**Personal Motivations, Political Pathways:
Canadian University Students Studying in Australia**

Heather Barnick

A Thesis

in

the Department

of

Sociology and Anthropology

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts
(Social and Cultural Anthropology) at Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

November, 2006

©Heather Barnick, 2006

Canada

**ABSTRACT**
Personal Motivations, Political Pathways:
Canadian University Students Studying in Australia
By: Heather Barnick

Student mobility programs are promoted as an experience of a lifetime. Students who study abroad are thought to acquire a number of skills necessary for today's increasingly global labour market – cross cultural competence, familiarity in a second language, and a broadened world view. Studying overseas is also presumed to accelerate the personal development of students. As students negotiate unfamiliar environments, far away from home, friends, and family, they are thought to gain wisdom, self-confidence, and independence. Along with its educational dimensions, student mobility is also enmeshed with issues related to university internationalization, international trade, a move towards knowledge-based economies, and immigration.

Based on ethnographic research, which focussed on Canadian university students studying mainly in Melbourne, Australia, I advance two main arguments in this thesis. First, I suggest that claims about the potential outcomes of studying abroad are premature and need to be re-assessed against students' own motivations for wanting to study abroad and their actual experiences during their time overseas. Second, I argue that student mobility patterns are reflective of the differential economic and political positioning of nation-states in a globalizing world. The experiences of Canadian students are, therefore, considered within the larger context of the processes involved with university internationalization and relevant political and economic priorities of nation-states. This research also forms a part of a larger project on international youth travel, developed by Professors Vered Amit (Concordia University) and Noel Dyck (Simon Frasier University).

# Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Vered Amit, for the opportunity to be a part of this project and for providing invaluable guidance, insight, feedback and support, both throughout my fieldwork and during the writing of this thesis. It has been a pleasure being your student.

There are also several people I would like to thank who helped me tremendously during my fieldwork in Melbourne, Australia. I would like to extend a big thanks to all the students who participated in interviews. I am sincerely grateful to you for being willing to take the time to share your experiences and insights, without which, I could not have written this thesis. And to Don, I truly appreciate all your additional support during my stay. I would also like to thank those at The University of Melbourne's International Student Services for providing me with assistance on this project, as well as, Professor Andy Dawson, in the department of anthropology, for lending his support in the early and somewhat "shaky" stages of my fieldwork.

Finally, I would like to thank those that have given their unconditional support towards my academic development over the years. I am eternally grateful to Jean Mitchell and Llewellyn Watson at the University of Prince Edward Island. Thank you Tyler, first, for just being there and second, for providing a rational and logical counterpoint to my arguments. To Liz and Dave, your support on the other end of the country has not gone unnoticed. Finally, sincerest gratitude to my parents, Helen and Steve. Thank you for supporting, even applauding, my often impromptu and seemingly irrational decisions during the course of my academic trajectory.

# Table of Contents

# Introduction

A pamphlet titled "Building Global Citizens" published by the Association of Universities and Colleges Canada (AUCC) reads:

> If we were to open the luggage our young students bring back from their study abroad opportunities [...] we would find the benefits that last a lifetime. A cosmopolitan world view, familiarity and connections with different world regions and polished cross-cultural abilities. Canadian university students are [...] better prepared to engage as active global citizens. (AUCC, 2000)

In Canada, one will likely encounter a number of similar claims professing the benefits of studying abroad. The websites of international offices on Canadian university campuses are riddled with phrases such as "flexibility", "cross-cultural adaptability", and "intercultural competence", which are the qualities students are thought to acquire after a brief period of time studying abroad. It is often suggested by Government representatives and university administrators that these are the skills that are both desirable and necessary if university graduates are to succeed in the internationally competitive labour market of the 21$^{st}$ century (cf. Knight, 1999a).

Since the 1990's there has been a proliferation of organizations, international conferences, research projects, and policy papers related to the economic and political objectives for student mobility; however, very little attention has been paid to actual experiences of the students themselves. Similarly, in anthropology student mobility and issues related to education in general have been neglected as topics of interest. This

1

thesis seeks to address these gaps, not only by bringing the experiences of students to the forefront, but also by attempting to establish the linkages between students' motivations for wanting to study overseas and the political and economic processes that provide the pathways that allow them to do so. I am primarily interesting in focusing my analysis around a very simple question: *What is the personal significance that a period of time studying overseas has for students?* In addressing this question, I hope to provide a more substantial basis from which one can begin to asses the legitimacy of claims, such as the one cited above, about the outcomes of participation in a study abroad program.

The analysis provided within this thesis is derived from four and a half months of fieldwork based in Melbourne, Australia, where I focussed on the experiences of Canadian university students who were there completing part of their university education. The majority of students I interviewed were between the ages 18 -30 and were participating in an exchange or study abroad program. However, I also interviewed several Canadian students completing their entire degree at an Australian university at the Master's or Ph.D. level. During my time in Australia, I also had the opportunity to have conversations and interact with students from Europe, the United States, Southeast Asia and the Middle East. I have made use of the insights gained from my interactions with these students to inform the overall discussion.

Before outlining in more detail how I intend to examine the research question posed above, there are a few terms that need to be defined and clarified from the outset. Throughout this thesis, I use the generic term "overseas" to describe students who are completing studies at a university or college, in a country where they are not a citizen or permanent resident, for any length of time. Occasionally, I also use the term "studying

2

abroad" to refer to any instance where students travel overseas to study. However, it is important to emphasise that there are three categories of overseas students – exchange students, study abroad students, and international students – which should be distinguished from one another. Although the definitions of these terms often vary from university to university, in this thesis I have decided to use the definitions provided by the University of Melbourne, since this is where most of the Canadian students I interviewed and spent time with were studying.

An exchange student typically organizes a period of study for one semester or a year, through a pre-arranged bi-lateral agreement between their home university and the university where they plan to study. An exchange student usually pays tuition to their home university and also receives credit for the courses taken abroad at their home university. Study abroad students share many similarities with exchange students, but with two main exceptions. First, a study abroad student organizes their semester abroad themselves, due to an absence of a pre-established bi-lateral exchange agreement between their home university and the foreign university where they wish to study. Because of the lack of a pre-arranged bi-lateral agreement, a study abroad student pays tuition to the foreign university (at international student rates) and will often have to go through several lengthy and difficult procedures to arrange for the credits they acquired abroad to transfer to their home institution; although, transfer of credits can be a difficult process for exchange students as well. For Canadians, these factors often, though not always, make this option much more cumbersome and expensive than studying abroad through a pre-established exchange program. It is also worth mentioning that for Americans high tuition rates in the United States, combined with the exchange rate of the American

3

dollar, mean that participating in a study abroad program, despite high international student rates, is often a cheaper option than studying at home. The final category of overseas students includes international students. An international student is one who is neither a citizen nor permanent resident of the country in which they are attending university and who will acquire their full degree from a foreign institution.

The structure of this thesis is primarily divided into two main sections. In the first section, I concentrate on ethnographic material in order to address my research question regarding the personal significance that a period studying abroad in Australia had for Canadian students. This analysis constitutes the bulk of the discussion and focuses on such questions as: What motivates students to study abroad in the first place? Are students seeking to undergo an "existential quest" as is claimed in many of the studies on youth backpackers? Do they view their travel experience as an important means of entry into a social group or class status? During the course of their experience abroad, do students find themselves being challenged to re-think their own identity, to question their assumptions about the world and their place within it? Do they challenge others to do the same? An analysis of the personal significance of such programs for students also reveals a great deal about the social and cultural environments within which students develop a series of values and expectations regarding the desired course of their life trajectories and this will be discussed as well.

The personal experiences of students also provide an interesting vantage point from which to evaluate many of the taken for granted assumptions about the social and cultural transformations which are thought to occur as a result of processes referred to as "transnationalism" or "globalization". The narratives of students and their interactions

4

with those they met abroad clearly illustrate a need to question the degree of certainty with which one can claim that the increasing cross-border movement of people and the potentials of new telecommunications technology are inevitably leading us towards an era marked by post-cultural and post-national identities or transnational political arrangements.

In the second section of this thesis, I consider the immense political and institutional organization of opportunities for students to study abroad and in doing so I highlight the fact that student mobility programs have an economic and political significance as well. In order to focus the discussion, I will concentrate on the general theme of university internationalization. The multitude of processes involved with internationalizing the university provide another perspective from which to evaluate some of the contemporary debates in anthropology relating to transnationalism and the changing role of universities and their current relationship to the nation-state. The marked contrast between the experiences of Canadian students studying in Australia and those of students from Southeast Asia, for example, suggests that student mobility, when viewed in the larger picture, is not as "emancipatory" or "cosmopolitan" as some of the institutional and political discourses might suggest. In fact, an argument I wish to advance in this thesis is that student mobility is reflective of the unequal economic and political relationships between nation-states. While this issue forms a smaller portion of the discussion within this thesis, I question to what extent the unequal conditions between students' places of origin might have penetrated students' personal experiences and relationships while they were studying in Australia. In short, what I hope to accomplish in this thesis is to negotiate the complexity of Canadian students' heterogeneous lives and

5

experiences while also considering how institutions such as the university and overarching economic and political processes have an influence in situating, giving meaning to, and constraining those lives and experiences.

## Chapter One
## Methodology

I arrived in Melbourne two weeks prior to the start of "Orientation Week," where I had planned, as part of the participant-observation component of my research, to throw myself into the middle of the chaos, excitement, perhaps even panic, as foreign students from all over the world attempted to register for courses, negotiate their way around the university, find affordable accommodations, and establish social networks. In those first few days after my arrival, aside from the lingering effects of jet lag, which continued to leave me feeling unusually chipper at 4 a.m., my period of adjustment from Montreal to Melbourne was relatively rapid. My only lingering point of contention was learning that North American "brewed" coffee was kindly referred to by a local café owner in Elsternwick (the suburb where I stayed) as "swamp water." Given the severity of my coffee addiction, this meant I had to quickly adopt the local coffee lingo for variations of espresso: long black, long black white, flat white, skinny, to indicate non-fat milk, and so on.

After I made my morning long black, I gathered my courage to negotiate the foreboding bureaucratic labyrinth that was Melbourne University's ethics procedures and requirements. I had just received an email from an official with the University of Melbourne's International Student Services (ISS) informing me that I required ethics

6

approval for my research from the University of Melbourne, or I would have to participate in the orientation activities as a silent observer. This presented a significant problem, since I had intended to use the orientation as my primary means of making initial contacts with Canadian exchange/study abroad students. The concern was fair, the University of Melbourne was responsible for the safety and well being of the students I would be contacting. However, I already had ethical clearance from my own university (Concordia University) and my supervisor had contacted The University of Melbourne several months prior to my arrival and had already engaged in a lengthy process with ISS officials in order to obtain permission for me to participate in the orientation, and so ethics approval from the University of Melbourne was not an obstacle I had anticipated. I only had a few days until orientation would begin and so I was in a hurry to get things sorted out.

After departing from the train at Flinders Station, located in downtown Melbourne, I proceeded to catch one of the many trams that clumsily bumped and clamoured up and down Swanson Street, which ran directly uphill from Flinders Station to the University of Melbourne. I took this brief respite to glance at my copy of *The Age*, one of Melbourne's newspapers. On the opinion page was an article titled "Time to Set Some Limits" with a cartoon caption underneath featuring a man sitting on a park bench throwing money to what appeared to be Muslim, Sikh and Jewish birds. A sign in the background read, "Please Don't Fund a Mental Ism" (Bone, 2005). The author, also the associate editor of *The Age,* was adamant that limits be imposed on government funding to promote multiculturalism, which he expressed in the facetious phrase – "Couscous yes, child marriage no?" (Ibid).

7

As the tram slowly ascended the hill towards the University of Melbourne, groups of students – easily distinguishable by their backpacks, university labelled apparel, and textbooks – gradually took over the composition of the tram and a mixture of languages – Mandarin, French, and Swedish – began to pour in with them. I took comfort in these observations; while I had failed to anticipate ethics approval as being a problem once I got to Melbourne, at least I could be relatively confident that Australia in general and Melbourne in particular would be ideal locations for research on student mobility. Thankfully, the ethics issue was resolved just in time for orientation week. In the end The University of Melbourne only wanted official proof that I indeed had ethical approval from Concordia University.

## Choosing a Field Site

The ethnographic research I conducted for this thesis forms a part of a larger project co-developed by Professors Vered Amit and Noel Dyck entitled *Coming of Age in an Era of Globalization: Achieving Cultural Distinction through International Travel Abroad.* In addition to my portion of the project, which was to focus on the experiences of Canadian students on exchange in Australia, Vered Amit and Noel Dyck's project also includes an investigation of the experiences of Canadian youth who are undertaking a working-holiday in the U.K., as well as Canadian students who have received athletic scholarships to American universities. For my portion of the project, Australia had a number of advantageous qualities. Compared to other member nations of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), there seemed to be a tremendous amount of activity in Australia both in terms of the volume of foreign students going there to study and the diversity of activities related to university

8

internationalization. For the period 1990-2000, Australia had experienced the largest increase of foreign students in the OECD and currently is considered to be one of the most competitive nations in terms of trade in educational services (OECD/CERI, 2002). The large increase in foreign students studying in Australia is partly the result of reduced government funding support for universities. In response, Australian universities began a conscientious effort to recruit more full fee-paying foreign students as a partial means of making up for decreased federal funding. This marks a significant change in university policy towards foreign students. Up until the 1990's, foreign students were still fully funded to study in Australia under the Colombo Plan. The changing relationship of Australian universities towards foreign students was described in a recent paper published by Australia's Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) as "[...] a broad policy shift from aid to trade" (2005, p.4).

Australia also provided an ideal location for researching the experiences of exchange/study abroad students because most of its major universities have bi-lateral exchange agreements with Canadian universities including: The University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, The University of Calgary, McGill University, McMaster University, and Queen's University. Perhaps because of the shear number of exchange opportunities, Australia is one of the most popular destinations for Canadian exchange students. While the greatest numbers of Canadian exchange/study abroad students travel to the United States, the U.K., and France, no single university in any of these locations had a substantial portion of Canadian students. Finding a significant number of Canadian students in any of these destinations would therefore have required travel over vast distances and establishing contact with several different universities.

9

In Australia however, Canadian students were relatively concentrated in three large cities situated along the Eastern coast: Sydney (NSW), Brisbane (QLD), and Melbourne (VIC). According to some preliminary statistics, gathered by Vered Amit and Noel Dyck, The University of Melbourne had approximately 25 Canadians currently enrolled for the year 2004/2005, a comparably high proportion and more than enough to ensure that I would have a good contact base from which to begin. The city of Melbourne has a high concentration of universities and colleges: Monash University, La Trobe University, The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, and Deakin University. I was aware that Monash, Deakin, and La Trobe Universities also had bi-lateral exchange agreements with Canadian universities, which meant there was a possibility that I might also be able to locate Canadians studying at these universities as well. My field research was timed to coincide with the start of The University of Melbourne's second semester, which begins in mid July and ends in mid November.

**Description of the Field Site**

Located on Port Phillip Bay in the southeastern state of Victoria, Melbourne is the second largest city in Australia after Sydney. Melbourne is widely referred to as Australia's most "multicultural" or "cosmopolitan" city. According to the last census conducted in 2001, Melbourne had a total population of 3.3 million, approximately 1.2 million of whom were born overseas. The city is designed with a number of suburbs built around the downtown core, many of them carrying a reputation for being the primary residence of specific ethnic groups. I resided in the suburb of Elsternwick, located about a fifteen-minute train ride southeast of Melbourne's city centre. Elsternwick is known for being home to a large Jewish community, a reputation it shares with two neighbouring

10

suburbs St. Kilda and Caulfield. The University of Melbourne, where I had planned to participate in the orientation activities and establish initial contacts with Canadian study abroad/exchange students, was located about a ten-minute walk from the city centre in the Northern suburb of Carlton. Carlton holds a reputation for its sizeable Italian population; however, household surveys conducted for the 2001 national census indicated that the area now houses a larger population from China, most of whom are students studying at the University.

The current waves of migration to Australia, particularly from Southeast Asia (China, Singapore, Malaysia, and Japan), should be situated within a number of significant historical changes to Australia's immigration policy. While large numbers of Chinese, Greeks and Italians came to Australia during the Gold Rush years in the early 19th century, the establishment of the Immigration Restriction Act in 1901, more often referred to as "Australia's White Policy", resulted in a significant drop in immigration to the country for all groups except those from Western Europe. The noteworthy exception to the limitations of the Immigration Restriction Act included thousands of students who were sponsored to study and train at tertiary institutions in Australia under the Colombo Plan, initiated in 1950. According to Alexander Downer, Australia's current minister for Foreign Affairs, the plan was not only about offering developmental aid but was also developed to "[...] foster political stability and counter the spread of communism in the region" (2005). The Immigration Restriction Act was officially abolished in 1973 after it was determined that 'race' could no longer be used as a factor in selecting potential migrants.

In the late 1980's, Australia began to develop a national policy of multiculturalism, which today has been updated and summarized in the policy paper: *Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity* (Australian Government Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 2003). However, at the time of my research, forming the background to Australia's rather zealous commitment and continuous movement towards all activities broadly referred to as "internationalization of education" was a tension between the formal national policy of multiculturalism coupled with a growing uneasiness and mistrust towards "foreigners" and Australian citizens who had origins in the Middle East. This was marked in discourses emanating from Australia's Federal Government, the media, and the general public. Shortly after I arrived in Australia, this "uneasiness" became more visible on T.V. programs and in newspaper reports following the bombings in the London subway system on July 7th, 2005. Tensions literally exploded on December 11th, 2005 when a series of riots broke out in Sydney, after an ad hoc protest was organized, mainly through the spread of cell phone text messages calling for Sydney residents to mobilize and reclaim Cronulla Beach from what were alleged to be Middle-Eastern youth gangs (Lapkin, 2005).

I discuss racial tensions and inequality of experience between different groups of overseas students in a section of this thesis titled "Classroom Dynamics". Unfortunately, an analysis of Australia's political climate and how this might affect university policies and the experiences of foreign students is not an issue I can address in detail within the limited space of this thesis. However, in a number of sections, I make use of vignettes drawn from newspaper articles, my own experiences, and conversations with students as a means of drawing attention to the socio-political context in Australia. This context

formed an important backdrop to experiences of both Canadians and other foreign students I spent time with in Australia. Occasionally, tensions rooted in race, ethnicity, or even nationality coloured interactions among overseas students as well as interactions between overseas students and Australians.

## The Challenges of Studying Mobility

There are of course numerous challenges in studying a topic that demands an engagement with the complexities inherent in mobility and travel. I wish to discuss these challenges as they relate to both the nature of anthropology as a discipline and the nature of my project itself. As an ethnography of "Canadians studying abroad", this thesis places itself squarely in the centre of contemporary anthropological debates and critiques surrounding fieldwork methodology. Particularly, the need to re-conceptualize "the field" in anthropological fieldwork in recognition of the fact that in a world characterized by increasing travel, mobility, and the global expansion of capitalism there is a need to carefully re-evaluate the relationship of fieldwork methodology to new configurations of power and increasing ambiguity in matters related to identity and culture.

There has been a fair amount of criticism in recent years about constructing the idea of 'culture' as if it belonged to a homogenous clearly marked group of people who are confined to a clearly delineated and bounded territorial location. Culture thought of in this way is often misconstrued as being a-historical, unchanging, and unaffected by influences of processes or the activities of people living outside a pre-determined territorial area. In a world that is increasingly defined by movement, intermingling and creolization this notion of culture has become virtually impossible to sustain. These processes are not new, however; as James Clifford (1997) points out, movements of

13

culture, ideas, peoples, languages, goods and services have a long established and complex history and as Appadurai notes "[...] groups unsullied by contact with a larger world, have probably never existed" (1988, p.39).

Despite recognition of the unboundedness, historicalness, and interconnectedness of 'cultures', anthropological field methods have been slow to adapt and in many ways continue to operate as if little or no change has occurred in the world in which anthropologists work. Despite the fact that issues related to mobility and transnational identities are at the centre of contemporary theoretical and methodological debates in anthropology, studies related to travel and tourism, especially those that focus on middle class Westerners in Western locations, are ranked relatively low on the scale of what Gupta and Ferguson (1997) refer to as "a hierarchy or purity of field sites" (p.13). There is still clearly a value system in anthropology, which despite all other considerations still upholds the value of fieldsites that are "[...] distant, exotic, and strange" (Ibid). Lash and Urry in their book *Economies of Signs and Spaces* (1994) also suggest that studies of tourism have generally been neglected as topics of research in the social sciences because of a number of academic prejudices:

> [...] of analysing manufacturing rather than services, of production rather than consumption, of 'work' rather than 'leisure', of structure rather than mobility [...] and work-related mobility rather than leisure-mobility [...]. (p.254)

The broad parameters of my project – "Canadians studying in Australia" – also conflicts with some of the basic assumptions surrounding anthropological approaches to fieldwork. These assumptions are that an anthropologist will be a stranger among a

group of relatively homogenous "locals" who inhabit (and generally remain) in a defined territory. Such a view of fieldwork was impossible to sustain during the course of my project. Most of the students I interviewed were highly mobile during their time in Australia and as the anthropologist I was as much a stranger to Australia as the students I interviewed. Although to a certain extent I was "studying my own", meaning I was studying other Canadians who were my age and also attending university, this did not imply we shared *a* culture. However, I did share many things in common with the students I met in Australia and these commonalities proved to be an asset rather than a liability. We were of similar age, were all attending university, and had similar preferences for food, movies, and activities and these were invaluable means through which I could establish a connection with students. This highlights the importance of Cohen's position that that the inevitable starting point for one's interpretation of another person's selfhood (or experience for that matter) is their own self (and their own experience) (*brackets mine,* 1994, p.3).

In order to move beyond the "localizing strategies" of traditional ethnography and embrace head on the challenges of a mobile and transnational world for anthropology, Appadurai (1991) calls for the need to develop a "cosmopolitan ethnography" that would seek to understand "the deterritorialized world that many persons inhabit and the many possible lives that persons are today able to envision" (p. 196). In one sense, such a vision of ethnography seems prudent given the multiple levels of diversity and dissimilarity among the Canadians I interviewed. While defining themselves as Canadians and identifying with that definition on one level, many students had diverse cultural backgrounds and travel experiences, which also meant they questioned

15

generalizing assumptions about what it was to be Canadian, as well as the value of what many students referred to as the "Canadian", or "North American" way of life. However, during interviews and other conversations, many students also spoke about feeling pride in their Canadian identity combined with an ability to recognize the traits of Canadians against those of people from other nations – a Canadian versus an American mentality, for example - and this is something I have had to account for in this thesis as well.

Mobility and transience defined both the field and the Canadians I spent time with and as I result I suffered no illusions that I was studying "a people" from "a culture" that could easily be located within or explained with reference to a specific and bounded territorial/cultural location. Some of the Canadians who informed my research were born overseas, others had recently immigrated to Canada, and others had lived and been educated overseas for a substantial portion of their lives, while maintaining Canadian citizenship. I also met students who considered themselves "Quebecois" and who therefore did not feel that "Canadian" captured their sense of ethnic or national identity. So while calling themselves Canadian and identifying themselves with aspects of Canadian culture on the one hand, students also maintained affinities with other territorial locations, cultural or ethnic heritage, which also informed their sense of individual identity.

The mixture of similarities and dissimilarities among Canadian exchange/study abroad students posed several difficulties not only in terms of methodology, but also in terms of interpretation during fieldwork. I was never entirely confident that students' discourses, actions, thoughts and beliefs, or interpersonal relationships could be explained or understood based upon their membership within any particular set, or even sets, of

16

categories: gender, age, class, ethnicity, nationality. However, I did not find it prudent or useful to treat everything students' said or did merely as the acts of "de-territorialized" and detached individuals whose choices, experiences and motivations were determined merely by an autonomous act of will, or personal preference. My field notes are riddled with anxious moments of interpretation, especially as students often expressed contradictory worldviews, opinions, and ideas, all of which were explained with reference to collective categories such as citizenship or ethnicity as often as they were explained as characteristics of students' own personalities. By focussing on students' individual interpretations of their experience, I hoped to avoid the pitfalls of generalizing people into categories, which may be crude or inaccurate. However, upholding this position did preclude acknowledgement of the fact that people frequent generalize themselves and others into crude, inaccurate, or stereotypical categories.

**Research Interests and their Relationship to Methods**

Youth travel as a general topic of interest in anthropology is a relatively recent one. Although studies of youth who travel as backpackers have gained in prominence since the first in depth ethnographic studies on that topic were conducted in the early 1970's, there are currently no ethnographies of comparable depth on university students who travel overseas to study. The disadvantage of the lack of research in this area was that I did not have an example to follow in order to structure my project or weigh different methodological approaches. However, as is the case with most anthropological research projects, the field conditions and the methods required to gain insight into the topic of study rarely materialize exactly as they were imagined while writing up a thesis proposal. I therefore had the advantage of being relatively open and flexible in terms of

17

how I would conduct the research from the beginning rather than learning after several weeks that what I had proposed would not be sufficient or was not especially relevant to the actual circumstances of the field.

My original intention was to focus the research on Canadian university students, aged 18-25, participating in a study abroad or exchange program. However, because I met so many Canadians in Australia who were undertaking a Master's or a Ph.D., I decided to expand my project to include their narratives and experiences as well. This shift in focus broadened my topic somewhat from a focus on Canadian exchange and study abroad students to the broader topic of Canadian university students studying in Australia. There are a number of issues related to this broad topic that I consider in this thesis; however, there were three, which formed the focus of my fieldwork. I will discuss the first two below and the third further on in this chapter.

First, student mobility programs are often promoted as a means for students to achieve greater levels of personal development in a variety of ways - learning a new language, being exposed to a new culture, gaining independence, bolstering their C.V., or just by broadening their horizons and world view. While these are the discourses coming from universities, governments, and international organizations (OECD, WTO, UNESCO), I wanted to know something of the actual motivations behind students' decisions to participate in an exchange or study abroad program. I was also interested to know why students would choose these kinds of programs over other opportunities like backpacking, working/holiday programs, or volunteering with NGO's or the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

18

A second area of interest for me was the nature and quality of the relationships that exchange and study abroad students develop during their time abroad. Many of the backpacker ethnographies I read were centered on the idea that young travellers were alienated in one or several ways from their home society and sought travel as a means of contributing to a narrative of personal development, escape, and a sense of self authenticity and identity. I was interested to know to what extent students felt alienated, or to what extent they desired an escape from their home society. Related to this question, I wanted to know how much significance the development of new social groups, friendships and networks would have for students, especially given the short duration of their stay. Would Canadian students interact to any great extent with the local population or even other non-Western students? Or, would I find that Canadian students would establish networks and friendships with other middle class Westerners very much like themselves? I was interested to investigate Sweetman's suggestion that the coming together of groups of students on exchange or study abroad programs "[...] however temporary and fragmented the group is – can provide individuals with a sense of belonging and identification as well as a sense of individual identity [...]" (Sweetman, 2004, p.79). However, I was sceptical about the durability of this "sense of belonging/identification" and the "sense of individual identity" that students might develop during their time abroad.

In order to tie together students' motivations for participating in exchange/study abroad programs, the significance and meaning assigned to friends and networks established abroad, and the possible influences such experiences can have on students sense of collective and personal identity, I wanted to identify students' perceptions of how

19

they might have changed or been influenced by their experiences or their relationships during their time in Australia. I wanted to further inquire into the question left open by Nash (1996): "[a]re these young people significantly changed by going abroad, living with their hosts, studying and amusing themselves in a variety of ways?" (p.39).

What I knew at the beginning was that I would use a combination of participant-observation, qualitative interviews with students, informal conversations with both students and university officials who worked at international offices and examination of university materials and research papers related to student mobility and international activities of the university. Participant observation was of course the most complex and demanding part of the fieldwork. I enmeshed myself in several different contexts in order to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of Canadian students studying in Australia as well as how this might contrast or coincide with the experiences, motivations, and rationales for youth who travel through another means such as backpacking. The following includes a summary of some of the main contexts for participant observation.

**Participant Observation**

The only formal activity I had planned prior to departure was to participate in the University of Melbourne's orientation for overseas students. My hope was that this would allow me to gain some experiential knowledge of being an exchange/study abroad, while also providing an ideal opportunity to make some initial contacts with Canadian students. My expectation was that orientation would be a daylong series of talks and activities, but as it turned out, orientation at the University of Melbourne was a highly organized and lengthy affair lasting almost two weeks.

For overseas students, briefing sessions were organized on July 18th, one week before the official start of the semester. The briefing sessions were divided into three broad groups: Study Abroad and Exchange Students, International Undergraduate Students, and International Postgraduate Students. I attended the session for study abroad and exchange students, which included basic information about enrolling in university courses, setting up a university email account, and an introduction to organizations for overseas students such as Melbourne University's Overseas Students Society (MUOSS) and Melbourne University Student Exchange Society (MUSEX). Both MUOSS and MUSEX organize social activities and events for students and were also set up to provide peer support if students had any questions or difficulties. The briefing session ended with a talk about safety issues from a member of university security who placed special emphasis on the safety hazards of excessive drinking and partying and wandering around Melbourne alone after dark.

Along with the initial briefing sessions, the University of Melbourne also provides several other workshops and activities, which are aimed at assisting students in establishing networks and friendships, and familiarizing themselves with the university, Australian and Western culture, and the city of Melbourne. I attended a total of eight different sessions, which I thought would be most appealing to young Canadian exchange or study abroad students. These included: a briefing session on the International Students Outdoors Program (ISOP), a presentation by a youth tourism company titled "Exploring Australia on a Budget", an information session called "Introduction to Australian Culture", a Bush Dance (similar to North American line dancing), Melbourne University's Overseas Students Society's (MUOSS) trivia night, a "Compatriot Lunch,"

21

organized for countries with the smallest proportion of foreign students at the University of Melbourne (Canada was included), the Winter Race (also organized by MUOSS), which was designed to help students get to know Melbourne and its public transportation system, and the Melbourne University Student Exchange Society's "meet and greet" at a local pub.

These sessions proved very useful for allowing me to meet foreign students, many of whom seemed enthusiastic about my project and were eager to help me find Canadians. After the end of orientation week I had a total of eight contacts with Canadian students. Once I discovered that mobile phones were an essential part of networking and forming friendships among overseas students, I eventually bought one and it became my primary means for forming relationships with students and to participate in the activities they arranged informally among themselves. After participating in a text messaging frenzy during orientation week, and going with students on several informal outings, I gradually became friends with a group composed of three Canadians (Jean, Monique and Stephen) one American (Kevin) and a Swede (Bianca). I spent time with the members of this group nearly everyday and joined them in various activities, initiated by them as well as myself. Some of the most common activities included going to out to eat or to pubs for drinks, weekly dance classes at the University of Melbourne's gym, going to "footy" (Australia Football League) games, shopping and exploring Melbourne's different suburbs. We also went on a number of trips to museums, attended theatre performances, and went to various festivals and other events such as Melbourne's International Film festival, the Fringe Festival (featuring plays, musical performances, comedic acts, artwork and photography exhibits), and the

22

Melbourne Cup (Australia's notorious horserace). There were a number of other students who frequently joined this group, such as Nathan and Atanis (two Canadian exchange students), my roommate Sonia (from France and in Australia on a co-op program for her business degree), and Jean's two Australian roommates, Greg and Janelle. I also hosted a couple of dinners at my residence in Elsternwick (which had a large communal kitchen and dining room), including a Thanksgiving dinner, which was attended by most of the Canadians I had met during orientation week as well as the students who also lived in the residence house.

Because I wanted to situate the Canadian experience within a larger context, I was also interested in gaining insight into the experiences and motivations of students from other parts of the world who had come to Australia to study. For this reason, I considered finding share-house accommodations with international students an important part of participant observation. My residence in Elsternwick housed a few Australians, but was primarily occupied by international students studying in Australia, which made for a diverse and interesting group made up of students from South Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, and China. I also spent time with these students talking in the communal kitchen or over T.V. episodes of "Neighbours" (Australia's daytime soap) or "Australian Idol."

Travel within Australia constituted another part of participant observation while in the field. I accompanied Canadian students on several short trips to different regions of Australia. First, I undertook two trips run by The University of Melbourne. The first was to Phillip Island (a popular tourist attraction because of the opportunities for koala and penguin viewing), which was organized by the University's International Students

23

Outdoors Program (ISOP). The second was to Yarra Valley for a winery tour, organized by The University of Melbourne's Postgraduate Association (UMPA). Unlike ISOP, the events and day trips organized by UMPA are meant to include both local and foreign postgraduate students; however, international students were the only ones who attended this trip. I also noticed the same phenomenon in the group exercise classes at the university's gym. With my roommate Sonia, I took a trip to Byron Bay, and stayed at a youth hostel, which helped me to get a feel for the backpacker scene. This trip was interesting because, as I later learned, during semester breaks exchange/study abroad students will often "transform" into backpackers and travel around to a number of popular destinations such as Cairns, Kangaroo Island, or Tasmania.

I also travelled to Sydney and to Perth, for both recreational reasons and to conduct qualitative interviews. I was accompanied on my trip to Sydney by my roommate Sonia as well as Kevin. There I interviewed two Canadian students who were completing their postgraduate degrees at the University of New South Wales. I went to Perth with Jean who wanted to travel there to visit some Australian friends she had met in Vancouver when they were on an exchange at the University of British Columbia. I had been in contact with several students in Perth and was able to schedule several interviews with Canadians who were undergraduates on exchange at the University of Western Australia, as well as those who were postgraduate students completing their full degree at Curtin University.

**Qualitative Interviews**

The majority of students I conducted interviews with fell within the parameters establish by Vered Amit and Noel Dyck. They were Canadians, between 18-25 years, and

24

were participating in an exchange or study abroad program. However, I also interviewed students who fell outside the criteria. Interviews were also conducted with Canadians who were defined as "international students" because they were completing their full degree at an Australian institution. Many of the Canadians who were taking a full Master's or Ph.D. in Australia were the same age as exchange students and while they were undertaking a different level of degree, they nonetheless shared much in common with exchange/study abroad students.

I was also interested in interviewing students who fell outside of the 18-25-age category. Without decreasing the significance of individuals' unique histories, institutions give meaning to and help to structure both a sense of social and political identity as well as social connection (Wyn and White, 1997, p.82). This is especially true of the university, which, at least in Canada, continues to show a strong relationship to the priorities of the nation-state. I was therefore interested to see if there were significant similarities or differences in the responses between undergraduate exchange/study abroad students in their 20's, post-graduate students in their 30's, and Ph.D. students in their 50's. I was curious to compare motivations to study overseas across generations to determine possible historical shifts in the degree to which studying abroad was viewed as having cultural significance or value for Canadian students.

During the course of this research, I also became interested in the significance of national identity among overseas students. I wanted to know if place of origin (place meaning a nation-state) bore any relationship to the ways in which students conceptualized the value or importance of studying overseas and consequently how these conceptualizations informed their own motivations and desires to complete course credits

25

or a full degree abroad. During orientation the significance of being Canadian was often understood as a contrast to Americans and American culture. As a partial means to gain a larger perspective of this issue, I also conducted qualitative interviews with three non-Canadian students; two American exchange students, Kevin and Brian as well as Bianca, an exchange student from Sweden.

The interviews I conducted were qualitative in nature and lasted anywhere from 1 hour to 3 hours. In total, I interviewed 21 Canadian students, both male and female, whose ages ranged from 20 to 55. Out of these students 10 were on an exchange, 2 were undertaking a study abroad, and 9 were Ph.D. or Master's candidates completing their full degree in Australia. The majority (14) of the students I interviewed fell within the age range of 20-25. Most of the interviews were conducted in informal settings over lunch or coffee at cafes or restaurants near university campuses. Because of the qualitative nature of the interviews and the different degree of closeness in the relationships between myself and students, there was a fair amount of variation in the kinds of questions I asked. However, there are 8 broad headings, which summarize the information that was gathered from each of those who were willing to participate in an interview.

## Question Headings

1. General Background of Students

2. Activities Undertaken while in Australia

3. Students' Motivations for Undertaking Studies Abroad

4. Students' Perceptions on the Implications of International Experience for Later Career Options

26

5. Other Expected Outcomes of Travel

6. Notions of National Identity

7. Stereotypes Encountered about Canadians or other Nations

8. Students' General Plans for the Future

In addition to the contacts I made during orientation week and the few additional ones I was able to make from students' referrals, I was also able to establish contact with Canadian students studying in other Australian cities. One of the students who resided with me in Elsternwick introduced me to Doug, a Canadian Ph.D. student who was also the president of the Post Graduate Association at Monash University. Through Doug's contacts with Postgraduate Associations across Australia, I was able to send a general email out to a number of universities explaining my project. I received several email responses from both Canadian and American students studying in Sydney, Adelaide, and Perth, which allowed me to schedule interviews.

**General Characteristics of the Students I Interviewed**

I discuss the characteristics of students I interviewed in more detail in Chapter Three of this thesis. However, there are two general traits I would like to outline here. First, the majority of those Canadians I interviewed were from large cities in Canada namely: Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Ottawa, and Calgary. Out of a total of 20 Canadians interviewed, only one was from the Maritime region and none were from Saskatchewan, Manitoba, or the Northern Territories. One could account for this by the fact that Canadian youth living in major city centres are more likely to go to some of Canada's larger universities which have bi-lateral exchange agreements with universities in Australia. However, I think this lack of representation also speaks to the socio-

27

economic inequality between the different regions in Canada. This economic inequality of course influences participation rates in tertiary level education as well as participation in student mobility programs. Of course, it is also difficult to know if there might be higher representation from the different regions of Canada among youth who travel as tourists, backpackers, or working-holiday makers.

The majority of those I interviewed were also from a relatively high socio-economic class. In fact, it would be extremely difficult for young students to come to Australia if they did not have financial support. Although, an exchange program allows students to pay tuition fees to their home institution, the flight to Australia is still considerably expensive (approximately $3,000.00 CAD) as is the cost of living. Most of the apartments available for students in Melbourne start at $250 per week (plus utilities).

Despite coming from relatively affluent families, many students told me during their interview that despite the level of their desire or motivation to travel, the state of their finances was a major determining factor in their final decision to go to Australia. I think this sentiment is best articulated by Lee, a student studying for his Master's of commerce in Sydney. While talking about a prior exchange experience at Herstmonceaux castle, a campus owned by Queen's University, which operates out of England, Lee suggested:

> *I guess what actually made me do it is the fact that I had money at that time. Like everything is really money, if I didn't have the money I wouldn't be here right now ... whereas given an infinite amount of money I would probably be all over the place.*[1]

---

[1] While it may violate standard citation practices, I have chosen to use italics and single spaced lines in this thesis in order to differentiate the narratives of students from standard academic works, statements made by government officials, or discourses emanating from government documents, university websites, or newspaper articles. Primarily, the italics are meant to indicate that students' views, thoughts, and experiences are dynamic, subject to change, and have life beyond the pages of this thesis.

28

It is common among the diverse literature on backpackers to suggest that an obsession with traveling on a budget is an essential component of "road status" (Sørensen, 2003). For exchange/study abroad students, budgeting was often essential since students not only had to pay tuition and living costs, but also wanted to travel around Australia, New Zealand and Southeast Asia. However, I was also struck by the "spend now, pay later" attitude that students adopted. Many suggested that they were spending money in a far more carefree way while they were in Australia than they normally would at home.

In addition to the interviews I conducted with students, I spoke informally with five different faculty and staff members at the University of Melbourne and two at Monash University in order to find out more about the formal rationales for such programs and their experiences working with overseas students. These conversations were also intended to provide a list of contacts, which would enable my supervisor, Vered Amit, to conduct formal interviews. I also accompanied my supervisor to two interviews, one with Doug, about his role with the Postgraduate Association at Monash University and another with an exchange program director at Deakin University. During my trip to Perth, I conducted one formal interview with a staff member in the International Student Services Office at the University of Western Australia.

**Other Activities**

My fieldwork in Australia coincided with the department of anthropology's seminar series at the University of Melbourne. I attended two paper presentations by Michel Taussig and Vered Amit as well as a round table discussion between Margaret Jolly, Michel Taussig, and Michael Herzfeld. I also had an opportunity to attend a

29

seminar session titled "Quebec: Identity in a Globalizing Era", which was offered out of the University of Melbourne's department of French, Spanish, and Italian studies. The professor had sent an email asking any Canadians at the University of Melbourne who live or study in Quebec if they would be willing to join the seminar and speak about such issues as: multiculturalism in Quebec, bilingualism in Canada, and what their language meant to them. I attended this seminar along with Monique and Stephan, two exchange students from Montreal. A more in depth discussion of this seminar session is detailed in Chapter Five of this thesis.

## Chapter Two
## Student Mobility: A Brief History and Theoretical Overview

International student mobility has a long and diverse history and has always been entangled in a web of divergent aims and interests, ranging from those of individual students to those of nation-states and international organizations such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Today, one might encounter student mobility being discussed in a number of different ways: as a trade issue, a form of development aid or international diplomacy, a cultural experience, a means of creating internationally competent knowledge workers, or as a journey of personal development and self-discovery. The following will provide some background context and theoretical clarification to the ethnographic analysis that will follow in the subsequent chapters of this thesis. To begin, I will provide a brief summary of the major historical shifts in student mobility patterns that have taken place in Europe, North America, and Australia. I will then provide a discussion and critique of some of the social science literature that is both helpful for situating international student mobility generally and for providing some

30

initial insights into the personal significance that a study abroad experience may have for Canadian students.

The origins of student mobility can be traced to the British Grand Tour, which in the 17th century involved lengthy and often dangerous travel throughout Europe, most commonly to France, Germany and Italy. The Tour was reserved for elite young males from aristocratic families. Within this echelon of society, the cultural information gained as a result of youths' travel experiences was highly regarded as an important supplement to their education and was valued as a means of personal improvement and as a marker of elite status. Corrigan (1997) connects the Grand Tour to the ethic of the Romantic era, when elite classes were expected to cultivate their individuality and uniqueness through undergoing diverse experiences and travelling outside the constraints of their home society (p.11). By the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the Grand Tour had become firmly established as a finishing school for young aristocratic males, who upon return were expected to have acquired "[...] a broadened mind as well as a good command of foreign languages, new self reliance and self possession and a highly developed taste and grace of manner" (Hibbert, 1969, p.15). The 'Tour' also had a political dimension; the Queen herself was often willing to fund such tours for youth who stood in line for diplomatic positions on her staff.

After the Second World War, student mobility acquired a new significance under the Colombo Plan, which was a development aid strategy from Western Commonwealth nations (Canada, Australia, the U.K.) to nations in regions of the world – mainly Africa, Southeast Asia, and Eastern Europe – which were struggling to rebuild in the aftermath of the war. Initiated in 1950, the Colombo Plan permitted thousands of students to study at

31

universities and colleges in the developed Commonwealth. During the same time period, student exchange programs were proliferating between universities and colleges in North America and Europe. In this context, student exchanges and study abroad opportunities were not only considered important "cultural experiences" for youth, but were also viewed at the political level as part of a strategy to promote greater international cooperation and peace (Knight, 1999a).

By the late 1960's economic growth had contributed to the expansion of the middle class and labour market conditions were increasing the pressure for youth to receive university or college education after high school. As a result of these social and economic changes, university level education and opportunities to study abroad were no longer the sole privileges of a confined group of elite males, as was the case in the era of the Grand Tour. While today there are roughly equal numbers of young men and women who participate in such programs, it should be emphasised that exchange programs and especially study abroad programs continue to be cost-prohibitive for a large portion of students.

Beginning in the early 1990's, student mobility programs continued to expand, but took on a newfound economic significance, as they were designed to run in parallel with regional trading blocks such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the forum for Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). These trading blocks were created in the wake of massive economic restructuring and trade liberalization schemes throughout the 1980's and early 1990's. In 1992, for example, the "Wingspread Conference" was held to address the implications of NAFTA for the educational sector. One of the programs that emerged from this conference is the

32

Program for North American Mobility in Higher Education, which focuses on student mobility and the development of university partnerships between Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Writing from the Canadian context, Jane Knight (1999a) suggests that student mobility programs are increasingly starting to reflect the Canadian Government's trading policies and priorities. This is also clearly the case in Europe, where student mobility under the ERASMUS and SOCRATES schemes has been targeted as making an important contribution to the formation of the European Union.

More recently, The World Trade Organization (WTO) has included "educational services" as trade commodities, which should be negotiated under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATS). Educational services might include textbooks, course materials and course content, and even the offering of distance education on-line. However, currently the largest component in trade in educational services is accounted for by student mobility – students who travel abroad to study (Larsen, Martin & Morris, 2002, p.3). In fact, students who travel overseas to study – whether on exchange for a few months or to complete a degree over several years – are defined in economic terms as "foreign exports" because they are a source of foreign currency (cf. Larsen et al., 2002). The economic contribution of foreign students, not only to universities, but also to the local and national economy is often substantial. In the United States, for example, the contribution of international students through tuition, living costs, and other related expenses was $12 billion (USD), making higher education the nation's 5th largest export service (Tremblay, 2001, p.17).

Student mobility has also acquired a new kind of economic value within nations, which have undergone a massive decline of manufacturing industries and are rapidly

33

moving towards the "knowledge economy." According to Canada's former Foreign Affairs Minister, Lloyd Axworthy: "Knowledge-based economies will dominate the 21$^{st}$ century and Canada will be obliged to earn its way in the large part through its intellectual capacity and global leadership" (Axworthy, cited in CBIE, 1999a). The efforts of nation-states to move towards the knowledge economy have created an environment where international cooperation and competitiveness in research and development and science and technology have become paramount goals of both universities and nation-states around the globe. In Europe, one of the primary objectives set for 2010 is that the European Union should become: "The most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world" (Lisbon European Council, 2000). In Canada, the national goals for 2010 were set by the federal government in a document called *Canada's Innovation Strategy* (2002), which advocates innovation through the discovery and development of new knowledge as one of primary means of gaining a competitive economic advantage over the next decade. According to this document, which the current 2005 budget reaffirms, Canada's goal is to become one of the most innovative countries in the world by 2010, with the hope that it will become:

> A world leader in developing and applying new technologies, creating and commercializing new knowledge, promoting continuous learning, training skilled workers and ensuring a strong and competitive business environment. (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2005)

This knowledge-based economic re-orientation has implications for the contemporary role of the university and "internationalization", a process that emphasises

34

greater mobility of both faculty and students, has become an important part of defining that role (Dwyer and Reed, 2006). Internationalization is a process that involves the re-organization of universities or colleges to encourage greater international and intercultural perspectives and knowledge into teaching and learning (Knight, 1999b). Student mobility, including short-term study abroad and exchange programs, is now considered as one of the most important facets of university efforts to internationalize (Ibid). In Canada, Australia, the European Union and the United States a commitment to internationalization has become one of the most dominant trends in university mission statements. International students have also shifted in their significance for nation-states. There has been an increased interest, particularly in Canada and Australia, for international students to be regarded not only as an important boost to the local economy, but also as potential immigrants who will help to fill skills shortages that cannot be filled by the local population. I will elaborate on the importance of student mobility for both universities and nation-states in Chapter Six of this thesis.

As the brief history I have sketched above indicates, university run student mobility programs can be seen in light of some of the major social, economic, and political changes that have occurred in Western societies since the days of the Grand Tour. Technological and scientific innovations ranging from the printing press and invention of the steam engine to mechanized industrial production and, more recently, digital technology have dramatically altered the dominant mode of production. This change in production is commonly described as a shift from the industrial to post-industrial age – that is the significance of industrial material goods for the economy has

given way to economies that are increasingly dependent on services (tourism, hospitality, and education) and knowledge (science, technological advances, computer technology).

The global expansion of capitalism and the increasing emphasis that nation-states are placing on the need to develop competent "knowledge-workers" has not only encouraged greater international student mobility, but has also meant that universities are stepping up their efforts to attract the best and brightest students from around the world. As one commentator from the International Association of Universities (IAU) puts it: "It is clear, the race for brains is on [...]" (Egron-Polak, 2004, p.1). However, as some critics of globalization processes argue, the expansion of capitalism and the vast economic growth that has been enjoyed in the West is the result of growing inequalities in the global division of labour (cf. Sassen, 1999 Harvey, 2003). Samir Amin (1982), for example, argues that accelerated economic growth and advances in technological developments are not indicative of populations that are more knowledgeable or skilled than those that existed in pre-capitalist societies. Instead, Amin argues that such growth has been made possible only through a highly complex global division of labour, where highly skilled, creative and innovative tasks are concentrated in the West and low skilled mass labour in the Third World (1982, p.151). He argues that this growing disparity is partly the result of Western projects to develop educational systems in the "underdeveloped" world, where the goal in his view is to educate the people "just enough" to provide adequate labour power for Western industries (Ibid).

While I agree with the general point made by Amin, I think the centre/periphery model he uses of highly skilled innovators concentrated in one part of the world and low-skilled labourers at another is an overly simplistic one to explain the conditions today.

36

The trend within global capitalism to separate policy making, direction, and innovation from the less valued operative tasks is also noticeable *within* nation-states, such as Canada, the United States or Europe, which form the "Centre" to which Amin refers. There have been a number of alarms raised by university officials and educators about the declining, production line like quality of education at universities, which has contributed to a general de-skilling of students combined with an overall inflation of degree credentials as a result of ever-increasing numbers of graduates. These factors, combined with a decrease in permanent full-time employment opportunities and the expansion of part-time service sector employment, have led to a general "proletarianization of the white collar worker" in *both* the service industries and knowledge industries (Castells, 2002, p.244). While I do not focus on these issues in depth in this thesis, in Chapter Three I provide a narrative from Cheryl (one of the Canadian students I interviewed), who describes her difficult experiences as a computer programmer searching for employment in Toronto. Her trouble finding employment in Canada was one of the reasons she ultimately chose to study for her Master's degree in Australia.

Both the growing pressure to receive university education and increasing levels of debt, as students struggle to afford the costs of their degree program, have some interesting implications for youth travel. The Gap Year, as one example, is becoming an increasingly popular and institutionalized form of travel for youth as they pass through ambiguous transitional stages in the process of receiving their education. A Gap Year is most frequently undertaken in the transition from high school to university, or in students' third year of university study. Websites such as *Gapyear.com* and university travel offices, such as *Travel Cuts,* provide a number of different options for Gap Year

travel and promote the experience as "constructive time off", permitting youth to carefully evaluate their next course of action in the transition from youth to adulthood, particularly in terms of making the choice between receiving more education, or moving towards a career. Student loans also work to institutionalize travel at a certain period in youths' lives, namely while they are still university students.

Several of the Canadians I interviewed discussed feeling that if they were going to travel internationally the only time when this was affordable was prior to graduation, because afterwards they would have to begin paying back their student loans. Others managed to travel despite financial restrictions by taking part in a working-holiday makers program. In Canada, the agreements for working-holiday makers schemes are arranged by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and are geared towards the same destinations as many exchange programs: Australia, Europe, and the United States. It is also worth mentioning that travel to Japan or Korea to teach English is becoming an increasingly popular means for Canadians and Americans to combine their desire to travel with a means of employment to pay back student loans, particularly since many companies are willing to sponsor youths' living expenses. In fact, many websites that provide information on teaching English as a second language abroad advertise the experience a great way to pay off student loans.[2]

Student mobility should also be considered in light of the relationship between higher education and changing conceptions of the category of "youth" in contemporary Western societies. The lengthy periods of education that youth undergo today, when

---

[2] As one example, *TransitionsAbroad.com* advertises that teaching English abroad is a great way "[...] to travel, learn a new language, or pay off student loans." Interestingly, there are several programs that emphasise placing English teachers in Central and Eastern Europe rather than in Asia or South America. *TEFLWorldwidePrague.com* is one example.

38

taken together with fluctuating labour markets has expanded "youth" as a social category and has also made the transition from youth to adulthood more ambiguous. As already discussed, Europe, Australia, the United States and Canada have all experienced a dramatic expansion of the service sector and a decline of agricultural production and manufacturing industries. The expansion of the service sector has also meant a dramatic increase in part-time, short-term contract, and low wage opportunities for employment. Statistics describing the situation in Canada, for example, indicate a steady decline of university graduates who are employed in full-time jobs, from approximately 80% in 1990 to 68% in 2004 (Statistics Canada, 2005). This decline in full time and permanent employment opportunities is contributing to a process that Manuel Castells (2002) refers to as "social arrhythmia", which means social and cultural organization, influenced by technological advancements, have begun to diminish the construction of a biological life-cycle around social categories – education, working time, and the right to retirement (p.475). Neil Postman (1982) has also argued that media sources and technological developments such as television and the proliferation of computers have diminished both childhood and adulthood as distinct periods of experience in one's lifetime, giving way to the expansion of an in-between category of the adult-child defined as "[...] a grown-up whose intellectual and emotional capacitates are unrealized" (p.99). In order to achieve the level of education needed to enter the workforce, students are living with their parents longer, entering careers much later in life than in previous generations, and are delaying marriage and starting a family.

The speed at which technological advances and new scientific discoveries are occurring has also meant that life-long learning and continuous professional re-training

are becoming realities for almost all forms of employment. Interestingly, "life-long learning" is also frequently mentioned in Government discourses as a crucial aspect in the ongoing efforts to move towards a knowledge-based economy. The growing reality of constant occupational mobility, combined with the need to re-train and re-learn to keep abreast of new technological developments and the rapid discoveries of new knowledge has created an environment that demands emotional and intellectual capacities of individuals to constantly undergo change and develop throughout their lifetime. This is not an era where individuals are likely to find themselves arriving at an end-point of what the psychologist Abraham Maslow (1949) referred to as "self-actualization."[3]

While I agree with the general theory that the transition from youth to adulthood has become longer and less clearly defined, it is also important to consider ways in which young individuals organize and plan their life-trajectories within a shared sense of time frames and time limits. University students, for example, are likely to experience common constraints on their time such as the length of degree programs imposed by universities, and as a result of debts from student loans incurred upon graduation, which must be paid back in pre-determined amounts within a set period of time (maximum 10 years). Within students' families and social circles it is also possible for normative values concerning the use of time to emerge, such as at what age a child should move out,

---

[3] Maslow's notion of self-actualization in many ways parallels Aristotlean premise that essence precedes existence. According to Maslow, human beings are born within inbuilt capacities and talents which they will naturally strive towards given the right environmental conditions. In fact, it was his view that a failure or inability to realize one's essence by following the path towards self-actualization was the primary cause of psychopathology. There are existentialist strands in Maslow's theory, such as the emphasis on human beings' capacity for creativity and individuality and the importance of reliance on the inner self rather than features of the external environment such as cultural traditions or relationships for gaining a sense of personal satisfaction or to come to terms with one's identity. However, Maslow's view that human beings have an inborn teleological end to which they are striving runs counter to the existentialist view found in the writings of Sartre and Kierkegaard that existence precedes essence – that is human beings do not exist simply to discover meanings and truths already within themselves or already existing in the material world, but are rather thrown into existence and thereafter must create meanings and truths for themselves through their own conscious efforts.

40

finish school, find a career, or start a family. As I discuss in Chapter Three, the ways in which students rationally planned their study abroad experience, while considering a number of constraints of both time and money, suggest there are grounds to question to what extent people are "without foundations" from which to base their decisions given a plurality of available choices (cf. Giddens, 1991, p.80). In the next section, I will expand even more on the economic, political and social trends I have outlined here by looking more closely at their relationship to the social organization of work and leisure and hence production and consumption. A useful way to think through these binaries is by examining how student mobility might be conceived of as a category of human movement.

**Student Mobility as a Category of Movement**

An analysis of Canadian university students, who decide to complete part of their university education abroad, requires grappling with the cross-border movement of affluent groups of youth, who typically travel between Western countries (Europe, the United States, New Zealand or Australia). The desire to travel to large cities in Western locations is one major distinction between student mobility and backpacking. As Welk (2004), Sørenson (2003) and Desforges (1998) suggest, youth who decide to travel through backpacking are primarily interesting in visiting "non-Western" locations because these are believed to contain more "authentic cultures", which provide more challenges or risks for the traveller and are therefore thought to constitute more worthwhile and valuable experiences. Student mobility also diverges from the kinds of movement, which are typically the subject of anthropological research: diasporic movements of specific ethnic groups, labour migration patterns of the economically

41

disadvantaged, or on groups such as refugees who have been forcefully, or violently displaced from their place of origin. In the social sciences, issues related to the mobility of elite and privileged groups have generally been limited to the literature on tourism (Rojek, 1988; Badone and Roseman, 2004; Urry, 1990, Lash and Urry, 1994); although, there are a number of studies of note, which focus on labour migration undertaken by both the middle class and elite groups (Sassen, 1988; Ong, 1999; Bianchi, 2000; Urry, 2000; Amit, 2002, Hannertz, 2004).

Part of what makes student mobility difficult to pin down as a category of movement is the way in which it intersects with and blurs the lines between the social spheres of work and leisure on the one hand and migration and tourism on the other. Classical theorists, such as Marx and Veblen, conceived of work and leisure and hence production and consumption as constituting distinct and separate spheres of human activity and experience. Marx, for example, theorized that human beings come to terms with their own existence and their social connections to others through the physical act of labour. The capitalist system, according to Marx, dramatically altered the "natural" relationship between human beings and their labour. Instead of constituting a means of self-affirmation, labour is experienced as something external and alienating under capitalism, with the end result that human beings felt more like themselves during times of leisure than during times of work. According to Marx, "[t]he worker only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself" (Marx cited in Morrison, 1995, p. 94).

Writing slightly later than Marx, Veblen wrote of how industrial expansion under capitalism had given rise to the emergence of a new "leisure class." In his publication

42

*The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), Veblen defines leisure as time consumed *non-productively*: "(1) from a sense of the unworthiness of productive work, and (2) as an evidence of pecuniary ability to afford a life of idleness" (Veblen, 1953, p.46). Veblen would have agreed with Marx that productive activity was no longer what defined human beings; however, he would disagree that one's class was established by a specific relationship to capital – either as the Bourgeoisie who owned the means of production, or the Proletariat who are forced to sell their labour power. In his view, class distinctions were defined in terms of which members of society engaged in work and which could afford to remain unproductive. He furthered argued that status divisions provided a further hierarchy within the leisure class, and these divisions were made visible through symbolic acts of what he referred to as "conspicuous consumption." Similar views to those of Veblen can also be found in more contemporary works, such as Bourdieu's *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984).

The legacy of these two theorists and their construction of the binary distinctions between work/production – leisure/consumption are still apparent in the contemporary literature on mobility in both sociology and anthropology. John Urry, in his classic publication *The Tourist Gaze* (1990), suggests that tourism is a leisure activity "[...] which presupposes its opposite, namely regulated and organized work" (p.2). Following from the notion that work and leisure constitute two distinct spheres of activity and experience, a parallel distinction is often made between tourism and migration. The underlying assumption is that tourism is a form of leisure because it is undertaken during non-working time, is motivated by factors that do not include work (relaxation, pleasure, or break from routine) and is consumption driven. Migration, on the other hand, is often

assumed to be motivated by a desire to find employment and is therefore linked more to the sphere of production (or work). However, as Urry points out in a later paper "[...] much of what we typically identify as 'leisure' does of course involve work [...]" (1994, p.132). One could, for example, point to certain recreational hobbies such as scuba diving, or horseback riding, which not only require prior training to acquire a set of necessary skills, but also a fair amount of labour. These examples should also be taken together with the growing flexibility of labour conditions and the volume of people motivated to travel by a combination of factors including: employment, change of scene, excitement and adventure, to visit friends and family, to study or to relax. Such overlaps in travellers' motivations indicate that there are good reasons to question the work/leisure – production/consumption binaries that are used to distinguish between different forms of travel.

There are a number of studies which seek to re-orientate discussions surrounding mobility by highlighting a number of forms of travel which blur the boundaries between leisure and work and consequently migration and tourism. Hall & Williams (2002), for example, criticize the tendency to define migration as a physical and permanent movement across the boundary of an areal unit. First, as the authors point out, both boundaries and areal units are arbitrary. Boundaries, for example, are often normative, arising out of social interaction or long-standing tradition and so do not show up on a map (p.4). Hall and Williams are also particularly critical of definitions of migration that fixate on movement between the boundaries of nation-states because such definitions miss out on important nuances of migration that takes place within nations. For example, large nation-states such as Canada or the United States are likely to incorporate more

44

political and economic discrepancy than migration between nation-states in the EU. Similarly, Duany (2002) suggests the conventional idea of migration as a single one-way and permanent change of residence cannot account for cyclical migratory patterns, or for large-scale population movement in multiple directions (p.161).

Raoul Biannci (2000), who conducted fieldwork in the Canary Islands, proposes a need to introduce a concept of the "migrant-tourist worker," in order to describe the massive movements of youth from Europe to the resort areas of the Mediterranean; a form of movement that intersects with the dimensions of migration, tourism, and work. While youth from Northern Europe engage in a number of leisure activities in the Mediterranean, their labour has become absolutely crucial to the tourism service sector industry there. Biancci explains this phenomenon as reflective of "[...] the disjunctures in the experiences and cultural meaning of work engendered by post-industrialism" (2000, p.122). More specifically, Biancci proposes that the growing pattern of cyclical and seasonal migration from Northern to Southern Europe is the outcome of the decline of an occupation or career as a marker of a significant social category of identity. Following from this assumption, Biancci suggests that perhaps seasonal youth workers in the Mediterranean resort areas should be regarded more as migrants than tourists because they have been displaced from their home societies as a result of poor long-term career prospects and the high costs of living in Northern Europe (Ibid).

Other attempts to categorize and distinguish between different forms of mobility include attempts to operationalize travel categories through definitions based on time limits or the motivations of travellers. In such a view tourism might be distinguished from migration based on the assumption that it is motivated by non-work related desires

45

and involves a minimum stay of four nights, but not more than a year (cf. Rojek & Urry, 1997, p.2). Regardless of the usefulness or non-usefulness of attempts to categorize movement, it seems that one can safely conclude that both temporary and permanent mobility can be motivated by a drive for leisure and consumption purposes as well as by reasons that are more closely related to work and production (Hall & Williams, 2002, p.6).

In the literature on tourism there is also a tendency to view forms of travel which combine aspects of both production and consumption as an indication of the kind of de-differentiation, thought to be a general characteristic of post-modernity. Theorists who work from such a postmodern standpoint such as Baudrillard (1981), Lyotard (1984) and Featherstone (1991) argue that the rational categorizations and distinctions that contributed stability to the Modern era – real/simulated, male/female, private/public, home/abroad, work/leisure, and production/consumption– no longer correspond to how individuals experience the world. Featherstone (1991) has described the blurring of these distinctions as the "aestheticization of everyday life", which describes "[...] the project of turning life into a work of art [and] to the rapid flow of signs and images which saturate the fabric of everyday life in contemporary society" (pp. 66-67). This implies that it is no longer only in the material realm where social and cultural reproduction takes place, but in the symbolic realm, where people use not only material goods, such as clothing or artefacts, but also behaviours, activities, and experiences as signs that communicate meaning about their class, status, and identity.

In Bourdieu's work *Distinction* (1984), he divides the material and non-material means through which people may acquire status, or through which they may be

46

categorized and identified according to class, into four kinds of capital – economic, social, cultural, and symbolic. For Bourdieu, classes of people are determined by the total amount of all four kinds of capital they are able to acquire, which he termed "the overall volume of capital" (1984, p.114). In his theory, class distributions and antagonisms run from "[...] those who are best provided with both economic and cultural capital and those who are most deprived in both respects" (1984, p.114). Similarly, Baudrillard (1981) has also argued that acts of consumption are, in fact, productive in the sense that it is in this context where people do work on themselves by producing signs, which stand for their identity. For Baudrillard, leisure-time is the "[...] the moment of production value, of an invidious production of status" (1981, p.76). This of course is what Veblen was already writing about at the turn of the 20th century. The themes that follow from the general theory of the "aestheticization of everyday life" are also popular views in the literature that discusses the relationship between identity and travel, which I elaborate on later in this chapter.

Featherstone's idea about the aestheticization of everyday life has led Lash and Urry (1994) to proclaim the end of tourism. In their view, people are tourists most of the time, able to view distant parts of the world through televised images, or experience different cultures by taking a walk through various neighbourhoods in their own city. The aestheticization thesis also includes some interesting discussions about the distinction between the traveller and the tourist. Rojek argues that we have now entered the post-modern era and "[...] the modernist quest for authenticity and self-realization has come to an end" (1993, p.133). However, rather than suggesting that this marks the end of tourism, Rojek suggests it marks the emergence of the post-tourist who is aware of

47

and derives pleasure from the commodification of touristic experiences, spectacles, simulations and inauthentic reproductions of culture (1993, p.177). The post-tourist is the antithesis to the traveller who still desires an escape from the production/consumption cycle in order to find "the authentic" and "the real" in other cultures (cf. Maccannell, 1992) and who wishes to be characterized by "[...] refined values of discernment, respect and taste" (Rojek, 193, p.175).

International Student mobility is a form of travel, which encompasses work (both in terms of study and paid employment) as well as leisure (eating out, visiting tourist sites, participating in recreational activities) and students often have a variety of motivations to travel overseas. In some ways it is also an act of consumption, since "education abroad" is a commodity that students can purchase. Students may also stay for varying lengths of time, from a couple weeks to several years, which suggests that this is also a form of temporary migration. Students will have to find an apartment, pay taxes, and in some ways settling into a routine that is not totally unlike the one they left at home – attending school, going to work, and socializing with friends. However, as already discussed, international student mobility can also be a first step towards permanent migration. William Gibson (2002), in writing about the brain drain of Canadian students who go to universities or colleges in the United States, suggests that these youth not only view degrees from American institutions as having more value, but a high proportion plan to stay and work in the United States after graduation. Gibson argues that Canadian students see obtaining a U.S. degree as a means of gaining easier access into that labour market (p.p. 43-48). Immigration policies often favour those candidates who have a

48

university degree, particularly if the degree was obtained from a university located in the nation to which students wish to immigrate.

The overlapping characteristics of student mobility might at first appear to justify the post-modern thesis of de-differentiation. However, as Vered Amit points out "[t]his kind of overlap between different categories of spatial mobility is hardly a novel innovation" (p.7, Forthcoming). And as Adler (1985) demonstrates in her study of the European tramping system in the 17th and 18th centuries, international youth travel has for a very long time been motivated by overlapping desires to find employment opportunities, undergo religious pilgrimage, and to seek adventure and enjoyment in encounters with new and exciting people, places, and cultures. Hence there is also reason to question Biancci's argument that disjunctures in the experiences and cultural meaning of work are particular characteristics of post-industrial society. As detailed above, both Marx and Veblen discussed similar "disjunctures", but attributed them to the particular characteristics of industrial society.

If one considers the period of modernity to be characterized by a rational organization and compartmentalization of time and different domains of human experience, it seems reasonable to conclude that in contemporary forms of travel, this condition of modernity continues to exist alongside some of the disorganization and blurring of categories thought to characterize postmodernity. Hence, while there has been a proliferation of travel choices and diversification of possible travel experiences, there has been a corresponding institutionalization and organization of these opportunities. As Vered Amit argues:

49

[...] the deliberate convergence between previously, officially separate categories of travel have created new sharply demarcated circuits of travel rather than simply creating a more fluid array of multiple possibilities for movement. (p.11, Forthcoming)

This has also been discussed by Welk (2004) as a particularly ironic phenomenon in the backpacking scene, where despite the importance of anti-tourism to the backpacker identity "[...] the backpacker infrastructure has in many ways become so sophisticated and mainstream that it is difficult to draw a clear line where mainstream tourism ends and backpacking begins" (p.85).

## Student Mobility and Transnationalism

As one form of human movement, student mobility also offers an interesting entry point into some of the anthropological debates on transnationalism. Transnationalism has been used to describe and explain many different phenomena: the creation of digital information networks, flows of capital through transnational business operations, a shift in consciousness that includes a move from single to hybrid or multiple identities, and a process that precipitates a reconstruction of notions of home, place, and locality, particularly beyond the nation-state (cf. Vertovec, 1999). For my purposes here I am most interested in transnationalism as it relates to increased cross-border movement of people and new advances in telecommunications technology such as the Internet, email, and mobile phones. Both of these processes are presumed to engender a shift in consciousness and an expanded form of sociality that transcends time, place, and national borders.

A well known example of such a vision of transnationalism can be found in the book *Nations Unbound* (1994) by Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc who define transnationalism as:

> The process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement [...] social fields that cross geographic, cultural and political boundaries. (1994, p.7)

There has been a tendency in the literature to celebrate increasing movements of people (Clifford, 1997), or the powers of telecommunications technology to form communities or "virtual neighbourhoods" across borders (Appadurai, 1996). However, such trends are far from inevitable outcomes. Andrea Louie (2000), for example, in her ethnographic study of a youth festival sponsored by the Chinese government for overseas youth, discusses how transnational flows of media, people, and ideas can further differentiate diasporic populations from the homeland (pp.646-647). Similarly, many theorists have pointed to the paradox of upsurges of nationalism and national identities in an increasingly globally interconnected world (cf. Juergensmeyer, 2002; Held, 2002) and others have highlighted the fact that many nation-states are changing the way they function in order to actively embrace and exploit global processes, demonstrating that nation-states are not merely feebly resisting or losing control to globalizing forces (cf. Sassen, 1996; Ong, 1999). Theories which suggest that human movement and the many advances in telecommunications technology have simply "emptied out" (Giddens, 1991) or "de-territorialized" (Harvey, 1989) time and space cannot account for the lingering power of the nation-state, the continued significance of physical proximity and place in

human relationships, or the fact that not everyone has the same access or rights to mobility. As Aihwa Ong rightly points out, it is important to ask: "What are the mechanisms of power that enable the mobility, as well as the localization and disciplining of diverse populations within these transnationalized systems?" (1999, p.11).

According to Nigel Rapport, irony is an important means through which individuals may detach themselves from social and cultural categories and roles, and in doing so they are able to question their values (2002, p.99). It is true that I noticed nationality, in particular, becoming a site of ironic play as students poked fun at one another using national stereotypes. In many ways these stereotypes and a willingness to play with them constituted an important part of students' social relationships while abroad. Though stereotypes are generally empty of content, a willingness to dispense and accept national stereotypes was an important means through which students established an initial sense of friendliness and belonging in social groups. However, there were definable limits to this kind of identity play. Kevin, an American exchange student I interviewed, was surprised at the extent to which he found himself getting "up in arms," when other students or professors in his Australian classes attacked American foreign policy, political officials, or general way of life.

I argue that students' interactions with each other demonstrates that national identity among overseas students in Australia should be taken with a degree of seriousness, despite the fact that it sometimes manifested itself as a form of ironic or sarcastic play. In part, this argument stems from students' bodily responses as they spoke about their national identity: sitting up a little straighter in their chair, a slight blush on their cheek, a smile, or even an angry tone in their voice when they felt the need to

defend their national identity or nation. There were certainly certain issues with which one did not play and certain lines which were rarely crossed in students' interactions, suggesting that there are limits on the extent to which students are willing to question their own identity and culture and that of others.

However, while this characterized the social interactions among students for the period of time they were abroad, I cannot be certain about the durability of the changes individuals experienced in Australia with reference to their national or cultural identity. Many students suggested their sense of national identity became heightened in Australia, leading me to question if this intensified sense of national identity will fade again once students return home. The transitory and fast-paced nature of the study abroad context also leads me to question if the way in which students affirmed and debated their national identities and those of others amounts to little more than what Zygmunt Bauman (2004) refers to as "cloakroom identities":

> [...] patched together for the duration of the spectacle and promptly dismantled again once the spectators collect their coats from the hooks in the cloakroom. Their advantage [...] is precisely their short life span and the pettiness of the commitment required to join and [...] and enjoy them. (p. 31)

Given the fact that a study abroad experience is typically short lived and the fact that students travel frequently throughout their stay and are interconnected with a number of different social networks, there is good reason to question how significant and lasting changes students experienced while in Australia will be once they settle back into their

53

familiar routines at home. How much of what happened in Australia – the people students met there, the discussions, which took place in classrooms, the details of different experiences of students – will, after a period of time, fade or be forgotten altogether? While my research was limited to a momentary context of the actual study abroad experience, an interesting area for further research would be to follow up on students once they have returned home and settled back into their regular routines.

The insights gathered from the ethnographic fieldwork I conducted for this thesis have led me to depart from some of the common assumptions surrounding transnationalism for four essential reasons. First, such theories are frequently founded on a kind of technological determinism – assuming not only that people readily adopt and accept new forms of technology, but also that the mere capabilities of such technology will inevitably change social and political organization, consciousness, and relationships. However, as Lash and Urry (1994) point out, in order for technology and forms of transportation to be economically successful or "culturally emblematic" they must be socially and institutionally organized (p.253). In Chapter Four of thesis, I attempt to add something to this discussion by providing an ethnographic case study of how students who study abroad actually experience and use telecommunications technology. Second, theories of transnationalism often celebrate human movement and its emancipatory potentials, while ignoring the unequal conditions, which first motivate people to move, control or restrict their mobility, and second, which follow them to their travel destinations. Something I will discuss towards the end of this thesis is how the unequal conditions in overseas students' places of origins not only affected who students' interacted with, but also played a role in their overall experience at Australian

54

universities. Third, there is a tendency for transnational theories to start from the taken for granted assumption that national identities will erode the more people travel abroad, without giving consideration to situations where a sense of national identity becomes heightened. I argue in agreement with Louie (2000) that transnational encounters need not initiate an opposing force to the nation-state, but may in some instances produce a re-territorialization. This was more often than not the case among Canadian students I met in Australia. Finally, many of the Canadian students I spoke with discussed wanting to study abroad simply to get a break from the stresses and demands of their daily lives back home. Theories of transnationalism often do not account for modes of travel that are motivated by a desire for a period of "time out" or "disjuncture" from ordinary life, social and romantic relationships, or even existential questions relating to ones' identity, sense of self, or the future (cf. Elsrud, 1998 & Amit, 2002).

**Travel, Consumer Culture and Identity**

In their book *Mass Consumption and Personal Identity*, Lunt and Livingstone argue that the "[...] conditions of consumer society constitute the context where people work out their identities" (1992, p. 24). This has led many theorists such as Anthony Giddens to point to the growing significance of "lifestyle" as a set of practices, which an individual embraces and which give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity (1991, p.81). He also argues that lifestyle practices and hence identities are never fixed, but are reflexive and are therefore continuously monitored and revamped throughout a persons' lifetime (Ibid). Essentially, this means the commodification of objects and activities is no longer only a matter of exchange value and use value in the Marxian sense, but also of sign-value – that is objects and experiences are communicators

55

of identity (Watson & Kopachevsky, 1994, p.645). Travel experience, then, as a commodity can be regarded as constituting both a private and a social good. It is a private good in the sense that individuals can purchase travel opportunities as a means for self-discovery and personal growth. It is a social good in that travel also provides a means through which individuals acquire symbolic markers of class and status, or what Pierre Bourdieu (1984) refers to as "cultural and symbolic capital", which are read and validated by others as markers of identity.

Both symbolic and cultural capital can provide an important means of gaining entry (or at least a greater feeling of belonging) in a social or economic group. Luke Desforges (1998) in his study of youth backpackers suggests that as youth travel they engage in a practice of "collecting places" to use in narrations of self-identity. Desforges suggests that youth assemble the knowledge, experiences, souvenirs, and artefacts and convert them into cultural capital through personal narratives and authoritative knowledge (p.189). This assemblage, in turn, serves as a marker not only of identity, but also of middle-class status. Cultural capital is, however, somewhat precarious in that the value of travel has already been pre-determined by the audience, which can lead to tensions when the audience contests the value of travel or simply does not recognize the cultural capital (Ibid).

Rather than viewing youth travel as a quest for cultural capital, Erik Cohen (2004) suggests that backpacking is more usefully regarded as a temporary identity, which youth can use in their transition from one state of being to another. Cohen emphasise that this transition will take place when they return to their home societies, rather than during their travels. In this way youth travel becomes a modern rite of passage; a socially validated

56

means of moving through the transition from youth to adulthood. Following the rites of passage model as developed by van Genepp and later Victor Turner, Cohen suggests that youth who undergo backpacking journeys first exit their normal life, separate themselves from friends and family, and enter a "liminal" condition abroad where they must prove themselves by solving problems and making decisions without the assistance, advice or help of their parents or friends (p.52). By successfully completing their trip, youth have shown that they have the ability and competence to live autonomously, a valued marker of adult independence in Western societies (Ibid).

Although, he does not use the term "rite of passage", the idea that international travel provides an important means through which youth transition from youth to adulthood is also developed by Gmelch (1997) in his study of American students undertaking a summer study abroad program in Europe. According to Gmelch, it is during periods of "discontinuity, displacement, and disjunction" that individual change and maturation occurs (1997, p.487). Although, perhaps a little distraught at the lack of knowledge students gained of European cities, histories, and cultures, Gmelch acknowledges that the students he studied did encounter a number of experiences that were significant for their personal development: having to continuously solve problems such as finding transportation, having to communicate with strangers that did not speak their language, and having to find ways to meet their basic needs in unfamiliar contexts (Ibid). Gmelch suggests that students' experiences in new environments and unfamiliar circumstances provoked maturation, independence, and self-confidence; all skills that they will need as adults. I expand on both the idea that international student travel constitutes a form of cultural capital and a rite of passage in Chapter Three. However, I

57

also suggest that in the context of student mobility there is also a need to go beyond these concepts.

## Universities and Globalization

As already stated, in Chapter Six of this thesis, I deal in detail with university internationalization, which as Jane Knight (1999b) suggests, is a process which should be understood as the response of universities to the changing conditions wrought by globalization. As a means to pave the way for this later discussion, I will take the opportunity here to outline some of the emerging concerns from educators and intellectuals regarding the changes to the university, which are thought to be the result of global economic processes.

The increasing prioritization of market forces on university campuses, as nation-states withdraw funding support for public institutions and embrace neo-liberal practices of privatization and market competition, is generally regarded as eroding the ability of the university to fulfill its historical role or mission. Eric Gould (2003) suggests that there is a one hundred year tradition which views the university's mission as providing support for the development of the individual, the wider society and the needs of the market economy. For Gould, this means that universities are supposed to support the universal growth of knowledge, the personal development of individuals, and the functioning of both democratic institutions such as the nation-state and the labour market (p. 3). The decline of the welfare state has led some educators, such as Masao Miyoshi, to lament that the university is no longer capable of independent criticism of corporate or state policies and operates instead in a way that supports, rather than challenges or seeks to improve the status quo (1998, p.262).

58

Following from concerns that have been raised over the increasing pressures on universities to become more corporate minded in their operations, are those which object to the increasing movement away from the educational role of the university towards a greater focus on vocationalism. This concern is particularly relevant for student mobility programs, so often promoted as important ways in which universities can help to develop individuals to be future competent knowledge workers with cross-cultural skills. The International Academic Mobility (IAM) initiative in Canada, for example, suggests that such experiences provide students with the skills to "[...] think globally, preparing them to make the most of their opportunities in a competitive international marketplace" (Government of Canada, 2004).

There have also been concerns that the university acting as a private and increasingly international corporate business has fundamentally severed the relationship between the university and the nation-state. Robertson and Barlow (1996) in speaking from the Canadian context suggest that the assault on Canada's education system as a result of NAFTA amounts to "[...] an attack on Canadian history, culture, and values of the nation itself" (p. 70). What is one to make of this claim given the arguments and debates in anthropology that we are entering a post-national stage of history and that the very idea of a nation as a locus of values, culture, or shared history is largely a myth? This question seems even more relevant to the context of Canada, where there is a long history of ambivalence and debate regarding the relationship between public education (including university and college education) and the nation-state, or more specifically nationalism.

Robert Stamp argues that from the very beginning Canada's public education system was not about making "good little Canadians" but about inculcating pride and loyalty to the British Crown (1977, p.31). In the 1960's, the title of a report by H.B. Hodgett, on the condition of civic education in Canada titled, *What Culture? What Heritage?* (1968) is particularly telling. This report was shortly followed by another one, written by professors Robin Mathews and James Steele titled, *The Struggle for Canadian Universities* (1969), which sounded alarms at the lack of Canadian appointments and the lack of courses on Canada and Canadian issues in Canada's universities.

Universities are not only seeking to acquire a top ranking within an international as well as a national context, but the institutions themselves are becoming "transnational", not only in terms of their course content, research partnerships and overseas development activities, but also because they are hosting larger numbers of foreign students than ever before. Student mobility, along with other forms of youth travel, is strategically linked to the international strategies, trade policies, and shifting priorities of nation-states (Knight, 1999b). Student mobility offers an enriching window from which one can gain some insights into the overall process of globalization because it requires not only considering the re-organization of the work/leisure – production/consumption nexus, but also a consideration of how national systems of education have been re-organized to accommodate the global expansion of capitalism.

In her work *An Ethnography of Global Connection* (2005), Anna Tsing argues that strategies for global justice, individual rights, even the cosmopolitan ideal are inseparable from their counter-points. Her argument has a great deal of relevance for

60

both the situation in contemporary universities and student mobility programs. Internationalization, a process that places an emphasis on student mobility both to and from the university, is to be the primary process through which universities will seek to establish themselves with a prominent place in the global milieu. Yet, in university and political discourses such as mission statements, policy documents, or speeches by top administrators one will find a number of competing, often contradictory claims. One might find, for example, a mission statement affirming the university's commitment to the "universalization of knowledge" underscored by the construction of a new office to manage "intellectual property rights" – a process that capitalizes on knowledge (through legally enforceable procedures) as a private good, rather than something that should be universally shared. One might also find a university, such as The University of British Columbia, declaring its commitment to global citizenship, while at the same time the Canadian Government is affirming international student mobility as important for affirming students' national identity and for promoting Canadian values abroad. It is not the purpose of this thesis to propose ways in which university student mobility programs should be adjusted to better approach a cosmopolitan ideal or to bring about greater global equality through the advancement of cross cultural learning. My objective is rather to provide the necessary foundations from which such discussions can begin.


## Chapter Three
## Motivations and Management of the
## Study Abroad Experience

There is not a great deal of research in anthropology or sociology on students' motivations for participating in an exchange or study abroad program. However, there

has been a great deal of discussion related to both the motivations and the experiences of youth travellers, particularly backpackers. In anthropology, youth travel is generally discussed with reference to three broad explanatory frameworks: 1] As a rite of passage for the middle and upper classes (Amit, 2005; Adler; 1985; Turner & Turner, 1978) 2] As an expression of class anxiety, on the part of those whom Bourdieu terms "petit bourgeois", who see alternative travel such as backpacking as a means of stoking up on symbolic and cultural capital (Cohen, 2004; Desforges, 1998; Munt, 1994) and 3] As an experience that is intrinsic to the development of youths' identity, notions of selfhood, and personal growth (Vogt, 1976; Desforges, 2000). While elements from all three of these frameworks are useful for the discussion in this chapter, students' motivations for participating in an exchange were too complex and variable to be explained entirely with a single framework.

The difficulties I experienced in summarizing students' responses to the question – "what was your motivation for doing an exchange?" – were compounded by the fact that there were often numerous, multi-layered, overlapping and circumstantial factors which influenced students' decisions to do part of their university education overseas. A further complication arose out of the fact that I noticed students' motivations sometimes underwent a transformation during the course of their overseas experience. As time went on, some students began to express their motivations for wanting to travel with reference to the potential outcomes of their experience rather than with reference to "push factors" at home that had provided the initial impetus to study overseas. Presumably, students will also continue to frame their experience differently once they return home in response to the contexts and the social groups in which they will be interacting. The overall

62

significance of the trip and its value for students will also likely continue to change over the course of their lifetime.

With this ephemeral and dynamic nature of students' motivations in mind, as much as possible in this chapter, I try to distinguish between students' motivations for wanting to travel generally, their motivations for wanting to participate in an exchange or study abroad program, and the factors which influenced students' decision to choose Australia as their destination. I emphasize that students were in many ways creative and strategic participants in the overall experience of studying overseas; however, I do not want to suggest that students have total agency. The final decision to study abroad may be highly personal and individualized while at the same time being informed, influenced and also constrained by a series of factors in students' social, cultural, even political environment.

This chapter attempts to forge an understanding about why students decide to study overseas by looking at what factors had initially motivated students to go and what they hoped to gain from the experience. I also discuss how students conscientiously managed the experience by converting its outcomes into symbolic and cultural capital which might be recognized both socially – by parents, friends, professors, potential employers – and culturally in the sense that studying overseas becomes a means for students to lay claim to a newly acquired status. However, I have found it necessary to re-orientate the discussion away from a strictly class-based analysis, which in the backpacker studies is often used to imply that youth are interested in "collecting" travel experiences in order to use them in "classificatory struggles" through which they can lay

63

claim to a middle class status and the privileges, economic or otherwise, that go along with that status (cf. Desforges, 1998; Munt, 1994).

Based on my own interactions with students, the information I gathered from interviews, as well as informal conversations I would also posit that students viewed their travel experience as a form of "life capital." In this chapter, "life capital" is a term I feel necessary to introduce in order to incorporate the ways in which students discussed studying overseas as a means of living up to their own sets of values and expectations - particularly those related to their ideas about what constitutes the "good life" and perceptions about what one should see, do, and experience in order to get the most out of life. While such values and expectations are certainly related to class, I use the term "life capital" here in order to highlight the fact that the reasons students want to participate in a study abroad or exchange program cannot be reduced only to the circumstances or characteristics of their class positioning. One of the themes which stood out the most among the students I interviewed – a group which occupied a great deal of variance across class spectrums – was how travel was an important part of students' strategies for time management. Hence, rather than focus on students' economic circumstances, the last section of this chapter deals with how students' values and expectations were intrinsic to their conceptions of time and, more precisely, time constraints.

**Deciding to Study Overseas**

Students' often spoke about how the idea to study overseas arose out of interactions with their friends. Nathan (21) who had completed his high school in Indonesia and had worked there for a local NGO had never considered travelling through

64

an exchange program before a friend of his at The University of British Columbia suggested the possibility.

> *It started with a friend of mine who was also thinking of going on exchange and he was also doing all the research about it and telling me about it and up to that point I'd never really considered it, until he told me about it. And then I got into it and decided to do it and he actually didn't do it for some reason.*

In the case of Nancy (20) and Eric (23), the fact that their friends travelled frequently or had just returned from an extensive period of travel played a significant role in motivating them to take the initiative to do an exchange or study abroad. Nancy had previously been to Melbourne on exchange in high school. Because she had really enjoyed Melbourne she had always wanted to go back, but had been dragging her feet on taking the initial organizing steps. It was her friends' travel stories that eventually provided her with just the right incentive. According to Nancy:

> *And what really got me motivated to pursue it further* [a semester exchange at Melbourne University] *was a couple of my girlfriends came here and did the backpacking thing around Australia for a year. And I was like if they can do that then I'm going to get myself in gear and come back to Melbourne.*

Eric, an engineering student at The University of British Columbia, was on his first overseas experience when I spoke with him in Perth. He told me he had not travelled much before except for small road trips or vacations to the United States, nor had he really been that motivated or interested in travelling. Eric talked a lot about feeling that he was falling behind his friends in terms of life experience and making progress towards a career. These factors were highly significant for motivating him to want to travel.

*[...] so basically what happened was after my fourth year [at UBC] a lot of my friends went to like law school, med school, you know went out and got jobs and I realized I was going to be the only one at UBC, so I should take off to Australia [...] and I just realized that [...] I don't know, like a lot of my friends they come from like affluent families, so like they summer in France and stuff like that - you know what I mean. And they'd tell me about this and I was like shit – you know – I gotta get out and I gotta go travelling and stuff.*

As was the case with many of the students I interviewed, Eric made his final decision to go on exchange in Australia after mulling the possibility over with his friends.

*[...] I was living in a quad, like an apartment at UBC in residence, with five of my friends and we were all just talking about what we were going to do next year [...] one of my friends was going to law school, one to med school, one was going back to the States, one was going to grad school in Ontario and I realized I was going to be the only one here. And I was just like – "oh man - what am I going to do at UBC? All my good friends are gone." And they said "oh, well why don't you go to Australia" – so it was actually my friends' suggestion.*

In many ways Eric's comments do indicate that travel can be viewed as a kind of cultural capital that provides access to the privileges of what Desforges (1998) refers to as a "class identity" – "[...] young travellers define themselves as middle class, gaining entry to the privileges of work, housing and lifestyle that go with that class status" (p.177). While Eric did not feel he was part of the same elite class as his friends, at least in terms of their families' economic circumstances, he described travel to Australia as a kind of symbolic equalizer, bestowing on him a marker of life experience and cultural status, both of which Eric also viewed as important qualities for full inclusion in his social group.

There were a few students who told me that one of their many motivations for travel was that they enjoyed the way it provoked self change and personal development. Monique (23), who during her childhood had spent time living in Tunisia and travelling

66

throughout China, enjoyed travelling abroad because it allowed her to re-invent herself and build more self confidence.

> *Every time you go abroad you can re-invent yourself, you're not the same person as you are back home. And then if you're abroad for a long time—you're not just travelling, you're living somewhere — you can really get to do it and then you come home and you've changed and you're a new person also...Every single travel, like living abroad I've had, has in some way given self confidence.*

Monique also enjoyed travel because it provided a means to escape negative stereotypes from her peer group, which she perceived as restricting her ability to grow as a person.

> *[...] I was picked on when I was a kid [...] But then I started travelling and then you can re-invent yourself, you don't have the stereotypes following you and then you can be someone that people like, that's popular [...] and then when you go back home people will pick on you again, but then you don't care as much because you know that you're not just that.*

In many ways Monique's way of thinking about travel, as an escape from stereotypes, parallels Victor Turner's description of an 'initiate' in the liminal phase of a rite of passage: "[...] these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space [...]" (Turner, 1969, p. 110). For several students I spoke with, part of the enjoyment derived from travel was the freedom they experienced as their encounters with new people in new places began to diminish the significance of any *particular* set of classifications. To paraphrase Monique, students began to feel "that they weren't just that."

Undertaking a period of study overseas might have some parallels with Turner's conception of liminality; mobility does provide an opportunity for some students to temporarily elude particular "networks of classification." This does not mean, however,

67

that the social relations among overseas students can be described as a "communitas" – which Turner views as a kind of undifferentiated group, the members of which lose all sense of status and individuality in their passage from one social state to another. For Turner, "the passage from lower status to higher status is through a limbo of statuslessness" (p.361). However, travel to study overseas does not mean students totally escape, nor do they wish to escape, all forms of social structure or classification. During my time spent with students in Australia I noticed a constant, though often tacit, one-upmanship occurring among overseas students who seemed to be fairly interested in status and status-making, as well as maximizing their own individual experience.

Status making among exchange/study abroad students seemed to me to be largely determined by a number of factors: the amount of previous international travel experience and the "exoticness" of destinations, number of languages spoken, parents' occupation, previous work experiences, level of education, and area of study. Another popular strategy for status making was for students to distinguish themselves by claiming to be doing the exchange/study abroad program in "the right way." While I noticed several students had definite ideas about what the purpose of doing an exchange/study abroad should be, their definitions of "the right way" varied significantly. For some, it meant seeing and doing as much as they could while they were in Australia, for others it was more about meeting new people, and still for others it was about gaining knowledge of Australian culture and adapting to the local lifestyle as much as possible.

For Daniel (23), an exchange student from McGill University, an exchange should be about the cultural experience and challenging oneself to adapt to the local environment. During his time as an exchange student at Melbourne University, this

68

meant avoiding the fray of international students and interacting as much as possible with

local Australians.

> *Most of the study abroad people I met here – well they claim that they are here for culture and all that, but I mean that's false, I think [...] I don't seriously really enjoy study abroad people [...] most of them stay in residence and just refuse to adapt, to change [...] my purpose here is to meet Australians; should be to meet Australians.*

In many ways the process of status making among exchange/study abroad students is also similar to the kinds of group relationships that form among backpackers. Eric Cohen (2004) in describing the similarities between backpacking and a "rite de passage" is also against the idea that backpacking groups should be regarded as a "communitas" in Turner's terms, or even as a community in the general sense. According to Cohen:

> Such a complete immersion of backpackers with their co-travellers has not been reported in the literature, nor is it in fact to be expected. Rather, backpackers remain very much egocentrically concerned with their own fun, enjoyment and experiences even if they are gregarious [and] easily approachable. (Cohen, p.53)

Occasionally, students would talk about how their travel experiences not only changed their outlook on who they were and who they could be, but also how overseas travel shifted their frame of reference for situating themselves in the world. "Frame of reference" in this sense refers to how students' described their travel to Australia in terms of their experience of space-time, size of the world, and the distance between home and away. Depending on the student, a change in their frame of reference was alternatively

69

described as broadening/contracting their openness to living abroad and seizing opportunities for work, travel or study overseas, or shrinking/expanding their conceptions of the size of the world and the distance between home and away. Kevin (25), for example, an American exchange student from Texas, described experiencing "a change in consciousnesses" regarding the distance between home and away after going to Australia.

Lee (24) who had decided to do a Master's degree in Commerce at the University of New South Wales talked about how each new travel experience expanded his "North American mentality", making him "more cosmopolitan minded."

> *[...] when I was limited to Canada my mindset was primarily North American and when I went to England, even though I was with Canadians, and even though I was only there two months, like a whole new world opened up for me, like Europe. And I was like "Oh wow! I could do a degree in Europe." And now that I'm in the Asia/Pacific region, like a whole new world opened up for me again as well. So, you know, it feels like the degree's going to be icing on the cake at this point. Like I'm going to be much more...more cosmopolitan minded.*

For Kevin (25), the experience of flying to Australia had significantly altered his original perception that coming to Australia was "a once in a lifetime experience" because it was so far away from home.

> *Once I got here – this was actually very interesting – it had been: "Oh this is a once in a lifetime experience, this is a once in lifetime experience, this is a once in a lifetime experience." I get down here, and [...] you know, it's just a change in consciousness, a change in awareness, to it's really not that far. You know, even if it costs money, it's not that far, you just hop on a plane and you're there. So I really could see myself living here. Just as easily, I could see myself going home, getting back into the groove there and just coming back down here to visit.*

In Kevin's experience travel to Australia had the effect of shrinking his conception of the distance between Texas and Australia. Bianca (26), however, who was

70

on exchange from Sweden, started to view her exchange as her once in a lifetime opportunity to visit Australia only *after* encountering difficulties with jet lag and realizing the expense required to travel to Australia.

> *I thought it was going to be much harder, but I find it very hard with the jet lag. That's something I wouldn't like to do it again [laughter]. Actually, I would love to come back, but it's very expensive to come here. Like this is the... I figure this is the one lifetime opportunity for me to come here.*

Eric told me about how his experience in Australia effected a newfound appreciation for and attachment to place. 'Place' for Eric meant Canadian culture and, more specifically, the various opportunities in his hometown of Vancouver.

> *[A]ctually coming down to Australia makes me realize how good Canada is and how much I want to live there [...] you just kind of realize that home is home and that there's a lot of things in Vancouver that I haven't taken advantage of, like there's a lot of stuff that I should be doing there that I haven't. So it kind of made me appreciate Canada more. Cause there's a lot of stuff here that they do in Australia, just like some of things that they do that really annoys me. Like just it's just kind of their culture, it...not their culture, it's just some of things that they do where I don't like it, I like the Canadian way of doing things.*

According to Anthony Giddens (1991), one of the most significant effects of "disembedding mechanisms" such as the global flow of money, fast and efficient global transportation networks, and advents in telecommunications technology has been to undermine the significance of place. However, as Eric's comments suggest, it is also important to consider how new potentials for transcending time and distance can also incite new reactions to carefully guard, protect, and revere places, such as one's hometown. This is the point made by Lash and Urry (1994) in their critique of Giddens, where they assert that there has been a "re-assessment of place and various forms of resistance to the 'placelessness' generated by modes of instantaneous time" (p. 249). As

71

the comments made by Lee, Kevin, Bianca, and Eric suggest, travel to Australia definitely had an impact on their notions of time and space as well as on their own sense of the significance of home, yet for each of them this 'impact' was uniquely experienced. The different experiences as a result of overseas travel described by these four students illustrates one of the inherent problems with assuming the mere potentialities of "disembedding mechanisms" will translate in an automatic or homogenous way at the level of human experience.

A number of students had difficulty pinning down a particular motivating factor for deciding to do an exchange/study abroad. Some described feeling an unexplained desire, or an instinctual urge to travel, others suggested that doing an exchange abroad was just something they had always wanted to do. Yet, for Stephan and Fay alongside this "unexplained urge" to travel, lay several factors related to their personal circumstances or future career goals that prompted them to take action and organize an exchange/study abroad.

> Stephan: *I don't know how logical this explanation's going to be [laughter]. Well there's, first of all I would say there was a gut desire – like an unexplained gut feeling to go on an exchange. Now subsequent to that, I think a lot of it also had to do with where I saw myself being after I graduated. Cause, you know the cliché that a lawyer works 13 hours a day, seven days a week for the first 10-12 or 15 years, it actually holds water.*

> Fay: *I just think that I've always been, like at a very young age, like seriously when I learned that there was this world and there was these other places that, you know, existed outside of my own little world, I just remember having this natural curiosity that I wanted to go and see all those places. [...] I recently got out of a pretty serious relationship and I was devastated for like two weeks [...] I bounced back pretty fast, but I remember thinking what a great opportunity and a great time for me to start planning this. And I think that was at like the end of January, I just threw myself into planning this [...]*

72

So while students like Stephan and Fay may have always had a "gut feeling" or a "natural curiosity" that underlined their desire to travel, particular circumstances in their life prompted this desire into action. For Stephan this was his career choice as a lawyer, for Fay it was a tumultuous break-up with her boyfriend. The way in which unexpected life circumstances so often prompted a decision to travel was perhaps best expressed by Larry (50), who attributed many of his life experiences – his decision to go to Australia in the first place, meeting his wife, and undertaking a Ph.D. – to serendipity. According to Larry: "[…] my life is a series of serendipitous events, it really is."

## Choosing Australia as a Destination

Motivations for choosing Australia as a destination for studying overseas were divided between those who specifically wanted to come to Australia and those who ended up in Australia as the result of convenience or circumstance. However, I should emphasise that it was considerably rare that Australia was a first choice destination for students. Students who chose Australia as their destination of choice usually did so for one of three main reasons. First, as was the case with Nancy, some students made their decision based on the fact that they had previously been to Australia and enjoyed the experience so much they wanted to come back. Another common theme was that students felt a need to gain some distance from their everyday lives, which some hoped would allow them to gain new perspectives or think through things in their personal lives – romantic relationships, career goals, or even what they ultimately wanted out of life in the future. Since the purpose of the trip for these students was to find a space where they could think clearly on these issues they were not looking for a "culture shock", but rather "distance" from home and the temporary suspension of everyday life. This desire for

"distance" meant that Australia was ideal because, to paraphrase Nathan in one of our informal conversations, "it was as about as far away from home as you could get without coming back around."

Stephan talked about all these themes during our interview:

> [...] I think I wanted to go away because...ahhh...how should I put this? Let's just say there were things to think about in my personal life that I needed to be away from the people that I knew to be able to figure these things out [...] You know, it has to do with my parents, it has to do with my girlfriend as well and family situation [...] and sometimes I think the easiest way to think about something is to disconnect from your environment so that you're completely alone and you can sit down and not be distracted by something else or somebody else [...] when you're back home you always have your routine, it's never too far from you – right, you're always doing something [...] I think that coming to Australia is also, you know, it's a change, but it's not too much of a change. Because let's face it, Australia and Canada, there's not really a huge difference between the two. So I thought I'd find myself in a new environment, but wouldn't be complete like thrown to the lions type thing, like completely disorientated or whatever.

For some students who, like Stephan, felt they needed a break from their daily life in order to ponder life altering questions on relationships and their future, Australia provided the necessary combination of distance from home and relationships, a sense of change and newness in one's environment, suspension of one's routine, yet also a degree of familiarity – a kind of free-space, but not a culture shock. As Stephan put it, Australia was a place where "[...] you can sit down and not be distracted by something else or somebody else [...]."

The way that Stephan spoke about a desire for an interlude was a theme among students studying overseas which demands an explanation beyond the idea that this kind of travel is simply a quest for cultural capital. Ian Munt, one of the major proponents of such a view, suggests that alternative modes of travel, which presumably would include a

74

study abroad or exchange, may be regarded as attempts by members of the middle class "[...] to compensate for insufficient economic capital, with an obsessional quest for the authentication of experience" (1994, p.108). However, Stephan, Fay and Monique were motivated to travel because they were looking for a space away from home that provided a kind of "time out." Each of them, though in different ways, believed that a time out would be helpful to re-negotiate or come to terms with difficult issues in their personal lives – relationships, family situation, life transitions, or a stressful and demanding routine. Wanting a hiatus from the demands of education or work and feeling emotional over a tumultuous break-up or a relationship "on the rocks" are circumstances, which affect people regardless of their economic position. Students were of course aware that travel could be a means of stoking up on cultural capital that could be converted to economic capital by providing a pathway to certain professions (cf. Desforges, 1998, p.177). However, this particular benefit was often talked about as an afterthought, or an added bonus, but rarely the primary motivation for wanting to study overseas. It is highly problematic; therefore, to regard the factors which motivated students to study abroad only as symptomatic expressions of "petit-bourgeois" class anxiety and quest for status.

The third reason students chose Australia as their destination was that they either had personal contacts there, or were acting on the advice of friends who had previously gone and raved about the experience when they returned. This was certainly the case with Jean (30) who after teaching elementary school in Vancouver for a few years decided to quit her job and go to Melbourne University to complete a Master's degree in education. Much like Larry's experience, Jean's decision to come to Australia was also quite serendipitous.

*So I had, one of my good friends, her sister, had actually completed her B.E.D. here* [at the University of Melbourne] *and then went to work in the States and then came back and finished her Master's here and just loved it! Every time I'd run into her, she'd just rant "I loved it, it was awesome!" And Australia was just one of those countries that I wanted to visit, but it was really far away so it was good to do a study here because it was an excuse to come and see the sights [laughter]. And you get to probably be in a part of the world that otherwise, maybe I wouldn't have come just because it is so far away [...] I think I finally decided it was just an opportunity to go somewhere else to do your degree. The Australian system and the Canadian system aren't that far off in terms of education so that was part of it. And just opportunity because you know I had a chance to come, I had applied here already and had chosen to go to U of C* [ The University of Calgary] *and decided to go there for a little bit just because it was a little bit closer to home. And then I decided it's too cold here, I want to go somewhere warmer [laughter].*

What is also interesting in Jean's case is that she used the excuse of studying abroad as a means to visit Australia, which she viewed as a place that was so far away she probably wouldn't have otherwise travelled there. Melanie (24) also used the fact that she was getting an education as a way to justify the time and money required to travel all the way to Australia.

Melanie who is originally from Halifax, but had been living and working in Ottawa before deciding to go abroad, had always wanted to go overseas to do postgraduate work. And like Stephan, Melanie chose Australia partly because it was far away, but also convenient because it was less costly than other choices and would not involve serious culture shock. However, for Melanie going overseas to do postgraduate work made the experience worthwhile because it provided the opportunity to actually live in a different country rather than just visit.

*Well I actually always wanted to come to Australia to do my postgraduate work, ever since, I don't know, my first year of university I wanted to come to Australia. Well at first I just knew that I wanted to go overseas to do my postgrad, just to live in a different country for a while. When I started looking at different countries, I realized that I'm not going to be able to*

76

*pick up another language and so I would have to go somewhere where they spoke English and I'm not too fond of the idea of living in American and the U.K. was very expensive, so Australia was kind of like the only other option [...] but there's really not much of a culture shock. You just really have to be open to the little things that they do differently down here. For instance coming out to have pretty coffees, and spending $30 on breakfast and that type of thing, cause we would never do that type of thing back in the Maritimes. So there's just little things, but this is probably a 2 on the scale of 1 to 10 of culture shock, it's not that bad.*

Students studying at the postgraduate level, either a Master's or a Ph.D., usually had more specific rationales for wanting to come to Australia to do their degree. In the majority of cases these students chose Australia because they wanted to work with a specific professor who was conducting research in their area of interest, or because Australia offered a specific program that was not available in Canada. As one example, Mandy's (24) life plans changed dramatically as a result of the constraints that were put on university placements after the dismantling of grade 13 in Ontario. The resulting double cohort year meant Mandy would be competing against a larger number of people and therefore against very high standards for a place in medical school. This led her to look for other career options outside of Ontario. In her case a Google™ search eventually leading her to Curtin University in Australia for her Ph.D.

*Well I finished the Bachelor of health sciences [at Western University in Ontario] and I wanted to apply to medical school. And I had decent enough grades that I could have gone to medical school, but that was the year that the double cohort came in [...] And they jacked up all the entrance, like percentage type thing, huge! Just unrealistic, no one could get into medical school if they wanted to. Like no one in their undergrad carries a 97 [%] at all times. So I was like – "what do I do?" And my three highest grades were law, human sexuality, and psychology. So I said – "Oh I'll become a forensic psychologist." You know if I can't do medicine, I'll do forensic psychology. So I did a Google search, typed up forensic psychology and one of the first things to come up was forensic sexology. I don't know what the motivation was to go to Australia really.*

77

*Probably the only main motivation was it was the only school in the world that offered the degree [...]*

Lee, however, did not choose Australia as the place to complete his Master's in Commerce because of a particular professor's work or because The University of New South Wales (Sydney, Australia) offered a particularly appealing degree program. However, like Amanda, Lee's line of reasoning for choosing to do his postgraduate work in Australia stemmed from some of the constraints he observed in obtaining a Master's degree in Canada.

*[...] I was always interested in doing a postgraduate degree, primarily a Master's, but I wasn't exactly an excellent student, which is pretty much what's required to do a Master's in Canada I think.*

According to Lee, Australia just made good sense as a destination because the GPA requirements were low (according to him, equivalent to an average 65% in Canada), and more importantly the application for a Master's in Economics at the University of New South Wales did not require any reference letters from previous professors.

*I guess one of the limiting factors for me why I just didn't do the shot gun thing with the applications was that they require reference letters for all the postgraduate programs for all the Canadian universities as well as the vast majority of European university's postgraduate programs. Whereas in Australia, in postgraduate programs, most of them didn't require reference letters.*

If going abroad to study can be viewed as sharing parallels with a rite of passage, then students, as the participants in the rite, also have a great deal of input into its design. First, there is no official person who oversees students' passage through the rite from start to finish. Effectively, the individual student is the only witness to the rite, which gives them a fair amount of freedom in determining how they can use the exchange/study

78

abroad experience as cultural capital or life capital. Additionally, there is not really a socially sanctioned set of criteria, which permits an evaluation of a successful vs. a non-successful overseas study experience. Students will no doubt be expected to have photographs, souvenirs, or books to back up their travel stories, but they still have a great deal of leeway to frame the experience the way they want to and to make claims as to having acquired beneficial qualities (ie. greater independence, personal development, more knowledge about another culture). The following section elaborates on these points by addressing some of the ways in which students are conscientious participants in the management, design and the outcomes of their experience studying overseas.

## Strategic Management of the Study Abroad Experience

Where Veblen (1912) once defined "leisure" as "[...] the non-productive consumption of time" (p.45), Urry's (1994) more contemporary concept of "rational recreation" – the idea that leisure, like work, is organized and regulated according to time – is much more applicable for explaining the ways in which students' organized their study abroad/exchange experience. In fact, many students chose to travel by doing an exchange precisely because this would allow them to combine leisure and productivity. This was accomplished by methodically managing their experience studying overseas with reference to constraints felt in three different domains of time. I have here broadly categorized the time domains students spoke about as: institutional time, biological time, and cultural time.

The trope which emerged from my discussion with Eric of not wanting to "fall behind" one's friends in terms of acquiring education, finding a good career, or establishing a family also surfaced when I asked students why they had chosen to do an

79

exchange or study abroad as opposed to another form of travel such as backpacking, volunteer work, or a working-holiday program like S.W.A.P. (Student Work Abroad Program). In many cases students wanted to travel through an exchange/study abroad program because they wanted all the benefits of being on vacation, but without feeling "unproductive", which often meant not wasting time towards the completion of their degree and moving into a career. Derek (21) had a particularly lucid way of expressing this perspective:

> *[...] I didn't want to take a year off and just fuck around and just have a holiday for a year, but this was kind of like, it is kind of like a holiday a bit. Like the time I've had here has been so much fun, but I'm also getting two semesters of uni that are going towards my degree.*

For many students the exchange/study abroad experience could be used as a means of re-organizing time in order to negotiate perceived constraints imposed by institutions such as the university, and the anticipated demands that marriage and a family, as well as a career would bring later in life. Some students saw an exchange or study abroad program as their last chance to experience "leisure time" before settling down. This was certainly expressed by Stephan who worried that his future profession as a lawyer would signal the end of leisure time, at least for the foreseeable future.

> *If I would have stayed back home I would have worked the entire summer and then gone back to school and I would have worked the next summer, gone back to bar school, would have worked again. So by coming to Australia it gives me two months off that are really like completely off [...] it's kind of a vacation at the same time from everything, I'm going to be travelling around Australia and New Zealand [...] cause coming on exchange, I still have to go to school, I still have to work, but those two months* [upon his return to Montreal after the exchange] *are really going to be [...] like the culmination of the entire exchange process, which is to have free time before I settle down for next ten or twelve years working.*

80

Although, as mentioned earlier, Stephan clearly had personal motives for wanting to leave home, going on exchange was also, in part a strategic decision in that it permitted Stephan the ability to organize a period of leisure – "two months off that are really, completely off" – before as he put it "settling down." Like Stephan, many students also used their study abroad or exchange experience as a means to manage time with reference to their future.

Students also expressed a sense of urgency to travel while they were young. There was a general perception among students that there was a narrow window of opportunity to travel extensively before one was too old. Many spoke about how after 35 travelling around the world would no longer be a legitimate activity because by that age one should have started a family or settled into a career. Some students had very methodically planned out their future so they could negotiate their desire for travel and future career goals with the biological limitations of starting a family. Mandy, for example, had a very meticulously organized plan, which incorporated traveling abroad, obtaining her degree, and establishing herself in a career, around what she thought was the perfect window to have a baby – as if she were racing against a ticking biological clock.

> So definitely I'll continue to travel. And hopefully my work will take me that way as well; like always having that opportunity to travel... But I plan to finish my Ph.D. within the next three years and then getting pregnant within my last year of my Ph.D. and then having the baby. We haven't decided if we'll have it in Australia or Canada yet, I really want it in Canada...so probably five years is finish my degree in three years, get pregnant because I want to have a baby before I open my own private practice [as a Criminal Sexologist]... and I really want to have the kid in Canada because my mom's there and I want that support... so probably get married in July 2007, then have a baby, finish my degree, and move back to Canada.

81

Students also used the experience as a means of managing cultural time, which I have here defined as a constellation of norms and values which inform an individual's perceptions about how much time one should spend at any single activity (ie. acquiring university education, travel) and what one should have accomplished in life by a certain age. Cultural time is highly influenced by the limitations of both institutional time and biological time, but more importantly cultural time is relationally perceived through students' personal interactions and relationships, things they've read, learned in school, or seen on T.V. Notions of cultural time are therefore bound to differ greatly from person to person and will likely also change over the course of one's lifetime.

By using their experiences studying abroad as a means of managing cultural time, students were often also managing their professional, social, and personal relationships with professors, employers, family, friends, boyfriends or girlfriends. Eric, for example, told me that he wanted to do the trip primarily for personal reasons – he felt he needed to "grow as a person." A desire for personal growth was largely in response to Eric's feeling of being excluded in his group of friends because he lacked unique international travel stories.

> *[...] I just got to university and like I said my friends [...] you know they went to France for the summer and this and that, so I just started hearing all these stories [...] and you got a lot of international kids there [at UBC] [...] and they had all these stories and I'm like – "Well I've lived in Vancouver my whole life" – like it just didn't seem that cool [...] I knew travelling would be beneficial for me as a person more than career wise or university wise. So that's why I wanted to do it* [go on exchange]. *I kinda wanted to, you know, grow as a person, I guess you could say.*

International travel through an exchange or study abroad then also becomes a means of inclusion in a social group as well as a way of securing enough time to see and do everything students thought they should to get the most out of life. Cultural time is

82

therefore also closely intertwined with students' values and life expectations. This is illustrated in the way some students saw their exchange experience as "life capital" – that is as one important step towards "having it all."

> Lee: *"I wanted to work for the Canadian government, I wanted to do something exciting [...] I guess you have plans when you're expectations of something are kind of rigid. But then when you experience something and then your expectations turn upside-down and everything, then so does your plan or so does my plan anyways. Like the more people I meet, the more people I talk to, the more experiences I have, the plan, you know, starts to get chipped away a little bit at a time as well. Maybe, kind of I'm still at the selfish stage of my life still. Yah – where it's all me, me, me – I want to do everything! [...]*

> Eric: *[...] I kinda want it all and I want to do it all, so that's kind of my motivation for travelling now and then going to law school – you know what I mean? So yah, basically what I'm trying to do right now is stay single and travel while I can. You know what I mean - cause like when you're 35 you can't really go around and travel in hostels and stuff like that so... I kinda want everything out of life. So I want to be young and have fun now, travel, you know go do the hostelling thing, do all that, and then still have the education and what not – get back to Vancouver and, you know, work an office job and earn how ever much money and settle down with a family and kids and stuff like that.*

Institutional time, such as the way universities organize the length of degree programs, tends to be rigid, bureaucratically organized and standardized. However, cultural time is much more subject to negotiation, disagreements, and differing perspectives depending on one's class, level of education, goals in life, social group, and perhaps even familial traditions. While in the majority of cases students' spoke about how supportive their parents were regarding their decision to study abroad, I spoke with a few students who had encountered conflicts in conceptions of cultural time with their friends and family.

83

Eric's father, for example, felt that an exchange was a waste of time and money; it would mean Eric would be taking too much time to acquire a university degree and therefore a delay in the time it would take his son to become established in a career where he would begin to make money. While Eric clearly had several personal (desire to grow as a person) and social (desire to keep up with his friends) motivations for travel, he also had to negotiate the value of going on exchange in order to get his father on board, especially since he needed his financial support.

> *[...] me and my dad got into a lot of arguments, mostly about money, the amount of money it cost, how long, you know, it would delay my degree and stuff like that. He didn't like me doing that cause I'd have to take out student loans and stuff like that so my dad wasn't supportive at all [...] And one of my arguments with him was that I would get [...] like a different perspective on engineering [...] I was always telling my dad too that I'd end up working internationally as a civil engineer.*

By appealing to the idea that the study abroad experience would ultimately be beneficial, since he wanted to work internationally as a civil engineer, Eric was attempting to manage conflicting values over cultural time with his father. In this particular instance, Eric's method of negotiating cultural time was also a way of negotiating his person relationship with his father whom Eric needed and (as he later told me) wanted to value his exchange program as "time well spent." However, despite what he initially told his father, Eric later told me that he planned to switch from engineering to law school and as reflected in his earlier comments in this chapter, his real preference was to live in work in Canada.

For Cheryl (24), her personal need for a break and new experiences won out over the criticisms from her friends and family about her decision to go to Australia in order to

84

get her Master's degree. Cheryl also spoke about the fact that she wanted to combine leisure and productivity.

> *Even my parents didn't want me to come here because U.S. is right close by and there's no scholarships, there's no availability, like "why Australia?" – right [...] And they always used to tell me, you know, grass looks greener on the other side. So I was like, ok let me go see how green it is [laughter] [...] everyone in my family, even my friends were like that. They were like –"you're not going to get much out of Australian education. Canadian workforce doesn't value other degrees out of Canada or the U.S. much." So people were really saying like – "don't." And I said "Well, you know, I have a Canadian degree and I have Canadian experience, let's see." But what matters to me is that I wanted this long break, but at the same time I don't want to just spend two years doing nothing just because I wanted to have a break [...] And in the meantime I get to go around and experience the culture, experience the lifestyle, you know, I have a new outlook on how things are done on the other side.*

Cheryl's decision to study overseas was also triggered by her frustrating experience with the labour market in Toronto. There were few job openings for someone with a Bachelor's degree in computer science and when Cheryl finally did find a job she told me she felt "used" no matter how hard or how long she worked she struggled to have her ideas recognized as valuable. In one instance, she was laid off after only six months working with a programming company – this despite the fact that she frequently worked overtime with no pay in order to increase her productivity well above the minimum required by the company.

> *[...] a lot of my friends, they're still looking for a job after graduating and getting their degree [...] It was quite a struggle to get a job [...] I used to send ten resumes a day for like a good month and a half and then I only got one job, so you can imagine [...] and then I got laid off after six months.*

Following Bourdieu's discussion of cultural capital, Ian Munt suggests that travel is increasingly emerging as a pre-requisite for entering the labour market: "[...] an

85

important informal qualification [...] a record of achievement and experience" (1994, p. 112). The students I interviewed were fairly divided about whether or not they thought that international travel would be something that potential employers were looking for and whether such experiences would really help bolster one's C.V. Even when such possibilities were mentioned they were certainly not a primary motivation for students to study overseas. For several students, the idea that their time spent overseas might be an advantage when it came time to apply for a job had never occurred to them until I posed the question during the interview. This was clear in Derek's response:

> *I don't know. I haven't actually thought about like putting this on a resume. Because it's not like I'm getting a degree from The University of Western Australia and it's not like I'm studying a language here or anything. I mean if I had gone to France for a year to study like French intensively or something than that would seem like something for a resume, but I don't know... I hadn't actually thought about how this would look on a resume, but I think it is like a character building experience. It might be valuable – yah! It might be valuable for a career because I know people here that like now I have contacts not just from Australia, but because I've met a lot of international students here I know people from like all over the world and yah.*

Those students who wanted careers that were international in nature were obviously more inclined to see international experience as an advantage when applying for a job. Nathan who eventually wanted to work for an overseas NGO was certain that international experience was beneficial for anyone's resume.

> *I mean, just being somewhere else is just a sign that you don't just have your nose in books the whole time. I mean, you have two resumes - one guy's been somewhere, one guy hasn't – that's an advantage.*

However, students like Nancy who weren't necessarily interested in having a career that would require international travel were more tempered in their response.

86

*[...] I think there's a lot of other stuff you could do that would look better. Like I didn't do it as a resume filling thing. But I think it makes you more worldly and aware of different ways of doing things, like the way that they teach psychology here and just the way people speak and the culture.*

Students weren't necessarily concerned with how their study abroad or exchange experience might help them in terms of finding a career in a "globalizing world". However, students were keenly aware of the fact that they could capitalize on the rationales and list of benefits they are given from university personnel who assist exchange and study abroad students and use them in narratives of personal development. Nathan had some particularly candid remarks on this subject:

*[...] like most of the things they* [exchange program advisers at UBC] *tell you seem fairly superficial. But I don't think that people at the end would deny it, like they'll probably want to say like "I've learned to be in a globalizing world" or something like that, but there is sort of a bit there.*

Something which I discovered during interviews with students as well as during informal conversations was that they had developed a number of techniques to manage their experience studying abroad in such a way that it would satisfy their own personal, individualized desires and motivations while also fulfilling a certain function that would be valorized socially and culturally as a sign of life experience, accomplishment, and status in the eyes of students' parents, friends, potential employers or co-workers. Part of the personal and individual gratification of travel is no doubt, in part, informed in terms of its social and cultural value. In this sense travel abroad does indeed share many important parallels with a rite of passage. However, where Turner's rites of passage model explained how socially sanctioned ritual procedures and ceremonial processes manage individuals, I have here sought to emphasize how *students* manage both the

87

processes involved in the "rite" of international travel as well as the potential outcomes of their experience.

Post-modern theorists have often highlighted de-diffrentiation of social and cultural life as constituting one of the most important characteristics of the post-fordest means of production combined with a global division of labour. John Urry (2000) and Raoul Bianchi (2000) have both pointed to how this kind of de-diffrentiation operates within the realm of tourism, which is increasingly merging the spaces of leisure, work, and education. Other theorists have chosen to focus on how this de-diffrentiation of life's spheres also corresponds to the re-conceptualization of time. This re-orientation to time in the context of a post-fordest capitalism has been alternatively conceived as "de-territorialization" (Harvey, 1991) - time is no longer so encumbered by space and distance, "flexibalization" (Sennett, 2002) – identities have become "short" and transitory in keeping with new global division of labour and increasingly mobile work force – and more "de-synchronized" (Urry, 1994) – at any given moment people are organizing and using time in different ways.

However, the idea that flexibilized transnational modes of production and accumulation operate together with the re-conceptualization of time as de-territorialized, flexible, and de-synchronized does not adequately capture the situation of students studying abroad. Students often pointed to the fact that by studying overseas they were merging the domains of tourism, leisure, work, and education; however this awareness of "de-diffrentiation" was combined with some very definite ideas about time constraints and time boundaries. Students expressed how time limitations were felt in relation to institutional time, biological time, and cultural time. In this chapter, I highlighted the

88

significance of time orientation in students' motivations for going abroad in order to illustrate the social and cultural significance of study abroad programs. While students were active and creative participants in their experience – making decisions, fulfilling personal and individual needs, wants, and desires – it is important to also consider that they did so while also giving careful consideration of their peer groups, financial limitations, their career goals, their families' wishes, as well as a general set of values and life expectations.

# Chapter Four
## Technology, Relationships and Social Networks Abroad

*As promised, at 8:00 pm the Bush Dance Ended. Arranged by Melbourne University as part of the week long repertoire of orientation events and activities, the Bush Dance was designed as a fun event to introduce international, study abroad, and exchange students to each other, while also introducing them to a piece of Australian culture. Hungry and impatient students were awaiting the preparation of the free meal, which was to follow and suddenly, almost in unison, they began zipping back and forth in earnest across the gymnasium floor. Their movement, like the Bush Dance, began to take on a dance-like quality of its own. This dance, however, required a peculiar ability for fast tapping thumbs rather than feet.*

*Initially, I had no idea what was propelling students to move indiscriminately between groups - pause, huddle, then move on. When I finally got close enough I realized that they were exchanging mobile phone[4] numbers, sometimes email information (although this too was recorded in the mobile phone). One student would record the information with their two thumbs flapping widely to enter the person's name and number. When finished, this student would call the number they had just received, the phone of the other student, whose number they had just recorded, would ring and automatically store the incoming number. There seemed to be great urgency in this task. There also appeared to be virtually no barriers in asking for someone's number. It was perfectly reasonable to traverse from group to group of complete strangers and say little more than "Hi, I'm so and so, what's your mobile number?" The goal, it seemed to me, was to obtain as many numbers as possible with as little chit chat as possible. Relationships, as I found out, would be formed later based on who would respond to mass text messages sent out to all those who were entered in a person's mobile phone.*

---

[4] Mobile is the term used most frequently in Australia when referring to cellular phones. Even though most of the exchange and study abroad students I interviewed were from North America, they too used the term "mobile" rather than cell phone. However, in this chapter I use "mobile" and "cell phone" interchangeably.

*And there I was standing in the middle of this hustle and bustle, looking a bit daft and feeling totally inept (not to mention old fashioned), with my pen and pad of paper. I floundered after students whose facial expressions seemed to indicate that they didn't quite know how to respond to or even interpret the intentions of someone who didn't have a mobile phone. My pen and paper apparently signaled I had some sort of devious and underhanded intentions in mind. After my experience at the Bush Dance, on only the third day of orientation week, I had already encountered a need to adopt a new fieldwork method. If I stood any chance at all of establishing important contacts with exchange and study abroad students, I would have to become part of their social network. Taking my cue, as an anthropologist should, I compromised on my distaste for cell phones and bought one the next day.*

In this chapter, I develop an analysis of the kinds of friendships and social networks that developed among Canadians studying abroad. It might at first appear strange that a discussion about relationships and networks should revolve around the use of mobile phones. However, as I quickly learned from my experience at Melbourne University's Bush Dance, mobile phones were an essential tool for the formation and maintenance of relationship networks among the exchange and study abroad students I spent time with in Australia. The use of mobile phones by students in the study abroad context also requires re-thinking some common assumptions about the outcomes of international travel, cosmopolitan exposure, as well as, the use of telecommunications technology to facilitate long-distance or cross-border relationships. The final section of this chapter challenges some of these assumptions.

## The Process of Forming Relationships

Very few of the students I interviewed had prior contacts in the way of friends or family from Australia. This is not surprising since part of the appeal in going to Australia on exchange or study abroad was to avoid people one already knew. However, Canadians had little difficulty in meeting and becoming friends with other overseas

students. In many cases students ended up forming groups with those who were very similar to themselves; either with students from the same country or similar cultural background, who spoke the same language, and who were interested in undertaking the same kinds of activities during their stay in Melbourne. There were a few students I interviewee who stated that meeting Australians was one of their main goals. These students made an effort to avoid other overseas students and find share-house accommodations with Australians. However, it was rare for Canadian or other exchange or study abroad students to form friendships or interact much at all with Australians.

Melbourne University organizes an extensive repertoire of activities specifically geared towards study abroad, exchange, as well as international students. Quite a few of the Canadians I interviewed were seasoned travelers and so only felt it necessary to participate in a select few of the organized events. However, several students met each other at events organized by Melbourne University's Student Exchange Society (MUSEX). MUSEX organized a pre-orientation dinner, several pub-nights and other outings. Many Canadians also formed friendships with flat-mates (in cases where students found their own apartments), other students who stayed in their residence and occasionally other overseas students taking the same classes. Students also made contacts out of chance meetings on their own travel routes they took on the way to Melbourne. There were a number of interesting stories about contacts and friendships made through chance encounters – one student getting lost on a bus ride and being graciously taken in by an Australian family, another meeting several students at a youth hostel where she spent her first couple of nights in Melbourne and quite a few stories of students meeting on the airplane or at the airport even before arriving in Australia. With

91

each new person students met, another name and number would be added to their mobile phone. As a result, after their first two weeks in Melbourne most students already had people whom they referred to as "good friends" and had built up a social network of between 15-30 people.

Use of the mobile phone was, however, not sufficient to maintain all the contacts students had made. During orientation week, and in the weeks following, students began to organize their own social gatherings and activities. Much of this was accomplished with mass text messages that would be sent out to all those who were entered in a person's mobile phone. Text messages would describe the activity and invite others to join. Students could then pick and choose which messages to respond to based on which activities they wanted to do and which students they enjoyed hanging out with the most. In the initial stages of the study overseas experience, forming friendships and joining groups depended largely upon students' willingness to not only participate in the text-messaging frenzy, but also to actually come out for organized outings and activities with others.

## The Nature and Quality of Relationships Among Overseas Students

Fast, intense, close, transitory – these are some of the words, which most aptly describe the character of relationships that developed among students abroad. Because a study abroad experience typically only lasts for one semester (four months), it would seem logical to assume that the relationships that students formed while abroad would lack the kind of depth and substance of firmly established relationships with friends and family at home. However, it was not uncommon for students to be surprised at how quickly they were able to establish close friendships and open up to strangers. Some

92

students even indicated that they felt closer to students they had met abroad then their friends back home. This is well illustrated in the comments from this American student whose grandmother had died during his exchange experience.

> Brian: *I've opened up to people a lot quicker. I think being this far away from home has done it. Like a few weeks ago my grandmother was really sick. She actually passed away.*
>
> Interviewer: *Oh my God. I'm sorry.*
>
> Brian: *It's actually, it's ok. I've had a lot of people here I can talk to. A lot of people I've opened up to really quickly and they've been amazing about it.*
>
> Interviewer: *So you've got that support here that normally you would think only comes from family and close friends?*
>
> Brian: *Yah. I feel like, I was really homesick and feeling like "Oh I wish I could be home for this." But being able to have Kevin around has been phenomenal. We've been hanging out the last two days straight. Going out... last night was really good and they all knew and it was amazing how supportive people were being so quickly. So it's- I don't know- it's helped me. I don't have to be so closed anymore and untrusting.*

Brian's experience of feeling more open and comfortable among strangers, even in highly personal and emotional circumstances, was common. However, despite the importance that newfound relationships may have had for students during the time they spent abroad, many of these ended, often without ceremony, just as quickly as they had begun after students returned home. Nancy, an exchange student from Calgary, described this phenomenon as being very similar to her summer camp experience:

> *Just relating from my summer camp experience as well, like you make such good friends cause you live with the same people for about eight weeks so you make like really best friends, but then, just because I live so far away from them, I just lost contact and like those relationships just kind of dissolved.*

93

Much like Nancy's experience at camp most exchange and study abroad students described their experience in Australia as fun, intense, but short lived. This fact, combined with the feeling that Australia was a "once in a lifetime experience" meant students felt a certain amount of pressure and sense of urgency to get the most out of their stay. Students often spoke of how they doubted they would ever come back to Australia because of the cost of the flight, the time it took to get there, and the amount of time away from home that was required to make a trip over such a distance worthwhile. Others also felt that even if they did manage to come back to Australia they could never re-capture what they had enjoyed most from their experience because none of the people they had become friends with would be there. This was of course because these friends were themselves temporary visitors to Australia.

It was often people and not place that students described as being the most significant and meaningful part of their experience abroad. Often this realization provoked a desire to make the most of the moment. This meant going out with friends, having fun, and being sure to see and do as much as possible, which also pushed the formation of friendships and social networks into fast forward. Additionally, the fact that many students came alone meant that they found themselves in a hyper-social environment where almost everyone was looking to make friends. This was often cited as an explanation for failing to make friends with local Australian students who already had their own networks and friendships and had no interest in forming new ones or traveling around their own country to "see the sights."

94

## Maintaining Friends and Networks

Students who hadn't traveled much before were far more optimistic about the possibility of maintaining contact with friends they had met abroad than those who had previously traveled internationally. Certainly, there were students who expected and wished to continue their friendships even after they returned home; however, more often than not students were pessimistic about this possibility and only expected to maintain contact with one or two people out of their often vast networks. More importantly, students often suggested they were more likely to make the effort to stay in contact in cases where there was a chance of actually *seeing* someone again; either because they lived in the same city or province or because they lived in a country that students wished to visit in the future.

Technology such as mobile phones, email, and on-line chatting services (ie. MSN, Google Talk, I-Chat) is purposefully designed to make the establishment and maintenance of relationships more convenient and feasible across borders. However, students used the idiom of "high maintenance" to talk about relationships that had to be sustained primarily through technological interaction. In contrast, students often described well-established, or "old", friendships with people from home as ones that required very little effort to sustain. It is also significant that at the same time as students were able to establish close and meaningful friendships during their time abroad, part of the reason they didn't expect these relationships to continue when they returned home was that the new friends they had made lived too far away. Students also expected the demands of their daily routines and already established relationships back home would eventually overtake their ability to maintain contact with people they had met abroad.

This is particularly evident in the comments made by two Canadian exchange students, Monique and Nancy.

> Monique: *My two best friends from high school, we talk to each other two or three times a year, see each other once in a year and there's no difference. We update on what happened, but it's like we're never apart. My real friendships are friendships that don't – not that they don't need maintenance, but they need very little maintenance – Because I'm not good at maintenance.*

Nancy's response to the question – "Do you think that you will maintain contact with people you've met here?" – is also interesting.

> Nancy: *I'd like to say so, but it's hard to judge [...] It'd be nice to maintain, but it takes a lot of energy to maintain as well and everyone's life goes on. But it's nice to have friends now and just enjoy the moment with them and that's what I'm trying to do.*

The availability of telecommunications technology such as mobile phones and email, so often hailed as facilitating the process of transnational connections and contributing to the fluidity of national borders, did not seem to affect students' expectations about being able to keep in contact. Many students gave responses similar to Monique indicating that relationships predicated on a long-term history were far more likely to be maintained, even without contact over long periods of time and in spite of how much distance separated students from their long-term friends. For those who felt this way, new friendships could become a nuisance because in the absence of a historical foundation they required constant communication in order to be maintained. Some students like Nancy were relatively complacent about this fact:

> *[...] I'd like to say that I will maintain contact, but realistically, I don't know. It's hard to say, the world goes so fast. It's hard to like, keep emailing.*

96

However, for other students like Mary this was a particularly upsetting, though inevitable reality. Speaking about her first exchange experience in high-school going to Brazil, Mary told me about the emotional toll that losing contact with new friends could take.

> *[...] all the drama and the emotion, like when you leave. You think like how can you possibly not keep in contact with these people and I don't think that I've kept in contact with nearly any of them. It's so much more of an effort to not lose contact with someone and we take it for granted. So I was observing quite a bit, that same thing [...] in Australia. Especially with the people who it was their first exchange and they're going – "Oh we'll keep in contact", "Oh we'll keep in contact" – and I wasn't going to sit there and go – "No we won't" [...] but it was really sad, really disheartening, to know in the back of my mind that a handful, five out of the hundreds of people you met, will you ever talk to again [...] When I was crying when I was going, that's why [...]*

It is also interesting to think about how the commercial organization of telecommunications technology, at least in terms of mobile phone use, is a significant obstacle for students to maintain the social networks they established while abroad. Often cell-phone companies have control over a very limited territory. Even though most mobiles have a 'roaming' function, which allows the phone to operate (for an extra cost of course) outside of the company's designated territory, roaming is still restricted by national-borders, sometimes even provincial or state borders. This is a frustration I often hear from Canadians and Americans who are annoyed to discover that their phones cease to work almost as soon as they cross the border.

There are of course ways around these limitations. One could pay to have their phone "un-locked" from a particular cellular network and go on a pre-paid plan, which would only require switching SIM cards when they cross a national border. However, paying to have a phone un-locked is itself expensive and pre-paid plans are often double

*97*

or triple the cost of having a yearly plan with an established phone company. For students on a restrictive budget these kinds of options are often too cost prohibitive. For these reasons, most students bought a pre-paid mobile phone that they only intended to use during their time in Australia. Students were also limited to communicating primarily by text-messages, because of the cost of getting a pre-paid plan (25 cents per text vs. 40 cents per minute to make a local call and $1.10 per minute to make an international call).

Students' reliance on their mobile phones to maintain their new networks was astounding. The phone, rather than the student, unofficially became the centre of their social networks, without the phone those networks were lost. Additionally, upon returning home, the mobile phone students bought to use in Australia would no longer work nor would most of the numbers it contained. Because students were traveling they rarely recorded new numbers or emails in another place besides their cell phone, such as an address book, as they normally would when at home.

> Jason: *[...] here's an example of how intrinsic they are. When I was organizing to come down here I had to text everyone to invite them to my going away party and then I lost my cell phone. And no one could get back to me, I couldn't get a hold of anyone cause I didn't know their numbers.*
>
> Interviewer: *It's almost like you loose the device and your networks kind of go out with the device. It's not that you're throwing out human relationships, but that it's become virtually impossible to maintain them unless you've got it in hand.*
>
> Jason: *Well they can't be that meaningful then. I mean it's because I'm traveling. I mean if I was home I would keep a record and I would have an address book too and then I'd have another record of it. And these people could still contact me as well so you still have that connection.*

98

Jason's comments and the fact that students didn't expect to maintain contact with many of the people they had met abroad might lead one to question just what the significance of friendships and social networks abroad was.

For the students I interviewed it was often encounters with new people and the distance from home, rather than any specific qualities about Australia that constituted the most significant and appealing part of their exchange/study abroad experience. I wish to emphasize here that Australia was rarely students' first choice of destination, often students ended up in Australia as a result of a series of chance circumstances related to timing, their university's bi-lateral exchange agreements, and which foreign universities had places available for study abroad or exchange students. If students did in fact choose Australia they did so because it fit two important criteria: 1] It provided a great deal of distance and space from home and familiar people 2] It was convenient because it was English speaking and not drastically different from Canadian society. The desire to meet new people was a theme that occurred far more often among the students I interviewed than wanting to learn about different cultures, wanting to become worldlier, or being drawn to anything particular in Australia. Of course a desire to meet new people was a goal that did not at all preclude some of these other outcomes. It also seemed to matter far less where people were from than the fact that they were new. Students were often just as happy to form friendships with their compatriots as they were with students from other countries.

There are several reasons being around "new" people played an important and often sought after part of students' experience studying abroad. These reasons include: the desire for personal growth, self-discovery, and getting distance from and new

99

perspectives on their daily lives and familiar routines at home. "I needed a break", "I wanted some space", or "I just wanted to get away" were some of the most common phrases students used in describing their motivations to go abroad. Making a clean break was also mentioned as part of the necessity of going overseas alone, rather than with friends or even among a group of people from students' home university.

> Kevin: *[...] I knew people who were going to pretty much all the English speaking programs in Europe and I didn't really want to go somewhere where I already knew people because I like meeting new people and making new groups of friends... You know, not that I don't really like the people I'm with in school, but it's just that kind of feeling – ok it's time to move on.*

Simmel's description of the stranger as – "someone who is here today, and stays tomorrow" (1950, p.402) – is useful to shed some light on the question of why students derived so much enjoyment from their interactions with new people. For Simmel, the stranger was becoming an unavoidable reality in the formation of new urban spaces and presented both a danger and a new kind of freedom. The presence of the stranger provided a "release from historical bonds" which permitted a necessary precondition with which one could begin to challenge social norms and redefine themselves in the presence of those whom they did not know (Ibid). While Simmel was referring to the emerging Metropolis of the 19th century, many of his insights are also applicable to the study abroad context. Through Simmel's analysis, one can begin to understand the reason why students would not be especially motivated to maintain contact with people from their social network, even those who became very close friends. In order to fully experience a sense of freedom and a release from some of the constraints and stresses at home, students had an interest in maintaining themselves and the people they met as strangers.

100

As was described in the last chapter, students intended their experience studying overseas to be an interlude, not an experience that would merge with their everyday lives at home.

Monique, who had struggled with being teased for several years at school in her hometown, articulates the appeal of being a stranger particularly well:

> *[...] I started traveling and then because you can re-invent yourself, you don't have the stereotypes following you and then you can be someone that people like, that's popular or that's not being picked on [...] and then when you go back home people will pick on you again, but then you don't care so much because you know that you're not just that [...] you're foreign, you're exotic, people want to know you, people think you're wonderful because you're from such an interesting place [...]*

The relationships that students tended to form during their brief time studying abroad were about being in the moment – enjoying the freedom of, as Monique put it, being temporarily released from stereotypes that might confine or restrict one's identity back home. However, there was little else holding these relationships together and the possibility of quick and convenient cross-border communication was not enough to motivate students to keep in touch. This doesn't mean that the friendships students formed while abroad were not meaningful or important, just that they were too set apart from other important spheres of their lives and therefore required too much effort and energy to maintain, regardless of how much students wanted to do so.

For Mary, wanting to stay in touch is a genuine sentiment, but it is one that arises out of an emotional response to the intensity of encounters with people in a hyper-social and dynamic context like that of being on exchange:

> *[...] I think it's emotionally driven. When you leave, you say I'm gunna keep in contact because, you know, it's like a New Year's resolution. You know, you're emotionally there and you're ready [...] but then as time*

101

*fades and that emotional aspect decreases so does the drive and the motivation to keep in contact.*

Much of the literature related to globalizing processes suggests that borders of all kinds have broken down, or that new advents in telecommunications technology and transport have decreased the significance of time and space for the orienting of social relations (Giddens 1991; Appadurai 1996). A similar approach has been taken in studies on travel and tourism, which suggest that spaces for tourism have begun to merge with those of everyday life. John Urry (1995), for example, has suggested that postmodernity is ultimately characterized by an "aesthetic cosmopolitanism" – "tourism is nowhere and yet everywhere" (p.150). However, the experiences of study abroad/exchange students demand another approach. During my time in Australia, I was constantly forced to grapple with the ways in which students were actively engaged in 'putting up walls' that would demarcate their short time in Australia from their everyday life at home.

While a study abroad or an exchange is not entirely touristic, it is similar in the sense that its value as a unique, fun and worthwhile experience is derived from the fact that it involves a temporary quiescence from work, school, family friends and one's daily routine. The students I interviewed were generally not seeking to learn about other cultures, or to become "global citizens;" instead, they were seeking strangeness – constructing themselves and the people they met as strangers. Richard Sennett's comments about the appeal of the strange and the new reflect students' sentiments fairly well:

102

People can develop multiple images of their identities, knowing that who

they are shifts, depending on who they are with. That is the power of

strangeness: freedom from arbitrary definition and identification.

(2001, p. 1)


As has already been discussed it was relationships with new people rather the

place itself that constituted one of the most significant aspects of students' experience

abroad. "A once in a lifetime experience" was a phrase often used by students to talk

about their time in Australia. However, "once in a lifetime" not only applied to travel

itself, but also to the rare openness and freedom experienced in contexts that encourage

fleeting encounters with strangers.

Certainly, there have been important critiques of the idea that telecommunications

technology, like cell phones or the Internet, will diminish the significance of time/ space

constraints, or national borders. Katz and Aakhus (2002), for example, have looked at

how mobile phone use varies widely in different regions of the world. Also, Horst and

Miller (2005) have identified the practice of "link-up" (making extensive mobile phone

networks) as a significant practice adopted by low-income households in Jamaica as a

strategy for coping with limited employment opportunities. These studies highlight the

need to pay attention to how people use technology to accommodate their own specific

needs and circumstances in different regions of the world. However, regional variations

do not go far enough in explaining the use of mobile phones among study abroad and

exchange students. This context requires an analysis of how people may also use

technology as a digital filing system that helps to compartmentalize and organize

103

different domains of experience: economic (work), social (friends and family) and leisure (travel, tourism, recreation). In fact, this is what people are doing when they have one cell phone or email account for work and another for their social life.

It is ironic that mobile phones, so often hailed as having the ability to transcend borders and facilitate communication among the highly mobile, can end up operating in a way that maintains borders, protects the integrity of time and space, and separates different aspects of lived experience. This is why the act of purchasing mobile phones in Australia, which lose their networking capability and transform into souvenirs when students return home, is particularly significant. The following chapter will expand on the idea of maintaining borders by discussing some other ironic outcomes of exposure to what, on the surface, appeared to be a multicultural context.

## Chapter Five
## Canadianess: The Significance of National Identity Abroad

> ... I don't really see Canada being this Trudeau dream that we're one nation from sea to sea. I don't buy into that. If Canada was in Europe, it would be something like 20 different countries, let's face it. [...]I think that people in Newfoundland have nothing to do with people from Ontario and people from Nunavut have nothing to do with people from B.C. And it's not even a question of identity, it's more a question of life style, some perspectives on things, and how you earn a living and everything that you do as a person [...] You know countries just don't drop out of the sky and then exist for the rest of time, you know, there's no political institution that has sustained the test of time. So I think that Canada as an entity, as it exists presently, needs to remain as it exists for millennia – I mean come on, let's be realistic [...]. (Stephan, exchange student from Montreal)

I've chosen Stephan's comments above as an opening to this chapter because his critique of what he calls the "Trudeau dream" articulates many of the contemporary

104

debates, questions, and contentious issues that surround issues of nationalism and national identity in Canada. For Stephan, the existence of so many different groups of people who were subject to diverse regional challenges undermined the functioning of democracy in Canada. Multiculturalism, in Stephan's opinion, makes it impossible to anticipate any kind of cohesive, generally agreeable course of action for the country's future.

National identity, however vague, difficult to define, and contentious it might be for social theorists, was none the less a significant aspect of students' interactions with each other abroad. Other students I interviewed would agree with some of Stephan's views. They would definitely agree that there is a great deal of cultural variety in Canada. However, many would disagree that a disconnection between say the people of Nunavut and the people of B.C., or the existence of cultural diversity were evidence of an inherent national weakness. Feeling Canadian for them was articulated more as a *personal* feeling of attachment and pride. Some students even pointed to aspects of Canadian culture, lifestyle, and world-view, which they saw as somehow distinct, superior, and desirable when compared to other nations. However, students' conceptions about being Canadian were rarely articulated with reference to the abstract notion like that of Anderson's (1983) "imagined community" – or the idea that they belonged to a cohesive community with a shared sense of history, ethnicity, language, and vision for the future.

While I think the actual phrase "one nation from sea to sea" was spoken by Canada' first Prime Minister, Sir John A. MacDonald, Trudeau's vision was that Canada would be a "multicultural nation." In 1971, Trudeau established a federal policy that

105

confirmed the bilingual status of Canada, but within a multicultural framework (Amit, 2002, p.54). Trudeau's vision was, in part, a response to concerns that Canada's Bicultural and Bilingual political structure excluded a significant portion of the population who were neither British nor French (Ibid). Since the 1970's, multiculturalism is the image that Canada has projected both within its borders and on the international stage as one of its defining national characteristics. Canada has since had to negotiate the paradoxical and often factious condition of "multicultural nationality."

A recent two page spread in *The National Post* adds greater complexity to the paradoxes of being a multicultural nation by placing "Canada" within a global as well as a national context. Michael Bliss, a professor of history at the University of Toronto, contributed to the National Post's discussion in an article titled "Canada a *non-Nation?*" Bliss's views share many similarities with Stephan's pessimism about the future of Canada as a nation. In his submission, Bliss writes:

> [...] Canada's evolution may appear to be moving increasingly toward declining into global irrelevance and social and political incoherence [...] polycultural Canada appears to be increasingly unable to develop a sense of national "self" or national interest in global affairs. (Bliss, 2006)

Michael Bliss's pessimism about Canada's future as a coherent politically meaningful nation-state resembles many anthropological conclusions about the future of the nation-state generally, in the wake of globalization. Lash and Urry, for example, in their book *Economies of Signs and Spaces* (1994) suggest that globalization has resulted in the increase of "transnational practices" and these flows of money, people, goods, ideas, and regulations have engendered "a marked 'hollowing' of the state" (p.280). A

106

more likely scenario is the one proposed by Aihwa Ong who has argued that both nation-states and citizens are employing new strategies to position themselves advantageously in order to acquire both power and capital in the global milieu. Ong employs the term "flexible citizenship" as a means of talking about new "cultural logics of capitalist accumulation, travel, and displacement [...] produced within particular structures of meaning about family, gender, nationality, class mobility and social power" (1999, p.6).

The significance of national identity for students studying overseas began to emerge during orientation week especially in students' introductions, where they would greet each other by name and nationality first. Individual personalities and traits tended to emerge much later in students relationships and often as an offshoot from notions of national stereotypes. Stereotypes about people from particular nations tended to colour, at least initially, how students viewed each other on a personal level. Even in classrooms students were often called upon as representatives who could shed some light from their nations' perspective on issues such as trade agreements, government policies, international relations, or treatment of indigenous populations.

## Quebecois not Canadian

I did not expect to encounter issues surrounding Quebecois identity and Quebec sovereignty during my fieldwork in Australia. However, Melbourne University has a fairly strong partnership with McGill University, in part because they have a well established bi-lateral agreement and also because they are both members of Universitas 21.[5] My interactions with these students and my observations of the ways in which they

---

[5] Universitas 21 is a global network of 20 leading, research intensive, universities in 11 different countries. The network has three levels of activities. Level one: encourages student and faculty exchanges. Level two: cooperation between network members ex. by sharing learning materials. Level three: entrepreneurial

107

interacted with others demanded that I pay attention to the way that some of the divisions between Quebec and Canada, and Anglophones and Francophones also play an important part in the construction of national identity in Canada.

It was rare to find Australians who could name many Canadian provinces or towns, so I was very much surprised that Melbourne University offered a course (taught in French) out of the department of French, Italian and Spanish Studies called "Quebec: Identity in a Globalizing Era." Monique had informed me that the professor of the class was planning two seminar sessions and had sent out an email to Canadian exchange students asking those who were from Quebec, or currently studying in Quebec, if they would participate. I asked the professor of the class if she would mind if I attended one of the class's seminar sessions. She agreed, and suggested that I might present something of the "Anglophone" perspective on the experience on living and studying in Quebec. I was accompanied by Monique and Stephan, both on exchange from McGill University. The three of us were to talk to the class about issues such as bilingualism in Canada, what our language means to us, and multiculturalism and globalization in the context of Quebec.

At the time of the seminar I had already interviewed Monique and Stephan, both of whom viewed themselves as Quebecois and not Canadian. I was relatively prepared for some negativity towards Canada and Anglophones to surface; however, Monique and Stephan, completely shocked me during this seminar. I had to question whether or not some of the things they said were a bit of a "posturing" for the Australian class, since during my interviews with them and in other more private conversations their views on

---

activities such as the establishment of U21Global an online university. For more information see www.universitas21.com

108

the issue of their own identity as Quebecois and Quebec sovereignty tended to be much more nuanced and less pejorative towards "English Canada."

Students in the class asked about the relationship between Quebec and France. Monique's response was that there isn't any real affinity because people from France tend to be a bit snobbish and tend to view themselves as superior to people from Quebec, even though according to her their French is "less pure." Although, Monique did add that occasionally when you go to France you'll be greeted by the phrase "mes cousins", which suggests there is still the recognition of sharing the same historical roots. Stephan's response to this question was much more negative: "Moi, je n'aime pas beaucoup les peuples français" (I don't like the French people very much) and a few other more decorative phrases.

Even outside the context of the seminar on Quebec, Monique and Stephan would sometimes digress into trite remarks over language purity, especially in their discussions with my roommate Sonia and her aunt who were both from Paris, France. During an evening stroll in downtown Melbourne, Stephan and Sonia began to argue about who spoke the most authentic form of French; a discussion I was more than happy to tune out. However, I couldn't help but tune in again as Stephan loudly affirmed to Sonia: "Ta français était corrompue par les africains et les arabes" ("You're French has been corrupted by the Africans and the Arabs"). It is likely that Stephan's outburst was a delayed reaction to an offhanded remark made by Sonia's aunt a few weeks earlier, who upon first meeting Stephan, remarked: "Ah! Tu parle vraiment français, pas français québécois" ("Oh! You really speak French, not Quebecois French").

109

Although the seminar was also about multiculturalism in Quebec, the bulk of the discussion revolved around the polarization of Quebec and Canada and the conflicts between the "Francophones" and "Anglophones." Monique told the class that multiculturalism in Quebec was a myth because different cultural groups were confined to specific neighbourhoods and there was not a lot of interaction between different ethnic groups. Her views also echo the tri-partite method of classifying people in Quebec as: Francophone, Anglophone, or Allophone (the latter classification indicating one's first language is neither English or French). For Phil (30), an Italian from Montreal who was in Sydney doing his Ph.D. in Engineering, growing up under the non-category of "Allophone" prevented his ability to develop an affirmative sense of either ethnic or national identity. Phil told me that the vagueness surrounding his cultural identity and even sense of citizenship was a "pretty big issue" – something he was hoping to sort out.

> *I have dual citizenship* [between Canada and Italy], *but can't really [...] I feel neither really sometimes. I still basically haven't gotten to grips with that. Because when I'm in Italy, I'm basically treated as an American and when I'm in Canada, I'm a Quebecker, but I'm not really a Quebecker, not really, I'm not Québécois so[...]Yah so I'm not sure of the answer to that one [...]Yah, It's a pretty big issue.*

I remember being told once that people live quite comfortably with contradiction. This idea definitely applied in my encounters with Stephan and Monique, both of whom I noticed could vacillate so easily from a highly politicized voice to an emotional, reactionary voice all the way to a more nuanced and rational perspective of, as Stephan put it, "people on the street"; although, as the altercation between Stephan and Sonia illustrates, "people on the street" are not always rational either. What fascinated me was how Stephan and Monique could speak with certainty and conviction in many of their

110

views on the differences in culture and mentality between Quebecois and Anglophones in some contexts, while at the same time viewing their travel experiences, as contributing to a more flexible and open view of themselves and others. In some casual conversations over coffee or a meal, their more flexible and less certain views were often expressed, for example, making statements along the lines of – "Of course not all Anglophones are like that."

Stephan discussed travel as an experience that helped to temper ignorance and essentialist views on people and their culture. During our interview, I asked Stephan whether he thought more mobility in Canada - people living and working in different provinces - could help in bridging the varying experiences and challenges of people living in different regions. In Stephan's response to my question, he revisited his view that Canada was a nation without a future and a nation whose political policies could never address his concern for his fellow human beings; however, there was only one point on which he questioned his certainty about this fact.

> *[...] this is the one thing that makes me doubt my conviction – is that people on the street get along. People on the street don't talk about politics; people on the street don't worry about Canada as a country. The only people that worry about Canada as a country is the media and the government, that's it. If you get people on the street everybody agrees, you know? I think that people are much more nuanced than we give them credit for. Despite the fact that there's an informational imbalance, I think that people are least willing to consider the other side. Having said that- mobility within Canada? - I think so. I mean I never really stopped to think about it, but I presume that, you know, I think that, I hate to use this term, but tolerance is something that you develop by just visiting other places, seeing different lifestyles, different cultures, different villages or whatever. You know people who've travelled a lot tend to be much more... I don't think balanced is the right word, but ahhh... less certain of things maybe. They tend to be much more flexible in what they believe. So I mean, necessarily, I would think that that's the same thing that would happen to people who moved around Canada. I know that for myself.*

111

Admittedly, I was no more rational than Stephan and Monique during the seminar and, much to my surprise, found myself responding in a very emotional and very "un-anthropological" way to the overall discussion. Towards the end of the second seminar in the afternoon I found myself becoming increasingly angry. I was becoming frustrated with the way in which Stephan and Monique continually referred to "Anglophones" as if they were an identifiable racial group (les têtes carées), yet one which lacked both a history and a culture. I was also angry that students were asking me to answer questions as an "Anglophone", and even angrier at myself for responding to their questions as though I actually belonged to a culturally coherent group of "Anglos." I was also becoming frustrated with the way in which the discussion – despite the fact that the theme of the seminar was *multiculturalism* in Quebec – had gravitated towards a grand divide between the English and the French, thus erasing all of the issues surrounding other diverse groups in Quebec, specifically First Nations groups and sizeable Haitian, Jewish, Italian and Middle Eastern communities among others.

All of these sentiments erupted at the end of the second seminar and I felt the need to ask Monique a question of my own:

> *Since you've told me that all Québécois share a vision of the future in terms of how they would like to see Quebec develop in the future, what should become of people who were born in Quebec, but don't share this vision?*

Monique retorted: W*ell then they should move to Ontario.*

I'm not sure to what extent Monique really felt this way. In fact, as she delivered this response her own words seemed to surprise her as if they were purely reactionary – some kind of automatic reflex rather than thoughts over which she had control. When the seminar was finished Monique actually apologized to the professor who had invited us to

112

speak and qualified her response to my question by suggesting that her emotional attachment to her Quebecois identity often overtook her ability to think rationally about issues surrounding Quebec sovereignty and the divide between Anglophones and Francophones.

During my interview with Monique, which took place shortly before the seminar, some of her reactionary views came out when she spoke about how globalization was a process that would help to strengthen Quebec sovereignty.

> *I think Quebec is speaking more and more English because of - which is a bit about what the class* [the seminar] *is about- Quebec and Quebec culture versus globalization. Because we speak more and more English because of globalization, because now that we have another outlet for English, which is the world. English language is spoken everywhere for business, so people are speaking more and more English for that. Because Quebec is more and more part of the world, whereas when Quebec was only with the rest of Canada it was as a reaction to Canada, we refused to speak English, but now people are more open to it because we can deal with the rest of the world without even thinking about Canada. So it's ok now to speak English [...] it's an embrace. It's not to embrace Canada, it's to embrace the rest of the world. And if we are open more to business with the rest of the world then it becomes easier to become independent because then we're more financially independent, we have strong bonds with other communities so we don't need Canada as much. So speaking English becomes a way to get back at Canada basically.*

There was only one point on which Monique and Stephan would permit themselves to be referred to as Canadian and that was in order to distinguish themselves immediately from Americans. This was particularly important since anti-Americanism was omni-present both among Australians and among study abroad and exchange students, particularly those from Europe. In a context where Quebec and what it means to be Quebecois were not generally known or understood by others, being Canadian became a kind of convenient blanket identity to quickly establish oneself as non-

113

American. Stephan, for example, had a Canadian flag on his backpack but the Quebec flag on his laptop. The desire to distinguish oneself from Americans permitted some flexibility in terms of how Stephan and Monique identified themselves. However, it seemed that whatever fluidity, or tolerance Stephan and Monique had gained in terms of their ideas about people, their language, and their culture they remained rigid in the idea that the Quebecois were distinct from Canadians.

> *My first Internet Law class [...] I can't remember exactly what I said* [in response to the professors inquiry about why one should study Internet Law], *but I said something to the effect of – not being from Australia, I'd be interesting in seeing the Australian perspective on copyrights, trademarks, digital information in general – something to that effect. And so she said "Oh, yes later on in the course we'll see how important the American perspective is". So then I said "But I'm not American." And her response was "Well I didn't hear you say 'aboot' or 'eh'." So then I went, "Well even if I had said those words you wouldn't have picked it out because I'm not Canadian either." She's like "Well where are you from?" I said "Quebec." She goes "Well same difference." ... No. It's not the same difference at all.* (Stephan)

For Monique in contexts like Australia, where Quebec was not generally known, it would suffice to introduce herself as being from Canada, "the French part."

> *[...] because not a lot of people know Quebec [...] when you ask me where I'm from, I'm from Quebec [...] first and foremost I'm a Quebecker [...] but always when people ask, if I say Canada, I always specify the French part [...] but just, my culture is not Canadian culture, my language is not English, my first is not English. My language is not English actually. I speak English because I have to. Because I've travelled, I have an ear for languages so I'd pick them like that, when I was a kid. But I love it. One of the things I love about being in Australia now is that my roommates are French, I spend a lot of time with Stephan, I spend a lot of time with French people so I speak French, I would say, at least half the time. Whereas back home I spoke English, my roommate's English speaking, I worked in English, so I speak more French now that I'm in Melbourne than I did in Montreal.*

However, despite her emotional attachment to her Quebecois identity and the French language in some contexts, in others Monique would suggest that issues surrounding Quebec separatism were not particularly relevant for her everyday life.

The ability to elide the political and the personal, the emotional and the rational, sometimes even in the same breath, was something I found remarkable in my conversations with Canadian and the Québécois students. In spite of myself, I often found that when presented with stereotypes about Canada or other nations and even when entering into casual discussions with students, I would also make constant transitions in my voice and positioning. Even when I tried to reflect on my positioning, I found it incredibly difficult to disentangle whether I behaved – or whether I should have behaved – as an individual, a Canadian, an Anglophone, or an anthropologist. Depending on the context and with whom I was speaking, I sometimes behaved as if I belonged to only one of these classifications and sometimes various combinations of two or three. This intermingling of the emotional and the rational and the personal with the political was also apparent in the way that students spoke about stereotypes they had encountered about Canadians as well as in their views about what distinguishes Canada from the U.S. and Canadians from Americans.

**Canadian not American: Encounters with Canada's 'Other' Abroad**

**August 4**[th] – Doug, an Albertan born and raised, now in his 50's and completing a Ph.D. in Australia, provides me with an anecdote from his grade school days during our interview:

> *I remember in school we had this one class and the teacher asked us where we were from, you know, what our heritage was. And a few of the kids in the class said they were British, or Chinese or that kind of thing and finally it came my turn and I said "well, I'm Canadian." And she*

115

says *"No, what's your heritage?"* *And I said "Canadian!"* *And she said "No, where are your parents from?"* *and I said, "Canada, they're Canadian."* *And she replies, "well where were they born?"* *and I said "Canada! They're Canadian! Canadian!"* *And then she said "Well, where were their parents born?"* *And I said, "One grandma was born in Canada, the other grandma was born in Ireland, my grandpa was English, my other Grandpa was Scottish."* *And she goes "Oh, so you're British?"* *and I said "No! I'm Canadian!"*

The experience Doug described would have occurred nearly 15 years before I was born, yet, as his voice took on more and more emphatic momentum with each "Canada! Canadian! I'm Canadian", I couldn't help being quietly amused at how much his story reminded me of a similar incident I experienced in grade 4. Shortly after our class had, to our teacher's satisfaction, mastered the ability to plot the world's continents and oceans on a map, we were given the famous family tree exercise. However, before sending us off to ask our parents about our heritage in order to plot them on pieces of paper featuring a gigantic branching tree with several lengthy roots beneath the soil, we were given some cautionary instructions: "Now remember countries like Canada and the United States are very young, so all of you, unless you have First Nations relatives, come from immigrant families that have only been here for two or three generations. And almost all of you will have a European heritage. You must plot at least one relative from outside of Canada." Though neither I, nor my classmates knew much about nations or nationality, what they meant, where they were located, how they came about, or the political relationships between them – for quite a while after this exercise where one's family was from outside of Canada became an extremely important mark of prestige. Despite its importance, however, European heritages were ranked with the same air of spontaneity and arbitrariness that determined which way was the boys' or girls' way to push the merry-

116

go-round. The idea of being Canadian, at that time, not only seemed terribly boring, but also took on the air of an illegitimate and unsubstantial identity.

Students frequently told me that in their experiences with other overseas students, and particularly in conversations with Australians, Canada was often described as a utopian contrast to the United States. One of the questions I asked students during interviews was if they had encountered any stereotypes about Canadians during their time in Australia. Students had a variety of different answers to this question; however, almost everyone responded by re-calling instances during their time in Australia where they were mistaken for an American and then receive a profound apology once they asserted they were actually Canadian.

Derek's response to my question about stereotypes was typical:

> *[...] they [Australians] expect you to be nicer than Americans and they expect that they're going to like you more. And they also expect that you're going to be upset when they mistake you for an American. They always say like 'What part of the States are you from [...]?' And then I'm like 'Oh no, I'm Canadian.' And they go 'Oh shit man, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry man, I didn't mean it.*

It became clear from my own experience, as well as the interviews I conducted with students in Australia, that the United States was Canada's "other" and for Canadians this distinction suddenly emerged as being significant when they were abroad. Many of the students I spoke with suggested they had not thought seriously about their national identity until they went to Australia. Eric articulates this position well in his insights into the distinctions between Canadians and Americans:

> *[...] I never knew what Canadians were until I came down here. Because, you know, you live with Canadians all the time back home and since I've come down here, I've noticed how Americans are and how Canadians are and I've noticed a difference between Americans and Canadians. Every time I see an American, or I meet someone I can tell they're American and*

117

*I can never do that back in Canada [...]Like Americans are -- Canadians are definitely more outgoing and fun and like, I don't know, Americans are just cool, you know what I mean? Like they're just like, I don't know it's hard to explain. Every time I see an American, or I meet someone I can tell they're American and I can never do that back in Canada. But I can do that here cause I really started to look at like, kind of what a Canadian is [...] I can hear the Canadian accent. I never knew what it was, but since I've come down here, yah I can hear it.*

Contrary to the idea that Canada is a "non-nation" as put forward by Michael Bliss the *National Post,* Eric clearly developed some very concrete ideas during his time in Australia about what constituted Canadian attributes; although, his view was probably informed from stereotypical distinctions, either from Australians or other international students, between Americans and Canadians. While Eric discussed "being Canadian" in relation to a series of contrasts with the United States, he also posited some very tangible "Canadian" traits: a particular "attitude" or mentality (open and friendly) and a particular way of speaking (the Canadian accent) that he could pick out in Australia, but not at home.

A few students were hesitant to answer my question "What separates Canada and the United States as nations?" Their reluctance ranged from wanting to avoid making broad essentialist generalizations, to a desire to dodge a discussion about American vs. Canadian politics. This occurred during my interview with Atanis (22) who had migrated to Canada with his family when he was 15 from Eastern Europe.

Interviewer: *Do you think there's anything that distinguishes Canadians from Americans?*

Atanis: *I really don't want to get into this. It's a touchy subject [...] Well I think Canadians and Australians are similar in a way that they both like the outdoors and they're more relaxed and they're both welfare states sort of thing. What is it called? Ah like a social safety net [...] as opposed to the States where you're pretty much on your own and you have to work*

118

*very hard and yah, it's all about your job so it's a lot more stressful, I think, over there. But again, you know that's very general so...*

Peter (23), for example, who had also migrated to Canada with his family from Switzerland when he was five, responded to my question by referring to a discussion he had with an American during a backpacking trip around Eastern Australia.

> *[...] while travelling on the East coast of Australia I was with some Americans and one of them was saying that he was really disappointed with America [...] This American guy was explaining to me that it's just a country that's reached the height of its Roman dominance [...] this just kind of made sense to me what he was saying about how it had reached the height of its empire and this was kind of a problem.*

In an effort to explain just why the American Empire seemed to be headed for a collapse, Peter drew on distinctions between Canadian and American culture as an explanation.

> *[...] when you look at Canada and America, in America, the standard of education is really low. Lots and lots of uneducated people and yet they still have a major influence in determining political outcomes – very dangerous in my opinion. Canada you have a very high percentage of educated people and that's the major distinction for me [...] in general, American culture that I see just by going there casually, like all those fast food places and those big huge whales of people walking down the street [laughter] [...] They* [the Americans] *think too much in terms of 'us and them' and they have a conquering mentality. No good [laughter].*

According to Peter, Canada and the Canadian population in general did not have this "conquering mentality."

Nathan also wished to avoid making generalizations about Canadians in relation to Americans. He attempted to do by keeping his discussions about Canada with other students centred on issues related to political differences between the two nations, rather than talking about personality traits of citizens. He also noticed that his exchange

119

experience also helped to break down stereotypes not only about people from different nations, but also about people from different regions within Canada.

> *I've met some people who just because America and Canada are supposed to be opposite, they tend to idealize Canada as this utopian, like you're not American so you're... I generally say that Canadians and Americans are similar, but ah... well most of these discussions are more political, that's what they [other students] want to get at. Like how politics in Canada might be different from like politics in the States and stuff like that [...] because living in Canada, I find it's easy to get trapped in these regional like you're from Vancouver, you're from Alberta, or Toronto. I mean it seems like they're all stereotypes and it seems like people don't really like each other or they sort of have this general like – how people in Toronto are, or people in Calgary – you know what I mean?*

As Nathan's comments indicate, international travel can also have important implications for the way in which students think and feel about their own nation. Some students spoke about how studying in Australia gave them a newfound appreciation for Canada as their home. Eric, who had formally wanted to work internationally, decided during his exchange in Australia that Canada was where he wanted to be.

> *So it's helped me realize more about Canada and where I'm from and where I want to be I guess. Because I was always telling my dad too that I'd end up working internationally as a civil engineer. Like it seems like something that would be appealing, like to – like you know I go work in Second World countries and something like that as a civil engineer. But since I've lived in other places now, I've realized that Canada is the place I want to live in. You know what I mean; like it's really... it's really changing. Cause I didn't know what living in another country would be like, so I wanted to do it and now that I've done it, I've realized that it's not as great... so it's definitely changed my perspectives on like Canada and life and stuff like that [...]*

While students were often leery of making generalizations about Americans or Canadians, they also questioned whether Canadians (or Canada for that matter) were worthy of their reputation in contrast to the United States. Some students, like Derek,

120

even expressed feelings of guilt about the positive stereotyping of Canadians and the utopian stereotype of Canada as a harmoniously multicultural nation.

> *Like a lot of Australians are like "Ah damn yanks" Like "You're alright because you're Canadian." And like I feel a bit guilty. Like in one of my Australian culture classes where it was mostly American students in the class and the tutor was English and we were talking about multiculturalism and he was saying that like he found that in his travels he found that Australia has like kind of a token multiculturalism and it's not really that genuine and America has this melting pot mentality which is actually contrary to multiculturalism and like he was like describing it in quite a negative way. And then he was describing Canada and he was like "when I was in Canada it was amazing, it was the World Cup and the Greek community got excited and the Portuguese community, and the Korean community and everyone came together and it was this beautiful patchwork" [...] me and the other Canadians were feeling a bit guilty, like it's not perfect. But he was really down on the Americans like specifically down on the Americans[...] and that was his idea of Canada as being... he was describing it really positively, so we felt a bit guilty.*

What is interesting is that regardless of the extent to which students questioned the legitimacy of the "positive" Canadian stereotyping, they were often quite happy to play along in public. Students often talked about how asserting that one was a Canadian in Australia was quite simply a way to get along better with other students, get better customer service, and in some cases to avoid unpleasant confrontations should they be mistaken for an American.

The efforts of Canadians to actively distinguish themselves from American culture, attitude, accent, and politics also influenced the opinions of students from other parts of the world who formerly tended to merge Canadians and Americans into the general category 'North American.' This was expressed to me during an interview with Bianca (26), an exchange student from Sweden, who became my good friend and confident during my stay in Melbourne:

Interviewer: *And so the people that you've been interacting with, have you been learning much about their country and their culture?*

Bianca: *[...] I mean, I know it's a big difference between Canadians and Americans and before, I think - I think I knew that, but you still put Canada and American [together] and Europe there, you know.*

Interviewer: *What are the differences do you think?*

Bianca: *That Canadians are not as big headed as the Americans. The Americans are very loud people and Canadians are not like that.*

Canadian students often articulated their ideas about their national selves in response to the way other international students and Australians positioned Canada as a utopian 'other' juxtaposed to the United States. However, the American students I interviewed did not indicate that being distinct from Canada was an important part of their national identity. Kevin, an American exchange student from Texas, launched his response to my question about American conceptions of Canada from a humorous rendition of how Americans and Canadians are distinguished in the animated cartoon *South Park*:

> *Yah the Canadian heads flap side to side. And that's considered really funny because nobody really has any conception of Canada, generally, other than as, ok, you guys have a lot of maple syrup, you're up there, it's big and cold, you know, we get some funny people from there, Mike Myers [...] but on a general level you're just our big kinda happy, friendly, goofy neighbour to the North. [...] there are a lot of people in the U.S. who say that Canada is the just the 52nd state.*

While studying abroad, students' interpersonal relationships with other students became enmeshed in stereotypes surrounding their national-identity. What is even more interesting is that some students had not been particularly reflexive about their national identity until they went abroad. While ideas about national identity emerged during

122

students' personal interactions with each other, it was in classrooms more than anywhere else where students' were positioned as being "typical" representatives of their nation.

## Classroom Dynamics

**July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2005** – *A headline in Melbourne's paper, the Age – "University Books Make Students People of Interest" – naturally catches my attention. The article is a small one, measuring 11x11 cm, buried somewhere in the middle of the newspaper, positioned bottom centre of the page. According to the article, a warning had been issued from Monash University to students enrolled in a terrorism studies course that they could be monitored by intelligence agencies. According to the author of the article, Clay Lucas, the warning was issued after an unidentified student, referred to in the article as "Abraham", was singled out from 40 students in the class and was questioned at his home by an officer from Australia's federal police about book purchases he had made for the course, all of which were on the course list. In spite of his outrage at the incident, David Wright-Neville, a former intelligence officer with the Federal Government's Office of National Assessment and current head of the university's global terrorism studies, issued a warning to other students taking the class that they too were under scrutiny.*

In the following, I offer a glimpse into a variety of different classroom contexts in Australia, with a focus on the perspectives of Canadian students. However, In order to provide some additional perspectives, I also offer narratives of students from the United States, Sweden, and towards the end I describe a chilling incident, which occurred at Monash University involving a student from China. While not all of the narratives relate directly to the issues of Canadianess and Canadian identity, they do bring forward, from the micro-environment of the classroom, some insights into the inequalities embedded in student mobility programs, so often glossed over in terms like "multiculturalism", "internationalism" (or as the next chapter will discuss "internationalization"), and even "cosmopolitanism."

Many of the universities in Australia offered courses, such as "Australian Culture", or "Indigenous Affairs" that are often more appealing to overseas students than

123

to Australian students. In some cases, these kinds of classes were comprised of a majority makeup of overseas students. The international composition of these classes often provided momentum for conflicts and debates on sensitive issues related to a nation's policies. Students were often called upon by the professor to present their nations' perspective. It was, therefore, in the classroom, perhaps more than anywhere else, where students were positioned as representative members of a nation and where their personal/individual views were often tacitly conflated with political/national ones.

What is intriguing, albeit paradoxical, is that interactions and discussions between students in the classroom, in what outwardly appeared to be a "cosmopolitan" environment, actually worked to solidify rather than dilute their sense of national identity. There were some American students, for example, who went to Australia with a critical view about American politics and the current administration, yet left their Australian classes feeling defensive and more patriotic then when they entered. This came across very clear in the interview I conducted with Kevin, when I asked him if he was provoked to defend the United States when he encountered anti-American sentiments in his classes at Melbourne University:

> *Interestingly enough, I do. I mean, I have my own disagreements with the administration, but I respect the institutions [...] I respect the office of the president,. I respect the way that we do things, even if it does seem odd or different from somebody else's political point of view [...] it's what we have and it works, even if it doesn't work well all the time. But that's just like any political institution, you know, everybody is going to have their point of view on it and when somebody starts attacking the American way, it's interesting how much I do get up in arms about it.*

However, Brian, another American exchange student from Maine, had a very different experience in one of his class on Indigenous Affairs. He talked about the

124

debates that would sometimes take place between American exchange students and Australians.

> *Ah, there were funny parts. Like when one of the lecturers told us that like one of the heads of the Indigenous Affairs department [in Australia] was removed by the Queen of England in a CIA coup. And we burst out laughing, the Americans, in the middle of the lecture and they singled us out right away [...] we were like why would the CIA care about the plight of the Indigenous Affairs Council [...] I still don't know if I believe it, but it's possible.*

Unlike Kevin, Brian's experience in his class on Indigenous Affairs did challenge some of his assumptions about the United States and being an American.

> *That course [on Indigenous Affairs] specifically, there was a debate about what was considered genocide under U.S. convention and like the parallel was drawn with the Native Americans and what we've done, and we've never discussed it as genocide and - wow! - that opened my eyes to that topic and that challenged a lot of ideas that I had about like Thanksgiving and everything nice about that.*

Derek, a Canadian who took part in a similar course during his exchange in Perth, offers a very different perspective. The following is his description of his anthropology class on Australian culture:

> *There's probably like three quarters exchange students and then about a quarter of the people there are Australian. And so in the classes the teacher will say like "What are your guys' ideas about whatever, like coming from your different backgrounds?" And there's Americans and Canadians and Swedes and English students and stuff. [...] I think what surprised me a lot is some of the stuff the Americans have said actually[...] sometimes when the Americans will go on at length talking about the way they view things at home or the way like [...] certain sociological ideas they have or whatever, I'm really surprised because I identify more with what the Australians are saying, with their experience and I'm surprised that what the Americans say is so different from what I think, or what my experience has been. Cause I always thought of, and I think that most people think of, Canadians and Americans as, like I mean,*

125

*I think I'm pretty much, I'm pretty similar to a lot of Americans, but a lot of the Americans say stuff that I totally can't identify with or agree with at all[...] One thing that really struck me was we were in a class talking about the situation of Aboriginals in Australia and the lecturer said – "For you guys from North America, what's the situation like there with Aboriginals? Are they marginalized with Native Americans?" And one of the students, an American guy from Indiana, he would just say some shockingly ignorant stuff [...] he would be like "Oh we just let them run the casinos and they do this and we do that." And then he was like "I don't think most Americans have probably ever seen a real Indian." [...] I was shocked that the rest of the Americans in the class were like "Yah I don't think I've ever met an Indian before like I don't know any actual Indians."*

The outcome of this course for Eric was a more firmly entrenched feeling that he was different from Americans because of his inability to identify with their some of their political and intellectual views. Because students were positioned as "typical representatives of their nation" in Australian classrooms, it became almost impossible for them to answer questions or express opinions as individuals. Hence, Eric's tendency to view the American students in his class as reflective of Americans in general, rather than as the views expressed by a few ignorant individuals.

One of the most obvious indicators of inequality among students who were studying abroad was the degree to which they viewed the difficulty of their classes. In general, Canadians felt their classes were easier and less demanding then what was expected from them back home. Specifically, students discussed feeling that the university setting in Australia was less demanding than that of Canada because there were fewer courses per semester (four as opposed to five) and professors tended to assign less readings.

For Eric, an Engineering student from Vancouver, the University of Western Australia was a much more laid-back environment than that of UBC.

> *The work load is nothing compared to UBC. Like they're really, really relaxed about everything down here. Like I don't feel pressured at all, the classes are a lot easier. The material is kinda the same, but ah, you know, I do like three or four times as much work at UBC as I do here.*

It is likely that students' sense of ease in Australian universities is also related to the fact that most Canadians on exchange will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis and will therefore not have their actual course grades transferred to their home university. There were quite a few students I interviewed who were not terribly concerned about striving to achieve high grades. Additionally, it was rare for Canadians to say that they went to Australia to study for the academic benefits or to gain experience with a second language, which were two of the priorities often mentioned by some of the European and Southeast Asian students I spoke with during my time in Australia. In fact, many Canadians chose Australia specifically because of the fact that they would not have to learn a second language.

Feeling less anxiety over one's academic demands was also expressed by Canadians I interviewed who were completing their full degree in Australia at the post-graduate level. Lee, whose family immigrated to Canada from Japan when he was three, considered the courses in Australia to be easier than in Canada; however, he attributed this to the fact that many of his classes were composed of students who either struggled with English or weren't familiar with Western culture and academic environments. Lee spent his formative years in Toronto and completed an Undergraduate degree in Commerce at Queen's University in Ontario. At the time of the interview, he was

127

completing his first year of a Master's program in Economics at the University of New South Wales in Sydney.

> Interviewer: *So how do you find your classes here compared to Canada?*
>
> Lee: *[...] I don't know if it's just my program or the fact that I'm a postgraduate, or the fact that it's geared mainly towards international students [...] like they start you right from the beginning, like how to write an essay [...] the work load, even though I'm totally behind on my work load and I'm not doing anything there's not as much expected of you as there was in my undergrad [...] and I think I can get by with doing extremely little and then I could pass.*
>
> Interviewer: *Is there a mixture of Australians and International students in your courses [...]?*
>
> Lee: *Yah, I've heard that it's mostly , like in commerce programs, like in any class in general there's a lot of students, I don't know if they're international students or if they're permanent residents, but in this campus there's a lot of people from China and Southeast Asia, but I think I heard particularly in the Master of Commerce program there's a lot of students from China and I don't see very many − I don't hear many Australian accents in class [...] One time in my [...] course called Business Practices and Ethics [...] And at one of our tutorials, the lecture, one student, I think she was from China, was asking a lot of specific, like a lot of specific questions about how to write the essay and what's expected and then one of the Australian students was getting irritated [laughter] [...] she felt it was something that this person should have known at a postgraduate level and she put up her hand and she was very outspoken and she was like "I think at a postgraduate level you should know how to write an academic paper[...]."*

It will be useful here to outline some of the historical policy developments, which have contributed to the classroom situation that Lee described. In 1990, the Australian Government, which had previously contributed almost all the funding to operate Universities in Australia, withdrew much of its financial support, leaving a meagre contribution of 15% (in Canada, Government funding still accounts for over 50%). To make up for the lost funding, Australian universities began to undergo a massive effort to

128

recruit large numbers of overseas students. The incoming numbers of overseas students

registered at Australian universities quadrupled in the decade from 1990 – 2000 (DEST,

2005, p.13). Most universities also hope to increase their numbers each year.

Lee described a particular instance where an Australian student outwardly

expressed her frustrations related to different academic levels in the classroom. I myself

often overheard similar frustrations expressed in informal conversations, sometimes in

very public places such as city trams. In interviews, students often remarked that they had

encountered a fair amount of racism, particularly against Asians, in their encounters with

Australians. However, it is also important to consider the perspective of students from

the Asia-Pacific region whose presence in Australia cannot be totally attributed to

university recruitment efforts. One could, for example, look at the economic and social

pressures in places like China, where it is very difficult for students to find employment

at home. The sometimes-overwhelming pressure to learn English and succeed

academically in Western universities was nowhere so apparent as in a shooting incident at

Monash University, which resulted in the deaths of two students. An online article,

which describes this incident, is worth quoting at length.

> *Two fourth year honours commerce students were killed and five other people wounded, when a student suddenly opened fire in a classroom at Melbourne's Monash University on October 21 [2002]. The tragedy occurred at the beginning of an econometrics tutorial on the sixth floor of the Menzies building at the suburban Clayton campus. It points to a growing crisis within Australia's tertiary education system, which is creating profound social tensions that remain totally unaddressed.*
>
> *As bullets sprayed around the room, Professor Lee Gordon-Brown, who was teaching the class, leapt forward to grapple with the gunman. He was joined by one of the final year students, Alistair Boast, and between them they managed to overcome the assailant. Another professor from a nearby classroom, Brett Inder, heard the shooting, and rushed to their aid. Gordon-Brown was shot several times*

129

*and collapsed. Inder disarmed the gunman, who had a total of five handguns, then stayed with him trying to calm him down until security arrived.*

*Police arrested the alleged gunman Huan Yn Xiang, 36, and took him for questioning. Next day in Melbourne Magistrates Court he faced two charges of murder and five of attempted murder. Aided by a Cantonese interpreter, he did not apply for bail and was not required to plead.*

*Because of his language difficulties, Xiang's final oral dissertation [to be presented on the day of the shootings] was a high stakes requirement that he had no chance of fulfilling. The almost certain outcome was failure. For overseas students, failing a course can result in deportation. For those with permanent residency like Xiang, it can still mean personal disaster. There are few job prospects for Asian workers with poor English language skills, except unskilled factory work. Yet he would still be required to repay his accrued university fees through HECS – the Higher Education Contribution Scheme. (Rees, 2002)*

What happened at Monash University was obviously an extreme case, but it is perhaps one that should come as no surprise. I remember an informal meeting I had with one of the officials at Melbourne's International Student Services (ISS) office who told me that it is not uncommon for her to refer overseas students to counsellors because of their difficulties coping with the academic stress or homesickness. According to her, in some cases the stress is so severe that students seek prescriptions for anti-depressant medication. However, it is not only students from Asia who struggle. There is also a fair amount of pressure for students from Europe to go on exchange as a means to improve their English language skills. Bianca who was on exchange from Sweden also went through an emotional struggle because of language difficulties.

> *The studies are very hard, but that's because I have high expectations so I want to do, I need to do well. A pass is not good enough for me [...] its so many terms they want you to use. Like the word for me 'de-contextualized', I can explain what it means, but not in academic writing. So it's like having the language trapped inside and you can't put it down on paper.*

130

Bianca told me about an experience she had when she starting crying while discussing her difficulties with writing academic papers in English with one of her Australian professors. This professor promptly sent her to a counselling service run by the ISS called "It's Ok to Make Mistakes," where there were several other overseas students in tears over their struggles and difficulties with course work because of the added challenge of having to work in a second language. Most universities in Australia have a variety of counselling and other kinds of "help" services designed specifically to cater to the needs and the emotional stress of overseas students.

Looking at what takes place in Australian classrooms, composed of a very international student body, is particularly interesting given the historical connection between educational institutions and the nation-state. Educational institutions today are still highly reflective of a nation's political and economic priorities. The dynamics of various classroom settings that I have here described reveal a great deal about systemic inequalities, which also have an influence on student mobility patterns. While the perspectives I have presented here are not all related directly to the Canadian experience they are nonetheless relevant. It is important to locate the experiences of Canadian students studying abroad in relation to the larger political and economic context of overseas study. The contrasts in the experiences of students who study abroad and the different pressures and motivations which brought them to Australia reveal a great deal about the less desirable qualities of increasingly global economic and political processes; processes which also have unequal benefits and outcomes at the level of quotidian experiences such as acquiring a university degree. These factors, taken together with the

clearly unshaken significance of national identity, highlight the importance of probing more deeply what "internationalization of the university" actually means.

## Chapter Six
## Internationalization of the University

This chapter is an attempt to situate the experiences of Canadian students studying in Australia by addressing how student mobility programs intersect with the economic and political changes brought on by globalizing capitalism, especially as OECD nations grapple with each other for a top ranking in the emerging knowledge-based economy. This will be accomplished by addressing two broad questions: 1] How is university internationalization posited as a necessary response to globalization? 2] What are the economic, political, and educational objectives and rationales that underlie this process? This discussion will focus on internationalization initiatives in the Canadian context; however, for the sake of comparison an account of the situation in Europe, the United States, and Southeast Asia will also be discussed in order to further illustrate how university internationalization strategies reflect the unequal positioning of nation-states (or regions of the world) within global processes.

University internationalization has been overwhelmingly constructed as a means for both nation-states and universities to respond to sweeping social changes brought on by globalization. Growing economic interdependence between nations, the move towards the knowledge-based economies, increased movements of people across vast distances, the advent of telecommunications technology, and a growing worldwide demand for higher education in response to changing labour market conditions are all

132

changes are often described under the rubric of globalization. While on the one hand, internationalization constitutes a response to these changes, it is sometimes discussed as a means through which universities can help initiate changes at all levels – personal, social and cultural, political and economic – in order to steer the future movement of globalization along a more humanistic course.

An appeal to the humanistic course for globalization is clearly articulated in The University of British Columbia's (UBC) Trek 2000 Vision. Internationalization, as one of the five pillars of UBC's Vision, is articulated as a series of processes primarily aimed at protecting human rights, promoting global health and well being, and fostering international cooperation among faculty, staff, students and other universities in order to accomplish these goals.[6] In addition to this agenda, UBC has developed a course on "global citizenship," which aims at developing individual's consciousness of their roles and responsibilities, not only to the local, but also to the global civil society.

The discourses emanating from both universities and national governments often emphasise the importance of cultivating "global citizenship" or "global citizens" as a partial means to make globalization processes more accountable to the welfare of human beings. While the UBC vision epitomizes some of the more idealistic or utopian discourses surrounding internationalization, it is important not to overlook the fact that internationalization strategies are also closely tied in with a capitalist neo-liberal agenda. For universities, the familiar characteristics of this side of

---

[6] A detailed discussion of UBC's internationalization strategy can also be found on its website in a document titled *Bridge to the 21st Century: Internationalization at UBC* at www.trek2000.ubc.ca/supp_docs/bridge.

133

globalization include the withdrawal of the welfare state and the privatization and commodification of educational services (including both students and knowledge itself), which has led to a corresponding corporate and capitalistic approach to the provision of higher education. It is an approach that often pits universities against each other as competitors for international students, top faculty, research grants and other sources of funding in order to establish a high ranking among the world's universities. These trends on university campuses have led some commentators to suggest that "[...] the internationalization of the university is an attempt to jump on a specific corporate bandwagon of globalization" (Dwyer & Reed, 2006, p.10). These two forms of internationalization – the one emphasising cooperation, the sharing of knowledge, and the formation of a global civil society, and the other, focussed on economic rationales that demand aggressive faculty and student recruitment strategies, competition with other universities, and establishing a prestigious ranking in the international sphere – often operate side by side in most higher education institutions. It is overly simplistic, therefore, to assume that the presence of one form of internationalization necessarily precludes the other.

### Internationalization and the Nation-State

Universities have for a long time played a leading role in nation building, and historically taught not only traditional subjects such as philosophy or history, but also the values of civil society, patriotism, and loyalty to the nation-state. While internationalization is sometimes viewed as a way of going beyond the university's traditional relationship to the nation-state, it is important to emphasise that as a process and a series of discourses internationalization, as its name suggests, advances the notion

134

that nation-states should be preserved, as should the diverse and unique cultural identities between them (Knight, 1999, p. 203). Even in Europe, where student and faculty mobility under the SOCRATES/ERASMUS schemes is aimed at contributing to the formation of a European Higher Education Area (considered crucial to the continuing development of the European Union), decision-making within these processes is carried out "intergovernmentaly", rather than through the European Commission. Despite the obvious connection between internationalization and the on-going formation of the European Union, decisions about university internationalization, and more particularly student mobility strategies, are reached through a consensus between the Ministers for higher education in each of the 45 signatory countries. Each of the EU member nations is expected to develop distinct internationalization goals, priorities and strategies.

Internationalization includes a wide range of activities, initiatives, and rationales and hence definitions of what university "internationalization" entails often vary. Jane Knight's definition of "internationalization" as, "[...] the process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the university or institution of higher education", is one of the most frequently cited (Knight, 1994, p.3). However, several researchers have sought to expand upon this definition in order to describe how internationalization functions beyond the educational role of the university to serve the interests of both local communities and the nation-state. Kalvemark and van der Wende (1997), in their comparative study of national policies for internationalizing higher education in Europe, suggest that internationalization includes "[...] any systematic, sustained effort aimed at making higher education more responsive to the requirements and challenges of globalization of societies, economy and labour

markets" (p.19). These two definitions encompasses a number of vastly different kinds of activities and demonstrate that internationalization can refer to activities such as: introducing more foreign language courses, increasing opportunities for faculty and students to attend overseas universities, the recruitment of foreign students, research partnerships with overseas universities, university operated development projects overseas, offshore campuses, and providing distance learning via the Internet. An institution's specific strategies for internationalization often reflect the economic and political conditions of the nation-states, or regions of the world where they are located, as well as the priorities of faculty members, university officials, or students. Despite the direction that administers or officials would like to take their universities, they are often coerced into pursuing internationalization in very particular directions, in order to secure scarce funding from federal government agencies.

A comparative study by Knight and de Wit (1997) of nine Asia-Pacific countries determined that internationalization, in this context, is focussed more on strengthening *national* rather than global identities. In this same study, it was also found that there was a growing concern in Asia-Pacific countries that internationalization would erode local cultures and belief systems because of its tendency to homogenize education according to "Western" standards and practices. According to Knight (1999b) internationalization in these countries was often equated with Westernization (p.221). By becoming part of the global environment through internationalization, As Knight and de Wit observed, Asia-Pacific countries view becoming part of the global environment as a means of obtaining a position where they may determine a course of direction that is not dominated by Western technology, economies, or educational methods.

136

As was discussed at the end of the last chapter, the economic rationale for internationalization higher education is perhaps most evident in Australia. This is partly related to the extreme and sudden withdrawal of federal funding to support higher education institutions as well as the fact that Australia's overall economy is more dependent on trade in educational services than either the United States, Canada, or the U.K.. In fact, education has become Australia's eighth largest export industry amounting to 2.2 billion (USD), making up a total of 12% of the country's total exports of services (Larson, Martin & Morris, 2002, p.6). The significance of trade in education to the Australian economy becomes even more apparent when compared to the statistics for the United States, where trade in educational services amounts to over 8 billion (USD), yet only contributes 3.5% of total U.S. service exports (Larson, Martin & Morris, 2002, p.7).

A recent Government policy document focussing on the benefits of internationalizing education suggests that in Australia, "[...] internationalization of education contributes to the growth of fulfillment of individuals [...] enhances Australian democracy and well being [...] improves economic outcomes [...] and [builds] networks for international cooperation, and national defence and security" (Nelson, 2003). Ironically, as the Australian federal government has, over the last decade, withdrawn a substantial amount of direct funding to higher education institutions, it has increased funding initiatives to promote university internationalization, particularly for activities that emphasise the recruitment of international students and seek to increase overseas export opportunities. In the 2003/04 budget, the Howard government announced a $113 million (AUD) dollar package to support the growth of Australia's international education sector over the next four years (Nelson, 2003, p.iv).[7]

---

[7] The majority of funding (41.6 million AUD) will go towards increasing government to government work

137

The United States is perhaps one of the most dramatic examples of how study abroad programs for university students can become deeply intertwined with political priorities. In response to the events of September 11th, 2001, internationalization discourses from both non-Governmental and Governmental organizations in the US, such as the American Council on Education (ACE) have become particularly focused on the potential usefulness of promoting and developing study abroad opportunities at universities for national security. Currently, the U.S. Department of Education has defined its international role as one that will "[...] complement and support the international roles of the nation's foreign policy agency, the U.S. Department of State, and other U.S. government agencies" (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). In a report entitled *The State of International Education in the United States* (2004), the U.S. Department of Education outlined the four primary needs of the nation, which international education is supposed to work towards achieving. Listed according to priority, these needs are: national security, economic competitiveness, academic improvement, understanding and peace.

One of the rationales for promoting a greater understanding among youth of other cultures and languages becomes clear in these following statements from the U.S.'s *General Accountability Office Report* (2002).

> The army, Department of State, Foreign Commercial Service and FBI [...] reported shortages of translators and interpreters as well as diplomats and intelligence specialists, with foreign language skills that are critical to successful job performance... [T]hese shortfalls have adversely affected

---

and promotion in overseas markets to further develop educational export opportunities. For a breakdown of the Howard funding package see *Engaging the World through Education: Ministerial Statement on the Internationalization of Australian Education and Training* (2003), written by Dr. Brendan Nelson MP, Minister for Education, Science and Training.

agency operations and hindered U.S. military, law enforcement, intelligence, counterterrorism, and diplomatic efforts. Effective public diplomacy requires well-trained staff with an in-depth knowledge of the culture in target countries and fluency in local languages. Since 9/11, especially, it has become clear that training, knowledge, and fluency are all inadequate. (Cited in the State of International Education in the United States, 2004)

Europe has been explicit that internationalization, particularly in the form of faculty and student mobility, will play a crucial role in developing the expanded political consciousness and world view necessary to ensure the ongoing strength and unity of the European Union. The Bologna Process in 2004, brought together 40 European education ministers with the expressed goal of making national higher education systems in Europe converge into a commonly shared and more transparent framework, particularly by setting down a common policy for credit transfers and a standard system of assigning academic grades. The Bologna process was also intended to fit in with the Lisbon objectives of the European Commission, which outlined the new strategic goal for Europe over the next decade: "[t]o become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world[...] " (Lisbon European Council, 2000).

In Canada, the Association of Universities and Colleges Canada (AUCC) states that university internationalization "[...] reflects the belief that an international perspective will assist us to maintain excellence in higher education and research, will contribute to the quality of life and assure continued prominence for Canada in the world

139

of the 21$^{st}$ century" (AUCC, 2004). While many non-English speaking countries view internationalization as a means of preserving a distinctive national cultural identity, in light of the potential homogenizing effects of globalization, Canada has generally adhered to the idea that internationalization is a means of promoting national culture and values abroad, which will in turn raise the international reputation of Canadian universities and attract more foreign students. This is, in fact, the third pillar of Canada's foreign policy, the significance of which was outlined by Bill Graham, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, in a speech he made to the Canadian Education Centres Network (CEC),[8] when he suggested that "national success" depends on Canada's ability to influence foreign publics:

> The projection of one's national image – as expressed through a nation's culture, knowledge and values – is increasingly important in contemporary international relations and diplomacy. Whether a country needs to build international coalitions against terrorism, co-operate to protect the environment, or attract investment and skilled labour, influencing foreign public opinion is critical to national success. (2002)

In Canada, "internationalization" has obtained a notable presence in most university mission statements. According to Knight (1999b), in Canada, arguments for the recruitment of foreign students have become increasingly economic. This is reflected in the research on university internationalization strategies, which tends to focus primarily on issues related to the economic impact of the presence of foreign students, the

---

[8] The CEC Network is a private not for profit company that was founded in 1995 with support from the Federal Government of Canada. The network functions to promote and market Canada to international students as a place to study.

level of competitiveness of Canada's international student market, and the prospects for expediting student visas and other application procedures (Knight, 1999b, p. 221). Internationalization, as it is most often described in the Canadian context, is upheld as one of the primary strategies through which Canadian universities can re-position themselves advantageously in the global economy, address the changing needs of students as they face the realities of the labour market in a globalizing world, and to advance the Canadian government's commitment to establish a firm foothold in the knowledge economy.

Internationalization commitments and strategies of Canadian universities are in some cases partly a response to the Canadian government's release in 2002 (under the Liberal leadership) of Canada's two Innovation Strategy Papers: *Achieving Excellence: Investing in People, Knowledge and Opportunity* and *Knowledge Matters: Skills and Knowledge for Canadians*. At the time of the release of these papers, several universities in Canada responded to Canada's strategy for innovation through written submissions proposing ways in which their respective universities' goals and priorities could be aligned with the federal government's own objectives. The new Conservative government, under Prime Minister Harper, has yet to review or change Canada's strategy for innovation and many of its original proposals continue to manifest themselves on university campuses. This is reflected not only in mission statements, but also in several new programs, which seek to promote internationalization.

The paper *Achieving Excellence* (2002) cites becoming one of the top five countries in the OECD in terms of Research and Development by 2010 as a primary goal (Government of Canada, 2002a, p. 56). According to the report, accomplishing this goal

141

will require addressing the issue of skills shortages in Canada as a significant obstacle that will have to be overcome. Internationalization of both Canadian universities and colleges is listed in the report as playing a crucial role in the realization of the "top five" goal in a number of important ways. First, universities were seen as important for furthering development of international networks and partnerships that will enable them produce Research and Development outputs of a high quality. Universities were also seen as important for attracting larger numbers of "desirable" international students. The main rationale for increasing international student enrolments was that they:

> [...] bring an international perspective to campuses, and add intellectual and cultural diversity to classrooms. They represent a significant economic benefit, not only for receiving institutions, but also for local communities. Once they return home, they can become decision makers or trade partners with an affinity for Canada. They can also be an attractive source of skills for Canadian employers, should they choose to become permanent residents. (Government of Canada, 2002a, p. 57)

Several Canadian universities provided written submissions in response to Canada's *Innovation* papers including: the University of Alberta, Concordia University, Memorial University, Queen's University, and the University of Toronto. Each one of these submissions along with those provided by the AUCC and the CBIE suggested ways in which the Canadian Government and universities could work together to achieve national goals. In all the responses, there were several important trends which reveal a great deal about the changing relationship between universities and the nation-state, as

142

well as the ways in which universities are not only important drivers of national economic growth, but are also key players in the development of foreign policies related to culture, trade, and immigration.

Memorial University, for example, recommended:

> The Government of Canada should review the policies governing the immigration of highly qualified foreign students, and their eligibility for scholarship/fellowship awards from the federal granting councils, to ensure that they facilitate their recruitment. (2003)

While Queen's University stated:

> We are eager to work with the federal and provincial governments, our community, and industry in striving to improve Canada's productivity and establish Canada's role as an internationally competitive innovative society. (2003)

Nearly all the submissions from universities suggested that increasing recruitment of international students is an important way for universities to increase their overall enrolments. In some cases, universities recommended changes to Canada's immigration policy to make this recruitment possible. Soon after the release of Canada's Innovation papers, the Federal Government began two pilot programs in 2003, aimed at making Canadian universities and colleges top destination choices for international students. The first of these programs was an "off-campus work pilot" for international students, which began in 2003 as a joint venture of the Canadian Government and the Government of Manitoba. In keeping with the desire to stay competitive against other members of the

143

OECD in terms of capturing a "market share" of foreign students, the stated objective of the program was "[…] to enhance the global competitiveness of Canada's post-secondary academic institutions while giving international students an opportunity to deepen their understanding and appreciation of Canadian society" (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2003). In April (2006), Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) announced that foreign students studying in Canada could apply for off-campus work permits. The second pilot program was established between the Federal Government and the University of Alberta, which was aimed at fast-tracking the process of obtaining a study permit from selected students, particularly those from China, India, and Vietnam. The pilot's aim was to decrease the processing time from 3-9 months to 28 days.

While globalization is often described as a universal overarching series of processes, the differences in the internationalization strategies between Australia, the United States, Europe, Southeast Asia and Canada clearly reflect that globalization does not mean the same thing in all times and places. The particular ways in which internationalization is pursued are negotiated according to the different economic and political priorities identified by nation-states, the universities that lie within their borders, the general public, and national and international bodies representing the interests of the university such as the Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE) in Canada, the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) in the United States, Australian Education International (AEI), or the Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE) of the OECD. It is true that regardless of the source, internationalization discourses in all parts of the world often incorporate a mixture of educational, social and cultural, political and economic rationales. However, a comparative analysis of national,

144

regional, and institutional approaches to internationalization reveal that depending on the context, these rationales are prioritized in different ways, whether this is national security in the United States, skills shortages in Canada, or a desire to counter Westernization in the Asia-Pacific region.

## University Internationalization and Societal Change

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, university internationalization is constructed not only as a response to globalization, but also as a means through which universities will be able to direct future social and cultural changes. The capacity of either education or educational institutions to act as agents of change has long been a subject of debate. In the early part of the 20th century, for example, John Dewey determined that "[...] to an extent characteristic of no other institution, save that of the state itself, the school has the power to modify the social order" (1909, p.171). Contrary to this opinion, writing in Canada, nearly 70 years after Dewey wrote these words, Réné Lévésque and Alf Chaiton declared in a speech to the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education:

> Education as an institution is not and cannot be, a prime mover of change. The educational system is always called upon [...] to implement, to rationalize, and eventually to help institutionalize whatever changes society at large has agreed upon [...] In any context anywhere in the world education is always more or less an instrument of the status quo [...]. (1977)

University internationalization is very much the contemporary platform on which debates over the capacity of educational institutions to initiate change are taking place.

145

Commentators on university internationalization strategies are very much engaged in debating whether such strategies are, in fact, window dressing for a global capitalistic agenda, or whether there is real potential for internationalization to actually promote the formation of what might be called a "global civil society." Are universities "jumping on a specific corporate bandwagon", or will they be important agents of change in an increasingly globalizing world? One might also be sceptical about the extent to which "internationalization," especially as it relates to the recruitment of full fee paying foreign students, is also a series of discourses that seek to legitimize university efforts to obtain new sources of funding, or the efforts of nation-states to find new ideal immigrants to fill skills shortages, or provide a major boost to the national economy in other ways. There is clearly a tension over what the current role of the university should be. Should it be to prepare students for the world, as it is – an internationally competitive knowledge-based labour market? Or, alternatively, is the university's role to develop a forum, where individuals not only engage in a critical evaluation of the world, as it is, but also where they can acquire the tools necessary to change it?

The university is a fascinating site to witness this tension as it negotiates the limitations and priorities of the nation-state, the demands of functioning as an educational institution under global capitalism, and its commitment to serve both local and international communities. Students themselves can have a major impact on the future direction and policy formation in a university setting and this fact alone means that universities are also sites where the interpersonal lives of a multitude of culturally, economically, and individually diverse students are negotiated and, more often than not,

146

contested. To borrow two metaphors from Anna Tsing, universities are not only sites of "global connection", they are also defined by "friction" and as Tsing reminds us "[...] friction reminds us that heterogeneous and unequal encounters can lead to new arrangements of culture and power" (2005, p.5).

## Conclusion

The primary aim of this thesis has been to emphasise the personal significance of studying abroad, according to students' narratives about their motivations for wanting to go in the first place, why they chose Australia, and what they were hoping to gain from the experience. After listening to students and giving careful consideration to what they told me in informal conversations and during interviews, I have found it necessary to depart from some of the common assumptions made in studies of youth backpackers and studies of processes referred to as transnationalism or globalization. Far from wanting to gain social status, become "global citizens" or internationally competent "knowledge-workers," the students I spoke with emphasised how studying abroad constituted an important part of their personal lives. For some students, studying in Australia provided a much needed interlude and a "space" away from home, where they could negotiate their relationships with friends, family, boyfriends and girlfriends. For others, studying abroad was a means of having a break from the stresses of everyday life, without losing time in the completion of a university degree. For most, studying abroad was simply an important life experience; one in a series of steps towards "having it all," or getting the most out of life. International travel seemed to be on every student's mind as something

147

everyone should do at least once in a lifetime. In Chapter Three, I used the term "life capital" to emphasise this, often overlooked, aspect of studying abroad.

Existing alongside the more personalized aspects of studying abroad is also an important political dimension. The narratives I have presented from students in the proceeding chapters also illustrate how the lives of students, as they participate in student mobility programs, are implicated in culture and power arrangements. This was clear in the ways that students asserted, contested, and negotiated their own national and cultural identities with other students. Unequal arrangements of culture and power, based on students' places of origin, were also an important factor for determining why students went abroad to study in the first place, with whom they were likely to form friendships, and also influenced their experiences and the ways in which they participated in multicultural classroom settings in Australia. Strategies for internationalizing universities also demonstrate how the political strategies and priorities within and between nation-states are also implicated in the functioning of the university and the formation of student mobility programs. It seems that while debates over university internationalization are often rooted in economic, political, and educational rationales, the rationales of students, who make up the bulk of the participants in internationalization strategies, are rarely considered. This thesis has not only been an attempt to address this gap, but also to highlight the fact that debates over university internationalization will remain largely empty until the experiences, motivations, and outcomes of participation in such programs on the side of students are given more thorough consideration.

References:

Adler, J. (1985). Youth on the road: reflections on the history of tramping. *Annals of Tourism Research*, (12), 335-354.

Amin, S. (1982). The new international economic order and the problems of education. In B.C. Sanyal (Ed.), *Higher Education and the New International Order: a Collection of Papers* (pp. 147-156). Paris: Unesco.

Amit, V. (2002a). An anthropology without community? In V. Amit & N. Rapport (Eds.), *The Trouble with Community: Anthropological Reflections on Movement, Identity and Collectivity* (pp.13-66). London: Pluto Press.

_____. (2002b). The moving 'expert': a study of mobile professionals in the Cayman Islands and North America. In N.N. Sørenson, & K. F. Olwig (Eds.), *Work and Migration: Life and Livelihoods in a Globalizing World* (pp.145-160). New York: Routledge Press.

_____. (November, 2004). Youth travel is still a rite of passage, says Vered Amit. In Lina Shoumarova (Auth.). [Electronic Version]. *Concordia's Thursday Report* 29(5).

_____. (Forthcoming). Structures and dispositions of travel and movement. In V.Amit (Ed.)., *Going First Class? New Approaches to Privileged travel and Movement.*

Appadurai, A. (1991). Global ethnoscapes: notes and queries for a transnational anthropology. In R.G. Fox (Ed.), *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present* (pp.191-210). Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

_____. (1988). Putting hierarchy in its place. *Cultural Anthropology*, 3(1), 36-49.

AUCC. (2000). *Building Global Citizens*. Ottawa, Ontario: Author.

Axeworthy, L. (1999). In Canada on top: educating Canadians for success in the
knowledge-based economy. Canadian Bureau for International Education.
Retrieved June 16, 2006, from
http://www.cbie.ca/news/index_e.cfm?folder=presentation&page=rel_s99_e

Bauman, Z. (2004). *Identity: Conversations with Benedetto Vecchi*. Cambridge: Polity
Press.

Badone, E. & Roseman, S. (2004). *Intersecting Journeys: the Anthropology of
Pilgrimage and Tourism*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Basch, L., Schiller, N.G., & Cristina S. Blanc. (1994). *Nations Unbound: Transnational
Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-State*.
Amsterdam: Gordon & Breach.

Baudrillard, J. (1981). *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (C. Levin,
Trans.) St. Louis: Telos Press.

Bianchi, R.V. (2000). Migrant tourist-workers: exploring the 'contact zones' of post-
industrial tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 3(2), 107-137.

Bone, P. (2005, July 18). Time to set some limits. [Editorial, Electronic Version]. *The
Age* (p.unknown).

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (R. Nice
Trans.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Castells, M. (2002). *The Rise of the Network Society*. Massachusetts: Blackwell
Publishers Inc.

Clifford, J. (1997). Traveling cultures. In J.Clifford (Ed.), *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (pp.17-46). Boston: Harvard University Press.

Cohen, A. (2000). Introduction: discriminating relations: identity, boundary and authenticity. In A. Cohen (Ed.), *Signifying Identities: Anthropological Perspectives on Boundaries and Contested Values*. London: Routledge Press.

_____. (1994). *Self Consciousness: An Alternative Anthropology and Identity*. London: Routledge Press.

Cohen, E. (2004). Backpacking: diversity and change. In G. Richards, & J.Wilson (Eds.), *The Global Nomad: Backpacker Travel in Theory and Practice*. Clevedon: Channel View Publications.

Corrigan, P. (1997). *The Sociology of Consumption: An Introduction*. London: Sage Publications.

Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). (2005). Higher education at the crossroads: an overview paper. Retrieved January 10, 2005 from Australian Government's Department of Education, Science, and Training Website http://www.backingaustraliasfuture.gov.au/publications/crossroads/preface.htm

Australian Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMIA). (2003). Multicultural Australia: united in diversity. Retrieved June 7, 2006, from the Australia Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs Website http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/settle/_pdf/united_diversity.pdf

Desforges, L. (2000). Travelling the world: identity and travel biography. *Annals of Tourism Research* 27(4), 926-945.

151

_____. (1998). 'Checking out the planet:' global representations/local identities and youth travel. In T. Skelton, & G. Valentine (Eds), *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Culture* (pp.175-192). London: Routledge Press.

Downer, Alexander (MP). (2005). Launch of "Australia and the Colombo Plan 1949-1957." Speech presented at the launch of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's series Documents on Australian Foreign Policy, Canberra, CT. Retrieved June 27, 2006 from http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2005/050523_colombo_plan.html

Duany, J. (2002). Irse pa' fuera: the mobile livelihoods of circular migrants between Puerto Rico and the United States. In N.N. Sørenson, & K. F. Olwig (Eds.), *Work and Migration: Life and Livelihoods in a Globalizing World* (pp.161-184). New York: Routledge.

Dwyer, J & Reed, D. (2006, March). *From Critique to Contribution: Investigating the Purposes of Universities in an Age of Globalization.* Paper presented at York University Symposium: Internationalizing Canada's Universities: Practices, Challenges & Opportunities, Toronto, ON.

Egron-Polak, E. (2004, October). Comments in response to paper by Karine Tremblay on links between academic mobility and immigration. Presented at WES Symposium on International Labour and Academic Immigration. Toronto, ON.

Elsrud, T. (1998). Time creation in travelling: the taking and making of time among women backpackers. *Time and Society*, 7(2), 309-334.

Featherstone, M. (1991). *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism.* London: Sage Publications.

152

Fisher, D. & Rubenson. (1998). The changing political economy: the private and public

lives of Canadian universities. In Currie, J. & Newson, J. (Eds.), *Universities and*

*Globalization: Critical Perspectives* (pp.77-98). London: Sage Publications.

General accountability office report (2002, January). In J.A. Esposito (Auth.) *The State of*

*International Education in the United States* (2004, November 15). Washington:

U.S. Department of Education.

Giddens, Anthony. (1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late*

*Modern Age*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Gmelch, G. (1997). Crossing cultures: student travel and personal development.

*International Journal of International Relations*, 21(4), 475-490.

Gould, E. (2003). *The University in a Corporate Culture*. New Haven: Yale University

Press.

Government of Canada. (2005). Canada's innovation strategy. Retrieved from

http://www.innovationstrategy.gc.ca/gol/innovation/site/nsto/en/in04113.html

Graham, B. (2002). *Notes for an address by the Honourable Bill Graham, Minister of*

*Foreign Affairs to the Canadian Education Centres Network*. Ottawa, Ontario:

Department of International Affairs and International Trade. Retrieved June 6,

2006, from

http://w01.international.gc.ca/minpub/Publication.asp?publication_id=379732&M

ode=pr

Gupta, A., & Ferguson, J. (Eds.). (1997). Discipline and practice: "the field" as site,

method and location in anthropology. In *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries*

153

*and Grounds of a Field Science* (pp. 1-46). Berkely: University of California Press.

Hall, M.C., & Williams, A.M. (Eds.). (2002). *Tourism and Migration: New Relationships Between Production and Consumption*. London: Kluwer Academic Press.

Hannertz, U. (2004). *Foreign News: Exploring the World of Foreign Correspondents*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Harvey, D. (1989). *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Inquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell.

_____. (2003). *The New Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Held, D. (2002). Culture and political community: national, global and cosmopolitan. In S. Vertovec, & R. Cohen (Eds.), *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context, Practice* (pp.48-58). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hibbert, G. (1969). *The Grand Tour*. New York: Putnam Press.

Hodgetts, A.B. (1968). *What Culture? What Heritage? A Report on Civic Education in Canada*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Horst, H., & Miller, D. (2005). From kinship to link-up: cell phones and social networking in Jamaica. *Current Anthropology*, 46(5), 755-777.

Juergensmeyer, M. (2002). The paradox of nationalism in a global world. In U. Hedetoft & M. Hjort (Eds.), *The Postnational Self: Belonging and Identity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Kalvemark, T., & van der Wende, M. (1997). *National Policies for the Internationalisation of Higher Education in Europe*. Stockholm: Swedish National Agency for Higher Education.

154

Katz, J., & Aakhus, M. (Eds.). (2002). *Perpetual Contact: Mobile Communication, Private Talk, Public Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Knight, J. (1994). *Internationalization: Elements and Checkpoints*. Ottawa: Canadian Bureau for International Education.

_____. (1999a). *A Time of Turbulence and Transformation*. Ottawa: Association of Universities and Colleges Canada.

_____. (1999b). Issues and Trends in Internationalization: A Comparative Perspective. In Bond, S. & Lemasson, J. (Eds.), *A New World of Knowledge: Canadian Universities and Globalization* (pp.201-238). Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.

_____. (2000). *Progress and Promise: The AUCC Report on Internationalization at Canadian Universities*. Ottawa: AUCC.

Knight, J. & de Wit, H. (Eds.). (1997). *Internationalization of Higher Education in Asia Pacific Countries*. Amsterdam: European Association for International Education.

Kopachevsky, J.P., & Watson, L. (1994). Interpretations of tourism as a commodity. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 21(3), 643-660.

Lapkin, S. (2005, December 15). Muslim gang rapes and the Aussie riots. *FrontpageMagazine.com*. Retrieved September 18, 2006, from http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/ReadArticle.asp?ID=20535

Larson, K, Martin, J.P. & Morris, Rosemary. (2002, May). *Trade in Educational Services: Trends and Emerging Issues* (Working Paper, Revised Version). Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Lash, S., & Urry, J. (2004). *Economies of Signs and Space*. London: Sage Publications.

Lingard, R., & Rizvi, F. (1998). Globalization, the OECD, and Australian higher

    education. In Currie, J. & Newson, J. (Eds.), *Universities and Globalization:*

    *Critical Perspectives* (pp. 257-273). London: Sage Publications.

Lisbon European Council (2000, March 23 & 24). Presidency conclusions I:

    employment, economic reform and social cohesion: a strategic goal for the next

    decade. Retrieved September 25, 2006, from

    http://europea.eu.int/ISPO/docs/services/docs/2000/jan-march/doc_00_8_en.html

Louie, A. (2000). Re-territorializing transnationalism: Chinese Americans and the

    Chinese motherland. *American Ethnologist,* 27(3), 645-669.

Lucas, C. (2005, July 27). University books make students people of interest. *The Age*

    (pp. unknown).

Lyotard, J.F. (1984). *The Postmodern Condition: a Report on Knowledge.* G.

    Bennington & B. Massumi (Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Lunt, P., & Livingstone, S. (1992). *Mass Consumption and Personal Identity: Everyday*

    *Economic Experience.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

MacCannell, D. (1992). *Empty Meeting Grounds: The Tourist Papers.* London:

    Routledge Press.

Marx, K. (1995). In K. Morrison, *Marx, Durkheim, Weber: Formations of Modern Social*

    *Thought.* London: Sage Publications.

Maslow, A.H. (1970). *Motivations and Personality.* New York: Harper and Row.

Mathews, R., & Steele, J. (1969). *The Struggle for Canadian Universities.* Toronto: New

    Press.

Miyoshi, M. (1998). "Globalization," culture, and the university. In F. Jameson, & M.

Miyoshi (Eds.), *The Culture of Globalization* (pp. 247-267). London: Duke University Press.

Munt, I. (1994). The 'other' postmodern tourism: Culture, travel and the new middle classes. *Theory, Culture & Society*, (11), 101-123.

Nelson, B. (MP). (2003, October). *Engaging the World through Education: Ministerial Statement on the Internationalization of Australian Education and Training*. Canberra, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia.

OECD/CERI. (2002). *Indicators on Internationalization and Trade of Post-secondary Education*. Paper presented at the OECD/US Forum on Trade in Educational Services, Washington, DC.

Ong, A. (1999). *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*. London: Duke University Press.

Postman, Niel. (1982). *The Disappearance of Childhood*. New York: Vintage Books.

Rapport, N. (2002). The truth of movement, the truth as movement: post-cultural anthropology and narrational identity. In V. Amit & N. Rapport (Eds.), *The Trouble with Community: Anthropological Reflections on Movement, Identity and Collectivity* (pp.73-152). London: Pluto Press.

Rees, M. (October 29, 2002). *Two students killed in Australian university shooting*. In World Socialist Website. Retrieved February 2, 2006 from http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/oct2002/mon-029_prn.shtml

Robertson, H., & Barlow, M. (1996). Is there a national role in education? a rational for the obvious. In P. Nagy & J. Lupart (Eds.), *Is There A National Role in Education?* Ottawa: The Canadian Society for the Study of Education.

Rojek, C. (1988). *Leisure Theory: Principles and Practices*. New York: Palgrave

    Macmillan Press.

_____. (1993). *Ways of Escape: Modern Transformations in Leisure and Travel*.

    London: Routledge Press.

Rojek, C., & Urry, J. (1997). *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory*.

    London: Routledge Press.

Sassen, S. (1999). *Losing Control? Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization*. New York:

    Columbia University Press.

_____. (1988). *The Mobility of Labour and Capital: a Study in International*

    *Investment and Labour Flow*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Simmel, G. (1950). In *The Sociology of George Simmel* (K.H. Wolff Ed. & Trans.). New

    York: Free Press.

Slaughter, S. (1998). National higher education policies in a global economy. In

    Currie, J. & Newson, J. (Eds.), *Universities and Globalization: Critical*

    *Perspectives* (pp. 45-76). London: Sage Publications.

Sennet, R. (2002). Cosmopolitanism and the social experience of cities. In S. Vertovec &

    R. Cohen (Eds.), *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context, and Practice*

    (pp. 42-47). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sørensen, A. (2003). Backpacker ethnography. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 30(4), 847-

    867.

*The State of International Education in the United States* (2004, November 15). In J.A.

    Esposito, Secretary for International Affairs (Auth.). Washington: U.S.

    Department of Education.

Statistics Canada. (2005). 15 to 24 years old university degree holders, part-time share in

labour force & 15-24 years old university degree holders full-time share in labour

force (No. 11F0019MPE). Ottawa: Government of Canada.

Sweetman, P. (2004). Tourists and travellers? 'subcultures', reflexive identities and neo-

tribal sociality. In A. Bennett & K. Kahn-Harris (Eds.), *After Subculture: Critical*

*Studies in Contemporary Youth Culture* (pp. 79-93). Basingstoke: Palgrove.

Treasury Board of Canada (2005). Canada's performance 2005: the government of

Canada's contribution. Retrieved September 25, 2006 from http://www.tbs-

sct.gc/ca/report/govrev/05/cp-rc03_e.asp

Tremblay, K. (2001). *Student Mobility Between and Towards OECD Countries in 2001:*

*A Comparative Analysis*. OECD: Directorate for Education Indicators and

Analysis Division.

Tsing, A.L. (2005). *Friction: an Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton: Princeton

University Press.

Turner, V., & Turner, E. (1978). *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*. New York:

Columbia University Press.

Turner, V.W. (1969). *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Chicago: Aldine

Publishing Company.

Urry, J. (1994). Time, leisure and social identity. *Time and Society*, 3(2), 131-149.

_____. (1990). *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure & Travel in Contemporary Societies*. London:

Sage Publications.

_____. (2000). *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the 21st Century*. London:

Routledge Press.

159

U.S. Department of Education. (2005). Title VI programs: building a U.S. international education infrastructure. Office of Postsecondary Education. Retrieved August 25, 2006 from http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/iegps/title-six.html.

Veblen, T. (1953). *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*. New York: New American Library.

Vertovec, S. (1999). Conceiving and researching transnationalism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22(2).

Vogt, J.W. (1976). Wandering: youth and travel behaviour. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 4(1), 25-41.

Welk, P. (2004). The beaten track: anti-tourism as an element of backpacker identity construction. In G. Richards & Wilson, J., *The Global Nomad: Backpacker Travel in Theory and Practice* (pp.60-76). Clevedon: Channel View Publications.

Wyn, J., & White, R. (1997). *Rethinking Youth*. Crows Nest (AU): Allen & Unwin.