as a commonality of their group culture. Some examples of full answers to the question follow:

I relate to people who are open, open to ideas, open to different people and cultures, people who don't look down on others... people who are genuinely interested in others and their backgrounds and ideas. (CB: ci)

Open minded people. People who loved to travel or people who grew up in different country or who lived now in different countries or who are foreigners or working in an international surroundings. (UV: ci)

I relate most to people who have come to realize they don't have to belong anywhere in particular to have an identity. (QR: ci)

7.4 How do ATCKs Belong?

Previous research with regards to ATCK belonging has stopped at a crucial point with regards to nation. Downie claimed that the mobility ATCKs face in their formative years “denies them a sense of home, roots and the stable network of relationships that impart an important dimension of self-definition.” (Downie, 1976, as quoted by Fail et al. 2004: 323) On a more positive note he stated, (Downie, 1976, as quoted by Fail et al. 2004: 323) that ATCKs view themselves, “as cosmopolitan people who feel comfortable in a variety of environments but lack a sense of belonging in any one.” However, the interviews that were conducted illustrated that, on the contrary, most ATCKs were able to identify confidently a sense of home as well as a stable network of relationships and a strong sense of belonging towards them. Equally, instead of lacking a sense of belonging to any environment, many ATCKs testified to a sense of belonging to many. Overwhelmingly, instead of coming across as individuals who lacked a sense of belonging and roots, the ATCKs I spoke with did identify with strong senses of belonging, even if the

things which they mentioned themselves as belonging to, were not grounded in place or tangible in nature: *“So the place I really, deeply belong is change.”* (CB: ci, April 2 2010)

Apart from taking comfort in belonging to intangible concepts such as change, all but one of the ATCKs I interviewed testified to a strong sense of belonging to other ATCKs. As stated by one interviewee:

I can easily identify and connect with people who have had the same experiences or background as I have... Part of that is that we understand each other and don't need to explain to each other that we are "homeless". (CB: ci)

Several ATCKs mentioned that they sometimes found it difficult to relate to non-ATCKs and that the more multicultural a person is, the easier they find relating to them. Many ATCK friend groups consist of other ATCKs and one ATCK in particular stated, *“I could quite confidently say that 100% of the people that I call friends have lived in more than one country.”* (OQ: ci)

In fact, this sense of belonging towards other ATCKs was often similar to that others have towards their nation, or people within that nation. When I asked one ATCK whether he would say his sense of belonging towards other ATCKs could be compared in this way he said, *“Yes I would... I guess we've become a new 'tribe'”* (ED: ci) Another ATCK responded, *“Yes definitely. I almost wish there was an ATCK passport. Because your priorities or value system completely skews if you are ATCK... and in a very similar way.”* (ZY: ci,)

This was a very interesting comment as if values or universal characteristics could be attributed to ATCKs worldwide, this would further affirm the nature of the ATCK community as a tangible culture. I

asked the same participant whether she thought there were any universal characteristics or values that she thought ATCKs held:

Yeah for sure... most of all... I think you learn to question the assumptions that are influencing your worldview constantly. I think you learn not to take yourself very seriously... 'this is how I think the world works, but I am probably wrong and probably no one else in this room agrees with me'. I also think ATCKs have thought out their values / belief system very carefully and consciously... and they tend to be more able to separate the country they are in from the values they hold. I don't think this necessarily means all ATCKs are liberal or anything... they are just more able to differentiate between what they think is true and what the shared reality is, if that makes sense. (ML: ci)

I kept her comments in mind and continued to ask other ATCKs a similar question, the results of which I will go into in more depth in my section on Patriotic Nation-less-ness below.

7.5 Placeless Belonging

Globalization has had a profound effect on the way in which we identify with land. Robins (1999: 22) states that *"Globalization is about the compression of time and space horizons and the creation of a world of instantaneity and depthlessness. Global space is a space of flows, an electronic space, a decentred space, a space in which frontiers and boundaries have become permeable."* Through my discussions with ATCKs, it has become very clear to me that frontiers and boundaries certainly have become permeable, at least from their perspectives. Yet what affect do these permeable boundaries have on our everyday lives, and what is the impact on our communication in intercultural interactions?

As Salo-Lee (2006: 79) highlights, *"With increasing voluntary or nonvoluntary international mobility, international business mergers and acquisitions, as well as intercultural personal relationships, national, cultural and ethnic boundaries are being blurred. New approaches of understanding, studying and managing cultural differences are needed."* This call for new approaches of understanding was echoed throughout my interviews

with ATCKs. Our culture has always been intrinsically tied to where we are from. If where we are from is no longer necessarily tied to physical location and land, then new approaches are surely needed.

This concept of a sense of belonging not attached to physical geography was a sentiment reaffirmed by many throughout my interviews, "*My sense of belonging, I guess, is very transitory.*" (HI: ci)

I am not attached to land. I don't fall in love with a city. Geography is irrelevant to me because I know I am transient. I know I'm transient because I get bored after awhile. Rather, I get my fill from a place and want to move on. (DE: ci)

One interviewee connects the dots and alludes to the fact that the question 'Where are you from' is problematic due to its tie to physical location:

Many people hold intuitively to a strict relationship between geographical location and identity, and have never taken a look at all the things that are normally implied by a phrase like, "where are you from?" (YZ: ci)

Perhaps it's this intuition that may be the root of the frustrations voiced by ATCKs, perhaps it is this intuition that is becoming dated, and one that we need to become aware of.

Afterall, just like many ATCKs feel empowered by their sense of nation-less belonging, they often equally do not feel shame in their lack of place-identification. In fact, one ATCK goes as far as to say:

...I believe post-national people are an essential part of our social evolution (our being humanity) and we have lots of unique opportunities to break down barriers because of the lines we straddle. People can't assume I'm on a particular 'side' in talking about cultures, people, countries and races, which makes them pause and think about their own identity a little bit, so we have an essential role to play in creating more cohesive inter-identity societies. (YZ: ci)

7.6 ATCKs and Home

Nationless and placeless, how is it possible then, that these ATCKs can begin to conceptualize “home.” What does it mean to them? Are they perpetually homeless or have they just found a new perspective on something that was also traditionally grounded in place? It seems that the latter is true. Out of 29 interviewees, an overwhelming majority defined it as a purely intangible concept including sentiments such as “where the heart is” “Where I feel comfortable and safe” “Where I can be myself” “Wherever I decide to make it.” Comfort with a lack of place was also voiced, *“It doesn’t really have a geographic location, I couldn’t find it on a map.”* (Definition of Home by HI: ci) and certain impermanent aspects were also identifiable, “Wherever I happen to live at the moment” “Wherever my family are” Or as one participant concluded in an interview, *“Home is wherever I happen to be at the moment, with the understanding it will change.”* (DE: ci) Another echoed this sentiment by saying, *“...because I identify with the sense of being a global nomad. Anywhere in the world can be “home” if you choose it to be, but it never has to be permanent.”* (QR: ci)

Symbols of mobility also proved to be important indicators of home, as one participant mentioned in a demographic survey, *“Having spent so much time in airplanes, getting on an airplane (no matter what the destination) always makes me feel at home.”* (CB: ds)

A few other participants spoke of the flexibility with which they refer to a place as home, stating, *“...I’ll start referring to even a hotel as ‘home’ when I’m staying there for more than 3 days.”* (ZY: ci), *“I have learnt to call anyplace “home” in 5 minutes or less.”* (ML: ci)

Therefore we can conclude that the concept of home for ATCKs is intangible and flexible in location, but deeply grounded in sentiments such as family and comfort.

7.7 NationILism – Patriotically Nation-less

From analyzing the 29 interviews I conducted, it was apparent that ATCKs had many different ways of conceptualizing belonging. A few did identify quite strongly with a nation, even if it was not the nation of their birth. A few did not feel a sense of belonging to anything and did not feel as if they needed it. A couple of participants were also visibly hurt by their sense of belonging “nowhere” so this study by no means tries to portray all ATCKs as nation-less, or even all ATCKs as empowered by their nation-less-ness. What this study did want to focus on, however, was those ATCKs who *did* identify with a sense of nation-less-ness and discover whether there were some who felt empowered by and proud of this belonging. Therefore, from my group of 29 interviewees, a final 15 were identified as falling within this category.

These 15 participants all stated within their interviews that they felt a strong sense of belonging to a sense of nation-less-ness. For examples of how identification with this concept unfolded, please see the following excerpts from my interviews with CB and QR:

YG: Okay great, so you definitely feel a sense of belonging to several nations, to some extent - would you say you could identify at all with belonging to the concept of nation-less-ness?

CB: Absolutely

CB: Sometimes people ask me, if Switzerland and Singapore were to fight a war. Who would you support. And I just shrug. Change those two countries with pretty much any other two countries and I shrug as well.

YG: That I understand :) Are you proud of this sense of nation-less-ness at all?

YG: patriotically nationless, as it were...

CB: I've never thought of it that way, but yes, I'd say I am. I feel that I've been very privileged to have the experiences I've had: namely, visiting so many places, living in so many different places and I'd say that it has helped me to understand that while we define and often think of the world as a set of states with borders, things are actually a lot more complicated. Once I made that discovery I found it difficult to confine my thinking to a specific set of borders or boundaries.

YG: Would you say you feel any sense of belonging to the concept of nation-less-ness?

QR: Yes. I often call myself a "homeless nomad" when discussing the where are you from issue.

YG: Would you say you are proud of that? Patriotically nation-less in a sense?

QR: Absolutely. I don't belong anywhere and everywhere at the same time. I'm proud of that.

Other interview participants made this sense of nation-less identification clearer in their own words such as, *"Belonging to any one particular country is not part of my identity as a person, rather it is NOT belonging to any one country perhaps."* (BA: ci)

As these kind of statements were coming out at the interview stage, I decided to target this group of 15 with a few more specific questions concerning the concept of nation-less identity via e-mail. Please see appendix 6 for a list of these questions. From analyzing the responses to this e-mail interview, several interesting themes surfaced.

7.7.1 The Positive Aspects of NatioNILism

In reading the responses of the twelve participants that self-identified with the concept of nation-less-ness, it became clear that they viewed this identification and sense of belonging in an overwhelmingly positive light. The sentiment here voiced by BC, was one echoed by many others,

“On a personal level, it’s something I tend to cherish as I feel it makes me quite unique.” (BC: ei) When discussing what they viewed as the positive aspects of identifying as nationless, participants listed characteristics such as a broader worldview or global perspective (ZY: ei, EG: ei) the ability to see everyone as a human regardless of their race or culture without the need to categorize them into a box (BA: ei), a feeling of belonging to something larger (DC: ei) as well as the ability to accept and adapt easily to new cultures (OQ: ei). Many spoke about not having a great fear of change (QR: ei, OQ: ei) and the benefits of being able to create relationships over borders, inter-culturally, inter-racially, and inter-spacially. Overall, there was a sense of positivity in the recognition that they belonged to something outside of the nation-state. One participant, QR, spoke of the sense of neutrality that this cultivates:

Nationless-ness gives you a sense of neutrality - you have nothing to attack or defend beyond your own interests and opinions. This can sound selfish and slightly arrogant, but not belonging to a nation leaves me with a sense of belonging to a wider group - international people, the human species, the planet - that extends beyond borders and administrative bureaucracy. I also think there is less of a fear of change when you see your self as nationless. You are highly mobile and adaptive and can chose to move if you don't like your current surrounds.
(QR: ei)

7.7.2 The Negative Aspects of NatioNILism

Overall, there were not many comments concerning the negative aspects of nation-less identity, yet what was striking was the level of homogeneity between the negative characteristics that were listed. Almost every participant listed their number one negative aspect of NatioNILism as the lack of recognition for this kind of identity in the wider community. Participants noted:

I often find myself frustrated when trying to explain my cultural/national identity to people who seem to want a black or white answer. (BC: ei)

Another negative aspect is that people generally don't understand this 'nationlessness', and so, unless you spend time with other ATCKs, you have no way of sharing experiences and your feeling of nationlessness." (ZY: ei)

People often don't get where I'm coming from (BA: ei)

It also can be difficult to be understood, and sometimes people can respond negatively to an individual who does not seem to fit in any box. There can also be an intrinsic sense of loss, that where you once were is not a place you can return to. In contrast, people who identify strongly with a nation and citizenship always have a place to "go back to." (DC: ei)

This lack of recognition that some people do identify outside of national borders is one this thesis attempts to address. The hope is that this study will contribute to what will be an increasing effort to raise the profile of such people within the global community. Although ATCKs come from vastly differing backgrounds, it seems their connections with travel and mobility serve as a strong binding factor. As one participant explains:

For example, when I've spent a lot of time with non-ATCKs, and haven't shared anything about my nationless identity, after a while I feel really 'numb', and dissatisfied, and look forward to the company of other ATCKs, or at least of people who are more well-traveled, and with whom I can discuss other places, cultures, and my feeling of nationlessness. (ZY: ei)

However, a negative take on this aspect of mobility was briefly voiced by another participant who spoke of the fragility or vulnerability of not having a physical base:

I do not feel like I have a base, i.e somewhere where I feel that I can call "home" and if anything should happen such as loosing my job and I couldn't find another one (in the country I am in) I would not know where to go back to. (OQ: ei)

7.7.3 Characteristics Shared by those who Identify as Nation-less

Previous research has highlighted characteristics shared by ATCKs such as difficulty relating to peers²⁹, an international worldview, migratory

²⁹ People of same age from birth country

instinct, rootlessness (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001) Add references for researcher. In my e-mail interview, I asked respondents whether they thought there were any shared characteristics of the community of ATCKs who identified with Nationlism. Their response was overwhelmingly in the affirmative and characteristics listed by almost all included open-mindedness (BC: ei, ZA: ei, KL: ei, BA: ei, EG: ei, QR: ei, DC: ei, OQ: ei) a curiosity about the world and a subsequent interest in world affairs (ZA: ei, BC: ei, ZY: ei) adaptability (BC: ei, BA: ei, DC: ei) and the freedom provided by a love or comfort with mobility (BC: ei, KL: ei, EG: ei,

Participants ZA and DC sum up the main characteristics above in their following statements:

I think we're more curious, adventurous, open-minded and empathetic. We're more invested in what goes on in the world, not just in our little corner of it, because we may have lived there before, or next month, we could be living somewhere else." (ZA: ei)

From my experience, these can include characteristics such as openness to difference, good listening ability, empathy, curiosity, generosity, and bravery. There is a strong sense of needing to adapt to new situations. There is definitely a kind of rootless living—whether or not a person keeps moving or spends a long period of time in one place. (DC: ei)

7.7.4 Nation-less ATCKs and Belonging

As one of the primary questions of this study is how do Nation-less ATCKs conceptualise their sense of belonging, the e-mail interview asked participants to rank in order of strength of feeling, their sense of belonging to those elements that had previously been highlighted in the chat interviews. In the analysis of these responses, it was evident that nine out of the twelve participants all listed either "Other people who identify as nation-less" or more specifically, "Nation-less ATCKs / Global nomads" in their top three (most included both in their top three). Those who didn't, mentioned instead "expatriates," or "People who

travel and lot and have many international experiences” instead. None of the participants listed solely other factors which didn’t have an international element such as “a university, club, team you belong to” or “Those who share your beliefs”. This strengthened the idea that many nation-less ATCKs do feel a strong sense of kinship and affinity towards other ATCKs or internationals, regardless of their nationality. As one participant put it:

I belong to a larger community of nomads (which, unfortunately, can't issue passports). If the TCK community and/or the global nomad community could be a "nation" I would belong there. (DE: ei)

7.7.5 NatioNILism vs. NatioNALism

On this note there was, however, quite some disagreement when it came to the question of whether the concept of NatioNILism could be compared to that of NatioNALism. In simple terms, whether participants sense of belonging to nation-less-ness, could in any way be compared to the sense of belonging others have with regards to their nation, or the people within that nation. Responses were very varied and seemed to depend on participants’ individual ideas concerning the definition of what a nation meant to them.

Those participants who thought of nation in terms of flags, songs, shared traditions and customs found it rather difficult to equate any kind of link between NatioNILism and NatioNALism. They explain:

No, I don't think so as this nation-less-ness is just a concept however, the feeling of belonging to a nation is a totally different thing. People who feel that they belong to a nation can identify themselves with it and other people can identify other people with that nation, however those people that are nationless, have nothing to identify themselves with or compare to. (OQ: ei)

I don't think these are very similar although it's not easy to explain. Being born and living within a nation means first of all being a "legitimate" part of something that has been constructed. Instead, if you

live in a state-less way, the experience is much less clear and you never have the same amount of established support. (DC: ei)

I suppose my sense of comradeship with people who are similarly nationless would be the same as the bonds felt between people within a nation. Similar backgrounds, outlook on life and the world etc. But I think the feeling of being nationless is quite different from a sense of belonging to a nation. There are no confines to nationless-ness. You are a person defined by your own personality and not a clear national culture or identity. (QR: ei)

Others who seemed to conceptualise nation more in terms of a collective of people united by similar sense of belonging, and similar characteristics, were more able to draw comparisons. This sentiment is voiced below:

Yes--the concept behind a national identity is community--we all have some desire to belong to a group, with the perception of shared values, experiences and a sense of solidarity among the members. For someone who is nationless, that community knows no national boundaries, but manifests itself in international schools, hotels/hostels, universities, whilst travelling on a train, or working for large international companies/organizations abroad. When people determine that they belong to any group, or consciously adopt any identity, they are setting up barriers and defining who is in, and who remains on the outside. This is much the same phenomenon with nations/national identities. (KL: ei)

Yes, in the sense that I can immediately relate to and find commonalities with others who share the same belonging to nation-less-ness, regardless of the different countries they have lived in. This is similar to how citizens of the same country, or people of the same race, always gravitate towards each other and can connect quickly because of shared background. (EG: ei)

Yes, I think comparisons could tentatively be drawn. My feeling of nationlessness is forms an integral part of my personality and attitudes in much the same way as another person's association with a single country does. (BC: ei)

I think it's basically the same thing, just on a larger scale. Where other people have strong feelings for their own nation and people, the rest of us have those same feelings towards the entire world (or at least those places we've lived or visited). (ZA: ei)

Yet regardless of whether these nation-less ATCKs thought that their sense of nationless-ness could be compared with that others feel towards

their nation, or not – one aspect remained consistent between them – their pride in their sense of identification.

7.7.6 Pride / Empowerment in NationILism

Although, as can be seen above, Nation-less ATCKs do recognise some negative aspects pertaining to their sense of identification, they also voiced an overwhelming pride in their NationILism. This pride seems to stem from a recognition of their unusual condition, the experiences they have had which lead to this identification and the freedom it gives them to feel at home around the world. For some participants, this pride took it's time in asserting itself, yet once settled, takes an empowering form:

It took me at least up until the age of 16 to realize that I can define my own identity. I thought that being "nationless" was synonymous with being "lost" in the world. What nationlessness means to me now is that I can make myself at home in many places. (BC: ei)

Without being arrogant, I am very proud of my nationless identity. I have chosen to define myself as a nationless ATCK and this, I strongly feel and believe, IS an identity in itself. (FE: ei)

When describing why they felt a sense of pride in their nationILism, many used the word "unique":

Overall, I am somewhat proud of my nationless identity, because I know I am rather unique, and I have had experiences that others have not had, and that many are envious of. (ZY: ei)

Overall, I like my nationless identity - it makes me unique and special, and I am proud of it." (EG: ei)

Others spoke about the comfort feeling nation-less gave them in terms of being able to live anywhere in the world.

I would say I am proud of my nationless identity. For me it is a natural state of being, but one that does not always fit into the reality of the world around me. I enjoy the sense of feeling that I don't belong anywhere but can feel relatively "at home" anywhere. (QR: ei)

I'm "proud" of this because it is clear to me that only through exposure to different environments, and to feeling like an outsider, can one build awareness and not rush to judgment. I feel confident that I can go (almost?) anywhere in the world and rely on my skills in observing, listening, and asking questions to find a way to connect. It makes me feel self-sufficient, also. (DC: ei)

Overall, it was very interesting for me to observe that a condition that had previously been written about in terms of confusion or a lack of certain identity, had been grasped upon as a vehicle for empowerment and pride.

7.7.7 Summary of Findings

In sum, it is clear that ATCKs incorporate the concept of nation within their identities in a variety of ways. For most ATCKs, the nation of their birth does not play a focal role in terms of their cultural identification. This fact was clearly represented in their difficulty in answering the question, "Where are you from" as highlighted in responses from my research participants as well as in literature resulting from previous research.

On the whole, ATCK backgrounds result in a broad worldview and a belief in the fact that there is a strong set of characteristics shared between the ATCK community. Perhaps for this reason most ATCKs feel their strongest sense of belonging towards people, rather than places. Their concept of "home" also fits within this placeless framework, as their definitions have little to do with location, and more to do with emotional space and comfort.

When it comes to those who identify with a sense of nation-less belonging, most do not resent it. A majority of nation-less ATCKs are proud of their NatioNILism, and recognize the negatives, as well as the positives, of this kind of identification. A smaller group of ATCKs go

further than this, feeling a strong sense of pride in their Nationlism.

This is summed up best by one participant during an e-mail interview:

I do feel that my sense of belonging to nationlessness is in many ways comparable to how other people might feel towards their nation, and towards people within that nation. I feel patriotic about my nationless identity in that I will defend its validity if challenged to do so. I am prepared to stand up for what my identity represents and champion its cause if I feel that its existence is questioned or attacked by any one. I will not allow people to make a mockery of the concept of nationlessness. Why? Because it is the essence of who I am, and my identity is as important to me as it is to another who identifies with another culture/cultures. Patriotism comes in many shapes and forms. Why not nationlessness? (FE: ei)

VIII. CONCLUSION

This thesis was built from previous studies on ATCK identity. The motivation for this study was the claim that in intercultural settings, it is important to be able to effectively acknowledge and understand the identity and self-concept of a counterpart, in order to communicate successfully.

In the 2009 movie, *Avatar*, the constructed language, “Na’vi” which is used by the indigenous inhabitants of the fictional moon, Pandora, uses the phrase “Oel ngati kameie,” which translates to “I See you” as its primary greeting. In an interview³⁰ with USC linguistics professor, Paul Frommer, it is pointed out that “See” is capitalized within the script as it means to *see into* and understand a person. This is relevant as surely this is exactly what we aim for, in effective intercultural exchanges – to see, and be seen, as we believe we truly are. As Kim and Ebesu Hubbard (2007: 225) point out, understanding a strangers’ communication style, a fundamental part of intercultural communication, constitutes an essential step in going beyond the dichotomy of ‘us’ versus ‘them’. In dialogue, we should continue to strive towards the recognition of our counterparts’ identities, especially in the current climate where new forms of identification are emerging.

³⁰ Accessed from <http://movieblog.ugo.com/movies/paul-frommer-interview> on June 26, 2010

8.1 New Identities

As our world changes, globalizes, mobilizes and place takes on new meaning due to technological constructions of space, our identities are forming in reflection. Cross-culturally, it is important to recognize and begin to understand these identities. For example, it is interesting to evaluate the cultural identity of an ATCK in comparison to the more traditional mono-national individual who feels some connections towards nation within their identity. Interculturally, it is imperative to be able to interpret people's identities in the way they wish to be "Seen" in order to be able to create a third space in which real dialogue can take place.

With regards to the ATCK phenomenon, we are faced with a cultural identity which does not usually define itself within the boundaries of a nation. As Jameson (2007: 3) points out, *"Focusing solely on nationality may lead people to have unjustified confidence in their ability to interact effectively in intercultural situations."* We must strive towards the ability to suspend judgment and maintain the ability to see and interpret the identity of each individual as they wish to project it. If we do not, we are in danger of falling back on stereotypes. The Collins Dictionary of Sociology (Jary & Jary, 1995: 656) defines a stereotype as a *"set of inaccurate, simplistic generalizations about a group of individuals which enables others to categorize members of this group and treat them routinely according to these expectations."* Stereotyping hinders what Ting Toomey refers to as mindful intercultural communication.

8.2 ATCK Culture

The ATCK is an example of the many different kinds of cultural identities that are forming in our current global climate and can be seen as a culture within themselves.

This thesis sees culture as a pair of tinted glasses, a continually evolving frame of reference through which we understand ourselves. Our culture is composed of our values, beliefs and norms as well as the way we look at the world, the way we *See*. Under this definition we can conclude that there is something such as an ATCK culture. Although ATCKs are influenced by a multitude of factors due to their vastly various backgrounds, there are shared characteristics, shared worldviews and many feel united by their sense of a belonging to a wider ATCK community.

As this thesis extensively points out, the first of these characteristics is the difficulty ATCKs have in answering the question, “Where are you from?” This complexity has been covered by literature of previous research and has also been significantly substantiated by participants within my research.

The second is the recognition amongst ATCKs that they are part of a larger community of people like themselves. As Petkova (2005: 21 – 22) points out, *“Both communities and individuals usually establish their cultural identity through comparison with other communities or individuals. By comparing with “others” they become aware not only of who and what they are but who and what they are not.”* The existence of the term, “ATCK” is evidence that this is a group rather than a single phenomenon, and this expression has served as an umbrella to unite an otherwise invisible

community of people. ATCKs have defined themselves in terms of their being similar to other ATCKs, and also in terms of *not* being the same as peers from the country of their birth. This community or culture is an example of those Featherstone (2003: 25) was referring to when speaking of global cultures:

First, we can point to the existence of a global culture in the restricted sense of “third cultures”: sets of practices, bodies of knowledge, conventions and lifestyles that have developed in ways which have become increasingly independent of nation-states. In effect there are a number of trans-societal institutions, cultures and cultural producers who cannot be understood as merely agents and representatives of their nation-states.

These kind of cultures do not form within the boundaries of nations, but can be compared to a nation in terms of Anderson’s (1991) concept of a nation as an “imagined community”. These cultures can be distinguished by their indifference to place and physical boundaries. As Morley & Robins (1995: 1) state:

Patterns of movement and flows of people, culture, goods and information mean that it is now not so much physical boundaries – the geographical distances, the seas or mountain ranges – that define a community or nation’s ‘natural limits’. Increasingly we must think in terms of communications and transport networks and of the symbolic boundaries of language and culture – the ‘spaces of transmission’ defined by satellite footprints or radio signals- as providing the crucial, and permeable, boundaries of our age.

Born into a culture with such permeable boundaries, a third characteristic common to ATCKs is a global worldview. Pollock and Van Reken (1991) speak of this worldview in both a positive (in terms of perspective) and negative (in terms of arrogance) light. Regardless of its value, this does seem to be a characteristic prevalent in many ATCKs and was one that also featured in discussions with my participant group.

8.3 The ATCK Characteristic of 'Belonging to the Spaces Between'

As we have highlighted that the ATCK culture includes characteristics such as difficulty in focusing on place in terms of cultural identity, it stands to reason that the fourth characteristic is the ATCKs relationship with liminality. "Between what?" a reader may well ask, yet the 'what' doesn't really matter. The *what* could be nations, values, religions, or a variety of other such cultures an ATCK has experienced and been a part of. In this way, the ATCK is similar to Bauman's (1999: 29) tourist. "*Like a vagabond, the tourist is on the move. Like the vagabond, he is everywhere he goes in, but nowhere of the place he is in.*" This either/or and none/all approach is one voiced by many ATCKs. In the past, it has often been interpreted in a negative light, in terms of 'not knowing where one belongs' and yet more recently, as illustrated by this passage from Schaetti & Ramsey (2009: 5) it is also being portrayed as an empowering concept:

Liminality, then, is a construct powerfully resonant for global nomads. Understanding it encourages them to celebrate their marginality: It is not necessary to choose between the United States or Kenya, between Japan or the United Kingdom. Living in liminality encourages complex, multiplistic perspectives. Their daily experiences persuade them to think in terms of "both/and" rather than "either/or". Liminality reinforces that it is a blessing to be able to "dance in-between," with a foot planted gently in each reality.

This sentiment was echoed by many interview participants and suggests a new perspective on liminality. In this interpretation, liminality takes on a more tangible form and becomes something positive that ATCKs can embrace as an aspect of their identity.

It is in this space, that many ATCKs have also chosen to define, "home". As evident from previous research and from the voices that came through during my interviews, home does no longer have to be

conceptualised in static terms. Schaetti and Ramsey (1995: 103) sum up with the words, *“Typically, home does not exist for the global nomad as a single place but as a multiplicity of relationships; it is not a “here or there” but an ‘everywhere’.”* ATCKs serve as an example of a new people who have changed the focus of ‘home’ from a place to a feeling. Although places are static, feelings are as mobile as the nomads themselves.

Indeed, liminality does seem to be intrinsically linked with mobility, as many ATCKs find themselves continually on the move, or under the influence of what Pollock and Van Reken (2001) term the “migratory instinct”. Cockburn (2002: 481) recognises that this instinct is born out of continual change and states:

However where change becomes a ‘constant’, this frequently means as adults, TCKs exhibit a need to be mobile... Adult TCKs have been found to need to move frequently even within one town if not abroad. They appear to struggle to settle and remain in one place.

Previous research has often equated this need for change with a kind of restlessness and indeed, some of my participants did complain that their instinct to move did clash with other aspects of their lives such as relationships, careers or responsibilities. Yet others see their drive to move as a liberating force that motivates their curiosity about the world. Regardless of how it’s interpreted, perhaps the ability to remain in one place is no longer of any more value than mobility.

8.4 The ATCK Characteristic of NatioNILism

Although previous research had considered the concept of belonging in ATCK identity, and had touched on this phenomenon of liminality, it had stopped at the conclusion that ATCKs had a complex relationship with places and nations, that some felt a sense of belonging to everywhere and others to nowhere. This thesis set out to move one step further and consider belonging outside of the confines of place and geographical locus. It aimed to discover whether there was such a thing as the phenomenon of NatioNILism, a sense of belonging to nation-lessness, and an intangible concept not grounded in place.

After reviewing information provided by ATCKs in 70 demographic surveys, transcripts from 29 interviews, and a further twelve e-mail interviews which focused on the concept of NatioNILism in depth, this study concludes that there is indeed such a phenomenon. It seems that this phenomenon has been born out of our current climate of escalating globalization, a modern technological frenzy which has sped together our access to each other, merged boundaries and borders and created within them, new solutions and new identities.

Yet this phenomenon does not by its existence deny any affinity with nation. Participants did voice varying levels of belonging towards the nations they had experienced living within, as well as those that they hadn't. Many factors influenced an ATCK's sense of belong towards those nations including their own acceptance within those nations, the length of their stays within those nations, as well as their cultural proximity to those nations.

Not only do ATCKs feel varying degrees of belonging towards nations, but it is also evident that they find ways and means to belong to many other things within their lives such as people, family, profession, and the global community of other ATCKs. As our environments have become more virtual, it seems our communities have followed suit and it is only a matter of time before we can find the same sense of belonging and pride in *space*, as we previously did in *place*. Hence we are left with the conclusion that not only do some ATCKs identify with a sense of belonging to NationILism, there are also some ATCK individuals who feel proud and almost 'patriotic' in this sense of belonging to nation-lessness.

Although our world has changed and continues to do so, our need for identity and belonging has not. What may require changing, however, is simply our ways of identifying each other. The ATCK phenomenon is just an example of a global trend towards new identities. This study highlighted the need to move beyond identifying each other solely in terms of belonging towards geographical location and problematised the subsequent question, "Where are you from?" as dated. However, just as we find new ways to conceptualize ourselves in our ever-changing world, we will also find ways to recognize each other.

8.5 Limitations of the Study and Implications for Further Research

Overall, I am satisfied with the snapshot of a single phenomenon this study provided. Nonetheless, it would have been fascinating to have had more time to devote to researching the concept of ATCK belonging and identity. Face-to-face interviews, focus group and the chance to ask further questions would have unearthed even more valuable

information. My interviewees were a rich source of information and the tremendous wealth of issues and ideas that could be taken from the transcripts and discussed were far too numerous to do justice to in a single Master's thesis. Therefore I hope that this is only the beginning and that others will continue where I left off.

Several limitations became apparent to me within the research process. Firstly, as a product of a dominantly anglo-saxon educational environment, I recognize that I must have dealt with the concept of the self and identity within this thesis, with a strong 'Western bias.' As Sparrow (2000: 177) elucidates:

The idea that a mind can isolate itself from its experience has also been problematized frequently by those outside western cultural paradigms. Balagangadara (1991) suggests, in stark contrast to this concept, that while: the Western man feels the presence of 'something deep inside himself' even if he is unable to say what it is (and) builds an identity for such a self (which) is what makes such an endowed organism unique . . . By contrast, the Easterner would experience nothing, or some kind of hollowness, the psychological identity of such a self is a construction of the 'other', an agent is constituted by the actions which an organism performs, or . . . is the actions performed and nothing more (Balagangadara, 1991, p. 103).

Although this study has succeeded in not being dominated by the American/UK-background ATCK phenomenon, there is a great need for further research in this field to be undertaken by researchers from all backgrounds and experiences.

Equally, by necessity, this research was limited to those ATCKs with high English language ability, but it would also be of interest to conduct similar studies with speakers of other languages, to consider whether their experiences share any commonalities.

Furthermore, participants of this study had often experienced international schooling systems, which no doubt influenced their concepts of belonging and identification. It would be of great interest to consider the differences between these and other participants who had attended local schools.

As the ATCK phenomenon grows larger, new questions will continue to present themselves. During a chat interview, one participant made an interesting observation concerning nation-less representation in a global arena:

I do think that people who understand themselves to be "citizens of the world" would really benefit from having some kind of presence as a large group to speak about issues that people who speak from the perspective of nations do not do. The U.N. is made up of nations; what about finding representation for those who live beyond the borders?
(DC: ei)

This study did not touch upon the concept of representation for those that identify as nation-less, or upon the roles these people play on the world stage, professionally or otherwise, but further research in all these areas is needed.

Lastly, within this study, the concept of "NatioNILism" was introduced. Initially, I had wanted to draw a distinction between NatioNILity, which I wanted to define as:

1. The condition of attributing no value or sense of belonging to a nation or territory.
2. A sense of belonging tied with nation-less-ness.

and NatioNILism. Just as "nationality" refers to a state of being and "nationalism" refers to a sense of pride within that state of being, I

wanted to draw the same distinction with the definition of NatioNILism as:

1. The condition of pride in attributing no value or sense of belonging to a nation or territory.
2. A sense of pride in a belonging tied with nation-less-ness.

I decided that drawing such a subtle distinction between two new and very related terms would only add to reader confusion and hence used just the one: NatioNILism.

This thesis aims to introduce the new concept of NatioNILism, to shed light on one of many emerging new identities and to contribute towards informing the field of intercultural communication in order to move closer towards effective dialogue between all peoples.

In terms of the light it has shed, this thesis is only a flash in the darkness but it is a start and an invitation for others to continue to explore.

*If everyone is a stranger, no one is.*³¹

³¹ As quoted by Pels, D. (1999: 71)

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X. APPENDICES

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Appendix 1: Participant data pie charts

TABLE 2. Pie chart representation of participants by birth country

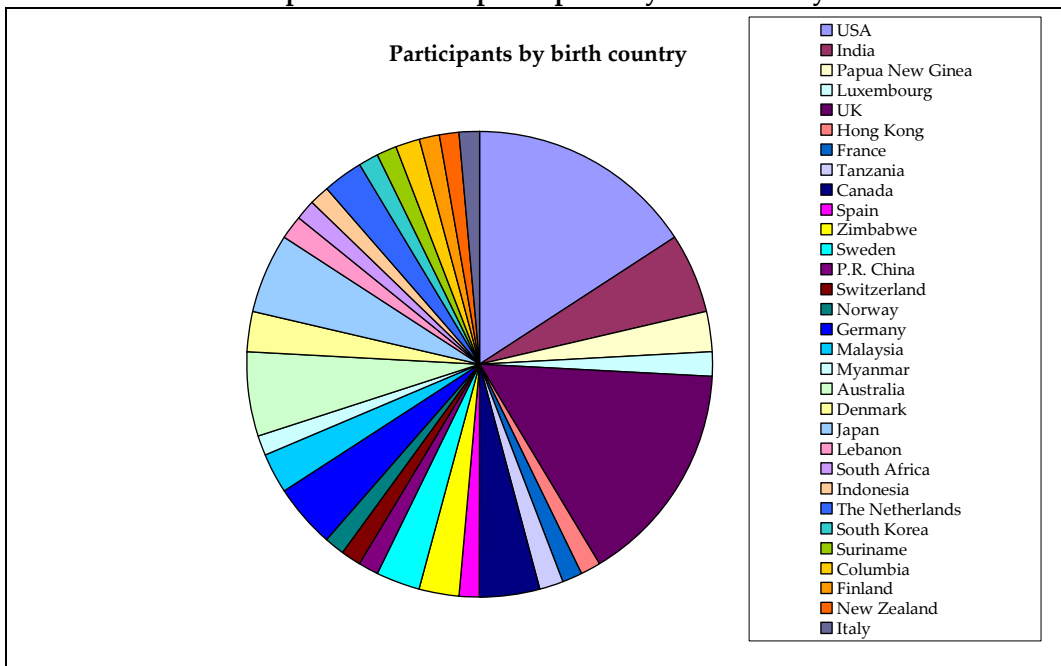
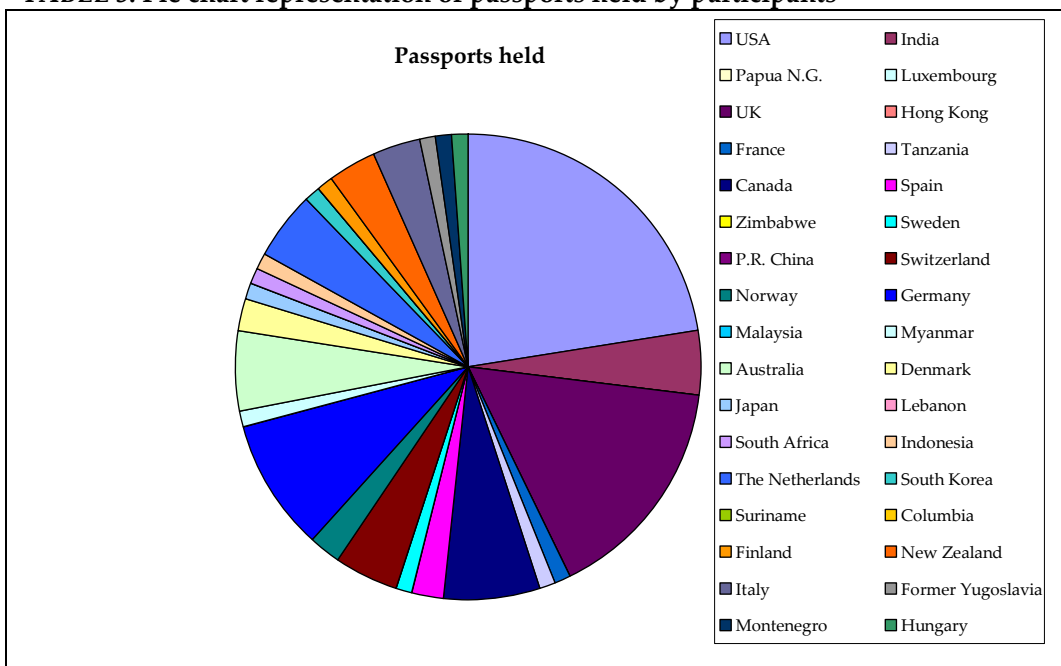


TABLE 3. Pie chart representation of passports held by participants



Appendix 2. Participants' birth country and passport country compared to that of their parents' & Number of countries, number of schools and number of languages spoken.

Participant	Birth country	Passport country	Parents	# countries	# schools	# languages
AB	UK	UK	One diff	2	3	4
BC	Hong Kong	UK	Both diff	6	8	2
DE	Japan	USA	Both diff	2	5	4
HI	USA	USA	Both diff	4	7	3
KL	Canada	Canada	Both diff	2	4	4
QR	Zimbabwe	Germany	One diff	4	2	4
RS	Sweden	Italy, USA	One diff	5	8	5
ST	Germany	Germany	Same	2	4	4
UV	Switzerland	Switzerland	One diff	5	5	4
YZ	Canada	Canada	One diff	3	6	3
ZA	USA	USA	Same	5	4	4
BA	USA	USA	Same	2	4	2
CB	UK	Swiss, German	Both diff	6	4	6
DC	Zimbabwe	German	One diff	5	2	3
ED	UK	Canada, UK	Same	2	6	2
FE	Malaysia	Norway	Same	3	5	4

GF	Denmark	Denmark	Same	4	5	4
LK	India	India	Same	4	6	4
QP	N.Z.	N.Z	Both diff	2	2	2
RQ	Australia	Australia	Same	5	6	3
SR	PNG	USA	Both diff	3	3	5
XW	Japan	Switzerland, Germany	Both diff	4	3	4
ZY	The Netherlands	UK	Both diff	6	6	4
DF	USA	USA	Both diff	3	4	3
EG	Luxembourg	USA	Both diff	3	13	5
FH	UK	UK	One diff	4	4	3
MO	USA	USA	Same	3	9	4
NP	Japan	Japan	Same	3	5	4
OQ	Myanmar	Myanmar/Singapore	Same	5	3	4
Average				3.7	5	3.7

Appendix 3: Alerts posted to attract participants

Posted on Facebook Groups:

1. Official UWCSEA Alumni Group Posted: 02 March 2010

ATCK Research - Nationless Belonging

Hi, I attended UWC from Pre-IB to graduating in 99. I am currently completing a Master's Thesis on the subject of nation-less identity in the field of intercultural communication. I am doing some data collection and looking for people who consider themselves as Adult Third Culture Kids, are over 18 and identify with a sense of nation-less-ness. If you feel this applies to you and would be willing to fill out a short (2 pg) demographic survey and participate in a chat style (typing over facebook or skype) interview, please contact me, Yoshi, at grote.joanna@gmail.com

Your anonymity within the research will be assured but should you have any questions about confidentiality or the nature of this research, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Many thanks,

Yoshi³²

³² <http://www.facebook.com/yoshi.grote?cropssuccess#!/group.php?gid=5638092338>

2. AISB Class of '99 Posted: 16 February 2010

Research: Do you feel no sense of belonging to a particular nation?

Hi there! I attended AISB from 1990 - 1995 (Grades 5 - 9) I am currently completing a Master's Thesis on the subject of nation-less identity in the field of intercultural communication. I am doing some data collection and looking for people who consid...er themselves as Adult Third Culture Kids, are over 18 and identify with a sense of nation-less-ness.

If you feel this applies to you and would be willing to fill out a short (2 pg) demographic survey and participate in a chat style (typing over facebook or skype) interview, please contact me, Yoshi, at grote.joanna@gmail.com Your anonymity within the research will be assured but should you have any questions about confidentiality or the nature of this research, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Many thanks, Yoshi³³

I. UWCSEA Class of '99 Posted: 28 September 2009

Hi

I'm currently doing some research for my Master's thesis in Intercultural Communication. The subject concerns Adult Third Culture Kids and their orientations towards nationality. If you would be willing to fill our a short survey, please contact me: grote.joanna@gmail.com

Much appreciated

Yoshi / Joasia UWC '06-'09³⁴

³³ <http://www.facebook.com/yoshi.grote?cropsuccess#!/group.php?gid=17364316266>

³⁴ <http://www.facebook.com/yoshi.grote?cropsuccess#!/group.php?gid=2288185047>

II. Locating Lost Friends AISB Posted: 16 February 2010

Research: Do you feel no sense of belonging to a particular nation?

Hi there! I attended AISB from 1990 - 1995 (Grades 5 - 9) I am currently completing a Master's Thesis on the subject of nation-less identity in the field of intercultural communication. I am doing some data collection and looking for people who consider themselves as Adult Third Culture Kids, are over 18 and identify with a sense of nation-less-ness.

If you feel this applies to you and would be willing to fill out a short (2 pg) demographic survey and participate in a chat style (typing over facebook or skype) interview, please contact me, Yoshi, at grote.joanna@gmail.com Your anonymity within the research will be assured but should you have any questions about confidentiality or the nature of this research, please do not hesitate to contact me. Many thanks, Yoshi³⁵

³⁵ <http://www.facebook.com/yoshi.grote?cropsuccess#!/group.php?gid=2249896818>

III. You know you went to an International school when... Posted: 02
March 2010

Hi there!

I attended international schools from the age of 5 - 18. I am currently completing a Master's Thesis on the subject of nation-less identity in the field of intercultural communication. I am doing some data collection and looking for people who consider themselves as Adult Third Culture Kids, are over 18 and i...dentify with a sense of nation-less-ness. If you feel this applies to you and would be willing to fill out a short (2 pg) demographic survey and participate in a chat style (typing over facebook or skype) interview, please contact me, Yoshi, at grote.joanna@gmail.com

Your anonymity within the research will be assured but should you have any questions about confidentiality or the nature of this research, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Many thanks,

Yoshi³⁶

³⁶ <http://www.facebook.com/yoshi.grote?cropssuccess#!/group.php?gid=2216724758>

IV. AISBudapest and proud of it! Posted 16 February 2010

Research: Do you feel no sense of belonging to a particular nation?

Hi there! I attended AISB from 1990 - 1995 (Grades 5 - 9) I am currently completing a Master's Thesis on the subject of nation-less identity in the field of intercultural communication. I am doing some data collection and looking for people who consi...der themselves as Adult Third Culture Kids, are over 18 and identify with a sense of nation-less-ness.

If you feel this applies to you and would be willing to fill out a short (2 pg) demographic survey and participate in a chat style (typing over facebook or skype) interview, please contact me, Yoshi, at grote.joanna@gmail.com Your anonymity within the research will be assured but should you have any questions about confidentiality or the nature of this research, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Many thanks, Yoshi³⁷

V. *ISSH Alum* Posted: 16 February 2010

Hi there! I attended ISSH from 1986 to 1990 (Kindergarten – Grade 4) I am currently completing a Master's Thesis on the subject of nation-less identity in the field of intercultural communication. I am doing some data collection and looking for people who consider themselves as Adult Third Culture Kids, are over 18 and identify with a sense of nation-less-ness. If you feel this applies to you and would be willing to fill out a short (2 pg) demographic survey and participate in a chat style (typing over facebook or skype) interview, please contact me, Yoshi, at grote.joanna@gmail.com Your anonymity within the research will be assured but should you have any questions about confidentiality or the nature of this research, please do not hesitate to contact me. Many thanks, Yoshi³⁸

³⁷ <http://www.facebook.com/?sk=2361831622#!/group.php?gid=2204618380>

³⁸ <http://www.facebook.com/?sk=2361831622#!/group.php?gid=2204616144>

VI. I Went to ISSH in Tokyo

RESEARCH - ATCKs and Nation-less Identity

Hi there! I attended ISSH from 1986 to 1990 (Kindergarten – Grade 4) I am currently completing a Master’s Thesis on the subject of nation-less identity in the field of intercultural communication. I am doing some data collection and looking for people who consider themselves as... Adult Third Culture Kids, are over 18 and identify with a sense of nation-less-ness. If you feel this applies to you and would be willing to fill out a short (2 pg) demographic survey and participate in a chat style (typing over facebook or skype) interview, please contact me, Yoshi, at grote.joanna@gmail.com Your anonymity within the research will be assured but should you have any questions about confidentiality or the nature of this research, please do not hesitate to contact me. Many thanks, Yoshi³⁹

Posted on LinkedIn:

The same message (below) was posted on March 30th 2010 to the following groups:

United World College of South East Asia⁴⁰

United World College (UWC) Alumni⁴¹

TCKID⁴²

Intercultural Navigators⁴³

Families in Global Transition (FIGT)⁴⁴

³⁹ <http://www.facebook.com/?sk=2361831622#!/group.php?gid=2204690085>

⁴⁰ http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=1159987&trk=myg_ugrp_ovr

⁴¹ http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=65191&trk=myg_ugrp_ovr

⁴² http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=1510657&trk=myg_ugrp_ovr

⁴³

<http://www.linkedin.com/groupAnswers?viewQuestions=&gid=1772736&forumID=3&sik=1272714202526>

⁴⁴

http://www.linkedin.com/groupAnswers?viewQuestions=&gid=1802636&forumID=3&sik=1272714202527&split_page=2

Research - ATCKs and Nationless Identity

I am currently completing a Master's Thesis on the subject of nation-less identity in the field of intercultural communication. I am doing some data collection and looking for people who consider themselves as Adult Third Culture Kids, are over 18 and identify with a sense of nation-lessness. If you feel this applies to you and would be willing to fill out a short (2 pg) demographic survey and participate in a chat style (typing over facebook or skype) interview, please contact me, Yoshi, at grote.joanna@gmail.com

Your anonymity within the research will be assured but should you have any questions about confidentiality or the nature of this research, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Many thanks,

Yoshi

Appendix 4: Blank Example of Demographic Survey

Demographic Survey

Name:
Age:
Country of Birth:
Passport(s) held:
Mother's country of birth:
Father's country of birth:
Mother's passport(s) held:
Father's passport(s) held:
Mother's native language(s):
Father's native language(s):

Please indicate if your grandparent(s)' countries of birth / passports / native languages differ significantly from that of yours and your parents'

--

Please indicate the country(ies) you lived in during the first 18 years of your life:

Age:	Country(ies):
0	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
16	
17	
18	

For what reason(s) did you live in these countries?

Please list the full names of the schools you attended from the ages 0 – 18 and indicate (if possible) whether they were international or local:

Please indicate your mother and/or father's and/ or guardian's jobs throughout the time you were aged 0 - 18

Mother:

Father:

Guardian:

What is your native language(s)?

Please indicate other languages you speak and to what level

Language

Level

If you speak more than one language, please list these languages and indicate in which circumstances you speak them (ie. Home, school, with one parent etc.)

How do you usually answer the question: "Where are you from?"

Would you be happy to participate in a follow up questionnaire / e-mail interview?

Additional Comments

Appendix 5: Semi-structured Chat Interview Questions

1. Where are you from?
2. Does your answer to that question depend on context? If so, how?
3. How satisfied are people with your answer?
4. Can you recount to me a few instances of how the dialogue goes, from your experience?
5. Do you feel the answer you most often give, accurately represents your identity?
6. Please explain any sense of belonging you have tied with a nation or nations.
7. Please explain any other sense of belonging you might have.
8. Do you feel a sense of belonging to any of the following?
 - a. Expatriates
 - b. Travelers
 - c. Other ATCKs / Global Nomads
 - d. People who have attended international schools
 - e. Citizens of countries you have lived in
 - f. Other – Please explain:
9. In general, what kind of people do you find you relate to the most?
10. What meaning does the word “home” have to you?

Appendix 6: E-mail Interview Questions

1. What are you overall feelings concerning your nationless identity? What are the positive and negative aspects? How proud are you of it?
2. Do you believe that are any common characteristics shared by people who identify with nationless belonging? If so, what kind of characteristics?
3. Do you feel that your sense of belonging to the concept of nation-less-ness could in any way to compared to what other people feel towards nation, or towards people within that nation? If so, how/why?
4. Please rank (in order of strongest to weakest) your sense of belonging to the following: (if you feel no sense of belonging to one / several or / any of the below, please indicate this in your answer):
 - a. Other people who identify as nationless
 - b. An invisible and global community of ATCKs/Global nomads
 - c. Nationless ATCKs / Global nomads
 - d. Citizens of your birth country
 - e. Citizens from the countries in which you have lived
 - f. Members of your profession
 - g. Those who share your beliefs
 - h. People who travel a lot and have many international experiences
 - i. Expatriates
 - j. A university, club, team you belong to
 - k. Other(s), please mention and rank accordingly
5. Please write any further comments you might have.

Appendix 7: Completed Demographic Surveys (please see attached CD)

Appendix 8. Countries lived in by participants

Country lived in	# of participants	Country lived in	# of participants
Singapore	34	Lybia	1
USA	25	Serbia	1
UK	16	Luxembourg	1
Japan	11	Macau	1
Australia	11	Pakistan	1
Papua N.G.	7	Wales	1
Germany	7	The Philippines	1
Hong Kong	7	Azerbaijan	1
Switzerland	6	Egypt	1
India	6	Spain	1
Malaysia	6	Senegal	1
Canada	6	Jordan	1
Italy	5	Ghana	1
Indonesia	5	Namibia	1
Mexico	4	Ethiopia	1
New Zealand	4	Myanmar	1
Thailand	4	Vietnam	1
France	4	Lebanon	1
South Korea	4	Congo	1
The Netherlands	4	Cameroon	1
Saudi Arabia	3	Lesotho	1
South Africa	3	Bangladesh	1
Tanzania	3	Nicaragua	1
UAE	3	Scotland	1
Zimbabwe	3	Belgium	1
Greece	3	Austria	1
Denmark	3	Suriname	1
China	3	St. Maarten	1
Kenya	3	Aruba	1
Dubai	2	Columbia	1
Iran	2	USSR (former)	1
Sweden	2	Puerto Rico	1
Norway	2	Bahrain	1
Rhodesia	1	Alaska	1
Zambia	1	Hungary	1

Appendix 9: Transcripts of Chat-Interviews (please see attached CD)

Appendix 10: Transcripts of E-mail Interviews (please see attached CD)

*There's a voice that keeps on calling me
Down the road, that's where I'll always be.
Every stop I make, I make a new friend,
Can't stay for long, just turn around and I'm gone again.*

*Maybe tomorrow, I'll want to settle down,
Until tomorrow, I'll just keep moving on.*

*Maybe tomorrow, I'll want to settle down,
Until tomorrow, the whole world is my home.⁴⁵*

⁴⁵ The Littlest Hobo, Sung by Terry Bush

*Now everything's beautiful and you feel no fear
But do you remember, the reasons why you're here
A hundred thousand miles and you still don't know
You've traveled such a long way
There's still so far to go⁴⁶.*

⁴⁶ Amir Yussof