Turun yliopisto
University of Turku

# NEW SCHOOL TIES:
# SOCIAL CAPITAL AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE CREATION IN MULTICULTURAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

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# ABSTRACT

Globalization and internationalization have transformed not only the way the business is conducted and managed, but by changing the compositions of higher educational institutions (HEIs) student bodies and labor market requirements for management graduates, they have also influenced the way management education and learning are conducted. Business graduates are expected to be able to function in international and intercultural professional and business environments, and they must learn skills to continuously develop such competences to an expert level. However, while the requirements for international management graduates and the tasks of educational institutions are clear, there is limited understanding of how the process of cultural knowledge creation and sharing occur in multicultural learning environments and what factors influence it. Few studies have explored processes in international business learning environments and how the students perceive and solve the problem of the developing cultural knowledge.

This research explores the cross-cultural and intercultural experiences of international and local students in four multicultural learning environments. It focuses on the holistic experiences of learners in novel cultural environments and, more specifically, on cultural knowledge creation and sharing. A comparative analysis was conducted within four undergraduate management and business administration programs at international higher educational institutions (IHEIs). The data were constructed through in-depth, semi-structured qualitative interviews, participant observation and document review and analyzed using the dimensional analyses method (Kool et al. 1996; Schatzman 1991). The research process, including the final presentation of the findings, was informed by the grounded theory research framework (Charmaz 2006). The aim was to develop an explanatory theory of the cultural knowledge creation process: to examine the learners, their experiences and behavior in the context of a multicultural learning environment, the strategies that they employ to develop and share cultural knowledge and develop theoretical models that are grounded in data to reflect the process from the participants' perspective.

The findings describe the process of knowledge creation that occurs within the informal social networks the participants create and nurture. International business students experience the multicultural academic environment as a learning network, a collaborative community for developing transitional social capital and engaging in cosmopolitan learning and knowledge creation. They create cultural knowledge through communal sensemaking, sharing and a long-term expertise development process. Their cultural curiosity, instrumental motivation to develop cultural knowledge and cross-cultural competence, existing social capital, and

their ability to develop further social capital through trust influence the cultural knowledge creation process. The HEIs, or the programs, are likely to support the process of cultural knowledge creation by creating and nurturing environments conductive to social exchange, network development and social capital creation, as well as exciting cultural curiosity among the students and encouraging cultural feedback and mentorship for the students from the faculty members and culturally competent student peers. The study identified four cultural learning strategies, among which the cosmopolitan one appears to be the most appropriate for long-term cultural learning and expertise development. The participants who employ it use continuous adaptation, regard change as normal, rely on creative thinking rather than rules, reinvent themselves and experiment with new identities, learn easily and use novel ways of thinking,

The study applies the concepts of cultural knowledge development, social capital, social networks, global identities and cosmopolitanism. It provides tentative recommendations for IHEIs and multinational enterprises (MNEs) concerning how to promote cultural knowledge creation among their members.

Keywords: cultural knowledge creation, international management education, multicultural learning environment, social network

# TIIVISTELMÄ

Globalisaatio ja kansainvälistyminen eivät ole muuttaneet vain liiketoiminnan ja johtamisen tapoja, vaan myös korkeakoulujen opiskelijajoukon koostumusta ja työmarkkinoiden vaatimuksia johtajiksi valmistuville, ja ne ovat myös vaikuttaneet tapaan opettaa ja oppia johtamista. Liikealan tutkinnon suorittaneiden oletetaan pystyvän toimimaan kansainvälisissä ja kulttuurienvälisissä ammatillisissa ja liiketoimintaympäristöissä, ja heidän on omaksuttava taitoja, joilla jatkuvasti kehittää tätä osaamista huipputasoiseksi. Vaikka vaatimukset kansainvälisiin johtotehtäviin valmistuville ja oppilaitosten tehtävät ovatkin selkeitä, ei kulttuuritietämyksen luomisen ja jakamisen prosessia monikulttuurisissa oppimisympäristöissä ja siihen vaikuttavia tekijöitä ymmärretä kovinkaan hyvin. Harvoissa tutkimuksissa on tarkasteltu kansainvälisen liiketoiminnan oppimisympäristöjen prosesseja ja sitä, miten opiskelijat kokevat ja ratkaisevat kulttuuritietämyksen kehittämisongelman.

Tämä tutkimus kartoittaa kansainvälisten ja paikallisten opiskelijoiden kulttuurienvälisiä kokemuksia neljässä monikulttuurisessa oppimisympäristössä. Se keskittyy oppijäiden kokonaisvaltaisiin kokemuksiin uusissa kulttuuriympäristöissä ja, erityisesti, kulttuuritietämyksen luontiin ja jakamiseen. Vertaileva analyysi suoritettiin neljän johtamisen ja liikkeenhallinnan opiskeluohjelman välillä kansainvälisissä korkeakouluissa (IHEI). Aineisto rakentui kvalitatiivisista syväluotaavista teemahaastatteluista, osallistujatarkkailusta ja dokumentaation läpikäynnistä, ja se analysoitiin dimensioanalyysin menetelmin (Kool et al. 1996; Schatzman 1991). Tutkimusprosessia, myös lopputulosten esittelyä, ohjasi aineistopohjainen Grounded Theory - tutkimusmenetelmä (Charmaz 2006). Tavoitteena oli kehittää selittävä teoria kulttuuritietämyksen luontiprosessille: tutkia oppijoilta, heidän kokemuksiaan ja käytöstään monikulttuurisen oppimisympäristön kontekstissa, heidän käyttämiään strategioita kulttuuritietämyksen kehittämiseen ja jakamiseen sekä kehittää aineiston perusteella teoriamalleja kuvaamaan prosessia osallistujien näkökulmasta.

Löydökset kuvaavat tietämyksen syntyprosessia osallistujien luomissa ja ylläpitämissä vapaamuotoisissa sosiaalisissa verkostoissa. Kansainvälisen liiketoiminnan opiskelijat kokevat monikulttuurisen akateemisen ympäristön oppimisympäristönä, yhteistyötä tekevänä yhteisönä, jossa voi kehittää muuttuvaa sosiaalista pääomaa ja osallistua kosmopoliittiseen oppimiseen ja tietämyksen luontiin. He luovat kulttuuritietämystä yhteisöllisellä merkityksellistämisen, jakamisen ja pitkäjänteisen asiantuntemuksen kehittämisen prosessilla. Heidän kulttuuriuteliaisuutensa – olennainen peruste kulttuuritietämyksen ja kulttuurienvälisen osaamisen kehittämiseen – heillä oleva

sosiaalinen pääoma ja heidän kykynsä jatkokehittää sosiaalista pääomaansa luottamuksella vaikuttavat kulttuuritietämyksen luontiprosessiin. Korkeakoulut, tai opinto-ohjelmat, todennäköisesti tukevat kulttuuritietämyksen luontiprosessia luomalla ja ylläpitämällä sosiaaliselle vaihdolle, verkoston kehittämiselle ja sosiaalisen pääoman luonnille myönteisiä ympäristöjä, ja kiihottamalla kulttuurista uteliaisuutta opiskelijoiden keskuudessa, rohkaisemalla kulttuurista palautetta ja tiedekunnan henkilökunnan sekä kulttuurisesti pätevien kanssaopiskelijoiden olemista mentoreina opiskelijoille. Tutkimus tunnisti neljä kulttuurioppimisen strategiaa, joista kosmopoliittinen vaikuttaa sopivimmalta pitkäjänteiselle kulttuurioppimiselle ja asiantuntemuksen kehittämiselle. Sitä käyttävät osallistujat sopeuttavat toimintaansa jatkuvasti, pitävät muutoksia normaalina, luottavat luovaan ajatteluun enemmän kuin sääntöihin, keksivät itsensä uudelleen ja kokeilevat uusilla identiteeteillä, oppivat helposti ja käyttävät uusia ajattelutapoja.

Tutkimus käyttää kulttuuritietämyksen kehittämisen, sosiaalipääoman, sosiaalisten verkostojen, globaalien identiteettien ja kosmopoliittisuuden käsitteitä. Se antaa alustavia suosituksia kansainvälisille korkeakouluille ja monikansallisille yrityksille siitä, miten opiskelijoiden tai henkilöstön kulttuuritietämyksen luontia voi edistää.

Avainsanat: kulttuuritietämyksen luonti, kansainvälinen johtamiskoulutus, monikulttuurinen oppimisympäristö, sosiaaliset verkostot

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*What a long, strange trip it's been*

*'Truckin', Grateful Dead*

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And the last, but the most heartfelt thanks are for Alexander, my husband, who has been there for me every step of the way.

Turku, October 2014
Natalie S. Mikhaylov

[1]Letter to A.F. Oeser, Nov 9, 1768

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

*We are all citizens of one world; we are all of one blood.*
*Jan Amos Komenský*[2]

## 1.1 Background and the scope of the study

The increase in and changing patterns of human migration, for example, the rise in the numbers of highly skilled professional and voluntary migrants (Carr, Inkson & Thorn 2005) and the growing diversity in the composition of traditionally homogenous societies and the corresponding labor force (Thomas 2008), as well as the growing use of cross-national and virtual global teams (Osland, Bird & Gundersen 2007) – are all factors that make cultural knowledge creation and cross-cultural competence (CCC) among management and employees crucial organizational issues. The need to develop CCC has been cited in the contexts of managing a diverse workforce (Tung 1993), finding employment and achieving satisfactory performance in international and foreign companies (Black, Mendenhall & Oddou 1991), and implementing participatory global leadership (Osland, Bird, Mendenhall & Osland 2012). Future career prospects for graduates are increasingly dependent on their ability to function successfully in diverse cultures (OECD/CERI 2012). The tendency toward global careers is particularly pronounced in business and education, as '(t)he increasing globalization and the interconnectedness of multinational work environment have intensified the demand for graduates capable of operating in culturally diverse contexts' (Jones 2013, 95).

Over the last twenty-five years, the topic has attracted the attention of management and the academic community: cultural knowledge creation and cross-cultural competence have been approached and researched from a variety of perspectives (cf. Holden 2002; Johnson, Lenartowicz, & Apud 2006; Spitzberg & Changnon 2009), but despite the definitive increased interest in the development

[2] in Will and Ariel Durant's The Age of Reason Begins (1961), p. 582 http://webspace.ship.edu/cgboer/comenius.html

of cultural skills at both the practical and methodological levels and the substantial number of models, frameworks and approaches, there is no shared interpretation of these complex constructs (Van de Vijver & Leung 2005). Educational research questions higher education institutions' (HEIs) abilities to create optimal learning environments for diverse student bodies (Jones 2013) and prepare their graduates for changing social and business world (Edwards, Crosling, Petrovic-Lazarovic & O'Neil 2003). International human resource management (IHRM) scholars are concerned with expatriate employees and their ability to be productive during international assignments, as well as with management's ability to address employee and customer diversity at home. The topics of culture shock (Oberg 1960), cross-cultural competence (cf. Johnson et al. 2006; Caligiuri, Noe, Nolan, Ryan & Drasgow 2011) and, recently, cultural intelligence (CQ) (Earley & Ang 2003) are discussed in connection with employee selection, retention (Black & Mendenhall 1990; Black, Gregersen, Mendenhall & Stroh 1999) and career management and development (Adler 1981).

However, the discipline remains 'amorphous and fragmented' (Tjosvold & Leung 2003, 2). Current research tends to conceptual and normative in nature, lacking in empirical grounding. In other words, as Van de Vijver and Leung suggest, 'we are now in the stage where we are unable to decide which theories are well supported by empirical data, which frameworks should be modified, and which ones should be abandoned altogether' (2005, 405). In part, this is due to the growing emphasis on positivistic research in international business (Birkinshaw, Brannen & Tung 2011).

In addition, a review of contemporary theories and models of cross-cultural competence reveals that they lack consistent definitions of the basic concepts employed and demonstrate Anglo-American ethnocentric tendencies that result in an overemphasis on the individual and assertiveness aspects of the process at the expense of empathy and sensitivity (Spitzberg & Changnon 2009, 35-36). The models often take for granted two distinct, objective and stable cultures, A and B, and the one-way process of individual adaptation from culture A to culture B (Bird & Osland 2006). In education, research is more likely to support what Hayden and Thompson (1995) term an ideological approach to the internationalization of education. Dervin and Layne note that '(m)any studies on interculturality have represented intercultural competence as a moral imperative' (2013, 5), not business and social competencies (Boyatzis & Saatcioglu 2008) to develop and employ, despite that multicultural learning can be beneficial for a variety of academic and practical skills, including creativity (Maddux, Leung, Chiu & Galinsky 2009; Maddux, Adam & Galinsky 2010; Fee & Gray 2012).

## 1.2 Identifying the research gap and positioning of the study

In the course of shaping the research topic by examining the current literature, it became clear that few studies have explored the current state of international business learning environments and how students perceive and solve the problem of developing cultural knowledge. Even when such studies are undertaken, they only address a specific aspect of the experience, for example, the effectiveness of a study abroad program in the development of cross-cultural competence (Forsey, Broomhall & Davis 2011; Koskinen & Tossavainen 2004), the experience of international students from a particular country or region as degree students at a foreign university (cf. Ladd & Ruby 1999; Devita 2000), or, conversely, the experience of local students with international peers (Jon 2013; Dunne 2009). Scant empirical work analyzes the development of cross-cultural interest among college students (Marcotte, Desroches & Poupart 2007).

There is a lack of inductive studies, grounded in qualitative data that are not limited to participants' narratives, but are instead triangulated in interviews, observation and document analyses, that are conducted in multiple international settings and address the process and contexts – individual, group and organizational - affecting the participants' voices. There is also a need for studies that depart from the dyadic view of cultures as sophisticated stereotypes (Bird & Osland 2006) and from the taxonomy of a host vs. a local to an understanding of culture as dynamic and fluid knowledge, which is constructed in social encounters. Although culture is understood to be shared knowledge (Holden 2002) and knowledge creation is treated as cultural learning (Kayes & Yamazaki 2005), cultural knowledge creation as a collaborative learning process has received only limited attention (e.g., Skobeleva 2006). In addition, culture is often perceived either as a catalyst for (Zakaria, Amelinckx & Wilemon 2004) or a barrier to, rather than a result of, a knowledge creation process (David & Fahey 2000). A study grounded in data would contribute further understandings of how individuals address cultural differences (Hinds, Liu & Lyon 2011) in learning environments. In particular, the insights from several representational educational settings are likely to answer the call for a holistic understanding of human behavior and cognitive processes in a complex, dynamic context (Smith 2004).

Furthermore, there is a growing understanding that knowledge, including cultural knowledge, is created in networks and influenced by social capital acquisition and trust shared among the learning community (Inkpen & Tsang 2005). However, while studies address the connection between networks and knowledge creation in social settings (Nonaka 1994; Nonaka & Toyama 2003; Hu & Racherla 2008), as well as the connection of social capital to knowledge access (Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998; Adler & Kwon 2002) and new knowledge creation

(Inkpen & Tsang 2005), there is a considerable lack of attention devoted to the sharing and creation of new cultural knowledge in social networks. The topic of transnational social capital and its influence on career mobility have recently received some attention (Levy, Peiperl & Bouquet 2013; Mäkelä & Suutari 2009; Reiche, Harzing & Kraimer 2009); however, though it is named as a global competency (Osland, Bird, Mendenhall & Osland 2012), its process of development and role in cross-cultural competences are mostly unexplored. Although understanding the process of cross-cultural learning is vital to management learning and education, it has received inadequate academic attention (Yamazaki & Kayes 2004), and 'most approaches to cross-cultural knowledge have given tangential attention to the role of learning' (Kayes, Kayes & Yamazaki 2005, 88) and to that of the context (Lave & Wegner 1991; Hidi & Harackiewicz 2001).

The importance of organizational factors, including a supportive learning culture, has been emphasized in the discussion of cross-cultural competence (Johnson et al. 2006; Adler 1981). However, the networked and interdependent character of learning culture has only recently been acknowledged (Ehlers 2013). The notion of learning as a participatory or a group process (Lave & Wegner 1991; Sfard 1998) might play a role in HEIs' emerging efforts to reduce the transmission modes of teaching and promote the integration of collaborative learning (Zepke & Leach 2005). However, understandings of how such change would influence cross-cultural knowledge development remain limited.

There is a recognized need to consider various factors that contribute to the development of knowledge and understand cultural learning in multicultural environments through an approach, grounded in data on the everyday experience of learners, how these learners understand and interpret the cultural interactions in their lives (Halualani 2008). International management programs present an appropriate setting for understanding how cultural knowledge develops. Numerous barriers to knowledge creation and sharing are non-existent or removed in educational settings: students have essentially the same social status, comparable professional/academic knowledge (Dyer & Singh 1998) and, by virtue of their involvement in learning activities in international programs or abroad, they demonstrate their motivation to develop cultural knowledge. In a multicultural learning environment, there is no distinctive dominant group, as even local students do not constitute the majority of the student population. All members of an educational community would be likely to apply a similar effort to communicate, negotiate, collaborate and learn together. Therefore, in contrast to research focused on a single cultural group, or the representatives of a group, accommodating and/or adjusting to another cultural group, this study will address the cultural knowledge created in social interactions.

This study is conducted from a cross-cultural management perspective, and it is situated at the IHEIs and focuses on the development of student competence.

Therefore, while broadly positioned in the fields of cross-cultural management and learning, particularly the development of cross-cultural competence, it draws on the social knowledge creation approach that connects social networks to knowledge creation and sharing in multicultural environments (Skobeleva 2008). The role of social capital (Inkpen & Tsang 2005) and its influence on intercultural learning and knowledge sharing are also considered.

The insights gathered from the several disciplines allow this study to address the complexity of the cultural learning process and facilitate the development of grounded in data theoretical models that attempt to imitate complex social contracts. The need 'to find a ways to develop a truly interdisciplinary approach to the area' was voiced long ago (Roberts & Boyacigiller 1984, 58), but the development of an inclusive, multidisciplinary paradigm is as elusive as ever. The emphasis on the participants' experiences, a data-driven approach and grounded theory methodology are applied to ensure that the research remains focused on the phenomenon as it was experienced and to avoid the according undue emphasis to a single aspect at the expense of a holistic perspective.

To address the necessity to focus the research 'on the interaction of schemas and context in situ' (Elsbach, Barr & Hargadon 2005, 423), experiences that contribute to knowledge development and are valuable to learners are considered, examined and analyzed to determine the pattern. To comprehend cultural learning in multicultural environments, an approach that is rooted in the everyday experience of the learners and the ways they define, understand and interpret the interactions in their lives is essential (Halualani 2008). However, the constructionist approach is neither normative nor prognostic (Soderberg 1999), and therefore, although this study attempts to present and explain the cultural learning experiences of the participants, it does not prescribe a course of action or predict possible future outcomes.

## 1.3 The motivation for and the aims of study

This research concentrates on the phenomenon of the cultural learning and is grounded in the participants' perceptions of the process. The aim of this study is to describe and conceptualize the process by which students interact with their intercultural peers and faculty members in multicultural learning environments and to develop a substantive theory of this process to examine the learners' experience and describe the strategies they report employing to develop and share cultural knowledge. The study also seeks to develop theoretical models that are grounded in data to reflect the process from the perspectives of the participants. Therefore, the focus of the study is on the participants' views of both formal and informal learning situations, how they report collecting information, collaborating in formal and informal learning situations, and adjusting to the realities of a new cultural and social environment, the challenges that they encounter and the strategies they employ to overcome them. The purpose of the study is to describe the process of cultural knowledge creation in learning environments, provide explanations and answer the questions of 'what, where and who?', and, 'what all or what else is involved here?' (Dey 1999) - questions that account for the full range of elements in a situation and their interconnections.

In contrast to past research, which is primarily based on researchers' assumptions of what problems learners might experience in multicultural environments, my goal was to address the problem as it existed for the study's participants (students in international business programs). Thus, I began with a broad formulation of the area of interest – cross-cultural competence and learners' experiences in multicultural learning environments – rather than specific research problems (McCallin 2003). The tentative research question that has guided the inquiry comes from the social realm, rather than theoretical hypotheses:

- What conditions shape the formation of multicultural learning environments in higher education?

The study adopts a constructivist, grounded theory approach. Therefore the focus is on the individual and the stories that the participants shared concerning their learning experiences, supported by observation. As expected, the problems the learners experienced emerged early in the course of research (Glaser 1998, 116), and it became clear that the main challenge the learners perceive in multicultural learning environments is the shared aspect of knowledge creation. The research questions, modified and refined by the learners' experiences, were finalized as:

- How do learners create and share knowledge in multicultural social settings?
- What factors influence this process?

## 1.4 The structure of the study

This introductory chapter, which, in addition to the brief description of the background and the structure, provides the rationale and the purpose of the study, is followed by chapter 2, which discusses the concept of culture and its diverse conceptualization in current research and provides a review of the empirical studies that address approaches to the development of cross-cultural competence. Chapter 3 focuses on the methodological approach applied in the study and discusses the sampling method for the settings and the participants, describes the data collection/construction process and the steps of the dimensional analysis, namely the constant comparison and natural cognitive analysis process, and addresses the crucial methodological issues.

The following two chapters present the study's findings. Chapter 4 provides descriptions of the four settings, and chapter 5 reports the findings grounded in empirical data that emerged during the continuous analysis process. The findings are supported by theoretical and focused codes, interview extracts, documents analyzed and the records of participant observations. The chapter centers on the grounded model of the cross-cultural development process, as constructed by the participants, and a typology of strategies for CCC development. The research findings are related to prior empirical findings and theoretical models, including those reviewed in chapter 2; whereas the in-depth discussion of the relevant theoretical concepts is presented in chapter 6.

Chapter 6 discusses the findings that emerged from the data from a theoretical perspective and further consolidates the dimensions of the process. Due to numerous issues that emerged during the analysis, the chapter summarizes and reexamines the findings outlined in chapters 4 and 5. In addition, it identifies, presents and relates the findings to existing theoretical concepts. This provides support for the study's efforts to produce substantive theory and evaluate the research findings from a theoretical perspective. Finally, chapter 7 provides a general review of the study, discusses the contribution to the literature and possible managerial implications, suggests areas for further study, and offers conclusions.

# 2 SENSITIZING GUIDING CONCEPTS AND BODIES OF THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE

## 2.1 Literature review – its role in grounded theory

It is a common perception that the grounded theory method (GTM) requires a researcher to enter the field while, if not entirely ignorant of the literature addressing the phenomenon in question, at least with very limited knowledge of it (Goulding 2002). This, obviously, creates a serious handicap for an academic researcher, as it is impossible to progress without at least some familiarity with the literature in the field. In addition, it calls a researcher's integrity into question, as he/she is forced to adopt the demure stance of a 'theoretical virgin' (Clarke 2003). This can also be understood as an excuse for lazy ignorance (Silverman 2000; Suddaby 2006) and, in an extreme case, condemn the entire research method as excessively 'easy' and 'atheoretical' (Morse 1994).

However, avoiding reviewing the literature does not necessitate ignorance: it should instead be considered a technique of delaying the final review until the specific theoretical developments become evident, in an effort not to contaminate one's findings with unconscious bias towards existing or more current theories that dominate the field. This is not drastically different from the non-judgmental stance a positivist researcher might adopt when studying a phenomenon, about which he/she has strong personal views, to avoid biasing his/her findings. Glaser (1992) defines this ingenuous approach to GTM as an imperative to 'learn not to know'. In other words, as Thornberg advises,

> *use the literature as a possible source of inspiration, ideas, 'aha!' experiences, creative associations, critical reflections, and multiple lenses, very much in line with the logic of abduction.* (2012, 249)

There are a variety of ways to preserve the purity of impression and theoretical development: Glaser (1992) recommends reading novels and other works of fiction to sharpen one's perception of the possible connections between themes and events – a suggestion that I, an avid reader, enthusiastically accepted. Wolcott (2008) suggests conducting a literary review in connection with one's own research, and Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) recommend several rounds of literature review when pursuing an inductive approach to research. Charmaz (2006) counsels delaying the literature review 'to avoid importing preconceived ideas and imposing them on your work' (165) while advocating 'recognizing prior knowledge and theoretical preconceptions and subjecting them to rigorous scrutiny." (Charmaz 2008c, 402) A further approach consists in reading articles areas beyond the narrow focus of the study to enhance its theoretical sensitivity, such that the theoretical development leads to sources that inform, explain and contextualize the findings (Goulding 2002). Eisenhardt (1989) emphasizes that to enhance theoretical sensitivity, it is crucial to comprehend a broad range of established theories and empirical works.

I conducted a broad literature review on the development of cross-cultural competence earlier in the project to develop and further refine the research topics and identify gaps in existing research (Coffey & Atkinson 1996; Creswell 1998; McCann & Clark 2003a), as when employing the GTM, the literature review 'neither provides key concepts nor suggests hypotheses' (May 1986, 149) but illustrates gaps or biases in existing knowledge to provide the rationale for the study (Creswell 2012). Over the course of the research, I embraced theoretical agnosticism and strove to read broadly and continuously on the subject and 'to treat all extant theories and concepts that one already knows or might encounter during the pre-study or on-going literature review as provisional, disputable and modifiable conceptual proposals' (Thornberg 2012, 250).

This chapter presents a broad overview of the concepts and existing theoretical knowledge that inform the discussion of cultural knowledge development in international business and international business education. For the final presentation of the theoretical development and implications for further research and practice, as Charmaz (2006, 164) suggests, I drafted my 'literature review and theoretical framework in relation to [my] grounded theory' as presented in the discussion of the findings and the summary of the study, in chapters 6 and 7, respectively.

## 2.2 Competence, learning and knowledge creation

Competence is the general ability to perform a specific task and is performance based (Torrington, Hall & Taylor 2005). Competency, by contrast, is behavior oriented; the concept is based on the works of Boyatzis (1982). One could argue that competency is instrumental to achieving competence (Rowe 1995), yet Robotham and Jubb (1996), in their quest to determine whether competence is skills or behavior based, tend to refer to studies that use the terms competence and competency interchangeably, without prioritizing one over another.

However, the distinction is far from clear, and it is been suggested that the term 'competence' is more commonly used in Europe, while competency predominates in the US (Torrington et al. 2005). While the skills, knowledge, and abilities applied in a specific context are the commonly considered competence components (Queeney 1997), Argyle (1967) posits that three factors are present in skilled performance, his term for competence - the motivation to perform, knowledge and understanding of what is required, the ability to translate knowledge into specific behavior and, finally and most important, the performance itself. Motivation and performance are crucial factors – an individual might understand a task, and be able to perform it, while lacking motivation, and one cannot conclude from the resulting performance that competence is present. Competence can also be viewed as a pyramid model, in which the top level – behavior - is the outcome of the competence, the middle level consists of skills and knowledge that are dynamic and learned, and the bottom level are innate abilities and personal characteristics (Lucia & Lepsinger 1999, 7) that motivate a person in engage in a behavior. However, I believe that the much earlier, motivation-based definition of competence advanced by White (1959), which indicates playful and exploratory behavior that promotes the learning process and is driven by an intrinsic need to address the environment and experience efficacy, is the most applicable definition for the feeling of being a competent participant in a culture.

Turning to the acquisition of competences, I might note that learning is 'a persisting change in human performance or performance potential…[which] must come about as a result of the learner's experience and interaction with the world' (Driscoll 2000, 11). Thus, as in the case of competence, learning is performance based and dynamic in nature. For a long-lasting, if not permanent, holistic change based on individual experience, Kolb's model of experiential learning, or experiential learning theory (ELT) (1984), built on the earlier models of activity-based learning, including John Dewey's (1938) and Piaget's (1953), can be considered. Like Dewey, Kolb believes that the process of learning itself is the main adaptation of human beings (1984).

Kolb defined learning as 'the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience' (1984, 38). The process of knowledge creation is presented in a cycle - from a concrete experience, through reflection and conceptualization to the re-iteration of the experience. Kolb's (1984) ELT can also be applied to developments occurring in intercultural contexts, for example, global leadership (Ng et al. 2009). In addition, an individual model of cross-cultural competence connected to Kolb's (1984) learning cycle proposes that an open initial attitude facilitates the development of the awareness of the self and other that is grounded in cultural knowledge, which translates into cultural skills and an even more open attitude (Carter 2007).

Mezirow (1991) states that learning 'may be understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or a revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future actions' (12). Intentional learning is thus defined as a process of problem solving and the goal of transformative learning as changing individual frames of reference by critically reflecting on prior assumptions (Mezirow 1991).

Both Kolb (1984) and Mezirow (1991) understand learning as an individual process that occurs through interaction with the environment and cognitive processing of the information. Lave and Wenger (1991) adopt a different approach to learning and regard it as a process that is situated in a participation framework and facilitated by differences in perspective. The authors cite ‘intrinsic rewards’, such as ‘a deeper sense of the value of participation to the community and the learner lies in becoming part of the community’, a sense of belonging and the development of identity (ibid, 111) as the main motivations for learning.

Ericsson and colleagues (Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch-Romer 1993) make a powerful case for the role of practice in the development of competence and expertise. The authors state that concerning achievements in numerous areas of human expertise, innate talents, while increasing the likelihood of excellence, are less advantageous than long-term, intense and specialized practice. Moreover, it is insufficient to achieve past levels of expertise; rather, it is necessary to improve on the existing standards. While the authors propose that a ten-year period of continuous practice is necessary to become an expert in a field or domain (ibid), it could be noted that continuous engagement with the domain might reduce the required practice time. As the areas examined in that study – sports, chess and music – do not lend themselves to continuous practice, one could question whether areas such as human relations, in particular cross-cultural competence, which can be practiced throughout one’s waking hours, would not require fewer years (but a similar number of hours) to master. A two-year threshold has been suggested as a minimum requirement for the development of multicultural skills (Doz 2013).

Moreover, Ericsson et al. (1993) support the role of continuous practice in cultural development, maintaining that ‘(t)he basic skills required for living in a culture are acquired by virtually all children as part of normal social interaction with a minimum of instruction’ (367). However, children in all societies are constantly supervised, corrected and encouraged to or discouraged from taking actions by their caregivers and subsequently peers and occasionally other adults, often with an explanation of the reasons that such a behavior or attitude is or is not desirable, and at older age with a negotiation of an alternative course of action. They observe actions taken by other members of society (Bandura 1977) and receive moral lessons through stories (Schein 1985), television shows and discussions of the behaviors of others. The authors appear to underestimate the extent of the feedback and mentorship that young children receive to become members of a society. Nevertheless, the authors’ assessment supports the claim that continuous life activities require fewer years of practice and likely a different type of coaching.

Knowledge is commonly separated into explicit (which is available for inspection and can be articulated in language, codified and communicated) or tacit (not available for inspection) knowledge (Polanyi 1958/2012; Davenport & Prusak 1997). Explicit knowledge 'can be articulated in formal language including grammatical statements, mathematical expressions, specifications, manuals, and so forth', while 'tacit [knowledge] is personal knowledge embedded in individual experience and involves intangible factors such as personal belief, perspective and the value system' (Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995).

Social science has long discussed knowledge exchange through social networks (e.g., Milgram 1967; Granovetter 1973; Rogers 1995; Burt 2001). Bourdieu was the first to name this access to resources, including knowledge, based on personal relationships and developed through mutual exchange and cooperative activity 'social capital' (1986). Social capital is defined as the 'resources embedded in one's social networks, resources that can be accessed or mobilized through ties in the network' (Lin 2008, 51). The preservation and development of social capital requires special 'investment strategies' (Bourdieu 1986), as '(s)ocial capital is the sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 119).

Social capital includes trust, and both are developed through shared values (Leanna & Van Buren 1999). Trust can be considered an integral element of social capital (Coleman 1988; Putnam 1993; Fukuyama 1995a); alternatively, it can be regarded as a result and a consequence of social capital (Woolcock 1998; Field 2003). Nooteboom summarizes these contradictions in what he calls 'Paradoxes of Trust', one of which is that trust 'may concern competence or intention; [trust] is based on information and the lack of it; it is rational and emotional; … [and the last, trust] is both the basis and the outcome of the relations [or the social capital]' (2006, 247). Trust can have both positive and negative effects on social capital, and the decision of whether to trust a new partner depends on the success and appropriateness of prior decisions. 'The extent to which our individual trust decisions actually add to our stock of social capital, however is clearly contingent on making judicious decisions regarding whom to trust, how much and under what circumstances. Wise or prudent trust decisions enhance our reservoir of individual social capital; conversely, poor decisions deplete it' (Kramer 2009, 69).

Nonetheless, even prudent trust decisions that increase social capital can ultimately be dysfunctional and prevent, rather than promote, learning and cooperation - the excessive social capital in 'bonding' networks (Putnam 2000) can result in exclusive relationships that stifle creativity and knowledge sharing.

The mere amount of social capital does not lead to effective knowledge sharing and creation. To develop effective knowledge sharing relationships, the following conditions are necessary: '(1) knowing what another person knows and thus when to turn to them; 2) being able to gain timely access to that person; 3) willingness of the person sought out to engage in the problem solving rather than dump information; 4) a degree of safety in the relationship that promoted learning' (Cross, Cross, Parker, Prusak & Borgatti 2001, 102). Therefore, there is a fine balance between the diversity of information available to each member of the social network and the good will of the members to provide meaningful assistance, as well as the individual and group norms related to openness.

Building and developing social capital is considered an aspect of management competence (Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998; Adler & Kwon 2002), and there are calls for the 'development and retention of managers, particularly those crossing geographical and cultural boundaries, who can successfully develop social capital in multiple cultural settings' (Taylor 2007, 337) or possess transnational social capital. While there is limited conceptual and empirical research on global or transnational social capital (Mäkelä & Suutari 2009), managers who have international professional experience are likely to have more social capital than those who lack such experience (Mäkelä 2007). Social capital is also linked to boundless careers (Raider & Burt 1996), the reasoning being that differences in the breadth and the quality of one's social networks can affect managerial performance.

## 2.3 Selected frameworks of cultural dimensions

Numerous frameworks have been developed to describe cultural differences, the most well-known and widely used of which is introduced by Hofstede (1980/2001), in which value, the 'broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others' (18) is the key construct used to describe culture. In addition, values can be 'desired and desirable: what people actually desire versus what they think ought to be desired' (ibid, 19). Hofstede's study provides a nation's average ranking relative to all nations in the sample considered, and thus the average score cannot be generalized to all members of a given society. While various concerns have been expressed regarding the methodology and the data collection methods employed in that study (Dorfman & Howell 1988; Roberts & Boyacigiller 1984; Kirkman, Lowe & Gibson 2006; Drogendijk & Slangen 2006; Ailon 2008), and as certain regions are excluded from not only the original but also the follow-up studies (for example, most of the former Soviet Union (FSU) states and many African countries), Hofstede's typology of culture has become the golden standard in management studies:

> *Hofstede's influence has become so pervasive, and his work has developed so many offshoots, that even those who don't agree with his*

> *theory or conclusions must at least acknowledge his work. ... It would be easier for caravans to cross the desert without touching sand than it would be for researchers and practitioners in this field to avoid Hofstede's work.* (Bing 2004, 82)

Among its numerous applications, Hofstede's quantitative measure of cultural dimensions allows the researcher to calculate 'cultural distance' using the formula developed by Kogut and Singh (1988).

Although the original cultural dimensions consider the nation as the unit of culture, Hofstede notes that every person belongs to several cultural categories, and 'people unavoidably carry several layers of mental programming within themselves, corresponding to different levels of culture' (1991, 10). In addition to the national level, culture involves regional, ethic, religious, language, gender, generation, role (student, teacher, administrator, tourist, etc.), socio-economic status (SES), education, profession, organization and informal groups (ibid). In the words of Avruch, '(i)ndividuals are organized in many potentially different ways in a population, by many different (and cross-cutting) criteria' (1998, 17). Nevertheless, a common assumption in cross-cultural management is that national differences can be expressed in cultural terms and the nation can be used as a unit of analysis for culture (Gannon 2001).

Another broad cultural framework is developed by Trompenaars (1993), whose study includes countries of the former Soviet bloc (including the FSU) that are omitted from Hofstede's research. Trompenaars' and his co-author and collaborator Hampden-Turner's approach culture as 'the way in which a group of people solves problems and reconciles dilemmas' (2002, 6), and hence the cultural dimensions present seven universal dilemmas to be solved. The first five concern the relationships among individuals: 1. Universalism - particularism; 2. Individualism - collectivism; 3. Neutral - affective; 4. Specific - diffuse; and 5. Achievement - ascription. The additional two categories address time orientation – sequential or synchronic activity and environment orientations - outer and inner directed; the last two are similar to Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's (1961) classic approach to cultural dimensions that also address the nature of individuals, activity orientation, responsibility and the concept of space.

A more recent, large-scale study of national cultural differences was conducted within the Global Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness (GLOBE) project (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman & Gupta 2004). The study collected data from middle managers and addresses both practices (descriptive) and values (normative and espoused). The study generally supports and compliments Hofstede's (1980/2001) earlier research; with the first four dimensions - institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance – expanding on Hofstede's four dimensions (while separating collectivism into two categories); the next two – humane orientation and future orientation – are closely connected to Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's (1961) work, and the last - performance orientation – is described by the authors (House et al. 2004) as deriving from McClelland's achievement orientation (1961) but can also be connected to the masculinity dimension in Hofstede's work.

These cultural dimension frameworks proposed by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), Hofstede (1980/2001; 1991), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993; 1999) and in the GLOBE project (House et al. 2004) address the differences among national cultures as a whole; Hofstede (1980/2001) specifically cautions his readers against attributing the average country scores to individuals living in these countries. In contrast, the Schwartz Value Study (SVS) (Schwartz 1994) attempts to present national cultural differences at both the country and individual levels.

Schwartz originally identifies 56 individual values, of which 45 have meanings that are consistent across cultures or appear within the same cluster in all cultures. The resulting ten clusters or value-types were then further analyzed at the culture level and yield seven types – Mastery, Hierarchy, Embeddedness, Harmony, Egalitarianism, Intellectual Autonomy and Affective Harmony. Following the general tendencies, the countries were mapped onto these dimensions (Sagiv & Schwartz 2000). Smith and Bond (1999) believe that these types support and further refine Hofstede's (1980) dimensions.

In addition to a holistic and inclusive approach to the categorization of cultural differences, other authors concentrate on a single distinct feature of a culture. For example, Lewis (1992; 2006) follows Hall's (1959) differentiation of monochromic and polychromic cultures (calling them 'linear active' and 'multi-active'), but maintaining that the two categories are insufficient, he proceeds to develop a third – reactive. Linear active individuals tend to act on schedule, plan and organize. Examples of cultures that value linear activity are Germanic, Anglo-Saxon and that of the Czech Republic. Multi-active individuals are lively and effusive and are likely to multitask and prioritize matters based on their perceived importance, not a predetermined schedule. Latin America and Russia are examples of cultures in which multi-active approach predominates. The final category is reactive, which includes quiet and respectful individuals who prefer to listen than talk and carefully consider proposals; China and Finland have a large percentage of such persons. However, most persons employ a combination of styles depending on the context, although they have a preferred type of action and communication (Lewis 2006, xviii- xix).

In addition to time and action orientation, the approach to trust is a meaningful dimension of culture. Fukuyama (1995a; 1995b) differentiates high-trust and low-trust cultures and links the level of trust to sociability, social capital and, ultimately, to economic prosperity. China and Italy are examples of low-trust societies; Japan, Germany and the US have traditionally been high-trust ones. However, Holden notes that trust is ‘not a cultural trait; it is a behavioral one…’ (2002, 11). It can be argued that, while a unique decision to trust a partner depends on personality, experience and context, the general belief that human beings are normally trustworthy and that it is preferable to trust and be disappointed than not to trust and miss an opportunity is certainly a culturally based perception. Cultural values can also influence the development of trust and perceptions of the trustworthiness of partners. For example, the general view of human nature (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck 1961) effects how worthy of trust a stranger is considered to be; achievement-oriented cultures are more likely to bestow competence-based trust on the basis of performance, while ascription-oriented cultures consider relevant social status, and relationship-oriented cultures would require an existing or referred relationship to develop identity-based trust (Trompenaars 1993; Hofstede 1980/2001). Individual or collectivistic approach (Hofstede 1980/2001; House et al. 2004) of a society generally indicates whether a person could be trusted until there is evidence that the person is either incompetent or malevolent. Moreover, a collectivistic society is relatively more likely to trust a member of an in-group, while an individualistic society is relatively more likely to trust a person who possesses formal qualifications.

The proposed cultural dimensions present the values in measurable and, in some cases, quantitative ways (as comparative indexes and scores); however, culture is both an individual and a social construct. ‘To some extent, culture exists in each and every one of us individually as much as it exists as a global, social construct’ (Matsumoto 1996, 18). Hofstede, for example, has never asserted that values and hence cultural dimensions exist in any physical or objective sense. He states that they are constructs employed to discuss another construct – culture (1991). Nevertheless, Holden (2002) cautions (citing Hoecklin 1994) that ‘there is a tendency’ in the management literature ‘to discuss culture as if it was a ‘‘thing’’ hovering over society and influencing behavior in a direct and uniform way’ (2). Said further (1993) suggests that ‘culture becomes to be associated, often aggressively with a nation or a state, thus differentiates “us” from “them” almost always with some degree of xenophobia’, a ‘combative identity’ and a ‘battleground’ that is nevertheless divorced from everyday life (xiii): society should value differences, which he considers individual and not group-based, in a constructive sense, and a society is capable of generating a unique culture at will (ibid). Finally, ‘individuals reflect or embody multiple cultures and that “culture” is always psychologically and socially distributed in a group’ (Avruch 1998, 5); cultures constantly influence one another and experience change (Ferraro 1998).

Despite their imperfections, cultural dimensions frameworks permit comparisons among different cultures, although they are primarily developed to compare national cultures. Several authors have compiled and compared a number of the cultural frameworks in international business and cross-cultural management (e.g., Holden 2002, 47-48; Myers & Tan 2003, 16-17; Thomas 2006, 66), and they all urge the recognition of the limitations of this approach and the 'emergent, dynamic nature of culture' in a state of 'flux' (Myers & Tan 2003, 15). Specifically, in constructivist methodology, culture is viewed as a dynamic, ambiguous, diverse and active process by which individuals create the shared meaning and make sense of world (Weick 1995; Bartholomew & Adler 1996; Fog Olwig & Haastrup 1997).

## 2.4 Approaches to cross-cultural management and the development of cultural competence

Sections 2.2 and 2.3 above provide a brief summary of the understanding of competence and learning, as well as the various approaches and frameworks to describe and compare cultures. One of the main reasons to understand cultural differences is to develop the competence necessary to perform in different cultures, or across cultures. There are currently three primary approaches in the domain of multicultural competence – cross-cultural competence (Johnson et al. 2006; Caligiuri et al. 2011), including cultural intelligence (CQ) (Earley & Ang 2003; Thomas, Stahl, Ravlin, Poelmans et al. 2012), intercultural sensitivity/competence (Bennett 1986; Deardorff 2006), and global mindset (Aggarwal 2011). However, even among the practitioners of a single perspective, there are numerous variations in the conceptualizations, assessment tools and stages of development proposed (cf. Johnson et al. 2006; Thomas 2008; Spitzberg & Changnon 2009), but the perspectives share a common broad focus. Intercultural competence (ICC) is commonly used in education, including management education, and its main goal is the development of communication ability, while cross-cultural competence (CCC) is more frequently referred to in international management studies and focuses on the employee's ability to perform in a new or several cultural environments. Global mindset (GM) is discussed in connection with the specific areas of management, most notably leadership, innovation and international business creation.

### *2.4.1 Intercultural competence and intercultural education*

Given the variety of definitions of and approaches to culture, it is unsurprising that intercultural competence (ICC) have been poorly defined, for the purposes of both international education and international business. That is not to say that it lacks definitions: Deardorff (2006) reviewed 51 attempts over 30 years of publication to define intercultural competence in international business education alone (242). As there is little consistency in the reviewed ICC terminology, to evaluate these definitions and arrive at a comprehensive and inclusive one, Deardorff employed the Delphi process involving 23 experts in international education and discovered that the definition advanced by Byram (Deardorff 2006) ranked the highest (ibid). It defines intercultural competence as 'knowledge of others, knowledge of self, skills to interpret and relate, skills to discover and to interact, valuing others' values, beliefs and behavior; and revitalizing one's self. Linguistic competency plays role a key role' (Byram 1997, 34). This definition emphasizes passive competencies that are not verified by any specific behavior or performance – a person might possess knowledge and skills but could choose not to use them or be unaware of when and how to do so. Many terms for ICC are often used interchangeably: for example, global competence and global citizenship are common (Deardorff 2006).

The term intercultural competence (ICC), as opposed to cross-cultural competence (CCC), is commonly employed in the educational domain, where there is a clear understanding that development of intercultural competence is desirable both for graduates, as it is a transferable skill valued by employers, and simultaneously, instructors and administrations must develop intercultural competence to serve diverse student bodies (Jones 2013). Among numerous definitions (Deardorff 2006), the one developed by Freeman and colleagues and which states that 'intercultural competence is the attitude, skills and knowledge for effective communication and interaction across cultures and contexts' (Freeman, Treleaven, Ramburuth, Leask, Caulfield, Simpson, Ridings & Sykes 2009, 13), is the most consistent with knowledge sharing in multicultural networks.

Although the educational benefits of cultural diversity are well supported in the literature (e.g., Whitla, Orfield, Silen, Teperow, Howard & Reede 2003; Terenzini, Cabrera, Colbeck, Bjorklund & Parente 2001; Nieto 2000), there is also consensus that they cannot be derived the presence of the students from different cultures on campus and in the classrooms alone (Volet 2004; Ward, Bochner & Furnham 2001) but must instead be developed intentionally (Deardorff 2009, xiii). General intercultural education is a problematic notion (Aikman 2012): it denotes facilitated, meaningful interaction among students that is beneficial for the educational process. However, there are few suggestions on how and who can and should facilitate it. Further, it is often assumed that it is natural for students to form long-lasting relationships in college, and researchers have often concluded that if this does not occur, artificial barriers had either been created by the institutions or the host students (e.g., Lee 2006; Gareis 2000).

However, unlike children and adolescents, young adults require considerable interpersonal skills, effort and resources, including social capital, to form friendships (Pettit, Erath, Lansford, Dodge & Bates 2011), and in contrast to local domestic students who are likely to belong to only one friendship/social network, international students typically belong to at least three: conational students, other international students, and host students (Bochner, McLeod & Lin 1977). The last network tends to be more practical and is used to facilitate the students' academic and future professional goals (Ward et al. 2001). In addition, through contact with local students, international students 'gain cultural knowledge, establish a local support network, and increase their language proficiency' (Li & Gasser 2005, 564). Thus if international students choose not to form close friendships with local students, this is due to a lack of resources, including time, and limited opportunities outside the classroom to establish such contacts (Campbell & Li 2007; Lee 2006) – a situation that universities can remedy. Apparently, contrary to the expectations of certain HEIs (Todd & Nesdale 1997), proximity does not always lead to positive social interactions (Ward et al. 2001).

A study of international business students' perceptions of intercultural group formation in academic settings indicates that students choose to collaborate on academic assignments with other students which whom they have cultural-emotional connectedness, shared language and for pragmatic reasons, and they tend to avoid students of whom they had formed negative academic perceptions (Volet & Ang 1998). In general, academic group work presents high stakes for students who depend on school or national scholarships or come from families that have high expectations for their academic results. Similar to other cultural learners, international students tend to derive benefits from social capital (Bourdieu 1986) through connections with individuals who can provide access to institutional resources and academic opportunities, thereby increasing international students' cultural adaptation and satisfaction (Trice 2004).

One of the problems that plague the intercultural education in HEIs is the ethnocentric approach to and focus on international students, in particular, the attempt to promote the adaption of international or exchange students to the perceived specific cultural characteristics of the local community, its values and attitudes (Hoskins & Sallah 2011). In Finland, for example, intercultural education is related to the 'problematic idea of tolerance' and is presented from the 'perspective of otherness,' and the object of education are those who are being tolerated, the 'others', specifically, international students (Dervin & Layne 2013, 4).

On a conceptual level, Bennett's (1986; 1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) stage model of intercultural sensitivity illustrates progress from an ethnocentric position to ethnorelative appreciation. 'The underlying assumption of the model is that as one's experience of cultural differences becomes more complex and sophisticated, one's potential competence in intercultural relations increases' (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman 2003, 423). However, many international and local students arrive at HEI campuses from culturally diverse educational, neighborhood or family environments, and it is therefore unrealistic to expect that their experiences of cultural differences have been limited or simplistic.

In contrast, Byram (1977; 2003) developed a model that addresses negotiating identity in the 'space' within and across cultures (Byram 1977, 17). The model identifies a distinction between 'bicultural' and intercultural: a bicultural personality is conflicted, while an intercultural person acts as a mediator between cultures, is able to negotiate both, and maintains a flexible individual identity that can combine 'aspects of multiple cultures in performance' (ibid, 18). Although this model adopts a more realistic assumption of learners' belonging and interaction across several cultures, limiting the negotiation of identity to only two cultures reduces the model's utility for international higher education and multicultural environments.

However, regardless of the particular approach, it is widely accepted that the HEIs should promote intercultural education and learning through various means, including curriculum internationalization, which includes enriching courses with diverse perspectives, introducing cross-national and cross-cultural professional practices and development skills to perform competently in international and intercultural environments in a dynamic, interactive and self-reflective learning process that involves all members of academic communities (Crichton & Scarino 2007). Noting that a top-down approach to student learning is likely to encounter resistance and collaborative learning requires organization within and outside the classroom, Treleaven and colleagues (Treleaven, Freeman, Leask, Ramburuth, Simpson, Sykes & Riding 2007) propose a conceptual framework employing a systematic embedded approach that includes three core components: 1. communities of practice (Lave & Wenger 1991), 2. curriculum, policies and procedures and 3. resources and tools (Treleaven et al. 2007). This framework is consistent with Deardorff's (2006) Process Model of Intercultural Competence, which begins with individual attitudes and moves to the level of interaction (desired external outcomes) through the acquisition of knowledge, comprehension and skills. It might be an unrealistic goal for HEIs to consider a high level of ICC to be a standard educational outcome and expect all international business graduates to achieve it; however, to develop cross-cultural competence sufficiently early in their professional careers, students should begin the process during their college studies.

### 2.4.2 Cross-cultural competence

Similar to Deardorff's (2006) search for a concise definition, but concerning cross-cultural competence for international business in general, Johnson and colleagues (2006) review ten years' worth of business, social science and psychology journals in EBSCO databases and conclude that though a number of articles discuss cross-cultural competence (CCC), few attempt to define it, especially in this domain. The situation has not changed drastically in recent years – while there is a substantial discussion on cross-cultural competence, there is still little consensus on what it is and how to use it.

Cross-cultural competence (CCC) has been discussed for some time in international management, mostly as a desirable, but problematic, attribute. In 1981, Tung reported a high rate of US managers failing at overseas assignment (see also 1993; 1998; Mendenhall & Oddou 1985), which brought the issue to the attention of international business scholars. The key factor in this failure was identified as poor adjustment to the host culture, or a lack of cross-cultural competence, a term subsequently coined by Gertsen (1990) – an individual's ability to function effectively in another culture, where culture is narrowly defined as a different national culture, or even simply a different country. Since its publication, the findings of Tung (1981) and the very term 'expatriate failure' as applied to incomplete international assignments have been questioned (Harzing 1995; Harzing & Christensen 2004); nevertheless, CCC as a specific competence for interacting with diverse groups of employees, clients and business partners in international business and at home has entered the management science discourse. However, the notion that a manager can possess stellar technical competences but lack a cross-cultural one is incongruent with the understanding of a manager's duties and objectives (e.g., Mintzberg 1994; Mintzberg & Gosling 2002).

Moreover, Johnson et al. (2006) note a lack of consistency in the usage of the term cross-cultural competence. Although it is widely applied to cross-cultural diversity in US services industries, including social, health and educational services, there is no universally adapted scholastic definition of CCC in international business. The authors suggest that

> *cross-cultural competence in international business is an individual effectiveness in drawing upon a set of knowledge, skills, and personal abilities in order to work successfully with people from different national cultural backgrounds at home or abroad.* (530)

Nevertheless, there are numerous attempts to describe a competent international manager that focus on the prerequisites (or antecedents) of development (Adler & Bartholomew 1992; Adler 2002; Schneider & Barsoux 1997; LaFromboise, Coleman & Gerton 1993; Black & Mendenhall 1990), rather than on results or performance. Table 1 below summarizes the commonly mentioned requirements for managing cross-culturally. Cross-cultural competences can be divided into stable ones (personalities and abilities) that are required for the successful development of dynamic competences (knowledge and skills), which are not essential and can be acquired subsequently, during the assignment (Leiba-O'Sullivan 1999). However, Keršienė and Savanevičienė (2005) suggest that both dynamic and stable components of this competence must be present to achieve success.

**Table 1 Required competences of a competent global manager**

| | **Adler and Bartholomew 1992** | **Adler 2002** | **Schneider and Barsoux 1997** | **LaFromboise et al. 1993** | **Black and Mendenhall 1990** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stable competences | | | | | |
| Adaptability | Ability to adapt to living in other cultures | | Motivation to live abroad, ability to tolerate and cope with uncertainty | Ability to perform specifically sanctioned behavior | Adaptability |
| Cognitive abilities | | Creativity | Cognitive complexity, ability to learn and unlearn, sense of humor | | Perceptual competence |
| Emotional stability | | Respect | Strong sense of self, patience and respect | Strong identity | Self-maintenance |
| Dynamic competences | | | | | |
| Culture-specific knowledge | Knowledge of foreign cultures | Awareness of cultural differences, knowledge of the culture and its people | | Knowledge of and facility with cultural beliefs and values; ability to negotiate the institutional structure of that culture | |
| Interpersonal skills | Skillful working with individuals from many cultures and interacting with foreign colleagues | | Interpersonal abilities, cultural empathy | Sensitivity to the affective processes of the culture, maintaining social relations within the cultural group | Cross-cultural relationship |
| Linguistic skills | | Good language training | Linguistic ability | Communicate clearly in the language of the given cultural group | |

Generally, in addition to the stable competences mentioned above, certain of the Big Five personality dimensions (Costa & McCrae 1985), for example, extraversion (Nummela, Saarenketo & Puumalainen 2004), consciousness and agreeableness, are cited as required personality traits, as is self-efficacy (Leiba-

O'Sullivan 1999). Among the dynamic competences, conflict resolution skills are also commonly mentioned (e.g., Black & Gregersen 1999; Bartlett & Ghoshal 2000). Cultural knowledge, which is present in all reviewed suggestion lists, can be differentiated into culture-general knowledge, or the awareness and appreciation of differences in values and behavior, and culture-specific knowledge (Hofstede 2001). The latter includes factual, conceptual, and attributional aspects (Bird, Heinbuch, Dunbar & McNulty 1993), or the ability to instantaneously discover new things, interact, and acquire and manage information, skills and attitudes (Sercu 2004).

In addition to cultural knowledge, and in particular culture-specific knowledge, other suggested components of cross-cultural competence, both stable and dynamic, do not drastically differ from general managerial 'people skills'. Therefore, it is rather trivial to conclude that managers who operate in multicultural environments need to be good managers and aware of the cultures they interact with: while management skills and culture-specific knowledge appear to be the basic requirements, cross-cultural management involves more than being able to cope with culture shocks, have cultural awareness and be able to manage cultural differences (Holden 2002).

In an attempt to discover the missing component that makes global management truly cross-cultural, a recently introduced concept, which remains 'the new guy in class' (EgholmFeldt 2009, 1), cultural intelligence (CQ), has the ambitious purpose of combining past flawed and fragmented research on cross-cultural competence into a system of knowledge connected by cultural metacognition (Thomas, Stahl, Ravlin, Poelmans et al. 2008). The term CQ was first proposed by Earley (2002), who, in cooperation with Ang (Earley & Ang 2003), applied Sternberg and Detterman's (1986) framework of multiple intelligences (Gardner[3] 1983; 1993) to build on the theory of emotional and social[4] intelligences popularized by Goleman (1995; 2006). Finding the latter limited to specific national cultural social environments, the CQ theorists conceptualize cultural intelligence (CQ) as 'a multidimensional construct with mental (metacognitive and cognitive), motivational, and behavioral components' (Ng, Van Dyne & Ang 2009, 514). This concept was further developed to apply to international human resources processes such as selection and training (Earley, Ang &

[3] Despite its wide popularity and applications in education and job-related assessment and testing, there is very poor (if any) empirical support for the multiple intelligence theory. Most of its factors strongly correlate with g factor or other cognitive abilities or personality characteristics. See Visser, B. A., Ashton, M. C. and Vernon, P.A. (2006), "g and the measurement of Multiple Intelligences: A response to Gardner", *Intelligence, 34 (5): 507*–510, OR Stahl, S. A. (Fall 1999) "Different strokes for different folks? A critique of learning styles," *American Educator,* 23 (3): 27-31.

[4] Defined as "the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls, to act wisely in human relations'. Thorndike, E.L. (1920) "Intelligence and its use", *Harper's Magazine*, 140: 227-235

Tan 2006). Although the definitions of CQ differ across various authors (Thomas et al. 2008), it is generally operationalized as an ability to behave appropriately in cross-cultural settings. CQ can be presented as three distinct but interrelated domains: 1. Culture-specific knowledge (Thomas 2006; Thomas et al. 2012), or cognition (Ang, Van Dyne, Koh et al. 2007; Early & Ang 2003; Earley & Peterson 2004), and metacognition, or 'thinking about thinking' (Earley & Peterson 2004, 105); 2. Mindfulness (Thomas 2006; Ting-Toomey 1999), or the motivation to engage with, learn about and understand other cultures (Earley & Ang 2003; Earley & Peterson 2004; Ang et al. 2007); and 3. Appropriate behavior (Earley 2002; Thomas 2006) based on the cultural knowledge. All three are cooked together into a 'chicken soup' system that is CQ (Thomas et al. 2008, 132).

The CQ label is rather misleading, as intelligence is generally defined as 'the ability to learn',[5] not the product of learning. Ng, Van Dyne and Ang (2012) employ a similar definition of general intelligence (IQ) – as the ability to reason and solve problems (32). Moreover, the supporters of the CQ approach provide no empirical evidence that such intelligence exists, even in a latent form (Thomas et al. 2012), and if it does, that the concept differs from regular cognitive abilities and empathy. Blasco and colleagues (Blasco, Feldt & Jakobsen 2012) investigate the distinct difference of the concept with 'key concepts that were previously used to describe the abilities needed in situations defined as cross-cultural, e.g. cross-cultural and intercultural competence (CCC and ICC), cultural literacy and global mindset' (230) and caution that the depiction of a perfectly culturally intelligent executive as described in the CQ literature is an unrealistic ideal. Briefly, at present CQ can only be treated as 'a hypothesis, rather than as a well-proven construct' (ibid, 242).

### *2.4.3 Global mindset (GM)*

In addition to research on intercultural competences (e.g., Deardorff 2006; Spitzberg & Changnon 2009), terms such as 'global mindset' (Gupta & Govindarajan 2002; Levy, Beechler, Taylor & Boyacigiller 2007) and global (or globalized) manager (Black et al. 1999) have been employed in the international management literature. Maznevski and Lane (2004) define a global mindset as the 'ability to develop and interpret criteria for personal and business performance that are independent from the assumptions of a single country, culture, or context; and to implement those criteria appropriately in different countries, cul-

[5] http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intelligence

tures and contexts' (172). It could also be understood as 'the cognitive ability that helps individuals figure out how to best understand and influence individuals, groups and organizations from diverse social cultural systems' (Clapp-Smith, Luthans & Avolio 2007, 107). This definition was developed by a group of scholars at the Thunderbird School of Global Management (Osland et al. 2012).

According to the Global Mindset Framework (Beechler & Javidan 2007), individuals with a global mindset (GM) possess global intellectual capital, psychological capital and social capital. Specifically, intellectual capital includes global business savvy, cognitive complexity and a cosmopolitan outlook, psychological capital – a passion for diversity, a quest for adventure and self-assurance, and social capital – intercultural empathy, interpersonal impact and diplomacy, with the social capital indicators highly correlating with the first two (Javidan & Teagarden 2011). In this framework, social capital is understood more in the sense of emotional stability than capital as such, which in the classic definition (Bourdieu 1986) is positioned outside an individual, in social networks, and includes the accessible resources of other members of a network. The second component in the model incorporates managers' effectiveness cycle, which includes the analysis of the situation, identification of the appropriate actions and the possession of behavioral flexibility to address the situation (Bird & Osland 2004). Javidan and colleagues (Javidan, Teagarden & Bowen 2010) explicitly state that GM is key to global managers' success.

Gupta and Govindarajan (2002, 120) suggest that individual and organizational development of GM is fostered by (a) curiosity, (b) an explicit and self-conscious articulation of current mindsets, (c) exposure to diversity and novelty and (d) a disciplined attempt to develop an integrated perspective (120). Consistent with their position, the Chattanooga model of global leadership development includes the development of 'new mental models', and the ability to process dynamic complexity, intensity, emotional affect and relevance that are dynamic in nature (Bird & Osland 2006).

The term global mindset is more commonly applied to global leaders, executives and entrepreneurs than to employees or international students. For example, Nummela et al. (2004, 53) indicate that internationally oriented managers have low psychic distance from foreign markets, are well educated and less risk averse, have a positive attitude toward living abroad, and, in case of Finnish entrepreneurs, are more extraverted and intuitive than other entrepreneurs. The authors conceptualize the individual managerial global mindset as proactiveness, commitment and international vision and conclude that it is a key characteristic for managing international business (ibid, 60). Therefore, one could also conclude that while global mindset is discussed in connection with the management of an international company, it is a desirable competence for international business students to develop.

### *2.4.4 Cultural differences – barrier or resource?*

The current scientific literature adopts two main approaches to cross-cultural management and competence development (Skobeleva 2008) – the first regards cultural differences as barriers or challenges to overcome and cross-cultural conflicts as undesirable and inefficient; the second approach regards cultural differences as conductive to the creation of new knowledge and competence development (Holden 2002). Although the various cultural dimensions systems, in particular those of Hofstede (1980/2001) and Trompenaars (1994), are commonly situated in the first, problem-oriented camp, Hofstede states that differences between and among cultures provide opportunities for learning and improved understanding (2001), and Trompenaars believes that reconsolidation of cultural dilemmas results in new competitive strengths for international organizations (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 2000; 2002).

Supporters of the cultural-diversity-as-an-advantage approach (e.g., Hoecklin 1994; Schneider & Barsoux 1997; Soderberg & Holden 2002; Holden 2002; Skobeleva 2008) maintain that a combination of diverse cultures co-exist, interact and influence one another in any organization, and an individual could simultaneously belong to a range of different cultural groups and subgroups. Cultural differences 'are manifesting themselves in new ways', for example, in the working environment of multicultural virtual teams, 'waiting to be discovered' (Hofstede 2001, 27). Therefore, the term 'multicultural' rather than 'cross-cultural' is more appropriate (Soderberg & Holden 2002; Keršienė & Savanevičienė 2005), and the focus of the discussion should not be on the ability to function in a new culture but rather on the capacity to generate new knowledge, foster creativity based on a diversity of views, values, and experiences and employ culture and knowledge about it as resources (Holden 2002, 15). Thus possessing cross-cultural competences means recognizing differences as a cultural resource and learning from others through negotiating realities (Friedman & Antal 2005).

'At the heart of this discussion lie two very different modes of perceiving culture: a primordial and a situational or constructionist mode,' – explain Blanco et al. (2012, 236). The primordial tradition regards culture as a set of rules, norms and values taught and learned in the society; it can change but does so slowly. From a constructivist perspective, culture is constructed, dynamic, fluid and flexible; it is a 'mixture of horizontal as well as vertical historically constructed elements that individuals (re)organize for particular purposes. It is thus individuals, not institutions, that create their culture and history … Culture itself 'does' nothing' (ibid). Or, in the words of Holden: 'The modern world of businesses, in effect, creating new kinds of cultures, which are perhaps better understood as infinitely over-lapping and perpetually redistributable habitats of common knowledge and shared meanings' (2002, 285).

Table 2 below summarizes the primary current approaches to cultural knowledge creation.

**Table 2 Summary of approaches to cultural knowledge creation**

| | ICC | CCC | CQ | GM | Multicultural |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Focus on | Communication | Performance | Behavior | Worldview | Knowledge Creation |
| Subjects are | Students | Employees | | Executives and entrepreneurs | All culture participants |
| Examples | Deardorff 2006; Bennett 1986; 1993 | Johnson et al. 2006; Adler 2002 | Thomas 2008; 2012; Thomas et al. 2008; Ng et al. 2009 | Beechler & Javidan 2007; Javidan et al. 2010 | Soderberg & Holden 2002; Holden 2001; Keršienė & Savanevičienė 2005; Skobeleva 2008 |
| Developed through | Contact | Training and experience | | Education, family background, global business experience | Diversity of views |
| Supported by | Respect to others | Open personality | Mindfulness | Cosmopolitan outlook | Multicultural networks |
| Views cultural diversity as | Moral imperative | Barrier | | Challenge | Opportunity |

The most promising approach, which regards cultural diversity as an opportunity to engage in knowledge creation and sharing, is the multicultural approach, which adopts a constructivist perspective on cultures as being flexible, fluid and situational.

## 2.5 Knowledge creation and sensemaking in multicultural networks

Understanding of knowledge creation, and cultural knowledge creation in particular, is somewhat limited (Tsoukas & Mylonopoulos 2004). Nevertheless, scholars recognize that contexts and social activities are crucial for knowledge creation (Glisby & Holden 2003) and that it is evolutionary and pragmatic (Engeström 2000). Moreover, interest in discussing the interconnections among culture, learning, and success in cross-cultural adaptation has grown. For example, Yamazaki and Kayes (2004) identify nine competencies for cultural development based on Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory. The authors suggest assessing individual commitment and values, emotions and skills development, experience in cross-cultural situations, and learning cross-cultural actions– solving problems using learning teams.

The contact hypothesis (Allport 1954) and social learning theory (Bandura 1977) frequently serve as the basis for understanding the process of learning in multicultural environments. Social learning theory (Bandura 1977) suggests that humans learn through social interactions and observations of their surroundings. However, learning does not always lead to a change in behavior. In a cross-cultural context, social learning theory has been applied to suggest that individuals require feedback from their peers or mentors and socially safe environments that encourage and support risk-taking (Caligiuri & Tarique 2009; 2012). Intergroup contact theory (Allport 1954) proposes that when a group satisfies the conditions of equal status, common goals, cooperation with the support of authorities and personal interactions, it is likely to reduce prejudice among minority and majority group members. Although this hypothesis has been applied to suggest that these conditions are also likely to enhance cultural knowledge, reduce anxiety concerning intercultural contact, and increase empathy and perspective taking (Pettigrew and Tropp 2008), it should be noted that its original goals were more modest – a mere reduction in prejudice toward an out-group with limited social contact with the majority population. Nevertheless, it is likely that social interactions, feedback, socially save environments, including the support of authorities and common goals, are beneficial for cultural knowledge creation.

Generally, individuals and groups make sense of novel or ambiguous situations by interpreting them in light of their part experiences and/or re-evaluating and reconstructing their identities (Weick 1995). Collective sensemaking occurs in groups or networks as the members exchange their individual understandings and attempt to arrive at a shared one (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld 2006). Cultural negotiations or collaborations increase sensemaking behavior, as collaborators assign meaning to events or 'schema' (Bird & Osland 2006) and then construct behavioral responses (Weick 1995), or 'scripts' (Gioia & Poole 1984). When individuals perceive events or the processes to be familiar, they operate as they normally would, without attempting to understand the events in a novel manner (Weick 1995). However, according to Louis' (1980) sensemaking paradigm, when individuals enter a new environment, they are likely to experience surprise, or role shock (ibid; Weick et al. 2006). Then, they compare and contrast the experience with their previous setting and select a course of action. A similar process occurs during cross-cultural transitions, when sojourners (Harvey, Buckley, Novicevic & Wiese 1999) strive to produce accounts that make the environment meaningful (Poole, Gioia & Gray 1989) by obtaining responses from appropriate sources, including own experiences, local knowledge and interpretation schemes, and from other members of their networks – insiders, or more experienced sojourners (Lazarova & Caligiuri 2001), who act as mentors (Sussman 2000). Conscious sensemaking behaviors, such as information seeking and social interaction, are critical for reestablishing an identity and knowledge of the expected behaviors and attitudes (O'Sullivan 2002).

In addition to efforts to understand their new environment, individuals might engage in information sharing and prospective sensemaking (Gioia 1986), to make sense of the personal or group experience through a social activity that promotes the creation of common ground (Klein, Moon & Hoffman 2006) to create new knowledge. These behaviors can occur in a variety of situations, for example, strategic development in academia (Gioia, Thomas, Clark & Chittipeddi 1994), entrepreneurship (Cornelissen & Clarke 2010), or innovation in virtual teams (Rafaeli, Ravid & Cheshin 2009). Thus, through social interactions, past experiences and novel ideas are shared in the form of accounts (Maitlis 2005), and through social processes and multiple channels, both formal and informal, individuals develop new understandings and interpretive frameworks (Balogun & Johnson 2004). Sensemaking does not have a clear beginning or end (Klein et al. 2006): such activity is a gradual construction of shared comprehension and shared models (Maitlis & Lawrence 2007). Bird and Osland (2006) stress that 'sensemaking across cultures differs little from sensemaking in a purely home-culture context' (123): it is a continuous cycle of '(1) framing the situation, (2) making attributions and (3) selecting a script' (ibid, 124). However, cross-cultural sensemaking is more complex and, therefore, requires a holistic development approach (McCall & Hollenbeck 2002). Moreover, the multitudes of daily experiences that individuals encounter in a dynamic, intercultural milieu are not naturally linear, and hence certain intercultural experiences might trigger either functional or dysfunctional changes, irrespective of their commonly attributed importance (Bird & Osland 2004).

When group members propose a 'tentative interpretation' of unclear or confusing events, they, by building on one another's ideas based on common references, move from an individual to a group level of sensemaking (Stigliani &

Ravasi 2012). Although sensemaking relates to creativity, curiosity, comprehension, mental modeling and situational awareness, the concept is more complex: it is a ‘motivated conscious effort to understand connection (which can be among people, places and events) in order to anticipate their trajectories and to act effectively’ (Klein et al. 2006, 71).

In addition to sensemaking and sensegiving, the concepts of making perspective and taking perspective (Boland & Tenkasi 1995) contribute to the discussion of new knowledge creation in communities of learners. By making perspective, a community develops knowledge and practices; then, through perspective taking, a community of learners and practitioners from diverse cultural backgrounds develops and integrates individual knowledge into community practices. Thus, cultural learning is connected to networking and knowledge sharing (Bartholomew & Adler 1996) through cultural knowledge transfer (Hu & Warner 1996).

Cultural conflicts can be attributed to the quest for identify, which depends on access to knowledge and the ability to share it (Kleppesto 1998); in other words, cultural knowledge is created in communities of meaning through communications with other members of the community (Gertsen & Soderberg 1998). Nonaka (1991) recommends that for knowledge transfer to occur, learners must find ‘common cognitive grounds’, even if it is more challenging in a multicultural group. Nonaka and colleagues’ (Nonaka 1994; Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995) theory of knowledge creation (SECI) proposes that it occurs through social interaction. The model could be applicable for cultural knowledge creation outside of a formal organization, provided that a process of social exchange is present.

Therefore, to comprehend how cultural interpretation, knowledge and sensemaking are created, we must focus on network negotiations and discussions (Gertsen & Soderberg 2000). The networks are developed in expectation of learning and promote knowledge sharing, in which the members are simultaneously givers, recipients, and creators of knowledge (Koehn & Rosenau 2002).

Holden (2002) regards network development and the ability to negotiate meanings, which corresponds to Friedman and Antal's (2005) concept of negotiating reality, as a core cross-cultural competence. In general, Holden proposes six core cultural knowledge sharing tasks:

- Cross-cultural transfer of knowledge, experience and values
- Collaborative cross-cultural learning
- Cross-cultural networking
- Interactive translation
- Development of participative competence
- Creation of collaborative atmosphere (293)

He considers network building to be a critical investment in time and effort, which ‘requires social skills of an exceptionally high order: lose your network, lose your life’ (ibid, 298).

Therefore, one can conclude that cultural knowledge creation and sharing is a continuous, interactive and cyclic process that occurs in social networks thought sensemaking and sensegiving. It requires shared meanings, facilitated through a common language and frequent interactions.

## 2.6 Cross-cultural competence development models

Prior to the introduction of the concept of cross-cultural competence in international business, the issue of intercultural adjustment was discussed in social psychology and educational research, with less of a focus on competence but rather on an individual's cultural adjustment to a new national culture. Based on Argyle's (1969) study on social skills, it was assumed that a person entering a novel cultural setting would be unable to manage routine social encounters and hence had to learn new culture-specific skills to negotiate the new cultural reality or engage in culture learning (Bochner 1986). Alternatively, cross-cultural adjustment can be regarded as a stressful life change that requires coping skills (Berry & Sam 1997). The combination of the two approaches suggests that learning culture-specific behavioral and coping skills would increase cross-cultural adaptation (e.g., Bochner 1986; Kelley & Meyers 1999; Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven 2001; 2002).

There are a considerable number of publications on cross-cultural training (CCT) that concentrate either on culture-specific skills or on cultural intelligence (CQ), despite that the empirical support for the validity of both assessment and training methods is questionable (e.g., Davis & Finney 2003; Kelly & Meyers 1999). Furthermore, there is limited research on how individuals develop cultural competence without formal instructions or training programs outside of well-defined organizational settings. That is not to say that there are no empirical or conceptual models of adaptation; one of the most widely used frameworks is based on Ward's differentiation of psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Berry & Sam 1997; Ward 2001; Ward et al. 2001). For professionals or academics (including students) involved in cross-cultural situations, domain-specific adaptation based on academic or work-related performance is also addressed (Black & Gregersen 1990; Black, Gregersen & Mendenhall 1992; Black et al. 1999; Adler 2002).

Keršienė and Savanevičienė (2005) apply Lucia and Lepsinger's (1999) individual competence model to create a more specific one for what the authors term cultural adjustment. They note that both stable and dynamic competences should be incorporated into the individual and organizational levels:

> *While seeking to acquire multicultural competence it is necessary to have stable competences, i.e. abilities (empathy, approval, task performance, openness to experience) and personal characteristics (emotional stability, extraversion, agreeableness) as well as dynamic competences, i.e. skills (capacity for learning and change, stress-management skills, conflict resolution skills, perceptual questioning skills, cross-cultural relationship) and knowledge (language and cultural knowledge). These competences ensure behavior for successful cross-cultural adjustment.* (49)

The role of the organization is presented as (positively) influencing the adjustment of individuals through selection, training, appraisal and motivation that originate in HRM systems motivated by a cultural integration strategy (ibid).

However, this model places the cart before the horse - if, as the authors state, they subscribe to the position that multicultural diversity represents an opportunity for the development of business competence and knowledge creation (Holden 2002; Hoecklin 1995), then it should be a tool, not a goal in itself. The authors refer to Kendall and Jaccarino's (2004) model of human services in which the objective is to serve diverse groups of customers, and hence a culturally integrated strategy would be appropriate, but this is not the case in all organizations. Caligiuri and Tarique (2009) note that the workplace or university has no monopoly on cross-cultural competence development and suggest that family national diversity, viewed from the position of social learning theory (Bandura 1977), substantially contributes to an individual's ability to successfully function in several cultural environments.

Several authors attempt to consolidate the existing frameworks and models into a more inclusive one; for example, Furness (2005) underlines the need to develop cross-cultural or 'transcultural' competence and other cultural competence models, and she uses that developed by Howell (1982), which differentiates among unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence, and unconscious competence (252).

In addition to the comprehensive definition that attempts to consolidate cross-cultural competence, intercultural sensitivity, global mindset and cultural intelligence, Johnson and colleagues (2006) also propose a model that incorporates different traditions and combines individual and institutional factors. However, they primarily emphasize individual personality and skills: personal attributes that include values, beliefs, norms and personal traits such as flexibility, perseverance, and self-efficacy, combined with skills (among which the authors include abilities and aptitudes, which can influence skills, but are not skills per se) and cultural knowledge, both general and specific. The development of individual cross-cultural competence is negatively influenced by institutional ethnocentrism and cultural distance, calculated based on Kogut and Singh's (1988) formula.

Schneider and Barsoux (1997) adapt Kets de Vries and Mead's (1991) model to illustrate the role of personality development (adaptability and leadership factors) combined with professional, management and personal development in their model of the creation of cross-cultural competence (Schneider & Barsoux 1997). The model is also influenced by a multicultural, flat, geocentric organizational structure that considers the third country's national and international HRM (ibid). Because the model accounts for family status and composition (e.g., 'movable' children), it obviously begs the question of how a single individual or one without young children would fare in a new cultural environment, while failing to address the fact that current global mobility trends indicate that the long-term assignments of the past are giving way to international commuting, extended business trips, rotation and other more flexible arrangements (WRRI 2012). This is only one example of the normative character of the model. The other weaknesses, such as the long list of requirements and the confusion of the background factors with actual competence that might be developed in this background, place the model solidly in the ideal but unobtainable 'flying chameleon' group, to use the apt expression of Blanco et al. (2012).

Moreover, there are numerous models that are primarily tailored to students, but not exclusively in the ICC tradition. In their detailed review, Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) identified compositional, co-orientational, developmental, adaptational, and causal path types of models and present an eight-page list of more than 300 items that had been identified as concepts and factors associated with interpersonal, communicative and intercultural competence, which are organized under the broad categories of motivation, knowledge, skills, context and outcomes (36-43). The authors summarize the shortcoming of the reviewed models: first, they place unjustified stress on the learners' cognitive, rational and intentional approach; second, the employ a poor conceptualization of adaptability, which, while is central to most models, could be understood either as a personal trait or a process of change; and third, they place undue stress on individualistic assertiveness at the expense of 'empathy, perspective taking' and a '*relational* perspective toward competence', thus raising 'fundamental questions about where *competence is located,* which largely have yet to be resolved in the competence literature' *(*emphasis in original ibid, 44).

In addition, most models are based on the assumption that a learner begins a an ethnocentric position and must move gradually toward a higher state of cultural awareness (King & Baxter Magolda 2005; Bennett 1986; Hammer et al. 2003). The presumption of a monocultural world view is at obvious odds with the reality of most modern societies. College students in particular experience cultural, ethnic, racial and religious diversity so frequently in their daily interactions that they cease to notice it (Halualani 2008). Therefore, one can conclude that most models regard the cross-cultural and intercultural competence development process as an individual one, which nevertheless occurs within an organization or HEI. Figure 1 below summarizes the individual-focused CCC/ICC process as it is commonly presented in current literature.

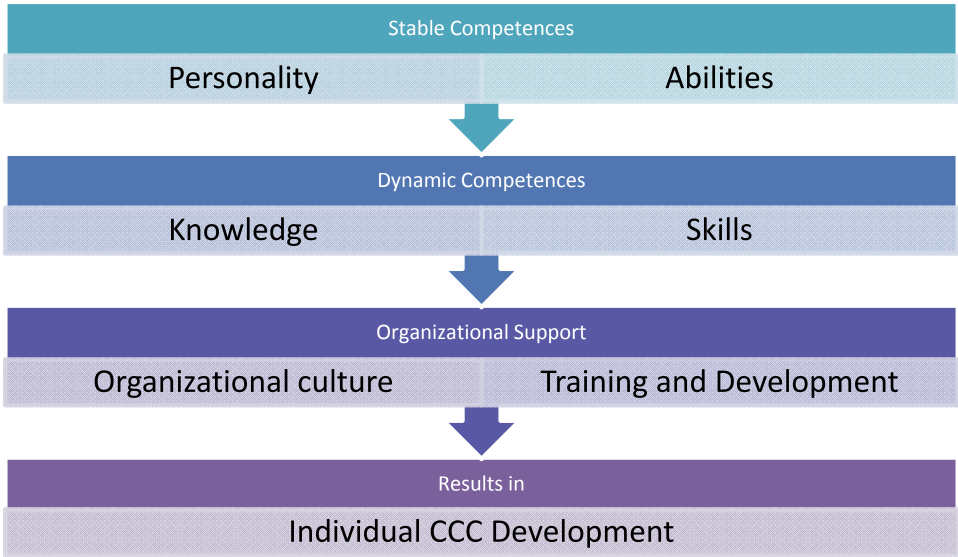


**Figure 1 Individual CCC/ICC development processes presented in the current literature**

In contrast, Holden (2002), advocating a process-based approach to cross-cultural expertise, which is to some extent is consistent with Deardorff's (2006) model, positions cross-cultural knowledge development outside of the individual, within network-based knowledge transfer; he names six tasks relating to it: 1. cross-cultural transfer of knowledge, experience and values, 2. collaborative cross-cultural learning, 3. cross-cultural networking, 4. interactive translation, 5. the development of participative competence and 6. the creation of a collaborative atmosphere (293).

In a more detailed and specific consideration of Holden's (2002) method, Skobeleva (2008) proposes a model that addresses the process of CCC development, specifically in cross-cultural executive teams. The process is initiated by the desire (or 'longing') for change. The first stage is knowledge 'symmetrisation' (ibid), which corresponds to the process of finding common ground proposed by Nonaka (1991). At this stage, the participants recognize the limits of their knowledge and, driven by specific goals, seek new knowledge and novel solutions to common problems: it is a combined transfer of valuable experience and perception adjustment. They share their knowledge of the practices that were successful in their former environments with one another until the knowledge becomes symmetrical. The second, critical stage is a 'mental hologram' (ibid), in which new opportunities and strategies are determined. This stage is characterized by trust building, deep mutual appreciation, and collaboration, as well as by an extensional view of the problem and insights. The process is facilitated by shared knowledge that is translated into different cultural worlds by the participants. The result of this new competence is a discovery of new opportunities. While Skobeleva and Gomes admit that this model of cultural 'knowledge creation lacks confirmation in other settings and contexts, as well as it needs further development in a number of themes… the theory can also be used to structure teaching in business-related courses in cross-cultural environments' (Skobeleva & Gomes 2011). In Skobeleva and Gomes' (2011) follow-up paper, the model is adjusted for teaching HRM in multicultural classrooms. However, the report is vague on whether knowledge was actually created and not simply absorbed. Nevertheless, this model can also be applied in international education environments.

Several strategies can be employed to facilitate the process of cultural knowledge creation and exchange. For example, Weick (1994a; 1994b) proposes the following strategies for cross-cultural negotiations – using a third party, perfect adaptation, or, on the contrary, one party forcing the other to follow the former's cultural script. However, the most productive, but also the most challenging, strategy requires the development of deep cultural knowledge on both sides of the negotiation table by extended contact between the cultures and, eventually, through improvisation of cultural scripts (Weick 1998), a new cultural script that goes beyond adaptation is created. He suggests that the cultural strategy should be feasible, acceptable and appropriate to ensure coherent interaction (Weick 1994b). The model is limited to cross-cultural negotiations; however, because many cross-cultural situations involve negotiating reality, improvisation and, ultimately, the creation of a new 'script', this model of strategy choices can be applied to the development of cross-cultural competence.

Although the process models of cultural competence development tend to stress different aspects of cultural knowledge, the most common provisions are presented in Figure 2 below.

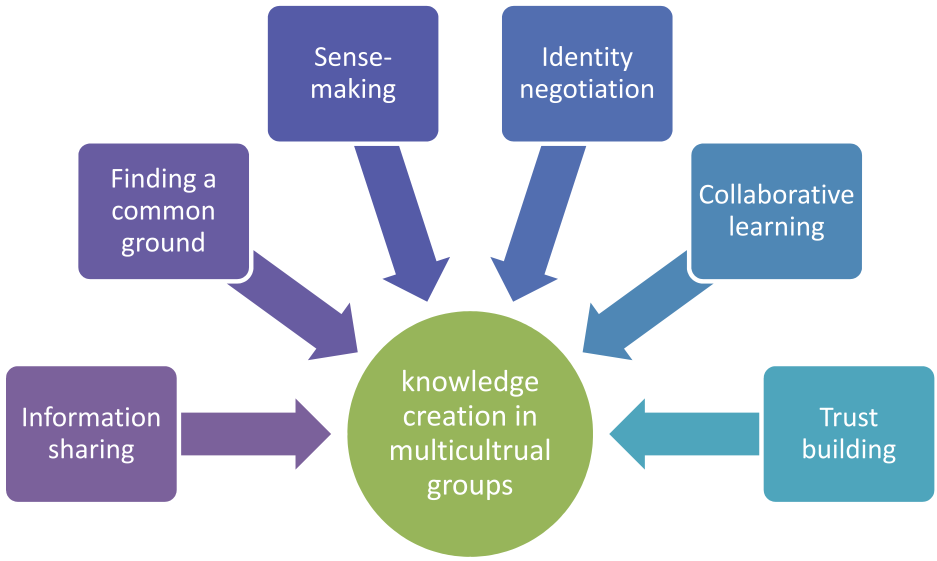


**Figure 2 General process of cultural knowledge creation in groups as presented in the current literature**

Therefore, one can conclude that the majority of the competence models reviewed above are static (e.g., Schneider & Barsoux 1997; Johnson et al. 2006; Carter 2007), and those that are not are better suited to human services (Kendall & Jaccarino 2004; Keršienė & Savanevičienė 2005). In addition, the models' primary focus is individual competence (Schneider & Barsoux 1997; Carter 2007; Earley 2002), and while there are a few that focus on cultural knowledge creation performed by groups, they tend to present examples of competence in action, rather than focus on the interconnections among various aspects of cultural knowledge creation. The most promising model appears to be that suggested Skobeleva (2008), as it incorporates the dynamic and fluid process of culture and competence and lends itself to further examination of the development process. However, it should be noted that the model concerns general knowledge creation, not specifically cultural knowledge.

## 2.7 The provisional framework of cultural knowledge development

Having reviewed the key terms and guiding concepts of this research, I can summarize that, while there are various, often conflicting, definitions of culture, cultural competence, cross-cultural competence, CQ, GM and ICC, there is an obvious trend in the current literature to shift from an understanding of culture as a stable, long-term and quantifiable concept to an understanding of it as a fluid and dynamic construct that is produced in social interactions and can be understood as shared meaning and knowledge. While we can consider all social interactions to be multicultural, and this is likely a point worth stressing, there are, nevertheless, clearly recognized cultural lines, and '(t)he persons who interact across cultural lines are usually atypical members of their cultural groups with respect to modal cultural personalities' (Bond 2003, 53). Studying such individuals' experiences and learning strategies has the potential to provide valuable insights into CCC and cultural sensemaking. Most individuals will not have an opportunity or a need to become culturally competent, and hence they will not develop intercultural competence (Aswill & Oanh 2009).

Intercultural competence should be understood from a dynamic, relational perspective (Spitzberg & Changnon 2009). However, on a conceptual level, the group dynamics and influences tend to be, if not completely ignored, relegated to the other factors considered. Spitzberg and Changnon note that 'despite decades of influence from systems-theoretic perspectives, the individual human is still the most intuitive and fundamental theoretical locus of explanation, despite attempts by many models to incorporate other interactants and contextual factors into their explanatory framework' (ibid, 7). Among the variety of models, most are created through surveys of existing theoretical models (e.g., Johnson et al. 2006) or by pooling expert opinions (e.g., Deardorff 2006), but few are grounded in empirical evidence. The notable exception is the knowledge creation model developed by Skobeleva (2008).

While providing structural learning experiences during international assignments to encourage leadership development has long been advocated, notably by Oddou and colleagues (Oddou, Mendenhall & Ritchie 2000), potential leaders have to participate in such experiences as early as their student years, as leadership development must begin early (Pusch 2009). However, the models applied in the educational environment, primarily ICC models, do not consider the future professional and personal development of graduates, and the models used in cross-cultural management tend to assume a cross-cultural 'tabula rasa' with respect to not only staff employees but also managers and executives. Few of the proposed development tools consider an individual, not an institution or an organization, to be the driving force in cultural knowledge creation and sharing.

Therefore, there is unwarranted stress on formal and short-term training, learning and preparation, as opposed to an informal, opportunistic, and continuous development of expertise fueled by individual curiosity, a drive for knowledge and other intrinsic motivators. Yet, any international or cross-cultural experience, whether professional, educational or cultural, can positively contribute to the CCC development of a person who actively seeks such experience (Suutari & Brewster 2000). For example, Caligiuri and Tarique (2012) found that non-work related cross-cultural experience is positively related to two main CCC dynamics – cultural flexibility and tolerance of ambiguity.

However, based on the broad scope of the materials reviewed, a few points can be applied when analyzing the data and constructing the theoretical models:

- Culture is fluid, socially constructed activity or knowledge, shared by a group that is manifested in different ways depending on the context.
- Individuals embody multiple cultures.
- CCC represents expertise that is developed through long, consistent practice with the aid of mentoring and constructive feedback.
- Innate abilities, characteristics and talents might be beneficial, but they are not crucial for its development. Practice is.
- Cultural learning and sensemaking occurs in groups and networks through frequent meaningful interactions.
- For cultural knowledge creation to occur, common ground must be found through social interaction – common language, symmetrical knowledge, and a shared value of collaboration.
- Cultural knowledge creation is characterized by trust, which is supported by social capital.

Taking these points into a consideration, the following provisional framework, as presented in Figure 3 below, is suggested. It can be supposed that individuals make a decision to engage in the cultural knowledge sharing and creation process to achieve specific goals. Although the learning process occurs in networks, which are likely to consist of weak, rather than strong, ties, the network would likely be accessed or formed in or through an organization, in this case HEIs, and organizational support, including mentorship, would be beneficial for such development. In contrast to the majority of the models and frameworks reviewed, I assume that the process would be long-term, and this learning process would be beneficially influenced by feedback and mentorship. The development of a network and thus shared learning would be supported by the learners' existing social capital and their ability to increase it, develop trust and make prudent trust-related decisions. The individuals would likely belong to several networks, and shared values and frames of reference would be vital for both the development of the network and knowledge sharing.

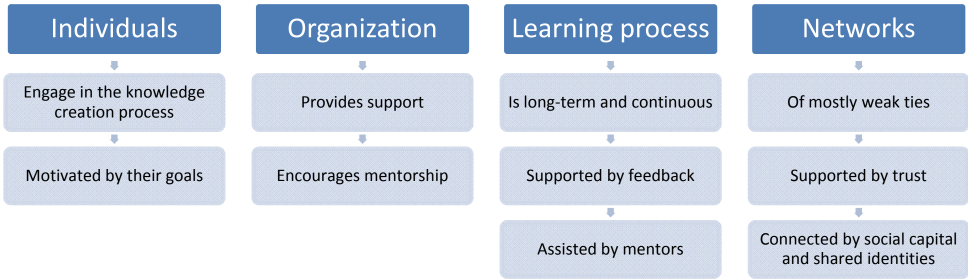


**Figure 3 Provisional framework**

However, this study is grounded in data, and the theoretical models are constructed through the interaction of existing theory with the participants' reported experience, observations and documents. This chapter's review of guiding concepts was conducted in several rounds (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008), based on the themes suggested by the data. Its objective is not to map the precise theoretical route of the study but rather to provide a broad canvas, or a background, for the theoretical constructs that are presented and discussed in chapter 6.

# 3 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

## 3.1 Philosophical paradigm of the inquiry

In his inquiry into research as a cultural practice, Kuhn (1962) maintains that in mature science, a prevailing paradigm is clearly defined. However, in social and business science, several paradigms have coexisted for a considerable length of time. Guba and Lincoln (2000) describe five major paradigms (positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, constructivism and participatory paradigms) that have been employed in business research for an extensive period (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). However, Alasuutari (1996) questions whether, in contrast to natural sciences, social science even has a paradigm, and Gummesson (2000) cautions that there is also a risk that we, the researchers, deceive ourselves and others into believing that we have identified our paradigm. He draws on the theory of action developed by Argyris and Schon (1974) and its two primary concepts – the first is espoused theory, or how an individual asserts that she/he thinks and acts; the second is theory-in-use, or how a person actually thinks and takes action – hence a researcher could be operating in one while claiming allegiance to another. Therefore, this study, as any other, might be shaped by my personal principles based as much on my worldview as on the preferred scientific paradigm, which contains ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions.

The study is positioned within the qualitative constructivist approach. Qualitative methodology is appropriate to examine a process, particularly 'how people learn about and make sense of themselves and others' (Berg 2004, 7). Creswell (1998) defines qualitative methodology as

> *(a)n inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological tradition of inquiry that explores a social or human problem. The research builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting.* (15)

My choice of a qualitative framework for this study is supported by the nature of the research questions and the aims of the research. The research questions are open-ended; they concern 'what' and 'how' and not causality and quantity (Patton 2000), and the focus is on understanding the student experience in a given situation, issues that are appropriate to address through a qualitative approach (Creswell 1998; Holliday 2002; Berg 2004). Bryman (1984) describes qualitative research as a journey of discovery, not of verification, a metaphor that is particularly applicable to this project, as in addition to an intellectual quest for knowledge, I travelled to different locations and worked in three countries during the course of the study.

The purpose of the research was to gain insights into a particular process, i.e., cultural knowledge creation, which makes qualitative research a suitable choice, as it aids in expanding 'an understanding of nature and form of phenomena, [and helps] to unpack meanings, to develop explanations or to generate ideas, concepts or theories' (Ritchie, Lewis & Elam 2003, 82). As the researchers in this tradition consider objectivity to be impossible in human science, 'they freely insert themselves in the research process and the report' (Cousin 2008, 8), a practice that allowed me to conduct the research in my work environment and combine the role of a researcher with other social and professional roles, without the concern that it would pollute my findings with subjective ideas and impressions. Qualitative research offers abundant strategies for inquiry – Wolcott (2008) cites nineteen qualitative research strategies, while Creswell (1998) limits the choice to five: biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case studies. However, despite the lack of consensus on the precise number and definitions of the qualitative perspective, they all allow for multiple interpretations of data, they 'seek to capture data from the inside,' and they illuminate 'the ways in which people manage their day-to-day situations' (Miles & Huberman 1994, 6-7). Therefore, it is ultimately appropriate for studying the cultural knowledge development process.

Specifically, I selected constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz 2003a; 2003b; 2006; 2008a; 2008b; Mills, Bonner & Francis 2006; Thornberg 2012), as my primary interest was to understand the cultural knowledge creation process, including the conditions and contexts that influence it from the inside prospective of the participants. Compared with other types of GTM, the constructivist version offers greater flexibility in the process and a more apparent epistemological position (Smith, Flowers & Larkin 2009). Charmaz (2003a) proposes a version of grounded theory that 'takes a middle ground between postmodernism and positivism, and offers accessible methods for taking qualitative research into the 21st century' (250); Charmaz & Mitchell (2001) suggest following adaptable, open-ended guidelines, as opposed to the more mechanical and prescriptive procedures advocated by Glaser (1978; 1992; 2001; 2003; 2005) or Strauss and Corbin (1990).

Guba and Lincoln (1989) originally describe the

> *... constructivist paradigm (also called, with different shades of meaning, the interpretive or the hermeneutic paradigm, and sometimes – erroneously, we believe – the qualitative paradigm). This paradigm rests on a relativist rather than realist ontology, and on a*

> *monistic, subjective, rather than dualistic, objective epistemology.* (13)

The grounded theory method is one of the most controversial qualitative paradigms, as its practitioners disagree on the epistemological foundations of the method. While Glaser (2005) states that '(t)he quest for an ontology and epistemology for justifying GT is not necessary' (145), Charmaz (2000; 2003a; 2006; 2008a) applies the same method in a strictly constructivist tradition, and her book (2006) clarified some of GT's ontological and epistemological ambiguities. In particular, it recognizes the theoretical foundation in symbolical interactionism, or 'the study of human group life and human conduct' (Blumer 1969, 1), which 'sees meanings as social products, as creations that are formed in and through the defining activities of people as they interact' (ibid, 5). The relationship between grounded theory and symbolic interactionism has been defined as a package (Star 1989): symbolic interactionism informs the researcher's understanding of how ideas are structured and, through the GT method, a researcher examines how individuals behave and make sense of their environment and interactions. Symbolic interactionism belongs to the interpretive perspective on research (Jeon 2004), and its goal is to understand 'the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who lived it' (Schwandt 1994, 118).

In turn, symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1969) is rooted in pragmatism (Peirce 1878; James 1907; Dewey 1925; Mead 1934), which evaluates the truth of an idea through its practical application. Pragmatism is a method for according meaning to reality (Peirce 1878) that relies on abduction – a logical method based on trial and error (Burks 1946). Repeatedly effective solutions are applied in similar situations and, eventually, form habits (Peirce 1878). Because human beliefs and behavior are influenced by social norms and values, they are negotiated among the members of communities through communication and cooperation (Dewey 1925). When such negotiations occur among individuals from different groups or communities with different norms and values, additional belief-habit inquiry is necessary to create a new belief-habit (Peirce 1878). Therefore, knowledge is created through the decision-making process or solving similar problems as a function of social process. Mead specifically suggested 'taking the perspective of the other' (1934). Humans go through a ceaseless process of adaptation to a social world in constant transformation. Therefore, a researcher must actively interact with the persons and the communities that he/she studies, have firsthand knowledge of the communities and further enhance this knowledge through participant observation and 'digging deep into it' (Blumer 1969, 39). Nevertheless, the knowledge claim this research makes does not concern objective reality but how individuals interpret realities. The goal is to conceptualize the 'actual production of meanings and concepts used by social actors in real settings' (Gephart 2004, 457).

## 3.2 The choice of the grounded theory method (GTM)

The grounded theory method (GTM) was developed in response to the overly positivist trend in social science in the mid-20th century and the then-prevailing assumption that all ‘grand theories’ had been discovered and the role of the social science lies in their verification in different settings (Locke 2001; Goulding 2002; Charmaz 2006; Denzin & Lincoln 2008). Then, Glaser and Strauss (1967) propose a novel qualitative research method that is based on ‘...the discovery of theory from data ... A major strategy that we shall emphasize for furthering the discovery of grounded theory is a *general method of comparative analysis…’* (emphasis in original, 1).

Originally developed for the social sciences, GTM have been successfully applied in management studies, for example on identity (Gioia, Price, Hamilton & Thomas 2010), career development (Richie, Fassinger, Linn, Johnson, Prosser & Robinson 1997), consumer behavior (Pettigrew 2002), cross-cultural research (Houston & Venkatesh 1996), sensemaking (Gioia & Poole 1984), and knowledge creation (Skobeleva 2008). Goulding (2002) cites 35 grounded theory studies in management; Jones and Noble (2006) review 21. In addition, in cross-cultural educational research, GTM has been applied to explore the challenges faced by international students (Ridley 2004), investigate classroom interactions in multicultural settings (Bird & Holmes 2005), academic strategic change (Gioia et al. 1994) and student leadership development (Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella & Osteen 2005). The GTM is popular in management research because it is effective in the development of new theory or gaining new insights, which are relevant for practitioners, and can expose processes in complex and dynamic scenarios (Locke 2001).

Building on Glaser and Strauss’ (1967) work, Charmaz and Mitchell (2001) define grounded theory methods as ‘flexible strategies for collecting and analyzing data to … conduct effective fieldwork and create astute analysis’ (160). Charmaz stresses that ‘(w)e try to learn what occurs in the research setting we join and what our research participants’ lives are like’ (2006, 2). The GTM begins with data, which in a constructivist approach are compiled through ‘observations, interactions, and materials we gather about the topic or setting’ (ibid, 3). ‘The comparative and interactive nature of grounded theory at every stage of analysis distinguishes grounded theory from other approaches and makes it an explicitly emergent method’ (Charmaz 2008a, 163). In contrast to the classic approach of Glaser and Strauss (1967), who assert that ‘facts are replicated with comparative evidence’ (23), Charmaz (2006) contends that both theory and data can be discovered: she states that ‘we are part of the world we study and the data we collect', and the construction of theories results in an 'interpretive portrayal' of the studies' social world (10).

Unlike other qualitative research methodologies, for example, case studies (Yin 2009), narrative analysis (Czarniawska 1998) or organizational ethnography (Schwartzman 1993) studies, which concentrate on an holistic example of one or multiple settings, collective or individual stories, or established cultures and their meaning, respectively, the grounded theory method allows the researcher to concentrate on the process under study and permits the theoretical constructions to emerge from the data, rather than using data to verify existing theories. Although I considered four research settings, in contrast to case study research, my goal was not to present and analyze a specific case or a situation but to continue the data collection in a new setting, until the data are saturated. I used the participants' stories of their cross-cultural experiences; however, my primary focus was the process itself, not the narrative used to discuss the experience. In addition, I applied certain features of ethnographic studies, for example, participant observation to obtain rich descriptions of the settings. However, I was not concerned with the culture of the setting as such but with the process of cultural knowledge creation that occurred in all settings. Therefore, although other qualitative research methods could be suitable for studying other aspects of the phenomenon and while certain aspects of other research methodologies could be (and were) incorporated into grounded theory research, the GTM remains the most appropriate methodology for this specific study.

My choice was informed by the research aims and the feasibility and practicality of applying the GTM. Glaser believes the GTM to be particularly useful for research on human behavior in organizations (1992); McCann and Clark (2003a) suggest using the GTM in studies concerning interaction, while McCallin (2003) specifies that it is used to 'generate knowledge about the behavior patterns of a group' (203). The choice of the grounded theory method was determined by the research questions, influenced by considerations of its viability in the multicultural educational context. My research matter was well suited to the GTM, which is open-ended and flexible (Smith & Biley 1997).

The constructivist version of grounded theory 'assumes the relativism of multiple social realities, recognizes the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and viewed, and aims toward an interpretive understanding of subjects' meanings' (Charmaz 2003a, 250). The assumption of various, diverse social realities and the mutual creation of knowledge are particularly suitable for a study of cultural knowledge creation in a multicultural environment, as each participant contributes his/her view and understanding of the social world. Grounded theory is valuable for examining how individuals manage their lives in the context of what they perceive to be a problematic situation and, in particular, how they make sense of and cope with what is happening to them in changing circumstances. It can be considered 'an essential research method for the development of new insights into social phenomena' (Fendt & Sachs 2008, 431).

As a specific method of constructivist grounded theory, I employed dimensional analysis (Schatzman 1991; Kools, McCarthy, Durham & Robrecht 1996; Bowers & Schatzman 2009), which provides tools for organizing theoretical codes into an explanatory matrix and applies the process of 'natural analysis' – a normative, cognitive process used to dimensionalize the components of a complex phenomenon into its parts for examination and understanding. The natural analysis process is routinely and naturally employed by individuals to solve everyday problems and by researchers in a more exaggerated and intentional form to solve more elaborately defined scientific problems (Schatzman 1991). In addition, Schatzman conceptualizes the construct of dimensionality (1991) as 'an individual's ability to address the complexity of a phenomenon by noting its attributes, context processes and meanings' (Kools et al. 1996, 315). Combined, natural analysis, which draws on past experience and cumulative knowledge, and dimensionality form the basis of the dimensional analysis method (ibid).

Regardless of the version, all ground theory studies include the same main features – theoretical sampling, gathering rich data, constant comparative analysis, coding, categorizing, theoretical memo-writing, and theory generations. All of these actions occur simultaneously and throughout the research process. A completed grounded theory meets the following criteria – a close fit with the data, usefulness, conceptual density, durability over time, modifiability, and explanatory power (Glaser 1978; 1992; Glaser & Strauss 1967; Charmaz 2006).

Flexibility and creativity were required due to the complexity of the topic, the variety of the factors that can influence the phenomenon (cultural knowledge creation) in international and multicultural settings, the differences that exist across three countries, and my lack of familiarity as a researcher with the local conditions. The GTM represents the most suitable framework for conducting inductive research in multiple locations. The continuous coding and categorizing from my first days in a setting allowed me to re-focus the study during the data collection/construction stage and, simultaneously, supplied a logical, systematic structure. This structure, while presenting the necessary flexibility and allowing the incorporation of my creative insights, also prevented the inquiry from disintegrating or remaining disconnected datasets - it advanced the development of theory from its first steps. I also selected grounded theory as the research method because of its inductive approach to data collection and because it represents a systematic tool (coding) for continuous data analysis. In addition, I was captivated by the notion of 'theoretical playfulness' that Charmaz (2006) presents as a vital component of constructivist GTM: 'Whimsy and wonder can lead you to see the novel in the mundane. Openness to the unexpected expands your view of studied life and subsequently of theoretical possibilities' (136). However, the main attraction was the GTM's capacity not only to collect, record and interpret the subjective experiences of the participants but, by using thick analysis, to abstract them into theoretical models (Fendt & Sachs 2008).

## 3.3 Research process according to the grounded theory approach

The research design is considered the blueprint, the model, and the detailed plan for the research project (Merriam 1988). Its purpose is to demonstrate how the study was conducted, what its underlying logic was, the relationship a researcher has developed with participants, the logic of selecting the setting, time, places and the data construction method, the extent of the researcher's influence on the setting and the data construction, the units of analysis, how the decisions were made and their influence on the following stage of the research (Miles & Huberman 1994). It is convenient to describe the study as a linear process. However, such a characterization detracts from the element of the discovery, the serendipity, and the fact that at no point in time was it a static plan; rather, it was always a fluid and dynamic organism, or a research design, characterized by an interactive, flexible and dynamic structure (Maxwell 2005). The nature of data construction, analysis and reporting was interactive, and simultaneous, using a data analysis process based on inductive comparisons, the data were constructed, filtered, combined, used for description, reduced and interpreted while further data were constructed.

'Constructivists study how – and sometimes why – participants construct meanings and actions in specific situations' (Charmaz 2006, 130). Alasuutari (2004) stresses that social theories should provide interpretive frames with which to view realities. 'Theoretical conceptualization means that GT researchers are interested in patterns of action and interaction among various types of social units or actors…. As such, process is a central feature of the theory' (Goulding 2002, 45). Theoretical development begins with the first stage of constructing rich data and reviewing and coding interviews, other materials and observations. As patterns become apparent through the constant comparative analysis and the drafting of theoretical memos, the theory development shifts to conceptual identification and, finally, to substantive theory supported by interview observation extracts that demonstrate the fit between the conceptual abstraction and reality (Goulding 2002).

Approximately six years (once the research process began) of teaching international students in Europe combined with professional HRM experience in an international, culturally diverse academic setting in the USA, specifically California, provided me with a comprehensive introduction into the problems faced by both students and academic professionals in multicultural settings. The broad literature review informed me of the current approaches and the importance of the subject.

Based on the preliminary literature review, I developed the research topics and selected the Finnish University of Applied Science (UAS) International Business program as the starting point. My choice was in part motivated by my being invited to teach as a substitute lecturer in the international business program at what became school A in my study. During my employment, I obtained a permission to conduct the research in combination with my teaching duties and was assured that my collaborative approach would support the school's mission of student involvement in scientific projects.

Although I refer to 'schools' throughout the study, I only addressed business programs, not entire universities or colleges. The notable exception is school B, which at the time of the study offered only business degrees, and therefore, there was no distinction between the school and the program. However, when I address the school's mission, vision, administration, buildings, policies and culture, in particular in chapter 4, I refer to the entire higher educational institution.

Informed by the findings from school A, or specifically, the International Business program, I further refined the research problem areas and developed tentative research questions and theoretical models, as well as identified the additional directions of inquiry to pursue in the next two schools (in the Czech Republic). I selected business programs from different educational systems (US vs. UK). The data construction process at school C was similar to that completed at school A – in both places, I was a complete participant, a researcher responsible for teaching classes in the business program. At school B I played (in addition to the interviews) an observer's role, merely observing academic activities (classes conducted by my former colleagues); however, I ultimately decided that the data from these observations did not contribute to theoretical development, partly because my non-participation prevented me from fully comprehending the social dynamics and education process of the courses observed.

In both school B and school C, the role of formal educational and student orientation programs, the level of the perceived administration support and external educational and personal learning environments were also considered. In addition to the students, I interviewed five faculty members and four administrators.

The data constructed in all four schools were used for rich thick descriptions and simultaneously reduced through consistent coding (initial, focused and, finally, theoretical) to enable individual comparisons in connection with the settings' descriptions and individual comparisons that all contributed to the development of the substantive theory, which is the final goal of a GTM study (Glaser & Strauss 1967). After the school A's data was processed (data construction occurred from February 2007 to May 2007), the second and third (school B and school C) were processed concurrently from May 2007 to August 2007, and all three were cross-analyzed as the new data were added and coded. In addition, I wrote theoretical memos while coding the interview summaries, observation notes, and reviewing documents to develop further promising lines of inquiry and suggest connections between and among the categories. The simultaneous process of analysis informed and influenced the theory development and allowed me to proceed to school D in January of 2008.

Because the Ecuadorian setting was unfamiliar to me as a researcher, and in contrast to the previous settings, I had no familiarity with the national educational system or the school's academic culture, I spent time obtaining a sense of the place and allowing myself to become familiar with the new environment, my colleagues and potential participants. However, I believe that my personal experience as a newcomer to the school, to the country and to the society assisted me in considering the issues from a fresh perspective and allowed me to develop a rapport with both new and more experienced teachers, as well as with the students, as it permitted me to adopt a 'naïve' approach to the interviews and observations and to ask questions with apparently self-evident answers. Therefore, I began the interviews in the spring of 2008, but I had previously been conducting observations, reviewing documents and writing theoretical memos. The interviews and observations continued for the next year, until by the summer of 2009, no new data could be added to the categories, the dimensions of the explanatory matrix were assigned and the interrelations among them were tested. Therefore, I considered the categories saturated and the matrix complete. As the data were analyzed simultaneously with the collections, I adjusted my research questions to identify the key concern of the student participants and focus on the process of how they resolved it, which resulted in identifiable stages and phases (Schreiber & Stern 2001). My inquiry was guided by the emerging theory and resulting theoretical sampling, and by the end of the data collection, I had developed the primary dimensions of the explanatory matrix and the theoretical codes.

**Table 3 Specific features of the research design**

| | International business programs in universities | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| School | **A** | **B** | **C** | **D** |
| Country | Finland | Czech Republic | Czech Republic | Ecuador |
| Program | BS/UAS | Diploma/BS | BS/BBA | BA/BS |
| Time frame | Feb 2007 – May 2007 | May 2007 – Aug 2007 | May 2007 – Aug 2007 | Jan 2008 – Aug 2009 |
| Researcher's institutional role | Substitute lecturer | Former faculty member | Former faculty member and current temporary summer term instructor | Non-tenured docent |
| Observation as | participant observer | observer | participant observer | participant observer |
| Interview participants | Students and administrators | Students | Students, faculty and administrators | Students, faculty and administrators |

As grounded theory studies typically focus on a phenomenon as experienced by a specific group of individuals, they tend to generate substantive rather than formal theories (McCann & Clark 2003a). In addition, theories may be distinguished according to their aims. Whereas positivist theories are generally intended to suggest and predict causation, interpretive theories, including grounded theory ones, focus on achieving an understanding of a phenomenon. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) state that 'the guiding principle of theorizing is not causal explanation but the identification of patterns and associations' (144). However, a grounded theory may also identify causal factors, as it 'offers explanations as to causes, conditions, contexts and consequences of the processes occurring' (Jeon 2004, 250). Thus, the grounded theory generated by this study is a substantive theory that describes a phenomenon and explains the processes behind it.

### *3.3.1 Theoretical sampling*

Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe theoretical sampling as 'the process of data collection … controlled by the emerging theory… whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his (sic) data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his (sic) theory as it emerges' (45). The initial decisions of what and how data are collected are only made concerning a general perspective, subject or problem area, not on a preconceived theoretical framework. Then, 'the emerging theory points to the next steps ... guided by emerging gaps in his theory and by research questions suggested by previous answers,' a researcher can select multiple comparison groups for specific theoretical purposes until theoretical saturation is achieved (ibid, 49-52). Saturation is achieved when no new evidence emerges to inform theoretical development. On occasion, a researcher needs to reach out to groups that expand the diversity of the data to ensure the broadest possible range (Glaser & Strauss 1967). It is recommended that a theory-based sampling strategy should find 'samples of a theoretical construct and thereby elaborate on and examine it' (Miles & Huberman 1994, 28).

However, it is not feasible to determine what groups to sample and when, or even the exact direction of the research, in advance (Glaser 1992). Beginning with the most obvious place and the most likely informants, guided by emerging theory and developing concepts, a researcher would progress to further individuals, situations and places (Goulding 2002). Therefore, the studies begin with a purposeful sampling; in other words, finding either a setting or participants that meet the initial requirements for the inquiry, in this case, the students who shared a particular experience of studying in a bachelor-level international business program in a second language (English) in a multicultural learning environment.

I began with the most obvious place – an international business program at a Finnish UAS, which was recommended by an 'Excellence in Learning' award. Interviews with Finnish students progressed to observations of social events and then to the interviews with international and exchange students, including group interviews, and finally, to the interviews with administrators. Based on the theoretically developing concepts, I selected two business programs, in a different European country and, finally, the fourth one in Latin America.

### *3.3.2 Settings of the study - doing backyard research*

Four international business programs were researched, described and analyzed in three countries. The first is a program at a Finnish UAS that received an excellence in education award and pioneered the 'Learning by Development' approach. This international business program also employs English as the language of instruction and prepares local and foreign (both exchange and international) students for business careers in multinational corporations (MNCs). A number of faculty members are visiting professors from abroad, and all instructors are required to have international business experience (in addition to their academic and teaching qualifications). The development of cross-cultural competence is one of the stated educational goals of the program, and its progressive pedagogical methods gave me hope that the school adopts a holistic perspective on student development. The student body is diverse and includes local and international students.

The issues that emerged during the interviews and observations (for example, the desire of the students for clear learning objectives, instructors' involvement and feedback, social connections among classmates and organized social events) suggested considering educational institutions in Prague, which both have successfully addressed these issues (in different ways). In addition to the clear cultural differences (Hofstede 1980/2001; Trompenaars 1993) and corresponding substantial cultural distance (Kogut & Singh 1988) between the two countries, the Czech Republic only joined the EU in 2004 and has a legacy of a socialist economy and a strong Soviet influence on social life and education, and hence presented an environment different from that in Finland. The students and faculty at the Prague schools come from different regions than the students and faculty at the Finnish UAS. Both Prague schools are private, whereas the Finnish school is a public educational institution, which influenced not only the SES status of the students but also student recruitment and selection, marketing strategy, level of student support, and the faculty selection criteria, performance measures and the overall retention rates.

School B is a smaller and newer, college-type institution that offers UK-style Bridge/Access programs and at the time of the research did not offer any Master's programs. School C is an older school, with a long-standing partnership with a US University, and it offers dual degrees (a bachelor of business administration degree accredited by the Czech Ministry of Education and a BA/BS degree from the US partner school). The students can decide to pursue one or another or both degrees concurrently. Most of the business faculty are long-term expatriates from the US and UK, but there is also a significant share of Czech professors from public universities who teach one or two classes per semester. At the time of the research, local students (at both schools) comprised approximately one half the student body, and the majority of the international students came from the former Soviet Republics (FSU) and the Balkans. I expected to observe different patterns of cultural knowledge creation in schools B and C. However, while certain theoretical categories were expanded and a few new ones were introduced at the focused codes level, the emergent theory was both replicated and extended (Eisenhardt 1989).

To discover whether that replication is limited to the EU schools, the fourth case was selected based on the additional issues that arose during the research in Prague (in particular, the role of social capital and trust and the need to establish lasting professional networks). As the first three international programs were from Europe, and even from the EU, the goal was to compare these EU programs with one from a culturally distant (to the first two locations) setting with a more collectivistic approach and greater power distance (Hofstede 1980/2001). Thus the program in Ecuador was selected to provide insights into the dynamics of cultural knowledge development in a Latin American country with a different educational system, social structure and cultural values. The fourth program also differed from the first three in that few international students intended to continue their education or find employment in Ecuador following graduation and the majority of instructors were short-term expatriates on one-year employment contracts (that could be extended but rarely were more than once); thus I theorized that social networks had to be created for more immediate learning purposes rather than longer term career ones.

Therefore, the settings were selected based on theoretical sampling, in which the theoretical development that emerged in the first one was replicated and expanded in the following three. While I sought negative and discrepant cases, the findings from all four programs support the theoretical development rather than providing negative examples. However, there was an opportunistic element in the selection: I had to be invited to teach at a school (or, I had taught there in the past) to gain access.

While certain academics hold that qualitative researchers should enter the research setting as a 'stranger' to avoid biasing their opinions through a conflicting or even previous role (cf. Morse 1994), the practice of conducting research in one's own organization – 'backyard research'– is well established in educational research (a teacher using his/her students, cf. Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008) and organizational research in general (Adler & Adler 1987; Cousin 2008; Glesne 2010; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). As I planned to exit my workplace upon completion of the data construction (gradually, as Merriam (1988) suggests, following the completion of my teaching obligations) and leave not only the school, but the country, and hence I would not be likely to be in further continuous and close contact as a teacher, a colleague or an employee, I enjoyed the best of the two worlds. While I was conducting a research in my workplace, my primary interest was the research itself, and I had no future expectations or plans of continuing my employment after the completion of the data construction. I was also a 'safe' person with whom everyone could share their experiences and views without being concerned that I would disclose it to the administration, other teachers, or even mutual friends. However, as an insider, I had an in-depth comprehension of the school's culture and history: in two of them, I was a 'founding' faculty member, who taught the first graduating class and participated in the development of the core curriculum and the accreditation process.

Costley and colleagues (Costley, Elliott & Gibbs 2010) suggest that a crucial benefit of researching an organization known to the researcher is that it is based within the researcher's familiar work practice, which allows him/her to draw 'upon the shared understanding and trust of their immediate and more removed colleagues' and other social actors (1). Adler and Adler (1987) emphasize that the distinction between a researcher and a participant has 'traditionally existed more strongly in theory than in practice' and the 'objectification of the self has occurred in the analysis rather than the fieldwork' (85). For my part, it was difficult to separate my identities as a teacher and a researcher, as I believe that participating in my research had educational value for my students and my observation notes and theoretical memos resulted not only in theoretical development but also in the immediate enhancement (or adjustment) of my teaching methods. One of the unexpected results of my research was an improvement in the students' individual and class work and an increase in their satisfaction with the course and the quality of learning, as reflected in both formal and informal student evaluations.

## 3.4 Gathering rich data

"All is data" is an oft-quoted maxim advanced by Glaser (2001), and furthermore, Glaser and Strauss (1967) note that there are 'no limits to the techniques of data collection, the way they are used, or the types of data acquired': for example, anecdotal comparison, based on a researcher's 'own experience, general knowledge, reading, stories of others…' (67). Constructivist GT does not differ drastically in the data collection process: 'Rich data are detailed, focused and full. They reveal participants' views, feelings, intentions, and actions as well as the contests and structures of their lives' (Charmaz 2006, 14). Such data require 'thick descriptions' (Geertz 1973) – detailed observation notes and participants' narratives. Grounded theory allows a researcher to add new pieces of data, follow leads, concentrate on promising lines of inquiry, or abandon ones that lead to dead ends. 'If particular sensitizing concepts prove to be irrelevant, then we dispense with them' – insists Charmaz (2006, 17).

The researcher 'sits back and listens while the respondents tell their stories' (ibid, 75), and he/she can subsequently ask questions bearing on the relevant categories. Charmaz (2006), however, stresses that the aim is to test our assumptions concerning the world we study, not reproduce them, and that we should not attempt to unquestioningly present our participants' perspectives – we interpret them. 'As we learn how our research participants make sense of their experiences, we begin to make analytic sense of their meaning and actions' (ibid, 11).

I collected data in four settings (programs) through interviews, participant observation and document review. The complete list of data sources and the type of data collected from them are presented in ***Appendix A*** 'Data Construction Matrix'. For clarity, local students are divided into two categories – Finns and non-Finns for school A, Czechs and non-Czechs for schools B and C and Ecuadorians and non-Ecuadorians for school D. At all four schools, a student is categorized as a local student if the country where the school is located is the country of his/her permanent residence (or, in other words, if he/she had not moved to the country primarily to attend school but had lived there prior to enrollment), and a student is designated as a Finn, a Czech or an Ecuadorian based on self-reported national affiliation (in other words, I call a student a Finn if he/she calls himself/herself a Finn). It is possible that this categorization is primarily based on citizenship rather than ethnicity (for example, there are no student participants in Finland who identify themselves as Swedish Finns, nor are there any Slovaks or Romani among the Czech students); however, as national origin has not proven to be a significant theoretical category for the purposes of this study, I call the local students Finns, Czechs or Ecuadorians if they identify themselves as such, and in the an absence of any clear indicators to the contrary, assume them to be fully competent participants in the local national culture.

Students are categorized as locals – non-Finns, non-Czechs, or non-Ecuadorians – if they are permanent residents of the country in which the school is located (Finland, the Czech Republic or Ecuador) but they have identified another country as their country of origin. The specific country of origin is recorded in the interview summary form, in addition to any other country where a person has spent a significant part of his/her life or to which he/she has any significant ties (a parent or a grandparent, or, in some cases, a spouse). There is one exception when a student is a permanent resident of another country but opted to commute to Prague for school – she is categorized as a local – a Czech – as she identifies herself as a local resident and a citizen of the Czech Republic.

The students are categorized as international if they primarily moved to the country for educational purposes and are expected to graduate from the school, regardless of their future plans (for example, to find long-term employment in the country or expecting to marry a local resident), and the students are categorized as exchange students if they attended the school temporarily (for a semester or a year) and plan to graduate from another university in another country.

Faculty and administrators are designated in the appropriate group based on their primary role at the time of the interview, although some of them have dual functions. Similarly, faculty members in the Czech Republic are assigned to school B or C based on their primary affiliation with one of the schools, even if they taught at both (as I did, but not at the time of the study). An event is categorized as school-related if its primary function is educational or administrative (for example, a graduation) and social if it is primarily recreational, even if it is sponsored by the school (for example, a graduation party).

The phenomenon of cultural knowledge creation has been illuminated through fieldwork involving four learning environments (international business programs).

### 3.4.1 Interviews

A qualitative research interview is often described as ‘a conversation with a purpose’ (c.f. Smith et al. 2009, 57; Berg 2004, 75). Constructivist research in particular should ‘emphasize eliciting the participant’s definition of terms, situations, and events and try to tap his or hers assumptions, implicit meanings and tacit rules’ (Charmaz 2006, 32). Paying attention to participants’ language, meanings and lives is crucial because the ‘interview respondents may wish to appear affable, intelligent, or politically correct and thus shaping their responses accordingly’ (ibid, 36). In qualitative interviews, the purpose is to ‘learn about something in depth from another’s point of view’ (Rubin & Rubin 2005, vii). However, Alvesson (2011) cautions that while a researcher might have pure scientific goals in mind, interview subjects might have agendas beyond the desire to ‘simply provide information. They may be politically aware and politically motivated actors’ (29). The particular challenge of the GTM is to understand the process from the participants’ perspective, and therefore, questions of participant selection, the interview settings and protocol, and possible power asymmetries have a pronounced influence on the quality of the data constructed and, ultimately, on theoretical development.

#### 3.4.1.1 Selection of participants

The selection of the participants and the settings began with purposeful sampling and progressed to theoretical sampling, consistent with the logic of comparison analysis and emergent theory. The purposeful sampling describes the group of participants who experienced the social phenomenon of interest under specific conditions. In this study, all student participants were pursuing an international business degree in multicultural learning environments. In addition, I selected the student participants at schools A, C and D from those enrolled in the classes that I taught. Participation in interviews was voluntarily, and initially, I invited all students to participate. However, as I obtained further interview data and the categories appeared to develop, I would approach students who might have experienced the cultural knowledge process from a different perspective individually and specifically requested that they participate in an interview. I sought to reflect the composition of the student body in a particular program: my goal was to solicit participation from students from diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences who could contribute to the theoretical development. Certain groups and individuals were not easy to engage – for example, throughout all of the programs, I was only able to interview two international students who came from Africa, despite there being more African students in the four schools.

Although, in most cases, I waited until the end of the course to schedule an interview with a student, I raised the topic of participation at the beginning of the class, when I was introducing myself to the students. I explained that I was conducting research for my PhD thesis on cross-cultural competence, and after we completed the coursework, I would appreciate if any of them decided to assist me and participate in an interview. Moreover, I explained that I would also be acting as a participating observer and would take notes on events that occurred in class and even outside it. I explained that if anyone felt uncomfortable with this arrangement, they could tell (or write to) me privately and I would not take notes about them. However, no one asked to be 'excused' from the observation.

Then, approximately halfway through the semester, I would return to the subject, explaining in greater detail the time frame (approximately an hour), how to contact me if students wished to participate, and where and when we could schedule a meeting. At that point, I also mentioned that I would provide them a participation credit, which was equivalent to actively participating in a discussion during one class meeting and had a negligible influence on their final grade – depending on the weight of the participation grade in the final class grade, which ranged from 1% to 0.3% of the total grade. The time and amount of effort would be comparable to participating in a discussion in one session, and I believed that the discussion of their cross-cultural competence and cultural knowledge development process would be of educational value to international management students.

Then, at the end of the semester, I would repeat the appeal, and at that point I would have volunteers from the class. The percentage differed from school to school. At schools A and C, approximately 80% of the students elected to participate, and at school D, 20% to 30% of the enrolled students typically participated, depending on the course. At school D, more students from cross-cultural management courses participated in interviews than from other management and marketing courses. At school A, I did not teach a cross-cultural management course, and at school C, the percentages of student participants from all classes were approximately identical. Although I devoted particular effort to engage certain students, the student participants ultimately self-selected into participation, as they were the students who were particularly interested in the subject or liked me as a teacher (or wanted me to like them as students). In either situation, they were interested in forming, or further developing, a social and academic connection outside the classroom.

At school B, where I was not teaching classes when the research was being conducted, I sent an email to the students enrolled in the two classes that I observed. The instructor invited me to observe the class, and I had no control over the composition of the enrolled students, although I had an opportunity to become better acquainted with them over the course of the observation. When I appeared for the first class meeting, the instructor introduced me, explained the reason for my presence and informed the students that I would be contacting them later by email. I sent them all an email with an invitation to participate in the interviews, and four students from two classes agreed to do so. I also sent emails to my former students who were still enrolled at school B in summer 2007 (as a faculty member, despite not teaching, I had an access to the student database). I sent a personal email, explaining that I was in Prague for a brief period to conduct research and asking for assistance. I also met some of them at school B when I was conducting observations.

No instructors were interviewed at schools A or B, but as the instructors' involvement as current and potential mentors, as well as their teaching methods and the level of cultural competence, emerged in the student interviews, I invited the instructors whom the students cited as the positive examples – either as the best faculty or the most valuable for the development of cross-cultural competence, at school C to participate in the interviews. I interviewed international coordinators or other student services professionals that the students mentioned as having the most contacts with the students and the greatest influence on their cultural and overall social experience in the programs. I directly approached an administrator or a faculty member I wished to interview and asked him/her to participate in my research. All of the administrators at the four schools and all faculty members at school C agreed to participate in an interview. At school D, I invited all business faculty teaching in the international program to participate. While no one refused, three instructors did not participate due to scheduling conflicts or other reasons. After reminding (or rescheduling) an interview three times, I assumed that this person was not interested in participation and made no further requests. The faculty participants also represented a variety of cultural values, experiences and backgrounds – ethnic, national and professional.

Despite the element of opportunity and self-selection, particularly in the case of the student participants, each interviewee was 'expected to have had unique experience, special stories to tell' (Stake 1995, 65). They were not only all different individuals, but their experience also came from a variety of different perspectives, including background, prior cross-cultural experience, future intentions, reasons for selecting the school and even the country of their study.

#### *3.4.1.1 Time and place of the interviews*

The selection of the interview site is an important consideration – it should be private, free of possible interruptions, safe and quiet, and a participant should feel comfortable in the setting (Smith et al. 2009, 63). Therefore, the time and place of the interview were selected by the participant – some preferred meeting at school, before or after a class, in an empty classroom, a school cafeteria, in a faculty room (if I was certain that we would not be interrupted during the interview), whereas others preferred to meet outside, generally in a nearby café or a pub (in Prague). In Ecuador, some students wished to meet in the evening or over the weekend (unlike Prague, there were no weekend classes at school D). Provided that I was reasonably certain that the location was sufficiently quiet to talk and that we were unlikely to meet other students or faculty there, I agreed to their suggestions – for example, all administrators preferred their own offices.

I offered to purchase all of the participants a drink of their choice (if the interview was held at school, this could simply be a drink or a snack from a vending machine). Several refused to allow me to pay, as they perceived our meeting to be a friendly outing rather than an occasion that called for a compensation of any sort, and a few (most, but not all, were men and all were from the countries that had a large power distance cultural value (Hofstede 2001)) insisted on also paying for me. I would generally order whatever they were having to make the meeting appear more informal, as it would be unnatural not to do so at a café or a pub.

For all groups of participants (students, faculty and administration), the interviews generally took from 45 to 90 minutes; faculty interviews tended to run longer, and the interviews with administrators tended to be precisely one hour (as it was most likely scheduled for an hour). However, given the often informal settings, the fact that certain interviews were group ones (discussed in greater detail below in section 3.4.1.5), and that I did not normally leave immediately after completing the interview if it was socially inappropriate to do so, it is difficult to provide the exact duration of each interview or make any meaningful comparisons across groups.

#### *3.4.1.2 Interview protocol and questions*

Alvesson (2011) stresses that 'despite the interviewer's intensive efforts and possible successes in getting the interviewee to be authentic, it is still not necessary that the 'true self' will emerge, but what may be seen as an effort to construct a valued, coherent self-image' (86). I did not perceive this to be problematic, as my goal was to construct data from the discussion, not to access the participant's 'true-self'. However, I realized that in a different situation, a different self-image could have emerged, and hence the interview materials were complemented by observations in class, during other activities and by other relevant data. Nevertheless, if we consider that both the interviewer and the interviewee are active participants (Smith et at. 2009) and meaning was being constructed throughout the dialogue, any self that the interviewee elected to present must be considered an authentic even if not a unique one.

I avoided directly asking the participants about their cross-cultural experience, although the majority of the students, having taken either cross-cultural management or at least an introduction to management course were familiar with the term, if not fully proficient in the subject. However, I found that when they employed more academic terms (adjustment, culture shock, behavioral changes) they tended to move away from describing their own personal experience to a 'student testing' mode and were more interested in demonstrating their mastery of the subject to me as their former instructor than in sharing their stories with me as a researcher. I would attempt to gently return them to their experience, using expressions such as: 'I see that you remember what we discussed in class well/you know that subject very well/ I'm impressed with your mastery of the theory, etc., but as you understand, my main interest is in your own, personal experience and your subjective views, so what would you say was the most memorable/unpleasant/happy episode ….' This approach refocused them on the subject of interest.

Such problems did not arise in interviews with the faculty or administration/staff members. There are several possible explanations for this. Faculty members were unlikely to attempt to impress me with their knowledge. Possibly, they better understood the aims of the interview, or potentially, their recollection of the theory of culture shock and adjustment was not as fresh as that of the students. I did not interview any faculty members who had studied or taught culture and cross-cultural management – primarily because I was the only member of the researched programs – but in any case, I would have been concerned that a professional and academic perspective would have predominated such a participant's account.

Furthermore, in addition to the conflicting roles of a participant and a student, or a professional, there is a political aspect of the interview to be considered – the participants might be uncertain of how the interview would be used (Alvesson 2011, 93). For example, Parker (2000) describes that he was perceived as a communication channel to management, and in the similar manner, some of the student participants perceived my interviews as an opportunity to voice their academic concerns, suggest improvements, or complain about faculty or staff whom they had found unsatisfactory. That occurred despite my having explained at the beginning of each interview that I would not be able to share any findings with the school administration until I complete the data analysis, which could be well after they would have graduated. My goal was partly to assure them of the confidentially of their responses and partly to explain the process to eliminate misconceptions concerning what they could accomplish by talking to me.

As I was interviewing different groups of participants, different issues had to be considered during the analysis. For example, senior managers (or program administrators in my case) can never be absolutely certain of the uses of the interview materials, and even if they trust the promise of confidentiality, they might not be able (or willing) to break the habit of a professional lifetime and speak freely (Alvesson 2011, 94). Thus, while there were few doubts concerning the sincerity of the administrative participants, I treated their accounts more as policy statements than personal opinions.

Interviewing colleagues could present further challenges, as while they often welcome the opportunity to discuss their work and life issues, such discussion could also be used as a sort of 'therapy' or a grievance session (Costley et al. 2010, 34). There were several instances in which the student participants also used the interview as 'therapeutic' talk. In the case of students, I could direct them to the school and community resources that could help them to address their issues, but such advice could be considered condescending by my colleagues, and when a close friendship relation existed, it could even result in hurt feelings. In such cases, I had to be particularly sensitive to what was shared with me as a researcher and what was a private discussion, not intended to aid my scientific inquiry.

Cousin (2008) states that researchers are often surprised by the readiness that interviewees exhibit to talk to them and offers Eisner's (1991, 218) explanation that the participants are attracted to a quasi-therapeutic relationship of attention and interest (in Cousin 2008, 77). The majority of the interview participants treated me as an acquaintance and even as a friend, not a formal 'researcher', and I was very grateful for their time, trust and disclosure; however, I had to be mindful that they had more at stake with respect to impression management and telling me a story that would conform to their self-image and self-perception. I address these issues more completely in the analysis section.

There was no set list of questions, and I allowed each interview to run its course, and a participant could chose to concentrate on a particular topic he/she considered the most applicable and relevant to his/her personal experience. Nevertheless, there was an approximate list of topics we typically covered at each school as the theory building progressed. In unstructured interviewing, a researcher should focus the conversation on a topic and allow the participants to define the content of the discussion (Bernard 2000; Rubin & Rubin 2005). While this is the ideal approach to solicit descriptions of the problem and solutions from the participants' perspective and hence is the best suited for grounded theory

(Morse 2001, 4), realistically, qualitative interviews tend to be at least semi-structured (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009).

In-depth qualitative interviews run for a considerable period of time - for an articulate adult participant (as in my study), it can take more than an hour to address between six and ten open questions, and therefore it is advisable to explain the structure and the purpose of the interview beforehand (Smith et al. 2009). From the GT perspective

> *asking few rather than many interview questions allows the interviewee to tell her story without the researcher preconceiving the content, or, for that matter, the direction the interview will take.* (Charmaz & Bryant 2011, 301)

I began the interviews by explaining the goals and objectives, and stressed that I was interested in the participant's personal experience and subjective opinions. Then, we moved to factual biographical questions – national origin, years in school, status (local or international student), cross-cultural experience (educational, professional and personal), and management classes taken. For certain participants, this was merely verification of what I had already known about them through prior teaching or social connections. However, I nevertheless allowed them to represent themselves as they wished, and frequently, certain aspects of their biography were reveled or stressed that I would have otherwise overlooked.

Then, I would build on the information shared and first ask general questions concerning their experiences. For example: 'So this is your second year in the Czech Republic and at school. How has it been? Can you tell me what was good and what was not so good in your experience as an international student at school C?' If I noticed that the conversation strayed from my research interest (although I would be very reluctant to interrupt, as a participant might be making a new point and introducing a new angle), I would attempt to return the interview to the subject of interest by asking further questions. As the theoretical categories became developed, I would ask specific questions to promote further theoretical development. The list of topics with examples of questions that could be covered in each topic is presented in ***Appendix C***.

To protect the confidentiality of the participants (I could not and did not promise to maintain their anonymity, as I knew all of them personally and most by their full names), no last names were recorded in the interview facsimiles, observation notes or memos, and all participants were assigned pseudonyms (McCann & Clark 2003b). Moreover, all the participants had an option to contact me via social media, email or other means of communication and withdraw their participation in the research until the finalization of the research analysis.

Luton (2010), following Kvale's (1996, 150) advice, suggests that an interviewer should be open, engage in some self-disclosure, and be analytically critical but neither naïve nor judgmental (38). While it is difficult to be critical, but not self-depreciating, I can say that I must have achieved some degree of success, as many signs of 'an interview going well' were consistently present: rich, nuanced and detailed answers, a sense of excitement, an interviewee anticipating questions and suggesting lines of reasoning, 'iconic' 'aha' moments, the discovery of new questions and, most important, 'this has been fun!' as a closing remark (ibid, 35).

#### *3.4.1.3 Recording interviews*

The arguments in favor of using a recording device to generate interview transcripts are that recording is obviously beneficial because it provides verbatim records of the interview and allows the interviewer to concentrate on the participants, not on taking notes. Nevertheless, I did not use one for compelling cultural reasons. I knew that many of my participants would prefer that the interviews not be recorded and transcribed verbatim – particularly those from the FSU and Ecuador, as they would otherwise not have been comfortable discussing their experiences (cf. Michailova & Hollinshead 2001). The use of a recording device would entail no disclosure, no sharing, and, in extreme cases, even a refusal to participate in an interview. Having left the Soviet Union many years ago, I still feel uncomfortable with any oral or written records of my private conversations or thoughts: if I were an interviewee, I would be constantly striving to ignore the fact that the conversation had been recorded.

It was irrelevant that the participants were not saying anything subversive or damaging to their reputations. The very fact of recording would have made them uncomfortable, and I noticed that when I explained that I was not going to record the interview and would only take very limited notes (meaning that I could not claim that I had their exact words written down), most participants visibly relaxed and were much more willing to discuss their opinions and experiences. Only those participants who originally came from the UK, Germany and Scandinavia stated that they would not have minded a recording.

Certain authors do not consider recording interviews necessary or even advisable in all circumstances. Alvesson (2011) suggests recording some, but not all, interviews (56), but I did not believe that having a few of the interviews recorded would have contributed to my analysis, particularly because Glaser (1992) believes that it is time consuming and not always necessary when using the GTM. Yin (2009) advises against using a recording device when 'an interviewee… appears uncomfortable in its presence' (109) and cautions that transcribing can be time and energy consuming, while the recording can be a distraction, and in any case, it is not a substitute for listening (ibid). Creswell (2012) considers 'conducting an unstructured open-ended interview and taking interview notes' (160) one of the five legitimate interview approaches.

In addition, as the majority of the participants were interviewed in a foreign language, the precise speech patterns and choice of expressions were not as significant as it would have been in the first language of both the researcher and the participants. I took notes and then typed the conversation and my thoughts immediately following the interview. Walford (2001) cautions that having an exact transcript is not proof that a researcher has captured the subject's 'authentic voice,' and Cousin (2008) states that a 'transcript is not an affidavit' (22) and the real importance lies in the sensemaking occurring in the interview, not in perfect recall.

Stake (1995) recommends the following procedure for recording interviews:

> *Within a few hours of the interview, the researcher should prepare a written facsimile, with key ideas and episodes captured. For many researchers, the tape recorder is of little value unless ultimately an audio presentation is intended. Getting the exact words of the respondent is usually not very important -- it is what they mean that is important .... Perhaps the most important thing is to insist on ample time and space immediately following the interview to prepare the facsimile and interpretive commentary.* (66)

This was the process that I followed for all interviews – ensuring that I had time following the interview to prepare a written facsimile that included all key ideas and episodes. Further, I coded the interviews with initial incident-by-incident codes and, subsequently, proceeded with focused coding and theoretical memos in addition to writing the facsimile and the initial coding. That allowed me to capture not only the participants' statements but also the context, background, and ideas and to establish connections with the previously constructed data and determine the strategy for the remainder of the inquiry. On average, a one-hour interview resulted in two pages of printed material (facsimile), and the 63 interviews yield a total of 172 pages of notes. However, due to the variety of interview locations, certain notes were hand-written and then typed, and the records of certain interviews required more than five pages, while others, as they did not contribute any new information to the data, were just over a page. Using examples from the interviews, in chapters 4 and 5, I attempted to maintain the participant's language and voice; however, I have revised certain statements to provide more articulate expressions. My objective was to paint an interpretive, impressionist portrait (Charmaz 2006, 10). Thus, while I have maintained the story, facts, opinions and voices of the participants, I employed artistic license to alter their precise phrasing, as I promised them I would.

In addition, the language employed in the interviews renders having exact quotations impossible, even if they would have been desirable, which was not the case. Although most interviews were conducted in English, Russian-speaking students from the FSU, represented in all four case studies, used Russian either instead of or in addition to English. This group, because of their shared language, culture or perceived familiarity or, possibly, because it was easier for me to interpret non-verbal cues and have shared references, was much more open in critically discussing their experiences. They shared both positive and negative incidents and were more frank concerning student practices and their attitudes towards the faculty and administration.

Interestingly, this was only the case when they spoke Russian. When/if they shifted to English, as they found it easier to use English terms for academic activities and subjects, they were much more politically correct than when they spoke in Russian. In English, they were often ‘giving me the party line’ or describing their experience using phases and terms that appeared to be taken directly from college promotional materials on the diversity and vibrancy of academic life. However, when speaking Russian, they were, without exception, more cynical. If I had had an opportunity to interview all of the participants in their first languages, I could have obtained more authentic stories. However, as cultural identity can be understood as fluid and constructed, it could be that the FSU students’ ‘Russian’ part was more critical and negative and their ‘international,’ English-speaking part was more positive, trusting and somewhat naïve.

#### *3.4.1.4 Group Interviews*

Some of the participants were interviewed as a group (as no focus-group-style discussion was held and the interviews followed the same pattern as the individual ones, it would be inaccurate to consider this a focus group method). Certain of the group interviews transpired by chance: a person would agree to an interview and then arrive with a friend, a romantic partner or a classmate (or two). In another case, after concluding a ‘formal’ interview, a faculty participant and I went to the faculty room to work on computers, and while doing so, the faculty participant continued sharing further thoughts on the subject, and then another faculty member entered the room and the discussion continued as a group interview.

Fontana and Frey (2000) define a group interview as ‘a qualitative data gathering technique that relies upon the systematic questioning of several individuals simultaneously in a formal or informal setting’ (651). They note that group interviews are more commonly known by the term ‘focus group,’ though there are differences in the techniques, and group interviews are best employed to obtain the experiences shared by the group. Group interviews produce rich, cumulative and elaborate data; they aid recall and are more stimulating for respondents (Fontana & Frey 2000), providing a sort of ‘collective testimonial’ that might be a more appropriate form of data construction in collectivist societies than individual interviews (Madriz 2000).

In a somewhat opportunistic attempt to ‘gain’ an additional informant, I allowed the conversation to develop, as declining to interview a volunteer participant merely because he/she arrived with a friend would have been rude. It would have also destroyed the relationship of trust and openness that existed between us; the mode of discussion might have become a highly clinical and formal one that would have defeated the purpose of the interview. I reminded a ‘scheduled’ participant that he/she should be comfortable with sharing his/her thoughts and inform the new ‘ad hoc’ one that we were conducting an interview, explain the purpose and conditions, and ask whether the newcomer would like to participate (if he/she met the participation requirement – class enrollment). In all such cases, I received enthusiastic consent.

The second reason for conducting a group interview was certain participants’ specific request to be interviewed as a group. In these situations, the participants were close friends, from the same ethnic and cultural background, close in age and, in all but one case, of the same gender. I perceived that if I had refused, they would have no longer participated, as they had insisted that they preferred to speak as a group and needed their friends’ support. I consider this approach to be similar to interviewing a family group (cf. Macleod, Craufurd & Booth 2002) – except that in this study I used friend groups. As they raised issues that they considered controversial, I understood their concerns; however, I recalled that the main goal of their participation might be to use me to express their concerns to the school administration (Patton 2000), despite that I had repeatedly explained the research process and how the interview data would be used.

One of the major challenges associated with group interviews is the potential for censoring and conforming (Carey 1994). However, as all the interviewed groups were established friendship groups, the opinions would have been discussed in the group prior to the interviews, and I assumed that those participants who had deviant or unusual opinions would opt to be interviewed individually. Madriz (2000) argues that a participant could feel more empowered in a group context; however, the most powerful member of the group might nevertheless dominate the discussion. The majority of the group interviews were two-person interviews, so each had an opportunity to contribute. Nonetheless, I ensured that each member had the opportunity to voice his/her opinion and tell his/her own story.

When I ceased obtaining new information from the interviews, I concluded that I had achieved saturation on a theme or a particular line of inquiry. However, I did not conclude that I had achieved complete saturation until I extended my inquiry to a different setting (program). I also had professional and social contact with other students, teachers and administrators, face to face, through email, and by telephone. This input was used to provide rich context for my observations; however, it was not recorded, analyzed or treated as interview material, but as observation. In the presentation of the findings (chapters 4 and 5), such communications are noted as conversations.

### *3.4.2 Observations*

Eisenhardt (1989) stresses that 'theory-building researchers typically combine multiple data collection methods' (537), and Creswell (2012) notes that observation is an important tool for data collection/construction. 'Both organizational rhetoric and reports may pale in the face of observed worlds', specifies Charmaz (2006, 38). Smith and colleagues (2009) suggest obtaining additional data to 'help contextualize' materials – in daily life, we also use observation to construct meaning and attribute sense to human interactions and social actions (Goulding 2002). Gummesson (2000) suggests 'the use of the researcher's personal observations that result from their presence, participation, or even intervention in the actual process to be examined' (83). In particular, in grounded theory, to hew to its symbolic, interactionist roots, it is crucial to study social life through firsthand observation (Blumer 1969, 38). Therefore, participant observation is one of the main data collection methods in the GTM.

Observing social actors' interactions provides for an in-depth understanding of the personal histories and opinions they present in an interview: actions speak louder than words. Merriam (1988) advises that '(o)bservation is the best technique to use when an activity, event, or situation can be observed first-hand, when a fresh perspective is desired, or when participants are not able or willing to discuss the topic under study' (89). All of these conditions were present in the researched settings – the events and situations could and were observed first-hand, a fresh perspective (the researcher's in addition to those of the various participants) was desired, and while the participants were willing to discuss the topic (CCC development and cultural knowledge creation), their perception was necessarily limited by their viewpoints.

Participant observation is the most 'natural' way of gathering data, but it is also the most demanding, as the roles of participant and the observer conflict (Richards 2009). Yin (2009) distinguishes between formal and informal observation and notes that, while the participant observer technique provides 'unusual opportunities for collecting case study data, it also involves major problems' (113). An observer is always involved, and a complete participant is fully engaged, which allows for the establishment of greater rapport with other actors (Angrosino 2007).

It is especially challenging for a researcher who cannot immediately record the observations – as it happened when I observed my own classes. Obviously, as a teacher, I devoted close attention to the class, but the actions I had to note as an instructor were not identical to those that interested me as a researcher, and occasionally, the two roles were in open conflict. For example, when I observed an unusual communication pattern among students or collaborations between cultural groups during an examination, as a teacher, I had to ask the students to stop talking in class or to their classmates during an exam. Another type of role conflict occurred when a learning activity would provide me with potentially rich data for the research, but the purely educational value of the task was low.

Becker and Geer's (1957) definition of participant observation is broad – in addition to direct observation, it encourages the researcher to ask informal questions and solicit explanations of the events from the participants and other observers before, during and after the event. In a systematic approach, which strives to present a holistic perspective on an organization and/or event, participant observation allows a researcher to use a variety of informants, even those who have not been involved in other aspects of the study, use prior knowledge and interfere with and interpret meaning as appropriate to the situation, adapting the theoretical approach to the new datum.

Obviously, occupying the position of a fully engaged participant and an insider is not without challenges (Labaree 2002). I faced multiple dilemmas while attempting to navigate the roles of a researcher, a teacher, a colleague, a friend, and a mentor, to name only a few. Stake (1995) believes that observation and some degree of intrusion are unavoidable because

> *for much case study work, researchers had to put themselves somewhat aggressively into a position to make observations, meaning that there was no chance of avoiding at least a little intrusion, but also that they had to aggressively review their behavior for an indication that they were interfering with the lives of others – a difficult balance.* (59)

Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) suggest focusing on the following topics when observing a setting: 'Actions and behavior. Verbal communication. Non-verbal communication. What does not happen.' (88) In addition to these topics, I considered the context, the situation, and the actors present and considered the questions of privacy, trust, conflict of interest and institutional image.

The settings I observed were open to me as an instructor at the university and an extension of that role in the social sphere. I observed my classes and extracurricular activities that were organized as an aspect of the learning process, for example a traditional Chinese banquet I organized as an after-class activity for my multicultural management course. I observed my colleagues' classes when I was invited – not a common, but also not an unusual, practice in small international programs; observed school events in which my participation was expected, for example graduation and public lectures, or when I was specifically asked to participate – a selection committee for a year abroad program. In addition, certain school-related social events, to which I was personally invited by the organizers or which were open to the entire campus community, for example, a Miss Campus pageant, or a traditional *corrida de toros* (all faculty members were invited to attend it as a cultural event), as well as more specific departmental events such as faculty meetings, after work social occasions, and routine scenes of school life – lunch hours, library study groups, bus rides, and so forth.

As in the interviews, I used the theoretical sampling strategy and concentrated on the events and behaviors that could promote theory development. However, I could not be perfectly selective and cease participating in an activity, for example, stop teaching classes or avoid social engagements, when I believed that I had achieved saturation in a category or categories. Therefore, when I observed something interesting in a situation that I was not planning to observe, I used it nevertheless. During observation, I kept as detailed notes as possible given my numerous conflicting roles. Occasionally, it was not possible to take notes, for example, in class or during a social event. In such situations, I wrote detailed reports immediately after leaving the event, focusing on the behavior of the players, the event or the episode, 'to provide a relatively *incontestable description*' (Stake 1995, 62) to use for further coding (as the notes were initially coded on an incident-by-incident basis), rich descriptions, theoretical memo-writing and theory development.

### *3.4.3 Documents and other sources*

'Quite often, documents serve as substitutes for records of activity that the researcher could not observe directly' (Stake 1995, 68), and Creswell (2012) cites public documents among possible sources for document-based data collection. Glaser and Strauss (1967) consider documents especially well-suited to comparison analysis and theory building, and Stake (1995) regards documents, both created independent of the research, for example public records, and those created at a researcher’s request, as the third major source of data after interviews and observation.

Atkinson and Coffey (2011) advise against using documents in qualitative research to support or validate other data; the documents should be ‘regarded as data in their own right [as] (t)hey often enshrine a distinctively documentary version of social reality’ (80). ‘One cannot assume that documentary accounts are ‘accurate’ portrayals…’ (ibid, 90) caution the authors. Prior (2011) notes that documents play a dual role – in addition to what they contain, they ‘enter the field as agents in their own right’ (94).

In reviewing the documents, I employed a strategy similar to that used in the observations. I did not specifically gain an access to any document that was neither in the public domain nor available to me in my role as a faculty member at a particular school. In addition to public and organizational documents – mission statements, course syllabi, guides, program catalogs, publications, promotion materials and so forth – I used certain documents that were created for me, but not explicitly for the research purposes – students’ work (with written permission to use it for the research), certain class activities, and other communications that were originated in the course of academic activity.

The documents were not used to ‘prove’ or ‘disprove’ statements or support observations but rather to provide a glimpse into organizational rhetoric and illustrate certain required processes and procedures as they influenced the issue under investigation. I examined them in their role as actors to discover how and why they were produced, who the intended audience was, what the intended communicational purpose/message was and what impact they had on others and on the dynamics of the case (Luton 2010).

Fielding and Lee (1998) admit that ‘(t)he emergent character of qualitative research … tends to encourage ‘data promiscuity’ (56) and since it is hard to predict in advance what data might be significant, one collects a lot ‘just in case’ (ibid). The data I did not use include more than 40 hours of classroom observation that my colleagues in three schools kindly allowed me to conduct in their courses, students’ drawings of their favorite possessions and collages and rich pictures of processes, certain course work and in-class exercises, observations from some social functions (although field notes were partly used to describe the context), Facebook posts, pictures and video materials. As they were not used in the final theory building and analysis, I will not describe them in detail or explain the reasons for not using these data in the study, but I believe it enhances the transparency of the process to note that not all data were used and certain of the emergent lines of the inquiry proved to be dead ends. However, I believe that all of these apparently futile activities contributed to my more holistic understanding of the settings and the process.

## 3.5 Data analysis process

The process of dimensional analysis in constructivist grounded theory was conducted in three phases – data expansion, data limitation and integration – to produce a substantive theory.


**Figure 4 Data analysis process**

(adapted from Kools et al. 1996)

At the initial stage of data expansion, a broad range of data are collected and considered. During this stage, it is impossible to determine which data have explanatory power for the phenomenon in question; therefore, a variety of data are collected and reviewed until a 'critical mass' is achieved and the researcher identifies the major aspects of the phenomenon. Data expansion 'serves to illuminate the plethora of dimensions and corresponding sets of properties unique to any phenomenon' (Kools et al. 1996, 317).

During the second, data limitation, stage, the relative importance of each dimension begins to appear and new directions for continued analysis are discovered. At this point, the general scope and complexity of the researched phenomenon are assessed and the data, while still being collected, are not expanded any further. On the contrary, the data are limited and separated into various dimensions, which are arranged into a preliminary explanatory matrix. The explanatory matrix provides the structure and context to develop an explanation. To arrive to the most meaningful explanation of the phenomenon, the researcher needs to design the central dimensions, called the perspective. However, several dimensions can be considered for the central positions, with the resulting changes in the matrix configurations and interpretation of the meaning, until the dimension with the most explanatory power is identified. 'When one dimension is conceptually raised to the level of perspective, remaining dimensions are accordingly relegated as either salient, relevant, marginal, or irrelevant' (Kools et al. 1996, 319), and all but the irrelevant dimensions are arranged within the matrix in the positions of context, conditions, processes or consequences.

Following the selection of the organizing perspective to promote integration and conceptual development (Schatzman 1986), theoretical sampling continues to strengthen the conceptual connections until data saturation, or a consistent level of repletion in concepts and their connections, is achieved. During the final stage of dimensional analysis, the dimensions are integrated into the central perspective and the relationships among the dimensions are described and explained (ibid).

However, it should be noted that to develop and to examine the emerging ideas, not only these three categories, but all data construction and analysis are performed simultaneously and in cycles, 'interwoven in a seamless dialectic' (Dey 2004, 84). The constant comparative analysis process occurred simultaneously with additional data collection, determination of new theoretical samples and theoretical development, as illustrated in Figure 5 below.

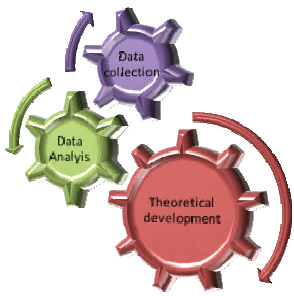


**Figure 5 Constant comparative analysis process**

As data are collected and simultaneously analyzed to trigger theoretical development, further directions for data analysis suggest themselves. The process is cyclic, continuous and interconnected. In addition, the constant comparative method entails comparing different individuals, incidents, data with categories and one category with another (Charmaz 2000). The constant comparative analysis continues throughout the research process until the data are saturated, which according to Charmaz (2006), occurs 'when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties of these core theoretical categories' (113), but the mere 'repetition of described events, actions, and statements' should not be considered saturation (ibid). A linear description of the process is used for the sake of simplicity and illustration.

In the following subchapters, I describe the main steps of the analytical process. However, it should be noted that all three stages occurred simultaneously with one another and with the gathering of rich data for further analysis.

### *3.5.1 Data expansion - initial coding*

The first analytic step in the GTM is coding the data for incidents that explain what is happening in the data; or, simply, 'categorizing segments of data with a short name that simultaneously summarizes and accounts for each piece of data' (Charmaz 2006, 43). It allowed me to make sense of the data and move towards interpretation. There are several levels of coding: Charmaz (2006) suggests three – initial, focused and theoretical – keeping close to data and doing it fast and spontaneously (48). Charmaz and Bryant (2011) caution that '… grounded theory coding differs from other types of coding because it codes for action, invokes comparative methods, and discerns meanings through actions and events' (303). In addition, 'using gerunds [for coding] is pivotal in grounded theory' (ibid), as they promote analysis and allow the researcher to 'detest process and stick to data' (Charmaz 2006, 49).

I applied an incident-by-incident initial coding scheme using two types of categories: 'sociological constructs' and '*in vivo* codes' to assess, develop and use the distinctive expressions of a particular case or a group (Blumer 1969). There were few *in-vivo* codes, as nearly all of the participants were interviewed in their second language and have not shared a close culture that would promote the use of specific terms or expressions. However, some of the codes I used were the terms and expressions used by the participants themselves when describing their experiences (Charmaz 2006; Glaser & Strauss 1967). Certain codes were used in one location, but not in others, for example 'having a *mañana* attitude' was used by Spanish-speaking participants, but it could not be called an *in vivo* code as such, as it is a widely used expression in the Americas meaning 'taking it easy' and 'waiting 'till tomorrow' – 'to do it mañana' means to postpone an action indefinitely. However, one of the *in vivo* codes, 'real people,' eventually became a focused code, as the expression was used consistently in all four cases in a sense of a search for 'common' or 'average' local nationals, to some extent, even stereotypical representatives of a culture, who in some cases were perceived as lacking language skills – 'I want to learn Finnish so I can talk to *real Finns'* and in certain instances were perceived as being of a lower SES as the participant – 'I don't want to live in suburbia [with a host family], I want to get to know *real Ecuadorians*, not those who shop at the mall'.

While taking notes of the interviews, or observation notes, I used initial codes, which helped me to subsequently discover patterns and contrasts in the next cycle of comparison.

There is a call in the methodological literature for the GTM to be more transparent with respect to initial codes and the exact process (cf. Jones & Noble 2007; Anfara, Brown & Mangione 2002; Bringer, Johnston & Brackenridge 2004). However, it is hardly conductive to the clarity of the theoretical construction to provide numerously revised and adjusted lists of initial codes. Creswell (2012) also advises against presenting the exact number of times each code appeared in the process, as that denies the importance of certain codes and draws undue attention to the quantitative aspect of the analysis. It is also more appropriate to code for the centrality and importance of the schemes rather than frequency (ibid; Luton 2010). The goal of the initial coding during the data expansion stage is breadth, not depth, and everything that may be significant in the process was coded. Although I have not recorded the numbers of codes at different times, during the data expansion stage, the codes fluctuated from approximately eight hundred to one thousand unique codes. ***Appendix D*** provides examples of extracts from observation field notes, interview facsimiles and documents with initial codes.

In dimensional analysis, the codes are eventually organized in an explanatory matrix. However, the process of dimensionalization or ‘designating things and events (dimensions) in the data regardless of position on the explanatory matrix’ (Kools et al. 1996, 323) begins during the initial analysis to expand the data in response to the question ‘what all is involved here?’ At this point, the complexity of the process was the main focus, not the salience of the dimensions. Some of the concepts considered during the data expansion stage were: the cultural backgrounds and demographic characteristics of the participants, learning styles, family backgrounds, family and other cross-cultural experiences of the student participants, faculty experience in international business, teaching and mentorship, their cross-cultural experience, the feedback and coaching provided, teaching styles, actors’ tolerance for ambiguity and risk taking, potential culture shock coping strategies, the intensity and continuity of the cultural learning experience and learning approaches.

As I defined these dimensions, I considered a range of tentative properties to attribute to them. For example, for learning approaches, I considered the mode of learning (intentional, incidental or opportunistic), the goal (pragmatic, theoretical or meta-cognitive), duration, and type (individual, dryadic, or communal). As the aim during the data expansion stage is to collect a critical mass of data and ‘reveal the full realm of conceptual possibilities’ (Kools et al. 1996, 323), I understood that not all of the dimensions could be fully explored and be included in the explanatory matrix.

### *3.5.2 Data differentiation – explanatory matrix positioning*

At the next stage, the codes have become more directed, selective and conceptual (Glaser 1978) and, based on 'the most significant and frequent codes' (Charmaz 2006, 57), were used to generate analytical categories that have facilitated theoretical development. During this stage it is crucial to constantly compare and contrast data, and I reviewed and developed focused codes after adding each new significant incident. Finally, based on the continuous analysis and interaction with the data, I moved to theoretical codes, which 'not only conceptualize how … substantive codes are related, but also move … (the) analytic story in a theoretical direction' (Charmaz 2006, 63). I used the theoretical codes to finalize relationships and develop theoretical models. Thus, the coding process provided a bridge between the data and conclusions (Charmaz 2008c). As the analysis was being conducted simultaneously with data construction, once the data collection has moved from purposeful to theoretical, or from school A to schools B and C and, eventually, to school D, more theoretically significant groups were reached – in addition to student participants, school administrators and faculty members were interviewed and more social events were observed, as opposed to purely academic ones.

In contrast to the initial coding, the second stage, or focused coding, reduced the data and established categories or broader groups of codes, and certain categories were eliminated through merging or simply not used if a particular line of inquiry had not proven theoretically valuable, as recommended by Maijala and colleagues (Maijala, Paavilainen & Astedt-Kurki 2003). For example, categories that address culture-specific adaptation approaches were dropped early in the study, as the data collected subsequently did not support them. In addition, during that stage, I established the explanatory matrix dimensions and questioned the relationships among the categories as my conceptualizations became more abstract. As a new potential dimension or theoretical category presented itself, I continued to search for additional data to achieve saturation. ***Appendix D, Appendix E, Appendix F,*** and ***Appendix H*** present examples of the coding and illustrate a connection between the data constructed in the interviews, participant observation and document analysis and the final conceptual categories.

The final stage of coding process was theoretical coding, which resulted in the development of a substantive theory, and was the 'analytical equivalent of putting mortal between the building blocks' (Dey 1993, 47). The constant comparative analysis of the data resulted in the multiphase basic social process (BSP) of cultural knowledge creation that is central to the actions of and interactions among the culturally diverse students in multicultural learning environments. The theoretical model is presented below in Figure 6 as an explanatory matrix – the coding paradigm, based on symbolic interaction (Blumer 1969) – and used as the main framework in the dimensional analysis (Schatzman 1991; Kools et al. 1996).

During the data limitation stage, not only were the codes refined through focused and, eventually, theoretical coding, but the patterns also began to develop and the relative salience of each proposed theoretical code was tested. Certain codes were dismissed as marginal, although they could be considered salient dimensions from another perspective. For example, 'learning orientation' or an intention to engage in collaborative learning or expertise development was a strong contender for the main perspective. However, I realized that, while the learning process obviously occurred in all programs, and all participants discussed learning and the factors that influenced it, their primary concern and approach to solving the problem of acquiring cultural knowledge was establishing social networks, not individual or group learning as such. In this context, my preconceptions as an educator unduly influenced my analytical process. However, in selecting a perspective, the researcher must consider several competing dimensions (Schatzman 1991), and in this case, the final choice of perspective was to some extent hindered by the impossibility of revisiting the same participants twice, as they had left the setting. Nevertheless, the discussions with the other participants, during the course of interviews, in class and in informal situations, as well as constant re-evaluations of the constructed data, eventually allowed me to select the most salient perspective that interpreted the knowledge creation process from the participants' point of view.

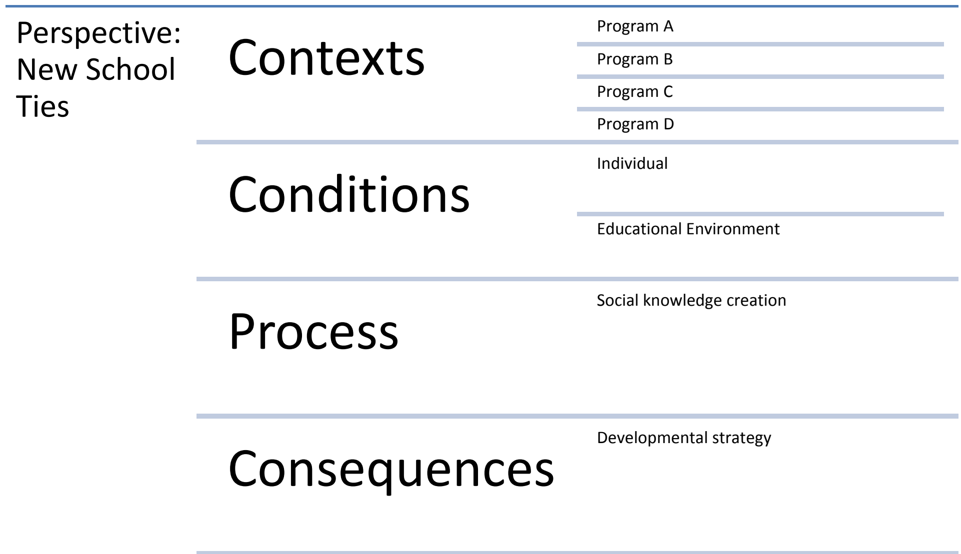


**Figure 6 Explanatory matrix: 'Developing new school ties'**

The perspective 'Developing new school ties' was selected as the most central, salient, and theoretically sustainable category. The idea of developing a long-lasting professional network originally derives from the tradition of British public schools, for example, Eton, and is symbolically referred to as 'old school ties' – a school necktie that commonly indicates the school and the house of the school and allows former pupils to recognize one another in social and professional situations. As a metaphor, it has a somewhat negative connotation of nepotism, the 'old boy/old girl network,' and the unfair advantages enjoyed by the graduates of prestigious public (in the UK, 'private' in the rest of the world) schools that are based on social class, not pure merit. However, the notion of 'new school ties' has a more positive meaning, as a professional and knowledge network based on shared educational experience and social capital. 'Ties', connections, networks and the need to maintain contact were consistently voiced by the student participants, and those who were familiar with the British expression of 'old school ties' used it, but stressed that it should be a different network, for the new millennium, that would stretch across social class boundaries, cultures and national borders. Thus, on the one hand, the need for the educational institution to re-establish its social role as a professional network incubator and, on the other hand, the recognition of the changed nature of such networks were reflected in the perspective.

The contexts defined the boundaries of the study – the situation and experience of the participants, in this case the multicultural learning environment – and the conditions are the things that influence the participants' actions and interactions; the processes are the actions and interactions that are influenced by the conditions, and the consequences are the results of the actions (Kools et al. 1996).

As all explanatory matrix dimensions were considered to determine the most consistent and salient perspective, the current conditions dimensions of the school learning environment was also considered as a perspective. The *in vivo* code 'More than a building' was used to describe the academic learning environment that the participants perceive to be conductive for cultural knowledge creation and sharing. The specific aspects of this dimension are presented in chapter 4 where, in addition to the rich description of the settings, the alternative analysis from the perspective of 'More than a building' is presented. However, in the final explanatory matrix, the environment remains the context of the process and, to some degree, environmental condition (whether it is conducive to cultural knowledge development), not the perspective.

The individual conditions, the processes and the consequences are further described and discussed in chapter 5, and the comprehensive analysis of the explanatory matrix is finally presented in chapter 6, where it is situated within the current discussion on knowledge creation and social networks.

### *3.5.3 Integration*

At the integration stage, the multiple components were reconstructed around key perspective or core category – 'The New School Ties'. Even though the main part of the analysis was completed at the differentiation stage, limited data were still added and analyzed to verify and to challenge the emergent theory. As the same time, the memo-writing became more theoretical and analytical and the memos eventually evolved into conference papers and contributed to parts of the thesis. When no new explanations presented themselves, and the categories developed and the connections explored through the matrix, and tested using additional theoretical sampling, the codes became redundant, and the data were considered to be saturated. At that point the data collection and analysis were completed.

However, writing the rich description story of the findings combined with rich analysis and providing the interpretation of the reality consistent with the participants' perspective, which is co-constructed in collaboration with them, can also be considered the final part of the analysis as writing the descriptions and selection of the examples to illustrate the dimensions are all part of the theoretical reasoning and questioning the data. When the reconstruction process was completed and the story has been written, it provided a grounded theory that explains the process of cultural knowledge development by international business students in the multicultural learning context.

### *3.5.4 Memo-writing and its place in the data analysis process*

Analytical memo-writing has been compared to blogs, diaries (Saldaña 2009), and self-talk (Clark 2003) and, as such, could be considered superfluous to the actual analysis. Yet, the importance of early and consistent memo-writing is repeatedly stressed in grounded theory (Kools et al. 1996; Goulding 2002; Charmaz 2006). Although not directly incorporated into the final papers or the thesis, the memos contain the product of actual coding while also providing a basis for theoretically sensitizing and summarizing notes and suggesting directions for sampling (Strauss & Corbin 1990, 223). Morse and Richards (2002) state that separating one's data from one's reflections, which they term 'abstracting', is one of the earliest steps in analysis. As the recorded observation notes, facsimiles of interviews, and documents were coded for action, to gather the data into manageable units and organize them into tentative categories, I simultaneously recorded my tentative ideas and questions regarding what these data might signify, what else could be included in a given category, how to further define the categories or combine existing ones. Memo-writing provides a link between the data and written drafts and allows the researcher to formulate intuitions, 'capture the comparison and connections' made and 'crystallize questions and directions … to pursue' (Charmaz 2006, 72). New ideas and insights derive from memo-writing (Lempert 2007). Charmaz (2006) suggests writing letters to a close friend (85), and I often used emails to myself as a medium, first, because email provided the most convenient and safe storage device in multiple locations and, second, because I found that I write emails in the most natural, flowing style.

My memos served as a conduit for the emergence of the substantive theory and the parallel, constant questioning of the data. I noted apparently random observations, or events that might not have any bearing on the subject, noted possible readings to connect with theoretical development, and occasionally, used the memos in a 'dear (research) diary' manner to vent my frustration, record fleeting impressions, or simply set down the events of a day that did not at first glance appear particularly related to the inquiry. However, in certain instances, these off-the-cuff notes would later resurface as an initial, tentative insight, a direction for theoretical sampling or suggest a linkage between categories. In addition, the memos served to engage me in reflexivity – as I was, to some extent, experiencing a similar process of developing cultural knowledge and cross-cultural competence to what I was researching. My personal circumstances, practices and experience also had to be recorded and examined, and their influence on the theoretical development examined.

In brief, I used the memos to record possible developments, approaches to theoretical sampling, expectations of what categories could be found (or not – in negative cases), or in other words, the memos recorded my state of theoretical understanding (Fielding & Lee 1998).

### *3.5.5 Application of NVivo 10 (CAQDAS) software in data analysis*

Weitzman (2000) categories NVivo as code-based theory builder; however, Darlington and Scott (2002) warn that the ease of application can result in careless in coding. Therefore, all the data was coded twice during the research process – the first round of the initial/focused/theoretical codes was performed manually, using markers, editing features in Word (highlight, comments, cut and paste) and Excel spreadsheets as recommended (Maijala et al. 2003); in the second round, the coding was conducted through a QSR NVivo10 project, in which some of the 'manual' codes were edited, merged or deleted in the process.

There are advantages and disadvantages in using a Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) package, and though its use is increasingly common, if not yet a standard practice, certain questions regarding its utility and applicability persist. Charmaz (2000) is concerned that such programs tend to be better suited for objectivist rather than constructivist GT, as they tend to have a one-dimensional, oversimplified process and 'may unintentionally foster an illusion that interpretive work can be reduced to a set of procedures' (521). On the one hand, I believed that the ease of manipulations, the ability to model changes before actually applying them, and the neat organization of data to be beneficial; on the other hand, I was mindful of Richards' (2009) sarcastic remark that playing with codes is simply a new, sophisticated method for researchers to procrastinate. Roberts and Wilson (2002) caution that ease of code creation and manipulation could allow a researcher to lose focus and generally complicate the study. Creswell (2012) suggests CAQDAS for managing large amounts of data, but Richards (2009) notes that Parkinson's law applies to data as to anything else – it tends to take the space and time available – more of a good thing is not always a better thing. I also faced this problem, as I realized that some of the data that I had not used in the first round of coding could be very easily stored and coded in NVivo; hence I was forced to resist the temptation to do so, as using data simply because it is available is not consistent with theoretical sampling, and when a category is saturated, no new data should be added (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Charmaz 2006), even if it is supremely simple to do so.

The use of the software reduces mechanical tasks and facilitates the conceptual exercise of theory building (Bong 2002). However, it can equally easily distract from theory building and cause a researcher to devote excessive attention to the mechanical tasks, particularly in the case of a novice, who is still in the process of mastering all of the software's capabilities. I had to bear in mind that while it was possible to do many things, this did not mean that it was reasonable, and I attempted to ensure that any manipulation and tables I created contributed to the discussion and clarity of presentation and not detract from it. For example, Creswell (2012) advises against counting the codes and reporting them in the main body of a work, as that 'conveys a quantitative orientation of magnitude and frequency contrary to qualitative research', 'all codes should be given equal emphasis' and doing so 'disregards that the passages coded may actually represent contradictory views' (185).

In summary, the use of the software provided additional clarity and ability to manipulate data and display the results. That the software does not perform analytical work for a researcher should not be considered a drawback or be more surprising than the fact that a word processing program does not write papers or a search engine does not conduct a literature review. As with every tool, its outcomes depend on the mastery of the user and it could not be blamed or credited for the results, either good or bad (Bringer et al. 2004).

## 3.6 Reflexivity and relationality

Neill (2006) suggests that as grounded theory studies human interaction processes, the researcher should note the possible impact of his/her personality and individual experience, as well as interactions and relationships between the researcher and participants and to reflect on them through constant comparative analysis. Therefore, reflexivity can be 'an important tool for researchers to be able to identify the effect of self in these relationships' (259). Robson (2002) defines reflexivity as

> *an awareness of the ways in which the researcher as an individual with a particular social identity and background has an impact on the research process.* (22)

At the same time, Hall and Callery (2001) explain that relationality is 'power and trust relationships between researcher and participants' (257) and propose that both tend to be neglected by the classic grounded theoretician to the detrimental effects on the quality of the research results, because: '(r)eflexivity and relationality provide criteria for rigor that make more transparent how data are created within grounded theory studies' (ibid). However, while appropriate level of reflexivity is likely to improve the quality of research, there is no need to reject the subjectivity and personality of the researcher as long as they are acknowledged and shared with the readers. After all, Alan Peshkin asserts that it was exactly his subjectivity that enabled him to tell his story. 'It is a strength on which I build. It makes me who I am as a person *and* as a researcher, equipping me with the perspective and insights that shape all that I do as a researcher …' (emphasis in original, Glesne & Peshkin 1992, 104).

Obviously, my personal life experiences influenced not only the choice of the topic but my very ability to conduct the research. The relationships characterized by trust and openness that I was able to establish with the students and colleagues allowed me to learn their stories and observe the process of cultural knowledge creation through their eyes.

I have been a participant in the multicultural educational environment, and throughout my educational and professional career, I have taken on a multitude of roles, some consequential and some simultaneous. First, I was educated in a multicultural learning environment in the Soviet Union (from kindergarten to the undergraduate level), albeit that the diversity of the ethnic, social, religious and racial backgrounds of my classmates was rarely acknowledged. Similarly, although I come from a multicultural family background, I grew up without a conscious awareness of my roots or family history. The only important characteristic was citizenship – all of the students and teachers were Soviet citizens; therefore, a uniformity of values, behaviors and attitudes was expected and forcefully promoted.

As an immigrant to the US, I entered university education as a foreign, but local resident, student who was expected to adapt to local norms socially, culturally and professionally. Although in an academic and cultural sense, I was expected to be a tabula rasa and learn everything anew, my teachers, if not the school administration, were interested in my prior cultural experience and knowledge, and the predominate objective was clearly integration, which, incidentally, I supported whole-heartedly, being eager to not only officially become a citizen of the USA, but a real American. Despite my best efforts, I have not been successful; although I do I know the words to the Pledge of Allegiance of the United States, the ingredients of the Big Mac are still a mystery, and that demonstrates that I would never be one of them. In college, I worked as a teaching assistant and in administrative support, and in these roles I strove to learn the appropriate teaching and coaching styles, as well as student customer service support, as they are expected at a US college or university.

It was only once I had graduated with a bachelor's degree, was admitted to an MBA program, and began working as a coordinator at the International office of my alma mater – Golden Gate University – that I reassessed my cultural background as an advantage, not a hindrance. With a truly international staff – everyone in the office was Something-American, and a few were not American at all – and the objective of attracting foreign students to San Francisco, the topics of cultural values, difference, adjustment, and competence were vital, both for staff development and our future customers – international students and executives participating in training seminars, to ensure that they could fully benefit from their learning experience.

Upon completing my MBA program, as a newly appointed human resource officer responsible for Affirmative Action and Diversity at a community college, I faced the challenge of recruiting, employing and generally keeping happy faculty and staff from as diverse backgrounds as I could find in the town and the state, where the majority of the population was born outside of the US. Subsequently, as an HR services manager working with faculty and researchers at a state university, I had to solve conflicts and provide services to managers, principle investigators and staff, who also came from very diverse national, cultural, and ethnical backgrounds. Thus, in my professional career as an HR manager, I had to address the issue of cross-cultural competence in an academic environment on a daily basis. Recently, as an instructor in management, I have taught international students, and again, the questions of cultural difference, competence and adjustment were often discussed in class and outside it, both as an academic topic and in an everyday sense. Finally, as an international doctoral student in Finland, I yet again experienced the multicultural learning environment of a large university from the other side, as a student and a researcher.

Therefore, I have been a local, non-local resident and international student, local and international faculty member, school administrator and a researcher. In brief, I have experienced all of the roles that the participants of this study represent. Socially, I have been a native-born citizen, immigrant, naturalized citizen, short-term expert, expatriate employee and transmigrant, foreign resident and foreign student. Ethnically, I have always belonged to a minority group, either hidden or acknowledged, but I have never been a part of any diaspora community, not even the loosely defined 'Western expats'.

Thus, what personal biases do I bring into this research? How is my personal history likely to influence my theoretical understanding? Based on my personal experience, I understand a global, multicultural life style as the norm, not an exception. Everyone I know is international in one sense or another – either professionally or personally – and most individuals I know socially do not live in their country of origin, nor do they share a country of origin with me. My own cultural identity is fluid and contextual, as I tend to claim whatever country and culture among the many to which I can relate as appears appropriate, and occasionally, my identity selected me. For example, my students in Prague and in Ecuador considered me 'a Finnish teacher,' as they realized that I was not the same as the other US or Russian teachers. While it could be a teachable moment to shatter their stereotypes, I honestly could not say whether I was sufficiently different from other teachers to attribute it to the influence of the Finnish academic system.

Both in classes with my potential student participants and subsequently in the interviews, I attempted to fully disclose my own history: as a management, and particularly a cross-cultural management instructor, I drew heavily on my professional and personal experience to illustrate different patterns of behavior, institutions and possible value conflicts and miscommunications. I discuss power relationships and that the student participants self-selected to participate in the research in subchapter 3.4.1 Interviews, however because our self-reflection is limited, I present a personal positionality map (Clark 2003) in ***Appendix G***, where blue indicates professional roles, yellow – social, violet – demographic and personal history events and green – educational and research ones.

As a researcher, I have attempted to document my positions and roles and applied reflexivity in my memo-writing, querying my theoretical constructions through constant comparison analysis of the data and literature to avoid substituting my perspective for that of the participants. Because I shared my personal and professional experiences with cultural knowledge creation with the students, both as their instructor and during the interviews, I exercised additional caution when I noticed that the participants reported similar experiences. In this case, I was concerned that I might mistake the similar for the identical, and hence I would ask them to elaborate and provide examples to ensure that I understood. In general, I can say that I tended to rather excessively question my experience and position in a somewhat misguided attempt to maintain distance, an issue that is apparently rather common among researchers who study environments with which they are professionally familiar (cf. Fendt & Sachs 2008).

# 4 CONTEXTS – MORE THAN A BUILDING

> *Many things went on at Unseen University and, regrettably, teaching had to be one of them. The faculty had long ago confronted this fact and had perfected various devices for avoiding it.*
>
> *But this was perfectly all right because, to be fair, so had the students...*
>
> *And therefore education at the University mostly worked by the age-old method of putting a lot of young people in the vicinity of a lot of books and hoping that something would pass from one to the other, while the actual young people put themselves in the vicinity of inns and taverns for exactly the same reason.*
>
> *Interesting Times, Terry Pratchett 1994*

## 4.1 The role of the context descriptions

In GTM, particularly when using the dimensional analysis approach (Schatzman 1991; Kools et al. 1996), the context represents the boundaries of the inquiry: it describes the situations in which the experience occurs. In this study, the context is multicultural learning environments or, specifically, four international business programs in three countries. Research results should, among other things, 'describe the data … so vividly … that the reader can literary see and hear its people… – in relation to theory' (Glaser & Strauss 1967, 228-229). Therefore, to fully understand a phenomenon situated in a multicultural environment, in addition to the actors (students, faculty members, administrators) and their behavior and experience, other relevant aspects of the setting – the organizational structure, organizational culture and the processes, formal and informal, that were developed and implemented to positively influence organizational effectiveness, student academic progress, and their general success and satisfaction as members of the school and local community and learners. In short, 'the space, actors, time, and feelings of the context" (Barnes 1996, 439) are all addressed.

As the descriptions are based on data constructed over months, not years, there is neither a desire nor an attempt to evaluate the programs' academic quality and/or the level of student services. It might be useful to note that all of the programs have evolved drastically since the period described, and even if the reader could identify the schools in question, the programs as presented bear little resemblance to their current state. The course and program offerings in the schools have been extended, and in one school, merged with another program; the facilities have changed - all four schools have expanded and remodeled their buildings and have either moved or are planning to move their campuses in the near future.

The faculty composition has changed, and even the administrations of the schools have been replaced in all but one case (to the best of my knowledge). The descriptions are presented to illustrate and to some extent dramatize the contexts of the cross-cultural knowledge creation process in international business education. They are based on the students' and faculty's accounts and, partially, on my personal observations and impressions. Thus, I do not provide an impartial picture – rather a rich, thick description of the situations – an 'interpretive portrayal', not a snap-shot (Charmaz 2006, 10).

To illustrate the schools' culture and academic approach, in addition to the letters (A, B, C, D) and brief descriptions (Finnish UAS, Ecuadorian International University, etc.), in this part I also attribute a color-based name to each school. My intention is to provide additional insight into the school's culture and the selected color, if not actually the official color of the school, is prominent in the design (in either the logo or facilities) and could be recognized and 'owned' by the students, faculty and administration.

## 4.2 School A – Finnish University of Applied Science: Institutional Green

The Institutional Green School is a program at the University of Applied Science (UAS) in Finland, the only public university of the four schools included in this study. The general feel of the school is impersonal and institutional, which is, however, not created by inadequate equipment or a lack of amenities, although it does appear that the school's administration does not expect the students engage in anything other than purely academic activities, except to have lunch and check their Facebook accounts between classes. There is a self-service cafeteria that begins serving all-you–can-eat lunch at approximately 10:30 am and there are several stand-up computer stations in the halls, obviously not intended for any extended period of work, but there are no study rooms or any other places where a student can read, think or rest. The only places for group work are in the computer labs, which are supposed to be relatively silent and are frequently occupied by scheduled classes.

The library is easily confused with a bookshop, as one primarily observes new textbooks there, and it is just as empty as any college bookstore mid-semester. Students are not expected to purchase books for the class, and it is difficult for the instructors to ensure that the assigned readings for their courses are available at the library. The course syllabi are not compared or coordinated.

One of the reasons for that general lack of consistency in expected academic outcomes is the ‘learning by development’ approach to teaching, which was pioneered by the school. However, new faculty members, at least the temporary ones, are not provided with any materials on that approach, and apparently, the regular faculty were not well briefed on the academic expectations and procedures. When I asked my new colleagues at the Institutional Green School how they manage, they vaguely replied that ‘the kids get to do more projects,’ ‘you can assign them to go and do individual research and then present it in class’ or a simple ‘I am sure we have it somewhere on the website’. While the materials on the website clearly explain the pedagogical and philosophical basis of the method, as well as its benefits for learners, there are virtually no specific suggestions regarding its practical implementation or precisely how the teaching methods should differ from those of the more common learner-oriented, peer-based approach, which has been practiced in business education for at least the last 20 years.

The students note that their permanent teachers are equally baffled about this ‘learning by development’ method, which, unfortunately, leaves the students confused regarding the expected learning outcomes. A teacher sends students in groups to research a topic, and when several groups make presentations, it turns out that none of them understood the precise topic and they instead researched something a bit different, and hence all of them fail the assignment. Of course, business students can be expected to access a variety of material with an internet connection and a search engine, but in this case the role of the school and the teacher remains ambiguous. While Google can answer many questions, the main issue in management, and business in general, is what questions to ask and what problems to solve, not how to find stock answers. Therefore, the students from the Green School must make substantial use of their imaginations, not only to find solutions but also to determine what their teachers want of them.

The students are not adverse to the idea of group work or independent research; however, they desire clear learning objectives, tangible outcomes, and specific deliverables, and most important, they would like to know how the knowledge they gain could be applied in their future professional lives. While few of the local business students plan to become entrepreneurs, most appreciate the changing nature of the work and that it is common to work in diverse groups and share responsibilities. They realize that task orientation is giving way to continuous process improvement, and, while a terminal degree is expected, a future of continuous learning lies ahead of them.

The students are left to struggle with academic issues on their own, and they receive little support for their cross-cultural development. Finnish students are particularly concerned by possible mishaps and prefer to avoid foreign students for fear of giving offence: ‘We’d like to invite them to our parties, but what if they don't eat our food, or don't drink alcohol, or are insulted that there is a dog in the house, or by mixed-gender gatherings?' (Helmi and Maija). A Chinese student (Lin) counters that it is the locals who are likely to object to foreign food, and hence this caution is more of a projection of their own negative attitude: 'Even my own family [she is married to a Finn] won't eat the Chinese food I specially cooked for the New Year. They say it is sinful.' For better or worse, the question of social engagement is a moot one: 'In any case, we don't have that many parties, not in winter when everyone is depressed. We, the Finns, are boring' (Riitva). The foreign students (Zhen and Mai) provide a more positive spin: 'The Finns are proud to be loners, not to need anybody, not friends, not even their family. They value their independence.'

However, the students have to work on group projects even in winter, and teachers often require them to form diverse groups. Local Finnish students are not alone in their dislike of culturally diverse teams: foreign students agree with them. However, the local Finnish students cite the lack of responsibility on the part of some students: 'They are never on time and don't deliver their parts, and we have to double-check for plagiarism' (Eeva); the foreigners are concerned with the differences in academic inspirations as the negative factors of diversity in groups. 'The Finns are happy with a '3' (a satisfactory – C grade), or even just with an '1' (the lowest passing grade or D-), and we need a '5' (excellent – A)' – insists a group of Chinese students (Zhen, Fang, Lin and Mai).

It is not only other students whose integrity or academic qualifications are suspected. Even faculty members are not exempt, and they are judged not only on their professional preparation but also on their class management skills and their ability to be a mediator in cross-cultural conflicts, provide clear grading criteria and select the appropriate assignments. As most of the foreign faculty members are employed for a short term (generally one semester) and primarily for research, not teaching, purposes, it is quite possible that this lack of attention to teaching duties is not exaggerated.

However, despite the formal feedback on teacher performance, which is most likely collected but not shared with the temporary faculty, the students prefer to directly appeal to school authorities when they do not like a class. 'You'd know when something is wrong – the students would be in my office the same day,' – I am not certain whether the program director tries to reassure or threaten me when I inquire after my performance mid-semester. As I do not wish to wait until that unfortunate event, I use my own informal questionnaire to gauge student satisfaction. The students are surprised, but apparently pleasantly so, and ask for fewer slides, more practical cases, more time to complete projects and they praise the clear learning objectives of the each class.

It appears that sending a delegation to the program director is the only way in which the students can be heard. The faculty remains in a locked faculty lounge between classes, and there are no office hours, although there is an understanding that the faculty should be available before or after classes. While this may be true, it is nevertheless difficult for a student to find a faculty member, as it is nearly impossible to hear a knock on the lounge door, and I have often found lonely students waiting by the door in the hall looking for their teachers.

Although the students readily share their dissatisfaction with international teachers, they are careful to concentrate on the teachers' teaching or professional abilities, not personalities or culture-influenced behavior. One teacher is too strict on exams, another knows little about entrepreneurship, coming from the FSU (Helmi and Eeva), and the third cannot organize students to work in groups and allowed one group of foreign students to loudly insult another group in class: 'She was just standing there, doing nothing!' (Laura). However, they state that local Finnish instructors are also far from perfect – they have limited international experience (or none), and one instructor tended to spend all class time in fond reminisces of how he used to be an important manager with a large Finnish company. Though the students can easily recall many humorous episodes of his career, they cannot agree on what course they had taken with him – some believe that it was marketing research, but others insist that it was financial accounting, and there was only one class and they all were in it (Juhani, Riitva, Eeva).

Most international students do not perceive numerous problems with Finnish education or the Green School in particular. They would prefer to have more practical assistance and more professional activities: 'Our international mentors took us food shopping, and there are only two shops and the prices are pretty much the same, so what can go wrong? But we cannot find anyone to help us register with the labor office [to look for a part-time job]' (Irina). Nevertheless, the international students expect to fend for themselves. 'Well, it probably works well for Finnish students and we're visitors here, so we cannot expect to be treated in a special way' – says a Russian student from Estonia (Laura).

However, not all foreign students are satisfied, particularly those who come to Europe from culturally distant countries. Some complain that the school does not appreciate their specific circumstances (Omar), is not helpful in event of the emergencies (Jackson) and does not assist students in becoming familiar with other (local) students and understanding Finnish culture (Ritvars). 'The school is just a building, not a community' – states one (Lin). The program's administration agrees that they cannot provide a great deal of assistance for international students. 'I tell all our foreign students, but particularly those who are not from the EU. Our program is unlucky. Terrible things happen to the students who enroll here – they lose their parents and other family members one by one, they get sick, their partners get sick, their dogs get sick, their cars break down – all the horrible things start happening as soon as they enroll, and it is particularly bad around finals and when papers are due' – laments the program director.

That finals' week is plagued by mysterious and debilitating illnesses is a well-documented fact of academic life, but apparently, even stranger things affect foreign students. 'One guy said that his father left his second wife [not the student's mother or stepmother], and so as the oldest son of his father the student had to go back home to mediate peace – have you ever heard of such a thing?' – inquires the director. I have not, but my suggestion that family arrangements and customs might differ across cultures is met with stark disbelief. 'Everyone's got one mother and one father and that is it. How can it be different?'

Thus, it appears that all groups of students face trials. While culturally distant students struggle to understand the Finnish culture and academic system, in addition to coping with various misfortunes, real and imaginary that lie in wait for them, the local students feel that they never have the opportunity to get to know their classmates, as the latter are too busy, have different priorities, could be insulted by insensitive actions or comments or simply because there is no opportunity to meet outside of class and foreign students prefer to remain with one another in class. Certain students, mostly those from Europe and exchange students, expect little and are thus not disappointed, but they also must rely on themselves to find their way at the Green School and in Finland and in attempting to make new friends (Laime and Arune).

Nevertheless, the students do not quit. If the Institutional Green School does not assist them in becoming acquainted with one another and prepared for the global world, they take responsibility themselves and organize events such as the International Carnival. There is international food, dancing (with teachers instead of the Stars) and more professionally oriented activities such as career information and project management workshops. The day is an unqualified success. 'That is the most fun thing I have done in this school so far, and I have been here for three years,' – enthuses an international student (Jackson). 'We should have more such activities and maybe start a sport club,' – suggests a Finnish student (Riitva).

Although the school appears rhetorically committed to students' development, including their cross-cultural knowledge and competence, the reality of the program's implementation appears to fall short of the students' expectations and not completely satisfy their learning needs. Nevertheless, the very lack of services, the demanding, if confusing, academic requirements, the diversity of students' backgrounds, certain international teachers (albeit mostly short-term ones) and the international focus of the program creates the opportunity for the students to demonstrate initiative and take an active approach to their CCC development. While there are few planned activities to promote it, emergent learning situations are abundant, and the students, appreciating the need for CCC in their future professional lives and in the globalized world in general, exploit opportunities for development where their can find them; thus, learning by development ultimately occurs.

The students wish to engage in more social and professional activities in school, in addition to activities through the student union and international student clubs. The students believe that the school only takes nominal steps to support the development of their cross-cultural competence, such as by assigning local peer mentors to international students, and the students desire greater effort on the part of the school to promote intercultural communication and social network development.

The school administration does not cite CCC development as a high priority; rather, the administration considers that only international students require cultural orientation or training, as these students are more likely to miss classes and final exams, turn in assignments late and generally possess poor study skills. However, both the local and foreign exchange students consider CCC to be a primary outcome of their studies, in addition to developing an international professional network of peers and knowledge regarding foreign business practices, including marketing, client services and entrepreneurship.

## 4.3 School B – Czech international college – UK model: Hot Pink

The Hot Pink School's atmosphere is relaxed and even festive. Even faculty members are seen wearing psychedelic pink T-shirts – leftovers from an educational fair and a promotional tool. The school is located in a converted apartment building, and the small space and cozy floor plan make the Hot Pink School more akin to a shared student flat than an ivory tower. The Hot Pink School is located in one of the most prestigious areas of Prague. With its windows facing an old, leafy park, it is occasionally difficult to concentrate on lessons, not only for the students but also for the teachers.

If students are not in class, they could be sitting under a tree in a park or anywhere in Prague – the teachers give them assignments that involve checking on hotels, scouting the best location for business or observing organizational culture in rival schools. The administration whole-heartedly supports the flexible and practical approach. Dressed in button-down shirts and casual slacks, the program director and coordinators are known by their first names, and the doors to their shared offices are always physically open: they are available to students and faculty alike for consultations and questions.

The students exhibit unequal preparation levels: of the four schools, the level of English language skills required for entrance is the lowest at the Hot Pink

School; to compensate, there are several study skills classes that cover the UK Bridge/Access program of college preparation in computer literacy, teamwork, study skills, and other subjects required for academic success. Small class sizes (generally fewer than 15 students and occasionally only four) allow for a personalized approach to each learner, but this forces everyone to participate – there is no opportunity to avoid participating in the discussion. Certain teachers allow a student to 'pass the buck' to another student (Vlado), but eventually everyone has the opportunity to speak.

In a sense, the school's informal atmosphere and small classes are responsible for the bulk of cross-cultural adjustment – there is rarely a group of students from the same culture, including local Czech students, in any class. Each student can be and is treated as an individual, with his/her own strength and weaknesses, and instructions can be tailored to address the precise needs of each student. However, that can be considered a shortcoming – while the students have a perfect opportunity to form international friendships and to obtain personal attention from their instructors, students who are quiet, shy and performing at an acceptable academic level could be ignored, and some already have friendship groups outside the school and hence are not interested in forming new ties.

Although the casual, family-like atmosphere is comforting to most students, some feel isolated. A student from Nigeria (Ken) relates that he has been unable to make friends in Prague or in school, even after two years, and still experiences difficulties in understanding teachers and students' accents and is unhappy in Prague, at school and with his education in general.

There are twice as many contact hours (a three-credit course entails six hours of instruction per week, not three as is common in the US and Czech systems) than in other programs and in addition to more hours, they also receive written feedback on all graded assignments and personal consultations to review this feedback. Nevertheless, an international student complains that he does not see enough of the teachers and has too much free time but was unable to complete all of his assignments on time (Thierry). Thus, it appears that the issue is not so much a matter of the quantity as the quality or the difficulty of instruction. As in the Green School, the students are expected to work more independently that they are accustomed, and not all of them are prepared for the different ratio between class time and individual preparation, and hence experience difficulty managing their schedules.

The problem is not unique to the students. While in contrast to the other Czech school, True Blue School C, the Hot Pink School is more likely to offer full-time contracts to its faculty, and certain faculty members work exclusivity for Hot Pink, many others are employed by several schools in Prague, and some even have additional, non-academic employment or private businesses. Combined with the double workload for each class, it is unsurprising that certain instructors 'are not there 100%' (Thierre). They push the flexible attitude to teaching a step further and promote de facto learning by development – or expect the students to identify learning opportunities themselves. In addition, while many are professionals with several years of international experience, not all of the instructors teach in their specialties and some simply have to follow the textbook (Zhenia).

Some instructors strike a balance and use half of their contact hours to actually provide teacher-led learning in the form of a lecture or other instruction activity and then leave the second half for student activities. Ideally, this approach could encourage peer learning, group work and collaboration, but often it becomes what in US secondary education is known as a homeroom hour – a period to work on individual assignments that are supposed to be completed outside school. Students are generally pleased that there are no tests: 'I hate tests: I always get too nervous when taking tests,' – states one student (Leah). The individual assignments are graded based on the stated learning outcomes and can be resubmitted several times (depending on the subject) if certain outcomes are absent. However, certain teachers find the workload prohibitive and the requirement to explain each grade in writing rather daunting, especially when explanations are used not only for the students' benefit but also as a performance record for the administration and, possibly, the UK accreditation body control (Oscar).

Although cross-cultural knowledge is not an aspect of the regular curriculum, the fact that most of the faculty and administration have Anglo-American educational backgrounds and all have international teaching or professional experience brings cultural issues to the classrooms. Leo believes that it is helpful to learn the documentation style and general expectations regarding the depth and the form of projects, as he comes from a different educational system. Vlado finds that the teachers' informal attitudes and hands-on assignments not only help him academically but also prepare him for a multicultural work environment. Certain students prefer to form their own groups with students with similar academic goals – normally those with high goals, but efficiency is also a substantial concern, as time is at premium (Leah and Thierry); others enjoy it when the teacher assigns groups because it provides students with an opportunity to collaborate with other students with whom they normally would not work (Marina).

As Prague is a large, cosmopolitan city, there are numerous social opportunities to meet people, make friends and receive advice. It has an active multicultural expatriate community, and hence the school might be excused for not providing extensive student services, apart from housing and visa assistance. However, not all students are able or willing to seek information and fend for themselves, and they tend to gravitate toward their national communities (French, Russian, Nigerian, etc.). In these communities, they can have their concerns addressed and questions answered (Leo), but there are limited opportunities to develop cross-cultural competence or fully integrate into the Prague community, and even less opportunity to develop international business connections, which all student participants value.

Though the administration is approachable, it is left to individual students to approach them, and as paradoxical as it sounds, an open-door attitude could be a barrier. Students who come from cultures with larger power distances (which is larger than the administration's personal value, not necessarily the Czech cultural value or the US or Canadian values in general) feel shy and disrespectful interrupting an important Dean or Director in his office. Even the fact that the administrators are known by their first names can be a problem, as not everyone is comfortable calling the Dean 'Jim' (not his real name) (Ken).

Certain students prefer to concentrate on purely academic activities: 'I don't need any parties organized or any other social activities. I have my own group of friends and school is for study,'(Thierry). Some would prefer the school to be better recognized: 'I have many friends [from my home country] in other schools, and it is embarrassing that nobody knows about ours. I don't always want to tell people I go here,' - admits Leo. Some feel neglected and lonely: they have few friends and would like to have more social activities, including sports or weekend outings, to allow their classmates and teachers to interact with them during structural activities, receive more practical assistance with everyday living in Prague, and more clarity in the academic path (Marina).

Further, certain students, while considering themselves to be competent to find their own academic and professional path, are concerned for the younger students, the 'kids':'Leslie [from student services] is doing her best, and we'll bring her flowers and thank her on bended knees [when she leaves], but it is not nearly enough. Much more needs to be done so the kids know what they are doing and what to expect,' – as Zhenia expresses her concern. Leslie agrees: 'I do what I can, but I am alone and there is no way we can provide the level of services that are common in a 'normal' size school'. Certain services are not even considered. 'No, I don't see a need for cross-cultural orientation. After all, they are in Prague, and they can see culture all around them. School can answer questions, but I don't think we can tell them anything they cannot find themselves'. Leah notes that the students receive substantial personal attention from the teachers and the administration; for example, the teachers respond to emails immediately, even on weekends, and help with the assignments, which, she believes, is unusual and unlikely to be found in a larger school. However, Ken complains that when he sent emails with questions concerning work and a work visa, he received 'a short, rude answer, just a brush off'.

Tereza, who has international professional experience, suggests that the school B should be even more practical and less academic. 'Classes need to be more business-like, less like school, not give out answers, as that has little educational value. Nowadays students can study in any EU country – what we need is a more flexible schedule, more practical and professional application, so we can see the value of [the Hot Pink School's] education,' – she states.

However, most students are happy to fully exploit the informal environment, open door policy, ever-present on site administration, easy contact with teachers, the consistent form of the assignments, written feedback and regular meetings with advisors and the small class size to make friends, share cultural insights and improve their academic performance. The Hot Pink School is accommodating to the students that require additional academic help and assistance in completing their assignments. However, it expects these same students to miraculously develop cross-cultural abilities merely by being exposed to different cultures. This optimistic notion is quite in line with the up-and-go culture of the Hot Pink School.

## 4.4 School C – Czech international university – US model: True Blue

When a visitor enters the True Blue School building, he/she is faced with a stern Pan Vratny,[6] who asks the visitor's purpose and intentions in Czech and then directs him/her to reception. Irrespective of whether one is a visitor, a teacher, a director, or a staff member, all are required to sign the big blue book. Even students are required to do so on weekends. Employees must sign in or out whenever they leave or enter the building, and visitors must wait for someone to collect them in the lobby before they are allowed to ascend, in a very direct sense, as the school is located in a tall and narrow building.

The reception desk has yet another purpose – nearly all activities at the True Blue School require a key. All faculty members receive a key to the faculty room, another for the classroom, yet another for the equipment desk, a key for the elevator (the students, no doubt to boost their stamina and provide them with physical exercise, are not allowed to ride in the elevator) and even a key for the faculty restroom. The keys are signed for in another big blue book, and one must sign out when returning them at the end of the day. However, the good news is that all of the receptionists speak English well – they are often also taking classes, as the school provides discounted tuition as a benefit of employment. Another important benefit is the generous dinners provided after each start-of-the-

[6] Porter, doorman, janitor, concierge, doorkeeper (Czech, Google translate)

semester faculty meeting – something to look forward to during several hours of slides on raising student enrollment and declining TOEFL scores.

In addition to the keys and signing in, the faculty must follow a number of other strict rules, but at least there is a paternalistic attempt to wine and dine them. The students, however, do not fare that well – they have been complaining for years (since the year the proud True Blue School was established in Prague) about the lack of a cafeteria. Eventually, they received vending machines that are chronically out of sandwiches and Red Bull, but to receive any resemblance of a balanced meal, they need to go outside. This is not as great a hardship as it might appear: there are many eating establishments that serve cuisine ranging from Chinese to Macedonian to traditional Czech food in the four blocks surrounding the school.

Nevertheless, the students wish to eat at school. They also desire a place where they can talk (about their group projects, they maintain), and the only place open to the students other than classrooms, which are in any case locked when not in use, is the library – a quiet place that is closed on weekends and later in the evening. Because True Blue has weekend classes (from 9 am to 5 pm) nearly every weekend, and classes run without a lunch break from 9 am to 9 pm during the week, the early closing hours are a problem. The students report that their busy schedule is also one of the reasons that they need a school café – they simply do not have time to go out to eat. They are trapped in the school, and not only physically – some perceive that once they have signed yet another big book and paid their tuition, the school ceased caring for them, as they are unlikely to transfer to another school.

While the students are not impressed with the physical comfort that the school provides, they hold a better opinion of the academic programs. Students select True Blue for its 'American-style' approach to teaching – practical projects, presentations, and discussion-style lectures (Magda, Vera, Marketa), and they have more options here than in other Czech HEIs: they can decide to pursue a national BBA degree, obtain a BS from the US partner university, or have a dual degree. They also can decide whether they wish to study during the week, on the weekend, or have some classes in a traditional semester format and others in an intensive weekend one. Nevertheless, perception is reality, and, if the students perceive that they are not treated fairly, they become disgruntled. This creates an uncommon bond between them and the faculty.

Though faculty members are paid slightly above the market rate and have greater opportunities to obtain additional earnings, for example, being a thesis mentor or serving on a state examination committee, and they have more freedom (in their choice of study material, topics and feedback) than at the Hot Pink School (Oscar), many faculty members believe that they are mistreated (Lakhi).

The faculty regards the administration as business people lacking a basic understanding of the academic environment. This perception is hardly based on solid facts, as the academic administration is more academically qualified that other private schools' administrators in Prague, and definitely more so than at the Hot Pink School and most have considerable experience in education, administration, teaching and even research.

Why does this misconception exist? First, the school is more culturally diverse than its competitors. In addition to the very traditionally Czech Pan Vratny, there are other staff (student services, accounting, library and other support services) who all speak Czech among themselves and imperfect English to the students, while providing them with what the students consider an extremely Czech-style service, which can be described with a popular Soviet-era customer service motto – 'there are many of you and only one of me' (Vasek, Vera, Nela). The disconnect between staff and faculty who do not share a culture, do not have the same goals and often do not speak the same language creates an impression of poor educational quality and a lack of desire to improve, and hence the faculty members believe that they are the only ones who care about the students learning experience and actual knowledge, almost in spite of the administration's strategy.

Further, there is a division within the faculty itself – the majority comes from the Anglo-American (mostly the US) educational tradition, while another part of the faculty (a considerable minority) comes from the Czech state universities, either as retired docents or combining classes at the True Blue School with a full-time academic appointment at a state university. While state universities tend to pay less per instruction hour, they offer tenure-track academic careers. In addition, as students at the state universities are selected based on their secondary school matriculation and university entrance examinations results, and the True Blue School has open admissions, which only requires a high school graduation certificate and TOEFL scores, there is a perception among the local faculty members that the True Blue School represents its students' last chance. Therefore, 'teachers need to be strict and not give credits for just doing the work in class or homework,'– insists Zdenek, who also teaches at a state university.

This is in part true, particularly of the local students, who often come to True Blue after failing to be admitted to their first-choice state university. However, many students prefer English-language education, the US degree, business-school-type instructions and flexible schedules. Karolina attends the prestigious Charles University for a double degree in law; she prefers True Blue and only wishes that it offered a law degree. Nela and Adela also believe that the True Blue School provides them an advantage in professional development (as full-time professionals, they know what is needed 'out there'). Jakub believes that coming to True Blue was the best decision he has made in his life (so far) – 'brilliant' teachers and the wonderful opportunity to study in a multicultural environment. He has learned a great deal and believes that being a student at True Blue gives him an advantage in finding good jobs (he is currently working for Deloitte in Prague). In a sense, this is almost too much of a good thing – studying in a multicultural environment makes it more difficult for him at work, where there are only Czechs and Slovaks, and many of his coworkers have never been abroad – he notes that they are 'very narrow minded'.

Miras and Filip both speak from experience when they praise the US-style education at the True Blue School – both have positive firsthand experience of 'the real thing,' as they attended junior colleges in the US and could have transferred to second-tier universities there, but preferred Prague (in part because of the lower cost of living). Filip actually believes that he is receiving a better education at True Blue than some of his compatriots, who attend Ivy League schools and Cambridge, but he wishes the world were also aware of that. He is concerned with the school's academic reputation.

Thus, in addition to students, who enjoy the education they receive but do not like the school's staff, and the faculty, who (generally) like the students but not the administration or other faculty members, there is also the 'Family,' found in the lavish offices upstairs. While not all of the administrators are related, they come from the same EU country (other than the academic administrators who are mostly from the US), speak to one another in the same language, which no members of the faculty and staff can understand (at least, not that they admit), and all tend to wear severe business attire and take long, late lunches. Although none of the students or faculty claim to have ever heard the True Blue School's President speak either English or Czech, it is not true that he does not know any of the school's languages – he simply prefers to use a translator for his official speeches (Linda).

However, the picture is clear. At the top, there is an authoritarian administration that has its own language, dress code and has long known one another. Then, there are two groups of instructors – Anglophone, long-term expatriates and local Czech academicians – both groups holding lower opinions of the other than their own. The 'Americans' tend to regard the Czechs as fossils from the previous Soviet regime; the Czechs consider the 'Americans' to be lacking in proper academic qualifications, which prevents them from being employed in their home countries or at more prestigious universities. Of course, all are very polite to one another and only share snide remarks with students and colleagues from the same group.

Further, the mostly Czech staff provides (poor) student services, and some are also students. There are also regular students, whose tuition and fees pay everyone's salary, but who do not have even a corner to themselves or any food other than stale sandwiches. Moreover, there is a rivalry between the various depart-ments regarding which department contributes more academically with respect to the publications and terminal degrees among its faculty (important for accreditation) and which has the most students who pay tuition.

However, all members of the community must obey rules. There are rules on numerous subjects that change constantly – attendance rules, plagiarism rules, how many pages one's thesis should be, when to submit a bibliography and the very exact schedule of final exams that symptomatically is published before the list of teaching faculty for a semester is finalized. Students are severely punished for infractions – there is no academic freedom, and missing more than the allowed percentage of classes results in failing the course, regardless of one's grades. The faculty has almost no say in plagiarism decisions, excusing absences or grade changes. All of these irregular decisions have to be petitioned for in writing and in advance to the academic committee, which decides all the cases behind closed doors based on vague and constantly changing principles.

Therefore, faculty members and students form clandestine alliances. Faculty members mark the students present when they are not, give them a warning for plagiarism instead of reporting them to the administration, change the exam days (or assign take-home ones) – provided that this remains a secret – and allow long lunches when it is clearly stipulated that the lunch break (during full-day weekend classes) should be precisely 60 minutes. A student is more likely to find understanding, from a teacher who shares his/her ethnical background or have similar interests. Thus, the Czech students are more likely to ask for and receive favors from Czech teachers (Miras, Artem), and if a student were to meet his/her instructor drinking at 1 am at a nightclub, in that case, the instructor would be more understanding of the student oversleeping the next day. Even perfectly legitimate academic activities are conducted stealthily. Ultimately, if a teacher wishes to take his/her students on a factory tour, he/she might be forced to file seemingly endless paperwork on insurance, transportation, contact hours and the learning outcomes of the outing. Thus, it would be preferable to simply sneak out on a weekend and then tell the students to write an impression paper for homework.

Goran only attends True Blue because it offers weekend classes; he enjoys beer with his classmates on Saturday, but hardly considers them close friends. Teachers are knowledgeable, friendly, and easy to become acquainted with – to him, teachers in Sweden appear more remote, but he has not attended university there. Classes might be too easy for him, but he is not a traditional student who just graduated high school, and he appreciates out-of the box assignments and practical tasks. True Blue gives him an opportunity for education and social connections that he would not have elsewhere. Aleksi, another Nordic expat, agrees that although the classes are too easy, he believes that passing is sufficient and does not strive for an A (excellent).

Many adult and weekend students have similar feelings. Networking is one of the primary benefits cited by the weekend students (getting a business degree is another one), and they make certain they know their classmates not only as fellow students but as professional colleagues and friends. The corner pub becomes a de facto student union cum faculty advising hour on the weekends and in the evenings, and any issue that was not addressed in class can be discussed there. These students have no other time to socialize, given their busy professional and family lives. Teachers are proud to be invited for a beer after class – it is a sign of respect and trust.

The opportunity to meet different instructors is also a learning experience, especially those who are passionate about their subjects. The students are not concerned with the high instructor turnover – the more perspectives available, the more learning (Tomas, Thanh). However, they do notice the trend – the better, more qualified, more knowledgeable and approachable expat instructors tend not to remain long: they soon move on to other academic or professional challenges. Those who remain for some time either combine teaching with academic research at another institution or become a horror story. For example, '300' is an oft-repeated battle cry; however, it has nothing to do with Thermopylae but with the 300 slides that the students were asked to memorize in one class (Katka, Misa, Matys).

The President is reported to be very proud of the multicultural and multinational character of the school and often stresses it in official communications (Linda), and this is repeated in nearly all promotional materials. Certain multicultural opportunities are beneficial and welcomed by the students, for example Karolina is happy to study with other bicultural students and meet bicultural faculty members. However, other opportunities arise due to the ambiguity that the students and the teachers experience regarding the school rules and the expectations they bring to the educational process. The Czech and Slovak students enjoy that there is little memorization and no oral exams (Marketa, Vera, Adelka), but Miras is concerned with the inconsistent expectations and his inability to understand his progress in class. 'In one class, the teacher was smiling all the time and said that I was doing great and was one of the best students, and still I did not get a high grade'.

Generally the 'American'[7] teachers receive the best reviews, potentially because most of the students were attracted by the 'American' style of education. They teach students to think, use logic, present information, work in groups and solve problems; the students also develop self-esteem and learn how to be asser-

[7] Not all the instructors that students assume are 'American' (originally from the US) are actually from the US; however, they are all from the US educational tradition (as opposed to the UK or EU).

tive (Nela and Simona). However, the Anglo-American educational model baffles some: Marko, similar to other students from Europe or the FSU, was initially confused and did not know what to expect, being used to oral examinations at the end of a semester. In addition, whereas 'American' teachers like their students, believe that students have to be made to think, not memorize, and find them a pleasure to teach (Paul), few understand the difference between the European and the US educational systems (and True Blue offers both degrees), and some use class time as an opportunity to preach the superiority of the US over the Czech Republic. 'All negative examples for the lectures were taken from the Czech Republic and all positive from the US,' – complain Magda, Vera and Marketa, referring to their Business Ethics instructor.

In contrast, European teachers (UK teachers are grouped with the continentals) appear to require more memorization than the students would expect in a business school and have less professional knowledge, but to compensate, they all employ stricter attendance and punctuality rules (in addition to the school ones), though some of them have problems arriving on time or 'being all there' during class (Vasek and Misa). 'The Czech and UK instructors prefer written assignments, not creative ones' (Dimitrios and Niko).

Generally speaking, Thanh expresses the popular desire to improve academic life at True Blue – more 'American' instructors, more projects and examples and interesting lectures based on the real-life experiences of the instructors. Dimitrios and Niko add that they would enjoy greater consistency in grading and workload. While the local students find studying in English to be beneficial and even credit this for their obtaining international jobs (Jakub, Vera and Magda), Czech (offered as a second language for humanities credit) is not particularly popular, as many international students plan to leave after graduation (Aleksi, Artem, Filip). 'I don't need Czech as I am not going to use it,'- insists Thanh.

Despite the Family's pride in being multicultural, Karel from student services believes that it means little to prospective students, and he does not consider the multicultural environment an attraction. Although international prospects occasionally ask about other students from their county (are there any other Kazakhs, Russians, etc.), this is not considered valuable by Czechs and Slovaks. Most students prefer to work on projects in groups of the same or familiar cultures (for example, students from the FSU), and East Asian students are liked for their dedication – they 'work hard' and 'love work'. This is not to suggest that the others are not completing their responsibilities – Miras recalls seeing one East Asian student working away on his laptop and two Kazakh students cheering him on.

Nevertheless, there is interest in having more interactions with other students and teachers outside of class, oriented toward future career development, building contacts, and knowing other students better, especially Czech students, as international students find it difficult to become acquainted with Czech students

(Marko and Filip). Linda would like to provide counseling for students, in connection with culture shock, anxiety and adapting to new roles, but thus far this remains only a desire. The students are not the only ones who could benefit from such counseling. Non-US and non-EU teachers also feel excluded (particularly because so few of them teach in any given semester). Lakhi is concerned that True Blue favors American teachers, and Oscar believes that he has to dress in a sober business suit and a tie to not 'be taken for a gangster'.

To summarize, despite its multinational and multicultural rhetoric, the True Blue School does little to manage its existing multicultural environment or prepare the students to address the different teaching and learning styles they face in their classrooms among their teachers, peers and even the school's administrative staff. On the contrary, with excessive rules and regulations, authoritarian decision making, lack of flexibility and limited participation by faculty and students in academic governance, the administration stifles attempts to negotiate cultural expectations and develop cross-cultural competence among the students and faculty. However, this is precisely why the faculty and students form alliances and communicate outside the strict classroom boundaries. While certain groups and individuals are excluded, the informal connections based on shared deviance and the need to cooperate to create a supportive learning environment and achieve satisfactory academic results draw the faculty and students together. Certain issues are not resolved, but even negative experience alerts the students to cultural differences in expectations, values, attitudes and behaviors and hence puts them on the path toward developing their cross-cultural competence.

## 4.5 School D – Ecuadorian international program: Vivid Burgundy

One cannot come to the Vivid Burgundy School without an invitation – there is a stone wall surrounding the campus, and only a combination of a key card and a fingerprint opens the gate to knowledge. The students feel safe and protected within the campus – it is similar to home, as the majority comes from gated communities protected by private security forces.

In contrast to the other three schools, at the Vivid Burgundy School, the internationally recruited (through the Chronicle of Higher Education and other professional and academic publications) faculty receives a true cultural orientation: each semester, new faculty members are introduced to the intricacies of living and teaching in Ecuador. However, many conflicting expectations remain that both instructors and students must satisfy. Reading appears to represent a deep cultural divide, with clear reads and read-nots. In their paper on teacher recruitment, the students (more in wishful thinking than providing helpful cultural advice) state that 'you [the prospective teacher] might be used to reading novels and books all your life, but we [Ecuadorian students] do not, so don't expect the students to read 100 pages over a weekend'. The teachers should not expect them to perform any work over a weekend, as they are likely to be engaged in family and social activities. However, the school rules state that during each two-month course, the students are to read at least 650 textbook pages – a difficult task, as most textbooks have fewer pages, and to assign two appears redundant. In addition, there is no guarantee that there would be two (or even one) textbooks in English in the library – and if Ecuadorians do not read books, they certainly do not purchase them, not even e-books.

Thus it is left to the ingenuity of teachers to work around the rule. It is good that no one enforces it; however, a written statement on when and how the pages were read is to be submitted each semester with the final grades. Some, such as Brian, simply admit falsifying the records, while others attempt to count movies as books, and some consider all of the literature used for references in term papers as textbook reading. There are many creative approaches, but most teachers believe that their time can be spent more productively teaching the class and finding materials they can use instead of finding ways to assign pages that *would not be* read. However, despite the 'we are not a reading nation' meme, there are complaints not only from the faculty but also from the students concerning the library's poor collection, that the loan period is very brief (a few days) and the lack of access to academic databases.

It is not only the library and reading that appear to have an unclear purpose. The role of a teacher is also not well defined. The students (based on a group project report) note that a teacher should be busy – their proposed job specification states that a good teacher is always engaged in class preparation, or grading – but not too busy to make him/herself available for students and to answer their questions at any time. However, one of their proposed recruitment advertisements features a person sleeping/dreaming in a hammock on a beach at sunset – but no school and no students.

The responsibility for earning grades and learning itself is also elusive. The same students state:

> *Being a teacher means you must always try and try but far more important is to make it believable to students. Sometimes the student may have had a situation, in which he/she couldn't prepare himself/herself to perform well, or maybe he/she was sick or maybe some other situation came up. Therefore, teachers should always be prepared to find alternative ways to evaluate students.* (From a group project report)

Students tend to punish teachers who are not prepared to ensure good grades, be it through easy exam questions, providing the answers during the exam, or avoiding exams altogether. Mike states that only teachers who are easy graders receive good end-of-the-semester evaluations: when confronted with tough graders, the students agree in advance to award the lowest evaluations on all items, regardless of the quality of teaching. However, Mike believes that good and tough teachers are the exception rather than the rule and regards the primary problem as the quality of the teacher selection, as ‘it is hard to expect good teachers to be willing to come to Ecuador’.

Andrea agrees that certain teachers are not competent to teach, irrespective of their expertise in their field, but this is because they do not take teaching seriously. One international teacher repeatedly screened videos (not related to the subjects at hand) in class and discussed his motorbike, which is why he received poor evaluations despite being an easy grader. Alejandro, however, relates a story of a local teacher who used to give a detailed account of his difficult day in the office (for example, the secretary brought his coffee cold and the day did not improve after that) but states that with international teachers such a lack of preparation is rare. He believes that the university needs more international teachers and should conduct teacher exchange agreements with schools abroad.

The administration, however, appears to share Mike’s view: ‘There is something wrong with almost all teachers who come to teach here: they are escaping from something,’ – states the director. While the director might be aware of factors that are not apparent to an outsider because unless there are criminal records (unlikely, as Ecuador requires a clean criminal record to obtain a teaching visa) or something else hidden and sinister, the reason why most international teachers come to Vivid Burgundy is perfectly transparent – earning money while enjoying exotic trips during school breaks. Another reason that the director’s suspicions are likely unfounded is that most of the teachers (all of those interviewed) had left the program either upon completion of their contracts or even earlier, which appears to demonstrate that nothing prevented them from returning home or, in certain cases, finding other international employment.

Eduardo, a local faculty member with international professional experience, is more concerned with the students’ motivation and believes that it is the teachers’ role to excite students with the subject matter. He rejects the notion that self-motivation for study is expected from students at that level. ‘Parents choose their children’s majors and even the areas of study, so the students are not interested in the subjects’. Indeed, some of the students name career interests that are rather far removed from business administration. On the contrary, a foreign teacher, who was not personally interviewed, mentions in passing that while one person can lead a horse to water, ten cannot make it drink, and hence he perceives his goal as leading students to the spring of knowledge, and then it is their decision whether they will learn.

Paradoxically, in this sense, the international faculty might provide a disservice to students. Jill states that Ecuadorian students learn by rote and are not accustomed to independent thinking, unless they had studied abroad. However, international teachers are not accustomed to the lack of study skills and do not adjust their teaching methods to the students' level. The system is not consistent, and the rules change; for example, students might be forgiven for excessive absences, or a failing student might be passed. Certain students feel punished when they complete their assigned homework on time. Ana is upset that while she, a working mother and a full-time double major student, finds time to complete her assignments, the rest of her class does not, and she does not receive points for being on time while they are not punished for being late. In another episode, a foreign teacher promised to devote a class meeting before the final exam to the students' questions on the covered material, but as Ana was the only one who prepared questions, the teacher decided to simply dismiss the class – 'so he would not waste his time – what about my time?' – she queries.

Sam, another international faculty member, expresses the opinion that it is the foreign teachers who are adapting to Ecuador, not the students to diverse teaching styles and cultures. Students are not concerned with good grades or securing good jobs after graduation, particularly not the males – the 'nepotistic culture' ensures that they find employment in either the family business or through friends and relatives. Melissa, a professional with business experience and entrepreneurship inspirations, agrees that most students are indifferent to the quality of education. However, Sam believes that the exposure to European and other foreign teachers helps the students learn and appreciate the diversity of views and teaches them to challenge their beliefs and values, especially discriminatory ones.

However, contrary to these views, the question of quality of education, as opposed to how enjoyable the process is, concerns many students. Mike is concerned that Vivid Burgundy does not prepare its students for employment. He would prefer to have a more competitive background and education to allow him to select future employers. He is working as an intern in the financial industry and finds that his knowledge is not sufficient. Melissa would like additional options for practice work abroad and internships for business students. Eduardo believes that the students would benefit most from exchange programs abroad (as he did as a student), and while international teachers contribute cultural expertise to the classroom, local teachers with international experience are equally valuable.

Of course, there are many local students who express satisfaction with the level of education (Sebastian, Andres, Brandon, and Dolores). They cite practical exercises, being introduced to different ways of thinking, flexibility in assignments (Diego) and the international examples they receive from the faculty as strengths of the program. International students, by contrast, find the classes too easy (Johanna, Sara), and they do not like being placed in the position of a 'teacher's pet' and being expected to answer questions if there are no other volunteers. A US exchange student on a school bus confides to a fellow Ecuadorian student: 'I feel like a total nerd – I am the only one who knows all the answers'. Joshua, a non-Ecuadorian local student from the US, says that as a 'gringo' who is not an exchange student, he receives limited support from the school and that he would like to be treated similarly to the local students. Johanna, from Germany, states that she is experiencing a double culture shock – adjustment to an English-speaking classroom and the mostly US-dominated academic culture of Vivid Burgundy and to the Latin culture of Ecuador itself.

The dual cultures of Anglo-American education and the Latin national one are not the only barrier to the international students' adjustment. There is also an exclusive social class structure and long-term friendship cliques: even the local students complain that the 'rich kids' form their own groups and do not socialize with the others, and they also avoid working on group projects with other students.

The survival guide (student project) explains:

> *Since Ecuadorian culture is very collectivist, students prefer working in groups. Students work efficiently when their groups members are people they known, if that is not the case there will be some tension among the group members, and the result will be an average work. There is a tendency that one member of the group takes all the responsibility while the others just laid back. (sic)*

However, the local students complain that when invited to social events, the 'foreigners' often embarrass them by bringing uninvited guests from 'undesirable' social backgrounds and being overly friendly with the staff, which creates further embarrassment for all concerned. Even cars have to be separated: during a practical exercise of 'observing the material culture,' the students reported back that only 'nice' cars were parked in a secured parking lot inside the fence – the 'ok cars, but not BMW or Mercedes' were parked outside school grounds, along the road. The students attributed this to the shame experienced by the owners of the 'ok' cars' and their desire to avoid being seen driving such cars.

Brian admires the 'complete academic freedom to teach whatever you want' and believes that most of the local students are quite similar to US students, as they are often educated in the US for a few years and spend their vacations there (with their parents). He also does not perceive major cultural differences but is concerned with academic standards and compares Vivid Burgundy with the freshly painted school building's façade (that covered but did not repair cracks in the walls) – the grades are given, but no one is concerned by whether they are accurate. ‘The students are nicely dressed and they seem to be enthusiastic about the projects, but in the end they do not do the work, but expect to get good grades. The system is extremely lax and makes even me lazy – trying to work with the system, I have to lower my standards.’

The students, however, believe that the teachers are constantly in charge and have absolute authority over them.

> *Ecuadorian culture has a high power distance, this means that the teacher has complete authority over students. So you should enjoy your autonomy (sic) in the classroom. You are expected to make rules about how you want things to be done in the classroom. If students don’t follow your rules, you are free to ask them to leave the classroom.* (From a student paper)

However, if the students and teachers lack confidence in one another’s abilities and dedication, many are happy to celebrate and generally socialize together. Carlos is glad to learn from his teachers, not only about business, but to know them as friends, mentors and future colleagues, and many remember Ahmet’s house parties with more affection than his classes. Occasionally, these aspects can be combined – a marketing class hosted a well-received beer tasting party to practice their newly acquired skills in blind testing and promotion (Mikhaylov 2014), and an ecology class greatly enjoyed playing, if not God, than at least the forces of nature and evolution (Beaumont, Rowe & Mikhaylov 2012).

Even teachers who identify areas of improvement such as punctuality, diligence and application, generally note that the students are enthusiastic when they are involved in projects and are easy to engage in discussions (even if more background reading would have been helpful). In contrast to the foundation math, critical thinking, or science courses, the more advanced entrepreneurship, marketing and management classes demonstrate clear benefits from the expectation of joining a family company and making managerial decision in the near future: it encourages the students to treat the case studies and even abstract theories with an eye to practical applications. Of course, some of them are already working (some in family business and others at MNEs) and are hence addressing the issues discussed in class on a daily basis.

The school also organizes cultural activities to enhance students’ cross-cultural development – the only school of the four to do so. Exchange and international students receive cultural orientation on Ecuadorian social, cultural and academic life, and there are also trips and outings to places of interest, including the Galapagos Islands, which the international office arranges for all who wish to participate, and many teachers take advantage of these opportunities. Ana is favorably impressed with the Dean of the program, whom she calls ‘an entrepreneur,’ who ‘gets up from the chair’ to proactively accomplish things for the students.

Exchange students also have foster families, which are obviously not located on campus, but the program is managed by the international student services office and those students who are unhappy with their foster parents (for example, Sara) can move to another family. The local students are also not left out in the cold (or in the heat, as the case may be) – not only are they welcomed to the events with the international students (however, few find time to attend given their demanding social and family life) but there are also international exchange programs. The international students department devotes serious consideration to the selection and preparation for a year abroad – several international instructors are invited to participate in the potential exchange students' interviews to assess not only their level of the foreign language competency but also their maturity and the potential to adjust to a new academic environment.

Nevertheless, the students, while appreciating the ease of social connection, informal communication with their international instructors and an opportunity to benefit from their international professional experience, wish for more. Diego believes that there should be more social life on campus (primarily to break up the cliques) and that the school needs a place for teachers and students to meet and discuss academic subjects and socialize. Andrea, Diego, Pilar, Gabriel and Alejandro (among several other students) desire more international teachers from more locations (Europe, Asia, and Latin America), who would share their professional expertise with the students, while Camilla and Ana believe that more international students (provided they are integrated into campus life) would be beneficial. Isabella does not believe that quantity of the teachers or the students would be beneficial for her competence development, but she imagines that the stories they would contribute would illustrate the issues discussed in class. Alejandro wishes to see more research activities and conferences in more areas (business, political science, and social sciences) conducted at school.

Regarding the instructors, they would like to have more job security (tenure has been mentioned, but so far nobody has committed to stay long enough to earn it) and more support in dealing with cultural specifics like students' family obligations that conflict with course work, unwarranted high expectations for final grades and less unrealistic rules like reading control or punctuality, which even if not followed, still take time to communicate, give a warning and then happily make an exception (or falsify the records). But all parties agree – as long as you remember that football is slightly more important than religion and keep a close eye on Barcelona games, you are way ahead in the game of understanding your students.

To summarize, the school administration creates many rules, but there are many exceptions to these rules, and it seems the naïve rookies of the international instructors are the only one who take the rules seriously and attempt to enforce them. However, another school of thought holds that teachers do not strictly enforce the rules, which is why the rules are broken. In truth, the teachers' hearts are not in locking the doors or frisking the students before a test. The administration does not limit itself to rule-writing and exception making but is also available to help mediate important cultural issues such as precisely how long 10 minutes is (some would say that it is closer to 20 min, and some insist that it is 600 seconds) and what plagiarism is.

The students at Vivid Burgundy might not learn to be good students, but they are learning to be good businesspeople and already demonstrate managerial and business competencies: they use their time and effort as effectively as possible, and hence when they are able to successfully cheat or plagiarize, they do not invest time in a project if the topic is not of interest to them. If a class lecture or discussion contributes nothing to their knowledge (in a manner that they believe could be applicable to their business environment), they prefer to spend class time building and strengthening social networks, which is of crucial importance in Ecuador. Although for instructors who come from more individualistic cultures, it might appear that funerals, weddings and other family obligations are of purely private interest, in Latin cultures, they are important social occasions, and non-attendance sends a negative message of either neglecting one's obligations or, worse – a disgrace. Somehow, the students manage to become prepared for their careers, even if their knowledge of math, economics, research writing and science leaves much to be desired. However, they are preparing to be international managers, not scientists or writers and, definitely, not readers.

## 4.6 Alternative perspective: A school is more than a building

Whereas 'Developing New School Ties' was selected as the main perspective to analyze and present the process, in the first program, school A, the *in vivo* code of '***school as a building'*** emerged and was echoed at the three other schools. Despite that this perspective was not ultimately selected as the most salient dimension, the students' expectation of having more than a building, namely, a socially connected learning community, has significant, if not the most explanatory power. Therefore, I present the dimensions that relate to the learning environment in the alternative explanatory matrix.

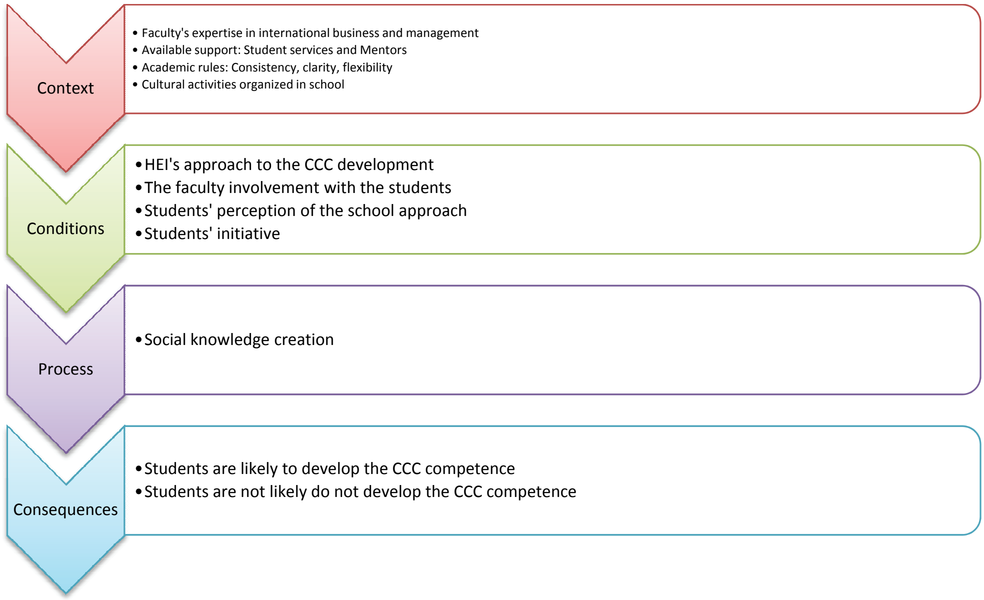


**Figure 7 Explanatory matrix from the perspective 'A school is more than a building'**

A detailed summary of the various dimensions, specifically contexts and conditions, of the explanatory matrix describing student experience in a multicultural learning environment is presented below in Table 4.

## Table 4 Summary of the school environments

| **Dimensions** | **Institutional Green** | **Hot Pink** | **True Blue** | **Vivid Burgundy** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Contexts | | | | |
| International faculty | Primarily short-term foreign academic visitors | Long-term foreign residents, primarily professionals and business people | Expatriate professionals, primarily academics | The entire faculty is international. Approximately half are recent graduates with limited teaching or professional experience, while the other half are former or current business people with some teaching experience |
| Local faculty | Retired professionals and managers, primarily lacking international business experience | Business people and experts, but few have international experience | Current academics from state universities, limited international experience | No local faculty, only some introductory classes are shared with the other, Spanish-language programs |
| Administration is | Local | Anglo-American | Foreign (EU, but not Czech) | Bicultural - local and US |
| Academic rules are | Unclear to both the students and the faculty | Complex but explained | Strict, complicated and inflexible | Complex, with many discretionary exceptions |
| Mentors | Student mentors are assigned but help only with routine tasks | Faculty mentors are assigned, and other faculty members are available | Only clandestine mentorship exists – classmates and faculty members help one another, occasionally to break the school rules | Informal academic and business mentorship by faculty is encouraged by the administration but is not required |
| International and multicultural activities | Student union organized, few | Teachers and student union organized but mostly social | Teachers organized, educational, but not supported by the school | Organized by the school, the teachers (supported) and the students– both academic and social |
| | | Conditions | | |
| School's approach to the CCC development as it is perceived by the students | You are on your own, do it if you want and have time after you are done with your homework. | Ask us and we will help you. Or don't ask and we won't. There is all of Prague out there for you to play. | Follow the rules. 'My way or the highway'. If there are problems, write a complaint and we'll address it in due time. | Helpful hand in need – formal and informal programs to help with every day and academic issues and mediate conflicts between the faculty and students |
| Students view the faculty as | Distant and unapproachable | Approachable and caring but not always professional | Clannish – they help students from their own cultural groups and personal favorites | Approachable, mostly professional, caring, and sociable |
| Administrative assistance in the students' CCC development is | Low | Moderate | Low | Moderate |
| Students feel | Lost | Coddled | Oppressed | Served |
| Students' initiative is | Low | Low | Moderate | Moderate |
| Promoted students' approach to CCC development | Plucky Orphans – you are on own, no help from anyone | Happy Family – Daddy knows best | Guerilla Fighters – do it on the sly | Country Club – effortless fun |
| | | Process<br>Social network based cultural knowledge creation | | |
| | | Consequences | | |
| The development of cultural competence is | Unlikely | Unlikely | Likely | Likely |

Table 4 summarizes the programs' environments as the student participants experience them. The approaches that each of the programs promotes among the students, de facto, regardless of the international or multinational rhetoric of a particular school or a program, are presented in Figure 8 below.

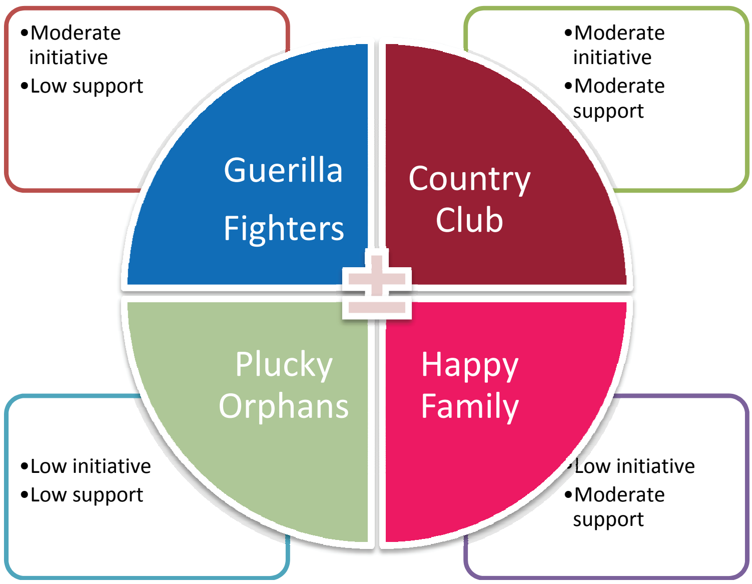


**Figure 8 Programs' approaches to the students' cultural knowledge development**

The consequence or outcome of the cultural knowledge creation process in various programs was either the success or failure of student CCC development. Although the individual outcomes depended on personal factors, including an individual student's ability to create cross-cultural social and professional networks, the general approach of students in a specific program was influenced by administrative assistance and the students' initiative. Unfortunately, none of the four programs provided substantial support for their students' cultural knowledge creation, and in none of the programs did the students, as a group, exhibit high initiative, although certain students were significantly more proactive than their peers. Student initiative appears to be a more significant factor than the administrative support provided by a school. Therefore, in the programs in which the students took initiative and responsibility for their cultural knowledge development, they were more likely to succeed.

**'Plucky Orphans' – School A.** Despite the rhetoric of internationalization, this program leaves students without support for the development of cultural knowledge. Demanding academic objectives, a lack of school-organized social or cultural activities, and the faculty's limited international experience and desire to engage with the students outside of classes limit the students' opportunities to develop cross-cultural networks. The student union organizes cultural activities with international students, but these activities are conducted during normal school hours and, therefore, are poorly attended. Certain students attempt to meet their international classmates socially, but because of a lack of shared interests or safe social spaces where they can interact, this network building is primarily restricted to team projects and group assignments. In addition, most students lack basic network-building skills and expect the school to provide them with opportunities to engage with their international peers. Such an approach is unlikely to result in the development of cultural knowledge and CCC.

**'Guerilla Fighters' – School C.** The administrative support provided by school C is low; however, the students take at least moderate initiative to develop their cross-cultural networks. The program unintentionally provides students with opportunities to engage with their peers and the international faculty, such as during the lunch hour in weekend-long classes. School C is less academically demanding than school A. Therefore, many assignments allow time, often during class, to engage in social networking: to discuss personal, professional and business interests; and to engage instructors in discussions that might not be strictly related to the course's learning objectives. In addition, the students and faculty share a disdain for the administrative rules and requirements, which are perceived to be unreasonable. The faculty members often engage the students in clandestine, or at least unofficial, learning and career development projects, such as field trips to local businesses, informal study groups held at a local pub, the sharing of job search suggestions, professional introductions and invitations to international social and business events. The students appreciate that the faculty members might be risking their jobs by breaking school rules, and this creates a bond between the faculty and the students and among students in a given course. In addition, many students are working professionals, and they have developed business and professional interests and networking skills. A 'Guerilla Fighters' approach is likely to result in the development of cultural knowledge and CCC.

**'Country Club' – School D.** At this school, student initiative and administrative support for cultural knowledge development are both moderate. The program provides cultural orientation for international faculty and exchange students, engages students and faculty in social and sporting events, organizes cultural trips and encourages the faculty to tailor team projects and class assignments to the students' interests. The campus has several social spaces, including group study rooms, a cafeteria, a café, a gym and a chapel, in addition to numerous study spaces furnished with sofas, tables and computer stations. The students have well-developed networking skills and are willing to introduce international and exchange peers to local business practices and invite them to social events. Many students participate in family businesses and have developed professional interests. Faculty members are generally willing to engage in social activities and participate in cultural events, where they are likely to meet their students. Faculty and students organize joint social events, which are encouraged by the administration. Although most of the administrative support is intended to provide enjoyable learning environments for the students and retain international faculty, it also facilitates the students' CCC development and cultural knowledge creation.

**'Happy Family' – School B**. Significant academic and learning support is provided to students, including personalized assignments, one-on-one tutoring, twice as many contact hours as in any of the other programs, an informal environment, an open door policy, ever-present, on-site administration, easy contact with teachers, consistent assignment types, written feedback and regular meetings with advisors. Small class sizes facilitate student efforts to make new friends, share cultural insights and improve their academic performance. However, school B expects its students to 'miraculously' develop cross-cultural abilities through exposure to different cultures. Yet, the students are accustomed to detailed instructions, directions and advice provided by the faculty and administration, and they rarely take the initiative to develop cross-cultural networks. In addition, the social activities organized by the school are poorly attended, possibly due to the excessive time students spend at school, and there are limited social spaces where students can interact outside the classroom.

The main theoretical theme that emerged after the comparison and dimensional analysis was that 'a school is more than a building', or social space is necessary to create networks in the educational environment, notably with respect to the collaborative and social aspects of knowledge sharing and creation.

The process was similar across all four settings (i.e., schools) regardless of the attitudes toward CCC development that were promoted and encouraged by the schools. However, differences were observed in the students' levels of development. In schools that supported network building and collaborative knowledge creation, either intentionally (school D) or unintentionally (school C), the students engaged in social and collaborative cultural knowledge creation. Where this engagement was deterred, either because of an excessive academic workload and confusing regulations (school A) or extensive individual assistance provided by the faculty and staff, which made contacts among students unnecessary (school B), the students who sought to develop networks and appreciated the value of these networks for academic learning and future career prospects were not actively engaged with their cross-cultural peers. These students often relied on local or expatriate groups for knowledge sharing and cultural learning.

Despite the difference in the final outcomes of the process across the four programs, the students apply the same process for the cultural knowledge development. As they perceive cultural competence to be an important outcome of their studies, as well as a study skill to improve learning, their goal is **pragmatic**, intending to '*learn manageable things that can be applied right away'* (Goran, SnCM). This opinion was expressed in different ways in all four locations by the majority of the participants, and no participant expressed the opposite opinion. However, the desirability of developing cross-cultural competence for purely academic purposes was not universally supported.

The students create their own social and professional **networks**, either with the school's support (in the form of mentoring, academic events, a buddy system and encouraging social contact among the students and teachers) or without. They consider it the main reason for business education, in addition to obtaining an official diploma or an undergraduate degree.

> *The most important part of the school is that you meet people – create your circle or a network. (Santiago, SnDM)*

A local Finnish student at school A expressed a similar sentiment:

> *We are international business students. We need to know how to do business in other countries, not here in Finland. And our international classmates are the best resource. After all, we are going to be doing business with them, or with somebody like them, not with the professors. And I'd like to build my business network now, when I am at school, that's why I'd like to have international students from the places I would be interested in professionally in class. (Juhani, SLAM)*

Holden (2002) considers networking to be a form of cross-cultural knowledge-sharing activity; it promotes cultural sensemaking and sensegiving in a social process that occurs in a community with a shared network and interrelated meanings (Gertsen & Soderberg 2010). Therefore, in situations in which the students perceived that they had neither the time nor opportunities to develop social networks, as their efforts were focused on completing academic assignments (as it was often the case at school A) or when they did not perceive the network to be of substantial value, as they already had an existing social network of friends with a similar ethic and cultural background (as reported by several participants at school B), there was less interest in sharing knowledge and collaborative learning. The students were less interested in cultural knowledge creation and sharing and had vague plans for their future careers and therefore were less likely to develop cultural competence during their undergraduate education.

# 5 THE PROCESS OF CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT: GROUNDED THEORIZING

## 5.1 The emergent model of the cultural knowledge development process

This chapter presents the second aspect of the research findings – the social process of cultural knowledge creation and the individual strategies, based on the reported experiences of the participants analyzed in combination with the participant observation and document analysis. The contexts, or the institutional learning environments, as they were experienced and perceived by the student participants from the four programs, are presented in chapter 4, and it might prove useful to refer to that chapter to maintain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. In this chapter, in addition to using aliases (pseudonyms) for the interview participants, the codes and the interview numbers are noted – the complete list of participants is presented in ***Appendix B***. The codes that associated with the theoretical categories are presented in ***Appendix F*** in the tables with the corresponding locations; however, the lists of codes only serve as samples, as some codes were attributed to several theoretical categories, while others were changed, edited and deleted during the subsequent analysis. When the categories achieved saturation, no further data were added to them.

Based on the interviews, observations and document reviews, the explanatory matrix was constructed to represent the participants' perceptions of the cultural knowledge development process. The matrix is presented from the social network perspective and supports the constructivist approach to cultural understanding as a sensemaking activity (Bird & Osland 2006) and the view of culture as shared knowledge (Holden 2002).

Figure 9 below illustrates the process as presented in the explanatory matrix in chapter 3. The contexts of the process or the programs' (schools') environments are richly described in chapter 4, and an alternative explanation based on a different perspective is presented. However, in the final analysis, the educational environments were not the most salient dimension. This aspect remained marginal, and therefore it remains the contexts of the process. However, while the students' initiatives, or individual conditions, are more likely to positively influence the process of cultural knowledge development, a supportive educational environment was also beneficial for the development of cultural knowledge.

The conditions referred to the individual conditions, or the triggers of the process. They are discussed in depth in the following subchapter 5.2. The process itself is addressed in subchapter 5.3, and the consequences or the results of the process are described in subchapter 5.4. Chapter 3 describes the process for developing the codes that were eventually designated as dimensions in the explanatory matrix, and the specific constructions were developed in connection with the continuous comparison analysis and literature review. The tentative model of the process that emerged from the continuous literature review is presented in subchapter 2.5. In this chapter, the individual dimensions are discussed, supported by specific examples from the interviews and the selected codes, which are presented in ***Appendix E***.

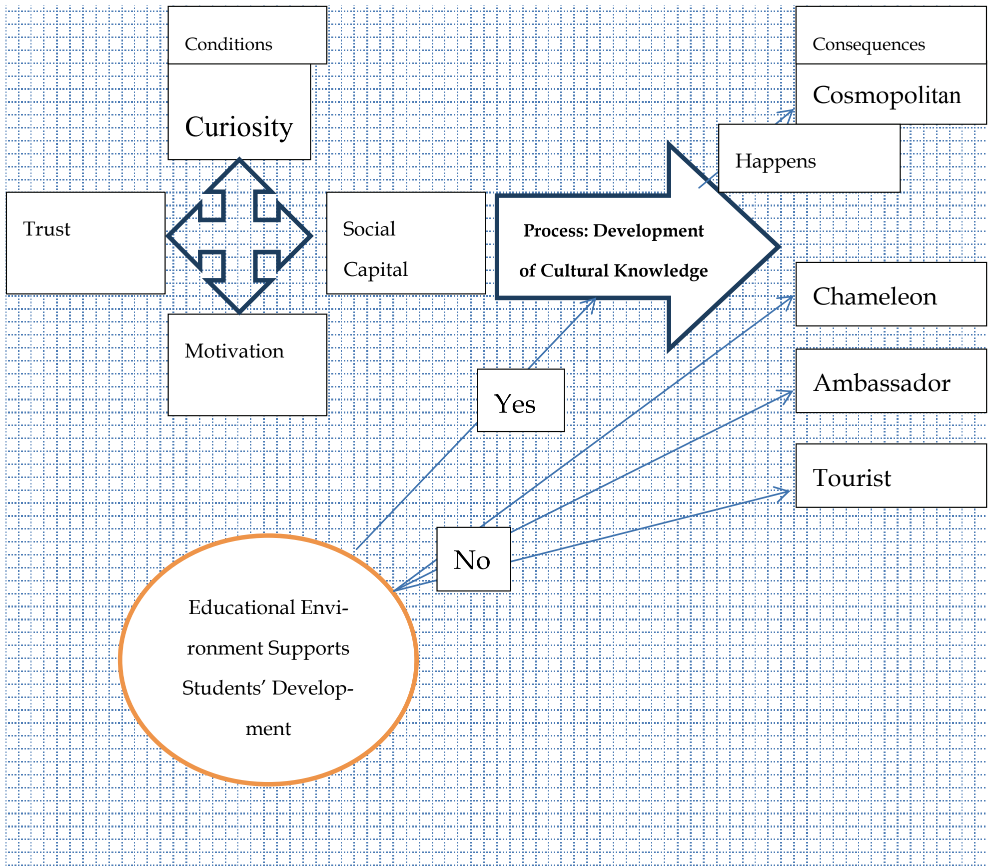


**Figure 9 Process: Development of cultural knowledge**

## 5.2 Individual conditions

The individual conditions in the explanatory matrix, or the conditions under which an individual is likely to engage in the process, have four main aspects that are highlighted by the emergent theoretical categories or dimensions – cultural curiosity, motivation, trust and social capital. In addition, the last two constructs are also understood as abilities: the ability to enhance and extend trust and the ability to develop and use social capital to increase intellectual capital, or cultural knowledge.

### *5.2.1 Cultural curiosity*

Cultural curiosity is understood as interest in the cultural environment(s). All of the participants expressed a desire to be more culturally competent in general, as a result of either their studies or their general experience in the country. However, there were considerable differences in the levels of interest generated by different national and academic cultures. The participants expressed a greater desire to obtain knowledge concerning those national, business and academic cultures that they considered to be interesting, curious, fun or of future practical value. Therefore, knowledge of and about these cultures was considered more valuable than knowledge of and about other cultures. In addition, the participants expressed an affectionate attraction to specific places and cultures, attractions that they could not rationally explain but that, nevertheless, influenced their current or past decisions to either stay in the location or become involved in the local community and develop broader and stronger networks and cultural knowledge.

US culture was nearly universally perceived as an interesting and desirable culture to learn about and be able to communicate within, particularly with the goal of finding employment and/or conducting business there. However, even when the students had a prior experience living, working or studying in the US, they occasionally lacked a comprehension of US cultural diversity, be it regional, ethnic, racial, SES or professional cultures, and tended to generalize the culture of the environment they had experienced to the entire country and all of its subcultures.

> *I know the US culture pretty well, as I went to a community college in X. Most people are nice, friendly, hard-working, but rather conservative and nothing much is going on. I would not want to go and live in America for good – I'd die of boredom. I would like, though, to work there for a while, to make business connections and gain experience. (Miras, SICM 9C)*

If they had not lived in the US for an extended period, the students generally had an image of a fast-paced, technology-driven environment, characterized by high task orientation, high individualism and masculinity, which is consistent with Hofstede's cultural dimensions for the US (1980/2001).

> *In the US, everyone has to work hard; it's all about money and success. I would miss my family and friends, but it is exciting too. (Dolorez, SLDF 1D)*

In contrast, other students expressed the view that precisely because of the cultural diversity of the US, there is no need to be competent in the US business or regional culture, as everyone is expected to respect one another's cultural values and adjust their behavior. The need to develop common ground and a shared organizational or professional culture was not fully appreciated.

> *In some countries, you have to be very careful – what you do, or say, or how you look like. But in America, everyone is different, and you can be yourself, and not try to change your ways. You can wear what you like, and do what you like, and as long as you do your job, there won't be any cultural clashes. (Vlado, SIBM 1B)*

Of course, such opinions could be based on the positive experience of successful adaptation, as an instructor notes that many of his students in school D are indeed bicultural.

> *We are fortunate – our students have international experience because their parents have country houses in Miami and other beach locations in the US. I have not experienced any cultural differences with them and have no difficulties teaching them the US business practices. (Brian, TIDM 19D)*

However, several areas of Florida could be considered culturally closer to Ecuador in certain respects than they are to, for example, Minnesota, and equating luxurious holiday experience with cultural knowledge might be overoptimistic.

One of the reasons for the high value accorded to learning about the US management and business culture could be the strong dominance of the US-originated theories and US-produced study materials, including textbooks, cases and examples in international business and management education, and therefore learning about US culture would be closely connected with learning about management in general. In addition, many participants expressed a strong positive attitude toward the 'American' educational model with its practical approach, discussion-style lectures, and low power distance in class, and hence they might believe that positive educational experience would extend to positive business or employment experience. Many regarded the US as a desirable place to work and conduct business.

> *The professor was very enthusiastic about the subject, I would say even passionate. Very American, you know. He might not know some facts about Europe, but he was really knowledgeable in his subject. And he always asked us what we think, made us form an opinion. ... I think studying in school C prepares us for the modern business world and I would like to work in the US, or for a US company, because I prefer a collaborative work style. (Magda, SLCF 1C)*

The other criterion that appeared to influence the students' attitudes towards gaining knowledge on a particular culture was cultural distance (Kogut & Singh 1988) or a participant's perception of it (cf. Drogendijk & Slangen 2006). Cultures that shared similar political, religious and historical roots, have had the most contact and were geographically proximate were considered culturally close (small distance) – an example might be Latin American countries, in particular Peru and Colombia to Ecuador, and Scandinavian and Baltic countries, in particular Sweden and Estonia, to Finland.

The participants considered culturally distant countries to be those, from where they had not met anyone and about which history, politics, economic and social systems they had limited knowledge. These countries were often located at a large geographical distance from a participant's country of origin (or residence) and were perceived as a region, not a separate country – African countries, the FSU, the Arab countries, or Central America. It appears that the countries that the participants perceived as either culturally close or distant were considered less attractive and interesting than those that were perceived at a middle cultural distance.

> *Spain is close to us in culture and we speak the same language, but people mostly go there to be maids, so I would rather go someplace else and so I am not very interested in the business culture of Spain. Anyway, [if needed] I think we [the potential Spanish business partners and the participant] would understand each other fine. (Dolores, SLDF 1D)*

In addition, a country's economic conditions influenced the attractiveness of cultures, with the 'WEIRD'[8] countries being the most desirable (as moderated by cultural distance) and the BRIC[9] countries came in a close second. This is consistent with the recent findings on the student mobility choices – the economic position of the country of destination is the most influential factor in the student's study abroad decision (Perkins & Neumayer 2013).

> *I would like to learn more about China – it is not only a country of the future, but I am very interested in Chinese [high] culture and arts. (Camila, SLDF 14D)*

However, there is also strong disinterest in countries neighboring the participant's country of birth or long-term residence that have supplied received a large influx of labor migrants, in particular those who were perceived to be low skilled, economic immigrants – for example, Ukrainians and Vietnamese in the Czech Republic, Russians in Finland – although Russia was generally cited as an interesting place to learn about, and Russia, along with the other BRIC countries, was

[8] White, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic (Henrich, Heine & Norenzayan 2010).
[9] Brazil, Russia, India and China

considered a growing economy and desirable future destination for employment and business.

> *I don't really want to know about Russia – even though it is our neighbor, I don't think I would want to work there and if I do business with Russians, I think they should learn about Finland. (Juhani, SLAF 3H)*

The future attraction of a country as a place of employment or residence also played a role in the degree of cultural curiosity, with the participants taking a practical view of costs and benefits – while it might be interesting to learn, it is not useful, and hence not desirable.

> *It might be interesting to learn more about African countries, but I really don't see how I could use it in the future – I would not want to live or work there. (Maija, SLAF 5H)*

Thus it appears that cultural curiosity would be less affected by cultural distance as is defined by Kogut and Sight (1988) but more by *psychic* distance (Sousa & Bradley 2006), a term that was first used in connection with cultural knowledge acquisition by Johanson and Vahle (1977; 1990) in their Nordic model of internationalization. Sousa and Bradley (2006) state that psychic distance is simply cultural distance combined with the individual's personal interests or preferences, and this was obviously the case among the participants – they expressed curiosity regarding the cultures that were attractive to them in a pragmatic sense.

> *Everyone goes to the US, and we have a lot of American teachers here, and this is great, but I think what we really need is to know more about Europe, yes, Finland for example, or other Scandinavian (sic) countries, or about, I don't know, Poland – something new, someplace where we would like to work and do business and what we know little about. I like reading books (yes, very unusual, [laughs]) but there are no books by Finnish authors in the shops and I don't know where to find them. I liked the Chinese book [assigned for the class], but it is more about Americans in China, isn't it, not really about China. We need to know more about 'new' [newly opened markets] economies, not the old ones. (Andres, SLDM 11D)*

In addition, the entertainment, or 'fun' and 'cool,' value of a culture generates attraction and cultural curiosity. The cultures that were regarded or experienced as 'serious' and 'sober' appear to be less attractive than those that are more social, festive, affectionate, and relaxed.

> *I did not like it in France – they are so serious there, yes, not at all like the image of them. And you always have to watch yourself so*

> *you would not do anything wrong – even with food or wine. They are very particular. (Carlos, SnDM 4D)*

The 'fun' cultures also appeared to be easier to approach and become engaged with and knowledgeable of, while more 'serious' and less affectionate cultures appeared to be inaccessible and even forbidding and to exercise severe penalties for breaking cultural taboos and not following the implicit rules of social and business interaction. 'Fun' cultures were perceived as those in which it is easier to create connections and form social ties.

> *I did not know much about Russian culture, but now [after a discussion and a movie] I think I would love to do business with those guys – I am just not sure I can keep up with their drinking [laugh]'. {After watching parts of 'The Peculiarities of the National Hunt' film[10]}. (Alejandro, SLDM, 10D)*

Certain cultures appeared to be valuable to know but not particularly 'fun' and rather 'hard' to understand. Those students who had been exposed to the 'fun' side of social interaction through humor, literature, film, videos, and personal experiences were more likely to find the culture attractive.

> *I was thinking about the China more in terms of Communists, but [after reading the assigned book] I can see that it is kind of a cool place with a lot of things going on, so I'd like to know more about it. (Isabella, SLDF 24D)*

It should be noted that this does not correspond to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (1999; 2002) Affective and Neutral cultural dimensions, as some of the highly affective cultures (e.g., some of the Arabic ones) were considered 'boring' and 'punitive' (as having a high social cost for not following social and business norms), while Japan was considered more entertaining, more 'cool' than, for example, the US.

> *I really liked Japanese cultural presentation (conducted by the language department). I mean I knew about anime but there is so much more, like ikebana and origami, and I see how it could be cool to try living there. I wonder what it would be like to work in Japan. [When I suggested that she speak to an instructor who had lived and worked in Japan for several years, she said]. 'But I am more interested in culture, you know 'cool stuff' you can do, not business etiquette – bowing and such'. (Pilar, SLDF 13D)*

The international students rarely expressed cultural curiosity regarding the local host culture, in contrast to the non-local resident students or even exchange students, yet a decision to remain could be motivated by what the participant perceived as an irrational, affective factor, which is consistent with the findings of

[10] http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0114055/

Tan and colleagues (Tan, Hartel, Panipucci & Strybosch 2005) concerning the effect of emotions in expatriate experiences.

> *I really don't know why I stay in Prague. It's just grows on you, you know what I mean? Pubs and clubs and parks and even streets – all of it – it's just a fun place to be. (Filip, SICM 10C)*
>
> *OR*
>
> *Guayaquil is so alive – there is always music – too much sometimes. People are friendly – also sometimes too much. But I enjoy it here – I cannot image having so much fun in any other place. (Joshua, SnDM 21D)*

Therefore, it appears that cultural curiosity depends on the psychic distance from an individual's culture and can be adversely influenced by a negative experience or a perceived image. While the value of cultural knowledge acquisition depends on the individual learner and his/her personal preferences, it appears that cultures located at a medium cultural distance, with more economic development potential and fun/entertainment factors, are more likely to excite curiosity. It should also be noted that the personal characteristic of possessing cultural curiosity is strongly connected to the setting's characteristic of psychic distance (from the individual learner) as it depends on personal perceptions and interest.

Cultural curiosity influences individual motivation, including the affective and 'fun' angles that pique cultural curiosity and increase the desire to engage further with the culture in question.

### *5.2.2 Motivation*

During the grounded analysis of the constructed data, motivation emerged as another personal condition for cultural knowledge development. However, the participants often used the term 'motivation' to simply signify the intention to engage in action. Examples include the following statements: 'I just was not motivated to go there' or 'I had no motivation to find a practical assignment'. This is consistent with a layperson's definition of motivation, as in the Oxford English Dictionary's definition of 'a reason or reasons for acting or behaving in a particular way' and 'a desire or willingness to do something; enthusiasm'[11]. However, motivation as a process of goal-directed voluntary behavior controlled by the individual (Vroom 1964/1995) or as a 'goal terminating mechanism, permitting goals to be processed serially' (Simon 1967, 29) requires, in addition to activa-

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[11] http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/motivation

tion, persistence and intensity (cf. Lang, Bradley & Cuthbert 1997); however motivation, as other social constructs, has numerous definitions (Kleinginna & Kleinginna 1981). Although the participants might limit their meaning to activation, persistency and intensity would be crucial for a successful outcome.

All participants asserted that one of the main goals of their choice of an international business program conducted in English was to prepare them for international business and management careers. They also agreed that the development of cross-cultural competence, understood as the ability to work with persons from different cultures, manage them, establish business relationships, trade and negotiate with international partners and identify and satisfy the needs and wants of customers from diverse cultural backgrounds, is essential for such careers. The student participants intended to further develop the CC competence that they believed they possessed at the time of the interview, and they all agreed that the school should support them in that development.

Nearly all participants expressed the belief that gaining cross-cultural competence is possible, desirable and useful for their future careers.

> *To do business in the modern world, a businessperson has to be able to work with partners and employees from different cultures. That is the essential part of international business. (Omer, SnCM 2C)*

This opinion was expressed in different ways in all four locations by the majority of the participants, and no participant expressed the opposite opinion. However, the desirability of developing cross-cultural competence for academic purposes was not universally supported.

> *It is important to know how to manage your employees from other countries and how to deal with business partners and customers, but in school, we are all students, all follow the same rules, so there is less need to understand each other's preferences or accommodate others' working styles. (Tomas, SLCM 5C)*

However, Tomas might be expressing the belief that adapting to and accommodating others' preferences are not necessary in an academic environment because all students must create shared meanings and a problem solving approach that suits all team members and the whole team. Yet another explanation might be that as a local student, Tomas expected the international students to accommodate his preferences; yet this is unlikely, as his international classmates (for example, *Marko, SICM 15C*) commented on his team-working skills and ability to lead discussions and negotiate the best group work approaches.

There is also an opinion that cultural knowledge development should take a secondary role to purely academic knowledge and direct study objectives.

> *It is good to develop professional networks with classmates, and working in diverse teams is also an important professional skill*

> *nowadays, but when we work on group projects, the most important part is to fulfill the task or assignment requirements, so if it is easier to just do it yourself than argue with your team members or wait for them to deliver their part; I'd just rather do it myself. (Eeva, SLAF 5H)*

Although, many participants preferred to work in diverse groups and teams and believed that having diverse team members improve academic results and the coordination (*Aleksi, SICM and Artem, SICM 10C*), other participants, while believing that promoting cultural understanding and creating cultural knowledge is a valuable group activity, thought that the other team members should increase their efforts to develop understanding and cultural knowledge sharing.

> *I think the other students should try to learn how we work here, not try to force us to adjust to their ideas of how it should be done. After all, that is why they have come here – to learn. (Luisa, SLDF 3D)*

However, even if not all participants immediately perceived the utility of developing cultural skills in their academic environment, they all expected it to the useful in the future. They identified activities, both practical and academic, that would assist such development – participation in international school activities, friendship, social connections and communication with international classmates and instructors, engaging in international business groups and communities, research activities and social activities. Several expressed the desire to have further such opportunities available for them or the regret that they did not take advantage of those available to the extent that they could have. Some provided suggestions regarding what the school, or even they as students, could do to better promote CCC development – more diverse teaching faculty and student body and more international academic conferences, while others suggested more social and sporting events to strengthen existing social ties, and a few were confident that they could continuous to pursue the development on their own, outside of school.

However, there were participants who reported that they did not even attempt to exert any effort in this regard because they believed that they were doomed to failure.

> *We don't invite international students to our parties and other social events because we are afraid that so many things might go wrong – we might offend when we serve and drink alcohol or eat pork products, or have unclean pets. It is better to avoid all these issues. (Maija, SLAF 5H)*

Another reason not to exert any effort was the stated expectation that performance could be achieved naturally, without any dedicated attempt to improve.

*I think just being in Ecuador is a culture-learning experience, even if I don't meet a lot of local people. (Daniela, SXDF 27D)*

Curiously, school administrators shared that belief.

*In Prague, there is culture everywhere. The students just need to go out, just to walk in a café or a local shop or here is a museum close by and here it is. (Leslie, AIBF 8B)*

The last statement clearly illustrates that not only students but student service professionals as well tend to subscribe to an understanding of culture as a thing that can be found in a distinct location and somehow 'contaminate' the students.

To summarize the motivation aspect that emerged through the data analysis, the learners were likely to be motivated to engage in the process of cultural knowledge creation and cultural competence development when they considered it practical and enjoyable, when they expected a reward in the form of immediate benefits such as an improved ability to communicate with peers and foster parents and engage with local community. When the reward was expected in the more distant future, after graduation and particularly further in the career (with increased management and professional responsibilities), the participants were less likely to engage in a dedicated, substantial effort to develop their competence. The affective aspect of motivation, which in turn was influenced by cultural curiosity, made it more desirable to engage in cultural knowledge and cross-cultural competence development if the students had positive associations with the location and cultural practices, which is consistent with the affect perseverance theory (Sherman & Kim 2002).

### *5.2.3 Social capital*

The participants recognized that to develop cultural knowledge, they had to interact with members of the culture, or in the academic environment, the multiple cultures represented on campus, and thereby gain access to multicultural groups and networks outside their own cultural groups. To do so, they relied on their existing social capital, 'the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network' (Bourdieu 1985, 248), and the ability to develop them through formal and informal networks. In addition, to gain an insight into a new culture, a learner should have an understanding of his/her own multiple cultural influences and identities.

The participants referred to their values, interests, demographic characteristics, cultural backgrounds and past experience to explain, how they were making connections with the local or academic communities and assess the areas of difficulties they were experiencing or were likely to experience. The participants, who had more cross-cultural experience, for example, those who came from multicultural family backgrounds, had previous educational experience in international schools or experience working in diverse work groups, were more aware of what they could contribute to the group or network and how to approach other members of the community who had access to cultural knowledge and were likely to share it with them, or had more social capital. Participants with limited cross-cultural experience often expressed an unwarranted optimism concerning their ability to make connections, expected to be more comfortable in challenging social situations, or possessed less social capital.

The accurate assessment of personal social capital and social identity is crucial in developing social networks, as it is fundamental for inspiring and building trust, generating further social capital, finding mentors and attracting support. Although there are many aspects of social identities, the main ones that emerged from the interview data were attitudes toward study and academic success, demographic characteristics, local and international cultural knowledge, and attitude toward trust.

Granovetter (1973) notes that weak ties, as characterized by time, emotional intensity, intimacy (mutual confiding) or reciprocal services (1361), as opposed to strong social ties of friendship or kinship, are the most useful for mobility opportunities – as many strong ties overlap and are ineffectual for discovering new opportunities. Participants who reported having an extensive circle of acquaintances and being opportunistic in forging new ties were more comfortable in a new environment and more likely to have a high assessment of their adaptation and competence. As Granovetter (1973; 1983) also mentions that the ties are likely to become stronger with the time spent in a given community, we can say that, in a new place, a person is initially likely to primarily form weak ties, which then might grow stronger (or not).

The characteristics that most often emerged as significantly relevant to the development of ties were the attitudes toward studies, study goals, and attitudes towards and the choice of recreational activities and the relative importance of academic achievement and recreational experience. In certain instances, these similarities were presented as cultural differences; however, it was the attitudes, not mere belonging to the same ethnic group or national origin, that created trust and influenced the intention to cooperate and to develop networks.

> *We like to work [on group projects] with other Chinese students, because normally the Finnish students don't care about their grades that much – passing is good enough for them, but we need 'excellent'. But when the students do good work and deliver their parts on time, and come to all team meetings, we are happy to work with them, as that gives us more perspectives and ideas. We like to work with L. (international student from Estonia) and with P. (local*

> *Finish student), as they can be trusted to do their best. (Mai, SIAF 9H)*

The study participants frequently mentioned the cultural 'affiliations' presented in Figure 10 below and stressed that they found that the combination of these similarities leads to increased trust and social network development. It is noteworthy that neither ethnicity nor national origin made the list, contrary to the results reported by Huff and Kelley (2003). However, it is consistent with Halualani's (2008) findings on students' perception and sensemaking in a multicultural learning environment: students tend to ignore their friends and acquaintances' different ethnic backgrounds and national origins when they belong to same social group.

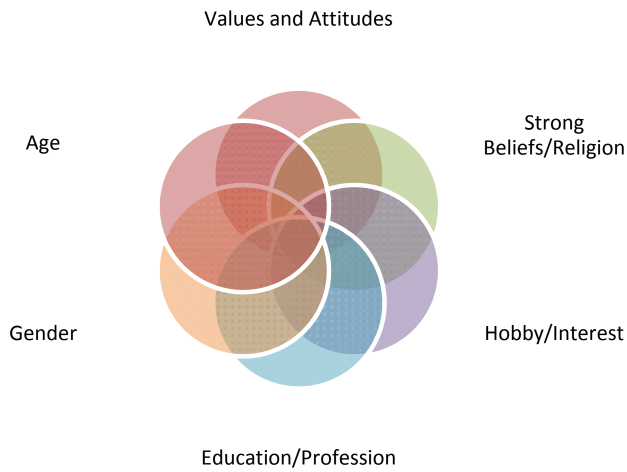


**Figure 10 Circles of social capital's sources**

Shared interests - from sports, music, and cultural activities to belonging to clubs and societies – were most commonly used to build networks.

> *I went to a football game with some of my classmates – I would not go alone, of course, it's not appropriate for a girl to be alone at a football game – and I had great fun. I met so many people – football fans are the same everywhere! I am in touch with many of them, and a couple could even become real friends. (Johanna, SXDF 29D)*

A variety of hobby activities could provide an opportunity to meet people and forge social connections.

> *I went to that film festival, and I met a girl from my Communication class, and then she introduced me to her friends ... (Zhenia, SnBF 2B)*

Gender and age could be connecters, sources of privilege, or limitations – and the participants stated that it was important to apply a new strategy (or recycle one from their high school years) to form connections.

*In Finland, girls do not get any special treatment – when we go out, we pay for ourselves, and are not being 'courted'. So in a way it is easier to be one of the guys, but on the other hand, it is not clear how to meet people. That is why school events are important – it's almost like being back in high school, all go out as a group, and all have fun together, and then you might make special friends. (Inga, SXAF 10H)*

School events often played a role in encouraging social ties and providing a venue for the development of connections among the students. In some instances, the events were organized by the students themselves, for example, school sponsored multicultural events – a carnival in school A, the only such event during the research period or in the collective memory of the students, which could be what made such a tremendous impression on many.

*It's great to have this carnival – I've met more people today than during the whole semester. (Jackson, SIAM 6H)*

Alternatively, when no school-wide events were organized, the students created professional networks through their classmates.

*We are friends with Artem and he introduced me to other Russians, and now I have a kind of network – well, at least it's a start as I want to do business in Russia. (Aleksi, SICM 10C)*

The participants from all four locations reported the use of referrals – contacting friends of their host families, classmates and local acquaintances for a variety of academic, business and recreational reasons – to gain access to local companies for research, a school project or internship, introductions to business managers and owners, information on local cultural and recreational activities, or invitations to family homes and social outings.

*I try to find people that would be like my 'coaches' – show me the ropes, so to say. Everywhere you need a local 'guide', not only in a foreign country – to introduce you, to explain things, to take you places. There are a lot of places in this city where a foreigner should not go alone – some are too rough, and some are too 'nice' well, exclusive, I guess. You know, like the girls in our class never go out by themselves – so to meet nice girls, you need to be invited to their homes– yeah, everywhere you need an introduction. Or you get stuck with the tourist stuff, and who needs that? (Olive, SXDF 7D)*

The participants discussed being opportunistic in finding information, and by searching broadly for new knowledge, they were able to learn things that might otherwise be not accessible to them. For example, an international student used her foster family connection to advance both her academic progress (as she needed to find a practical assignment for a credit) and ultimately to build an international business connection to be used later.

> *My foster parents introduced me to an owner of a business, where I wanted to do practical work… (Sara, SXDF, 5D)*

Some students recognized that they had limited time to engage in social activities and their existing social network required continuous investment in existing social capital. In this case, the informal school activities and connections with instructors outside class played an important role.

> *I don't have time to meet my classmates during the week: we are all busy working and we have our own lives, and this is why we all value the time we spend with each other after class and during lunch, and we like when instructors join us and we can chat – this is important, maybe even more than time in class. (Misa, SICF 14C)*

That ability to develop social networks was highly valued by many participants and the observed students and it could be summarized in the quote below – one from school D that echoes the participants' views in all four programs.

> *The most important part of the school is that you meet people – create your circle or a network. That is what it all about – you can read books at home, or even listen to lectures. I always try to meet international students – even if we are not in the same class. (Andres, SLDM 11D)*

### *5.2.4 Trust*

Trust, as a multidimensional construct, is challenging to define, and the participants might have had different definitions and understandings of it when they mentioned the need to trust. However, the most common understanding of trust across various academic disciplines is the 'intention to accept willingness to be vulnerable based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another' (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer 1998, 395), and, as there are no indications that the participants' use of the term 'trust' was inconsistent with the academic definition, I consider it to be similar or the same. Trust is unlikely to develop in predictable situations, in which the individual expectations of all parties are clearly defined: for trust to arise, interdependence, uncertainty, and risk must be present (Nooteboom 2006), and such conditions are common in most cross-cultural relationships, especially in the academic environment. Therefore, creating and building trust is a vital interpersonal skill in forging social relationships, and it is crucial for the development of global and cross-cultural competence (Bird & Osland 2006).

The 'Trust' dimension had a substantial presence in the interviews – as the desire to be trusted, by teachers, administrators and even students, such as the statement that trust was extended, and as an issue of the mistrust – of the students' ability, motivation, and learning skills and teachers' academic knowledge, goodwill and, consequently, the administration's competence in selecting qualified teachers, including their ability to facilitate learning in diverse cultural environments – *'trusting students'* and *'trusting teachers'* were *in-vivo* codes present in all four cases.

Students expressed their strong attitude toward trust as a default in a new relationship.

> *I believe it's better to trust people than to be always on your guard. You miss so much if you are always thinking about your wallet, or that someone is gonna cheat you. (Isabella, SLDF 24D)*

The instructors also expressed the desire to enjoy and extend trust from a somewhat normative perspective, rather than contemplating the ways of developing it and the reasons to grant it.

> *Administration should trust instructors and we should trust students – that is the main thing. (Ahmed, TnDM 30D)*

However, trust in the institution (the school) could translate into the trust in individual instructors.

> *The school selects good, competent instructors – I think we can trust the school on that. (Dolorez, SLDF, 1D)*

A student participant directly connected trust with cultural knowledge development, questioning the integrity of the school's administration and, in turn, the qualifications and integrity of an instructor (based on past negative experience in this particular case), however, expecting to enjoy the unconditional trust of the teachers and, by extension, of the administration.

> *It's an issue of trust – if the instructor abuses her position, how we can trust anything she says or does? To learn, the students have to trust the school [that it has the students' best interests at heart] to trust instructors and then we want to be trusted as well, not to be treated as criminals [potential cheaters]. (Matus, SICM 14C)*

An international student at the same school, while stating, based on my observations, mistaken assessment that his ethnic groups was suspected by the faculty to engage in cheating, was, nevertheless, prepared to prove his trustworthiness but did not expect it to be easy or even profitable for himself – not worth it.

*Of course, the instructors don't trust us – we Asians are all cheaters, that's what they think. So you have to first prove yourself, and sometimes it is not worth it. (Nurislan, SICM 4C)*

Other student participants reported engaging in trust building activities, 'to assure others of personal capabilities, desire to accommodate others' needs and to fulfill promises made to others' (Long & Sitkin 2006, 89). The participants took steps to clarify their intentions and understood obligations, as well as the intention to hold other actors responsible for their promises.

*With other students and with everybody else here too, I always try to be very clear of what I can do, what I promise for sure, and what I can only try to. Sometimes people misunderstand you, and sometime they do it on purpose. I am not sure, maybe it is because they tend to exaggerate and overpromise. But I think it is important to be very clear and it is better to ask several times to verify who is doing what, then when everyone goes 'oh, for sure, let's do it' and then nobody does anything at all. (Olive, SXDF 7D)*

Another way is to reward others' trustworthy behavior, and to indicate own willingness to trust, but unwillingness to be misused. The aim is, in a sense, to 'educate the other about us and to shape his or her trust related behavior in a direction we desire' (Kramer 2006, 72). There were several examples of participants adopting this approach, first, assuming competence and goodwill unless there were clear indications to the contrary, and then, rewarding others through good deeds, cooperation, and confidence, while simultaneously establishing clear boundaries.

To summarize, many participants mentioned trust as crucial for developing relationships and even engaging in learning. They also recognized that the ability to inspire trust was crucial for their success as students and ultimately for development of cultural knowledge.

## 5.3 Process: Cultural knowledge creation

The process of cultural knowledge creation and sharing is the central process of the phenomenon studied in this thesis. The process occurs within social networks, built and developed based on the participants' investment in social capital and in trust-building relationships. The participants in all programs stressed that cultural knowledge creation rather than mere adaptation to the current cultural environment was their ultimate goal in the international business and management programs in which they were enrolled. They expected to continue this process after graduation and in other social environments. They noted that culture is contextual and dynamic and the appropriate behavior in any given situation depends on several factors, including the social identity of the actor and the other persons involved, the degree of formality, and the expected level of cultural knowledge of the actor and the others. Simultaneously, cultural knowledge creation and sharing continuously influence all actors involved, affecting their cultural curiosity, motivation, social capital and the level of trust.

Driven by the individual conditions of cultural curiosity and motivation to engage in knowledge creation, an individual learner participates in the existing networks or develops new ones. Prudent decisions to trust and the ability to inspire trust contributes to an individual's existing social capital and allows the person to participate in more networks and access less open networks. The greater the extent to which a person participates in the cultural knowledge sharing and creation process, the more his/her individual curiosity and motivation increases, and in turn, social capital and the ability to develop trust and to make decisions to trust are likely to increase. Therefore, it is a continuous, long-term learning process.

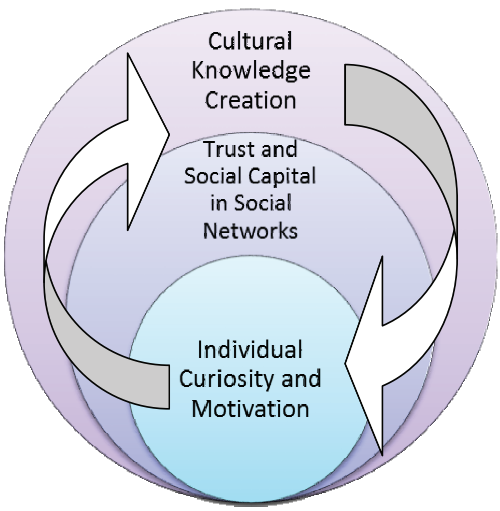


**Figure 11 Cultural knowledge creation and sensemaking in networks**

The most obvious step toward cultural knowledge creation is seeking information and culturally sensitive recommendations for appropriate actions from other members of one's networks. For example, the participants reported asking their friends, both local and international, for advice on how to address conflicts in school.

> *I was not sure if I could talk to the teacher about my grade, but we discussed it with others [Chinese students] and I decided to try it – how could it harm me? And then, when I had already decided and was going to talk to the teacher, Finnish students suggested they*

*come as well, and went with me. It was funny, because later they told me and my friends that they were all talking about it, but were not sure, and when I decided to go, they were glad to join me. So in a way, we [Chinese students] had to take the lead. (Lin, SnAF 9H)*

In certain contexts, a local resident is not the best source of information because while he/she could describe the most appropriate, or at least the common, behavior for a local person, it might be more difficult to explain the justifications for variations in such behavior. In the example below, the participant realized that her different social identities, which were significant in the specific context of the exchange of services, required a slightly different behavior pattern. However, this apparently simple local custom (tipping) can be confusing, even for a mature adult living in his/her home country.

*When I don't like how somebody treats me, I always try to talk to this person first [before making a judgment or taking an action] to make sure I understood him/her correctly. Sometimes I don't even see that there is a problem or why they are mad. And often it is another foreigner who can explain it to me. Just a small example. I could never understand how to tip help – I thought the more the better, but now I know I made other customers look bad. And I myself just looked like a stupid rich* gringa *[laughs]. So now I know I have to tip a little bit more, as it is expected from a foreigner, but not so much as to make the locals look bad. (Olive, SXDF 7D)*

The above example raises another important issue – the need to identify the problem or the possible source of a conflict before it can be solved. As Olive noted, another outsider to the social setting is occasionally necessary to help a person identify the problem. In general, the participants frequently reported using their peers for academic and social problem solving, as well as for professional advice, emotional support and camaraderie.

*One of the best things about the weekend class is that we can all discuss stuff during the lunch and after the class and we also try to stay in touch during the week, but we don't always manage to. And it's not only school stuff – it's often even more important to understand what the teachers meant by this or that – so it's cultural too. And it does not help to ask the teachers directly – they answer emails and, of course, we have their phone numbers, but they would just repeat what they said in class – and the same assignment might mean different expectations if it's from a Czech teacher or an American, and then we had one from the UK, and he was the most confusing one (not only because he was British, but still…) (Omer, SnCM 2C)*

In some cases, the international peers were from a specific region or a cultural area, which is connected to cultural distance (Kogut & Singh 1988), but the intention to continue and extend the social network to include the local peers in the future is noteworthy.

> *It's hard to figure out the Czechs, but we have a kind of 'Slavic' group – those from the FSU and Balkans – and we share notes and try to make sense of them. Yes, the Czechs are Slavs too, but somehow it's easier to deal with a guy from Bulgaria or from Georgia than with them. Maybe I can learn from my [current international] buddies and then make friends with Czechs – who knows? (Artem, SICM 10C)*

Not limiting their information sources to peer networks, many participants recognized the need for a professional or academic mentor or reported using cross-cultural groups as a collective mentor to solve more complicated issues and negotiate conflicts.

> *What I like about school B is that we get to work with teammates from different countries, and so when we work on a project, for example, a hotel business plan for Prof. Z, we can all pool our ideas together and come up with a unique proposal. When we all go on location, we talk about things, discuss them, share ideas, then we come up with something new, our own plan. That is how things are done in business, and I am glad we can practice that at school. (Vlado, SIBF 5B)*

The participants recognized that, even if no new information was added, simply verifying and comparing the existing information can be useful; as one of the uses of network connections is validation and problem reformulation (Cross et al. 2001).

> *It's good to have other bicultural and foreign students – we can discuss things and sometimes compare notes. (Karolina, SLCM 11C)*

Unsurprisingly, international faculty members were commonly regarded as a source of information, advice and mentorship, particularly by local students who had international career plans and, therefore, valued not only professional expertise but also social connections.

> *It's great when we can meet teachers socially – not only to know them better, but when you are friends, they can be your mentors, you have a long-term relationship, even after you graduate. This is very important and a huge plus of this program. (Carlos, SnDM 4D)*

Certain participants held that the social and cultural knowledge took precedent over the purely academic knowledge of the business disciplines.

> *It's important for us that teachers tell us not only about their subjects but also other stuff – how you find jobs, what are the expectations, give us examples. (Alfaro, SLDM 16D)*

When an instructor withdrew cultural knowledge and refused to engage in dialogue with the students and discuss cultural and contextual issues, she was perceived to lack precisely the academic qualifications, business knowledge and pedagogical skills (apparently, despite her formal academic qualifications and professional experience).

> *The teacher was very demanding, asked us to write long cases from the very beginning, before we even got a chance to learn anything, and she did not even know much about Latin America. I don't think she was a good teacher – she just lectured and asked us to write cases. That is not good teaching – she just wanted to show us who the boss was. She was like a textbook – and I can read a book at home. (Santiago, SnDM 3D)*

Weick (1995) suggests that individuals make sense of their experiences by constantly reshaping their identity positions (20), which are embedded in social role expectations and internalized through cognitive identity formation (Stryker & Burke 2000) or, in other words, are dependent on the social context (Weick 1995, 13). Although not all participants clearly expressed understandings of social identity and cultural knowledge that were dependent on the context, many noted that it was not sufficient, and often even not helpful, to attempt to mimic the behavior of others, including the local students and teachers. The need to maintain personal integrity to inspire and maintain trust and increase social capital, rather than blindly following the local rules, is expressed in the following example.

> *My foster parents cannot tell me who to be friends with. They say that my friends are not 'nice', that it is dangerous to bring them home or to go out with them (and I cannot go out by myself), but they are my friends, and I can make friends with whomever I like. Even my own parents don't choose my friends for me. (Sara, SXDF 3D)*

The students identified the need for cultural exchange in an academic environment and recognized that their social capital, including their personalities, attitudes toward learning, demographic characteristics and professional prospects, can positively influence the school's image. Below is an example of student-produced marketing material, and hence the exceedingly positive image of the Ecuadorian students is understandable and appropriate.

*Diversity should not be a problem if we focus on the competitive advantages it implies. There can emerge a fluid feedback from both cultural sides. Our students are well mannered, very nice, easy to approach on personal level, have a good level of English, and are respectful and eager to learn. Besides, you will be teaching upper-class students, educating the future leaders of Ecuador. (From students' paper on teacher recruitment, school D)*

To summarize, I will use the words of an international student from Prague, who, like many other participants, valued the social learning that occurred outside of class and the cultural knowledge that was created in the peer networks beyond formal academic education:

*We are kind of all helping each other, academically and socially. That is what is important, to build ties that will last – education is important, but this is more valuable – we all learn from each other, in class and after. (Jakub, SICM 8C)*

## 5.4 Consequences: Developing strategy

Based on the described dimensions, the learners appear to choose among several possible cultural knowledge creation strategies. There was no positive measurement or assessment of the participants possessing curiosity, motivation, social capital or a functional ability to trust and develop trust or access cultural knowledge that has been gained or shared. At best, this typology can be considered tentative and a subject for further study. However, it appeared that the participants who expressed merely curiosity in their cultural environment attempted only to gain knowledge, not to share existing or create new knowledge.

**Table 5 Typology of the learning strategies**

| Types/Characteristics | Curiosity | Motivation | Social Capital | Trust | Knowledge is |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tourist | Yes | No | No | No | Gained |
| Ambassador | No | Yes | Yes | No | Provided |
| Chameleon | Yes | Yes | No | No | Applied |
| Cosmopolitan | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Created |

The typology presented in Table 5 above is not a typology of the learners' personalities but of behavioral cultural knowledge creation strategies. Although certain individuals tend to select one strategy more often and some of the strategies are mutually exclusive, at least, in a given cultural situation (for example, ambassador and chameleon), a person can employ the full range of these strategies in different situations or progress from one to another throughout his/her life and career. Certain participants are presented as examples of a strategy; however, what is presented is their articulated approach to cultural knowledge creation at the particular time in the given context. As a number of participants discussed the different approaches, or strategies, that depended on their interest or curiosity, their current goals in the situation, the amount of social capital they possessed in the given environment, and their trust in the other members of a network, in their ability to adequately access their trustworthiness, or the risks involved in trust decision, the participants selected the most appropriate course of action. As with any other strategies, their utility and functionality depend on their suitability to the situation and the proficiency of execution – no strategy is inherently wrong or right.

The choice of strategies appeared contingent on the situation, and several strategies can be employed in the same settings. The examples of participants' behavior are based partially on observation (including their explanations and rationales for their behavior) and partially on the interviews. As the interview participants were asked to generally discuss their cross-cultural competence development process, particularly in the academic environment, not all of them specifically elaborated on their strategies. Therefore, it is not feasible to assign all or even the majority of the participants into the appropriate categories, even if I focus on the predominate ones.

The examples discussed below are certain indicators of the choice, and the limitations of interviews and observations addressed in chapter 3 are especially apparent when attempting to provide verifications of one strategy over the other. Nevertheless, it appears that whereas the tourist strategy is applied by all participants who discussed their approaches in at least some situations, the cosmopolitan strategy was reported to be the most preferred by the participants. It appears that when a participant deliberately considered his/her specific strategy of cultural knowledge creation, and thus brought it up in the interview, he/she would find the cosmopolitan strategy to be the most functional choice.

### *5.4.1* Tourist

A tourist has no interest in adapting to new cultural conditions: tourists seek thrills and exotic adventures, and their reference group tends to consists of the members of their own culture, occasionally those who remain at home and are connected through social media or other means of telecommunication. They tend to regard other cultures as merely an adventure and experience, not a possible choice of values.

Certain students jeopardized their educational process and personal safety to experience an exciting adventure, placing themselves in potentially dangerous situations – being attacked or exposed to hostile environment. A female exchange student was robbed on her way to class (among her other belongings, she lost her computer with homework and class notes, and she was obviously shaken and stressed in class); however, she refused to move to a safer, suburban location because 'she wanted to see the real Ecuador'. She reported continuing walking alone at night and meeting people at nightclubs, despite repeated warnings from student service professionals and her local classmates that such behavior is not safe for a foreigner, particularly a young, Caucasian female. A group of male exchange students from Scandinavia and Canada went on a weekend trip into the jungle, and one of the students became seriously ill, had to be hospitalized and missed his final exams; other students reported severe discomfort from festering insect bites. Although the desire to see exotic lifestyles and meet new people is a standard aspect of cultural exchange and educational experience, these students appeared to prefer adventure and thrills to gaining practical working experience at local businesses or socializing with their local peers to develop professional networks.

Tourist is the most common strategy in a foreign country, and it is not an exaggeration to hold that all foreigners are tourists, at least in certain instances – all are interested in the exotic, different, exciting aspects of a new setting. As mentioned in subchapter 5.2.1, when a learner considers a new culture to be exciting, cool and fun, as well as when the first impression of the new setting is favorable, it is more likely that he/she will be motivated to engage in the cultural knowledge development process. The limitations of this approach surface when it is the sole strategy, as the development remains superficial, and a learner sacrifices opportunities for deeper and lasting knowledge creation for a short-term adventure and excitement-generating activities. Exchange students, both in Finland and in Ecuador, expressed more interest in sporting, social and holiday activities then in academic and professional ones.

> *The most important thing is that I managed to visit Santa Claus in Finland. (Edite, SXAF 10H)*

Although such statements can be considered humorous and even cute, the fact that many of the exchange students at school A who participated in the interviews did not appear to form an opinion of the program, could not imagine they could use 'school ties' in the future, and during breaks in class, appeared to discuss shopping trips and nightclubs more often than anything else, is indicative of shallow knowledge acquisition. Most (but not all) exchange students at school D declined to be interviewed. Thus, I have to rely on class discussions and second-hand reports.

While certain students, such as *Daniella (SXDF*), complained that they could not obtain practical experience appropriate to their business major (marketing, micro-loans and local co-op enterprises) despite having been promised it and some took steps to find alternative assignments on their own (*Sara, SXDF*), most of the exchange students expressed relief that they could spend more time travelling and engaging in extreme sports, occasionally at the expense of their academic success or even health.

It is remarkable that while some of the students specifically stated that they did not wish to behave like 'tourists' and desired to see '*the real people'* (in all three countries), they ended up being tourists, only more social ones. 'Slumming' has a negative connotation in English, but this is precisely what they were hoping to do – visit the places where the lower SES individuals, or rural ones (in Finland and the Czech Republic) lived, believing them to be more genuine. However, the same students admitted that they were not interested in visiting low-income neighborhoods or rural villages in their home countries.

The tourist strategy appears to be the first employed in a new cultural setting and could be productive in the short run, generating cultural curiosity and producing affective motivation, but it is unlikely to be effective for extended periods of time.

### *5.4.2 Ambassador*

'*Where I am, there is America*' is a direct quote from a participant (*Brian, TIDM*). The ambassadors are deeply aware and proud of their cultural backgrounds and they do not actively attempt to expand their experience and are generally cautious – eat what they are accustomed to at home, take conventional vacations for foreign tourists or with local friends who share their 'foreign' tastes. This strategy is effective for instructors who are employed to educate students about their own cultures as part of their subjects. '*I am paid to be an American'* – another direct quote (*Brian, TIDM*).

The ambassador strategy was employed by the participants who believed that it was their goal, or even moral duty, to promote their own culture, either as an aspect of their professional duties (*Brian, TIDM*), in their role as international exchange students (*Fang, Mai and Zhen, SIAF*) or as hosts (*Luisa, SLDF)* who should educate visitors on the local culture. The ambassadors often state that it is their moral obligation to educate others about their own cultures, even at the expense of their own learning.

> *Look at me, I tell my students, I am the future. This is how Ecuador will look in ten years. Students got to know how to work with people from different cultures.* (*Ahmet, TnDM 30D*)

However, the forceful position of promoting one's own cultural values does not necessarily preclude the ambassadors from learning about other cultures and even applying such knowledge as appropriate, but it is subordinate to the advocating the values of their cultures.

They rarely engaged in collaborative learning, and if they realized that there was little interest among their peers or students in their home culture, they became withdrawn and upset (*Ken, SIBF*) but nevertheless made no attempt to find common ground or expending their knowledge. '*I don't understand why Finns are not interested in China more – it has so many business opportunities!*' (*Mai, SIAF 9H)*. In such situations, this strategy becomes dysfunctional; however, the ambassador strategy is rarely employed as the predominate one and is more likely to only be used in professional situations, by instructors and administrators, while in a social setting a more functional strategy, such as the chameleon or cosmopolitan, can be used. Nonetheless, the aggressive promotion of one's own cultural values and patterns of the behavior, even of the culture that most students consider interesting and useful to become familiar with, precludes shared cultural knowledge creation and might discourage other learners, particularly the students, from engaging in knowledge creation.

### *5.4.3 Chameleon*

This strategy is often employed by individuals who have travelled substantially during their formative years, had caregivers from different cultures ('third culture kids') and who were educated in a culture other than their original one. Instead of learning, adjusting to and internalizing the new cultural values and attitudes, chameleons mirror behavior without questioning it or attempting to reconcile their personal values, which also occasionally conflict, as they were acquired in different situations and cultural environments, with the new ones.

The weakness of this strategy is that a person, while being fully in touch with his/her culture A, culture B and culture C egos, could be less clear of his/her own personal values and eventually might become exhausted and feel alienated. Others, if they observe such a person presenting different behavioral patterns, expressing different attitudes or making different value judgments in different situations, might question the person's integrity, and therefore, chameleons are unlikely to inspire trust. While they could have several vast social networks, these networks do not overlap, and furthermore, if they do come in contact (often unintentionally) they could collapse due to the issue of trust. Chameleons tend to complain that they do not belong anywhere, do not have 'their own people', are strangers everywhere and often cannot comprehend, or at least articulate, their own values, attitudes or even wishes while moving among different behavior patterns and expectations. While it appears that they could substantially contribute to cultural knowledge creation, they experience difficulty even describing culturally influenced behavior, as they have difficulties separating cultural behavior from personality-influenced or general human behaviors and do not have means for cultural comparison. They often employ stereotypes and generalizations in their cultural discourse.

Two students in Prague, though they reported feeling comfortable in the city and enjoying their studies, were bewildered by the attitudes of their classmates toward peer evaluations – when asked to evaluate other students' oral presentations in class, these two students gave everyone an A (excellent) '*because we wanted to be nice to our classmates,*' and they were upset that the classmates did not reciprocate; both of them received a C (satisfactory). They considered this a sign of a negative attitude on the part of their peers. When asked, whether the grades were fair, they agreed that they might be, but that was not the point – if a teacher had given them this grade, they would not have complained or even been surprised, but their own classmates! '*And we even went to lunch with them many times'* (*Dimitrios and Niko SICM 12C).* Their classmates wrote in their group evaluations that both of the students worked well and were easy to cooperate with but could not tolerate criticism and took it personally. *Dimitrios* and *Niko* actively participated in class discussions, completed their projects on time and according to the requirements, and appeared friendly with their classmates (despite the low evaluation), but they both reported not understanding their classmates, finding their attitudes confusing and inconsistent.

*Mike* was an excellent student – his work was exceptional, and his classmates competed to have him in their project groups. He had a busy social life, worked for an international company and appeared to be equally at home in the US-influenced school environment, making astute evaluations of the positive and negative characteristics of his education, planning ahead for his professional career and was well aware that he could work in several countries due to his language skills and cultural awareness. Nevertheless, he reported feeling lost and confused and not belonging anywhere (*Mike, SnDM 12D*). *Carlos* (*SnDM 4D*) expressed the similar feelings and added that although he had not experienced any problems adjusting to the European academic environment and social life, or to the more culturally close Ecuador, he did not know where he would feel at home. Neither of them was considering permanently returning to their home countries, stating that they did not belong there anymore.

*Tereza* (*SLBF 7B*) was living in two countries – her family was in Prague, and she was working for an international company in another EU country. She studied in the UK-style business program and had a clear understanding of what she needed for her professional growth. However, she did not know where she should stay and considered moving to the third new country (however, her husband was not likely to agree to the move). She stated that the conflicting roles of a wife, a student, a manager and an expat made her feel pulled in different directions, and she did not really know what she ultimately wanted or where she belonged.

However, the chameleon strategy can work well if a person has a business that operates in different countries, and it can be a valid, if a limited, strategy.

> *I am at home in Ecuador and in the US, but I don't think I could live in one place without the other. Luckily, I don't have to choose – I go to the US all the time' (Melissa, SLDF 17D).*

The chameleon strategy can be identified when a learner successfully intermingle with his/her social environment; however, he/she either cannot or does not attempt to understand the values that govern others' behavior. Chameleons speak of feeling confusion, bewilderment and even betrayal – employing phrases such as 'I am doing exactly what you wanted me to do, then why I don't get the results I want?' In another situation, a learner can provide explanations for his/her cultural adjustment, but it is a normative and stereotypical one: 'All Americans do that' or 'They would not do that, it is against the law'. Even if the explanations are generally correct, they fail to differentiate among the subtle nuances of appropriate behavior, and to use a cliché (as chameleons often appear to think in them), appear to be more Catholic than the Pope.

The chameleon strategy allows a learner to master the intricacies of cross-cultural knowledge and appear to be successfully adapted to several cultural environments simultaneously, yet it fails to differentiate among their separate worlds and leaves them lost and disconnected. This strategy can be efficient for a short period or when the different cultural egos are unlikely to overlap. However, a long-term application of this strategy entails a high personal cost – alienation, social isolation, a lack of close relationships, and sporadic career growth. This strategy might be successful as a step toward a more efficient cosmopolitan one.

### *5.4.4 Cosmopolitans*

It is not by chance that many of the learners I interviewed discussed employing this strategy, as it is the most suitable for the long-term development of cultural knowledge and expertise. Many of the study participants were particularly interested in cross-cultural knowledge and competence (and that is why they volunteered to participate in the interviews), and the theoretical sampling strategy targeted those who could further contribute to the discussion, based on class observations and informal conversations. The cosmopolitan strategy is a long-term one that combines the development of expertise with collaborative learning. As the chameleons, learners who successfully employ the cosmopolitan strategy often come from cross-cultural family backgrounds and/or travelled extensively during their formative years; in addition, they are often in relationships with partners from other cultural backgrounds and have plans to move on to new cultural challenges - '*I can move anywhere' (Goran, SICM, 3C*) is a belief that they share. Another important characteristic of successful cosmopolitans is their intention to share knowledge with other learners and arrive at common understanding and cooperation. Teachers who employ this strategy recognize the students' need for mentorship and openness in the learning process *(Oscar, TIBM 9B*) and are willing to devote time and effort to be mentors and coaches for novice learners, both students and colleagues *(Helga, TIDF 20D)*

Cosmopolitans are seasoned travelers who adapt to local cultural behavior and honor local beliefs while maintaining their distinct cultural values and characteristics. The cosmopolitan strategy in the cross-cultural development sense is continuous improvement, based on existing cultural knowledge, the desire to develop existing knowledge and apply it in another place, knowing ones' cultural roots but being willing and able to gain cultural knowledge opportunistically and use it as needed. This strategy is beneficial for their networks, as they are able and willing to disseminate knowledge, negotiate conflicts and create new, shared values and attitudes.

> *Being in Finland is not such a great change for me – I've lived in the UK and in Germany, so I can see that some things are like in England, and some academic rules are close to the German ones, so I just try to find familiar things, but of course keeping in mind that it is a different country, and I need to check. Just because the things are similar, they are not the same. Still, when you get used to a few new places, it's getting easier. (Polina, SXAF 4H)*

This is the strategy that many participants would like to employ, or believe they are employing. Obviously, to access a success of this strategy in different environments, a longer and more in-depth study would be required. Yet, it emerged as an ideal long-term, cross-cultural development strategy for business education. Those who choose a cosmopolitan approach are wholly committed to the development of cultural knowledge and a global mindset and expect to be continuously engaged in such development after leaving the educational setting upon graduation, and throughout their business careers, in both the personal and professional spheres of their lives.

Student participants who employ the cosmopolitan strategy also recognize the need for collaboration and support, not only for students but also for instructors, and enjoy participating in support groups, social networks and other forms of cooperation *(Ana, SLDF 9D).* They are proactive in arranging international activities on campus, such as research seminars *(Alejandro, SLDM 10D)* or student led enterprises *(Leah, SIBF 5B*), to improve the quality of their education and student life and are convinced of the need for long-term, intense collaboration to continue their cultural knowledge development.

> *I have a lot of friends, and I can always ask them for help. They are from the school, and now I have met other people, so I really don't need that much help from the school administration. But there are some things, of course, that they know best – for example, about classes and [graduation] requirements. But everyday stuff – I don't go to them for it. We also do things on our own, to improve student life, like this sandwich sale [a pilot program for school lunches]. You should know when to ask for help or advice and when to show initiative. (Leah, SnBF 5B)*

The crucial factors that separate them from those who practice the chameleon strategy are a strong sense of social identity, trust and the resulting social capital. The understanding that their identities are complex and contextual is strong and persistent, and in contrast to the chameleons, they are unwilling to only present one, convenient social role, even if this is not always the easiest choice.

> *I am really glad that there are other bicultural students at school C – it is hard to be the only one, and people always insist that you tell them who you are – are you Czech? Or German? And I am both. (Karolina, SLCM 11C)*

They change with their cultural environments, not only by absorbing new knowledge but also by enriching their social groups with their cultural knowledge and understandings and are very clear about what they could contribute to the cultural experience and how intercultural exchange can be improved *(Miras, SLCM 9C).*

The practitioners of the cosmopolitan strategy have long-term career plans that include international collaboration or expectations of working abroad. They have broad social networks and are actively involved in social and academic life; however, they have specific and constructive suggestions for how the students' (and the teachers') cultural learning experience can be improved and express willingness to participate in these improvement projects.

It appears that the students have the global mindset or, at least, the drivers for developing it: 'curiosity about the world', 'explicit articulation of the current mindsets', 'exposure to diversity', and 'a disciplined attempt to develop an integrated perspective' (Gupta & Govindarajan 2002, 120). They share knowledge on local practices, the available economic and social resources, and how to do business, not only for the academic activities but also for existing business projects and future professional goals. Below is a representative example of a cosmopolitan, pragmatic approach to knowledge sharing and creation, which is based on shared business knowledge and social networks.

> *We are planning to go into business with A. (international Ukrainian student) when we graduate, and even now we are building our contacts with the students from Serbia and other parts of the Balkans. And they introduce us to other potential partners. We can share our local knowledge and discuss future projects because we are all on the same page. After all, most of us took the same business strategy course. (Aleksi, SICM 10C)*

# 6 REVIEW OF THE FINDINGS AND THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

*My home is not a place, it is people.*
*Lois McMaster Bujold, "Barrayar", 1991*

## 6.1 The relationship between the current theoretical concepts and findings in grounded theory

This chapter has two main objectives – to consolidate the findings and relate them to the research questions as finalized through the constructivist GT process based on the participants' perceptions of their social reality and current theoretical concepts. As stated in chapter 3, the grounded theory method demands an in-depth re-examination of the study's findings in connection with the existing theoretical concept.

The primary research questions, finalized based on the concerns and experiences of the participants are:

- What is the international business students' experience in a multicultural learning environment?
- How do they create cultural knowledge in a multicultural learning environment?
- What factors influence this process?

In particular, the goal was to examine the students' social cultural knowledge creation and development of cross-cultural competence in a multicultural learning environment. This chapter discusses the findings presented in chapters 4 and 5 in light of the research questions stated in chapter 1 and the methodology employed, described in chapter 3, and connects them to existing theories, including the theoretical concepts and the provisional framework presented in chapter 2.

In section 2.1, I address the connection between the current theories and the GTM: in particular, that engagement with present theories does not occur prior to the presentation of the study's findings, but rather concurrently or subsequently. In this study, I present the theoretical discussion and its connection to the findings at this stage, as doing so concurrently with the findings could result in a lack of clarity and focus, as well as in excessive chapter length.

Although GT privileges empirical data, involvement with current theoretical concepts (formal theories, hypotheses and specific theoretical ideas) is a vital aspect of the research process for several reasons: to make a meaningful contribution to scientific knowledge, position the findings within a broader theoretical domain, and enhance the quality of the research by explaining the findings and raising them to a further theoretical level (Eisenhardt 2002). Thus, the literature is treated as a supplementary data source, which contributes to overall research quality (Coyne & Cowley 2006).

Revisiting the provisional framework, presented in Figure 3 in subchapter 2.5, it can be concluded that individuals engage in the cultural knowledge sharing and creation process because they are motivated by curiosity and contextual practical goals. These individual conditions are discussed in detail in subchapter 6.4.2. No other individual conditions emerged as salient dimensions. The supportive organizational or educational environment, while beneficial for the cultural learning process, only played a marginal role and therefore was relegated to the context position in the explanatory matrix. Its role is discussed in chapter 4 and revisited in subchapter 6.5. The learning process is not only long-term but also continuous, as the participants expressed their intention to engage in cultural knowledge creation in new environments. The social-based process of cultural sensemaking and sensegiving supported by feedback and mentorship is addressed in subchapter 6.3. This process occurs within networks, which are created and accessed through social identities and supported by existing social capital and trust. The creation of networks is reviewed in subchapter 6.3. Learners are likely to develop new international identities and integrate their existing social roles within these fluid and unstructured networks. The strategies for developing new roles and the integration of existing ones are reexamined in subchapter 6.6.

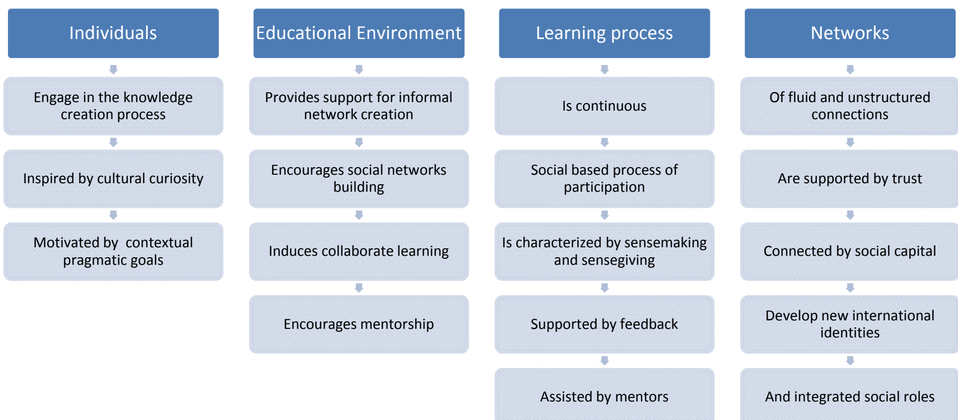


**Figure 12 Revised cultural knowledge creation framework**

The following subchapters answer the restated research questions, based on the contexts and educational conditions, which were described in chapter 4, and the other findings – individual conditions, process and consequences, which were reported in chapter 5, and connect the findings with current theoretical concepts.

## 6.2 Experience of cultural knowledge creation and the sharing process

The participants experience cultural knowledge sharing and creation as a social process in a community of proactive learners (Brown & Duguid 1991). They adopt a long-term and deliberate approach to learning, which is characterized by intense and continuous practice, and is positively influenced by feedback and mentorship (Ericsson 1996). Their attitude is more pragmatic (Engeström 2000) than the meta-cognitive one expected in the cultural intelligence tradition of intercultural competence (Thomas 2006) and is consistent with the practice of acquiring cross-cultural competence in the business environment (Blasco et al. 2012). Several learning theories could be applied to the processes of cross-cultural competence development, for example, social learning (Bandura 1977), experiential learning (Kolb 1984), transformational learning (Mezirow 1991), situated learning (Lave & Wenger 1991), and cognitive theories of learning (Argyris & Schon 1978; Senge 1990). However, the emergent data most clearly corresponded to the expertise development approach of Ericsson et al. (1993), as well as Elkjaer's (2004) third way of learning, which combines learning acquisition with participation.

The emergent perspective supports the understanding of culture as shared knowledge and competence development, based on shared meanings and interpretations, not on consistent patterns of behavior, in which meanings are produced and negotiated through social interactions (Holden 2002). Therefore, the participants perceive culture not as a stable system or substance but as composed of relationships and individual identifications and affiliations with a diversity of cultures that are dynamic and contextual, with fluid and contingent boundaries (Hannerz 1996). Both individual cultural identity constructions and their social organizations of meaning are perceived as contextual (Fog Olwig & Haastrup 1997). This view was presented more than half a century ago by Clyde Kluckhohn in one of his definitions of culture as 'pooled learning' (1951) and was more recently addressed in Kitayama's (2002) system view of culture as intertwined with the local context. The contexts of learning are grounded in pragmatism and symbolic interactionism (Clarke 1991), where social worlds are viewed as coordinated collective actions.

Social relationships play an important role in the individual ability to learn, acquire and create new skills and knowledge (Field 2005, 4), through the immediate social environment, as in situated learning (Lave & Wenger 1991), and in experiential learning (Kolb 1984). However, the intentional search for and sharing of knowledge and its creation in social networks is less acknowledged in the current cultural learning literature, although the necessity of expatriates to create such networks for information gathering and emotional support is well recognized (Farh, Bartol, Shapira & Shin 2010), for example, the need for double loop learning that creates novel action templates (Argyris & Schon 1996).

The other learning theory applicable to cultural knowledge sharing and creation is experiential learning theory (ELT) formulated by Kolb (1984). However, ELT was developed for adult learning based on practical experience, and while it has been applied to cross-cultural development processes (Carter 2007; Yamazaki & Kayes 2004; Ng et al. 2009), it targets individual learning and an individual experience, not long-term, group-based knowledge creation. Although certain activities are inherited in practical and experiential learning, for example, concrete experience and reflective observation, the participants did not report involvement in abstract conceptualization, and many specifically stated that they considered active experimentation with their environments to be ill-advised and in many cases dangerous, as the risk of misunderstanding and potential for inappropriate actions are too high.

The approach to learning as problem solving and finding new frames of reference (Mezirow 1991) is more in tune with the participants' experiences, yet the analyzed process occurred within social networks. Contexts and social activities are central to CCC and knowledge creation (Glisby & Holden 2003), and while Kolb (1984) and Mezirow (1991) consider learning to be an individual process, Lave and Wenger (1991) adopt a different approach and consider learning to be as a process, situated within a participation framework and facilitated by differences in perspective. Learning itself can be considered a cultural process (Cook & Yanow 1993; Elkjaer 2004), and cultural knowledge development abilities can only be 'learned over time through intercultural interactions' (Thomas 2006, 90) and experience (Blanco et al. 2012). Elkjaer (2004) suggests that, while thinking is instrumental to learning, learning is a practical, rather than a purely cognitive, process and knowledge is embedded in a community of practice in which participation and learning occur as a social process and cannot be separated from the creation of identity. This is consistent with the Dewey's (1925) view that knowledge is rooted in human experience, both individual and collective, as a process and a result. Therefore, the participants' experience of cultural knowledge creation as a process of constructing communities of practice, in which members seek to become expert practitioners (Brown & Duguid 1991; Richter 1998), is consistent with the pragmatic, practical and social-based approach to learning and the long-term development of expertise, where '(k)nowing is a situated, culturally embedded, and socially mediated practice [and]… learning does not mean to get something, but to become a part of a community of practice that shares a common interest…'(Wegner & Nucklas 2013, 3).

The participants engaged in group-based cultural sensemaking, grounded in identity constructions – a social and continuous process, driven by plausibility rather than accuracy (Weick 1995). Klein and colleagues (Klein et al. 2006) suggest that

> *…by sensemaking, modern researchers seem to mean something different from creativity, comprehension, curiosity, mental modeling, explanation, or situational awareness, although all these factors or phenomena can be involved in or related to sensemaking. Sensemaking is a motivated, continuous effort to understand connections (which can be among people, places, and events) in order to anticipate their trajectories and act effectively. (2006, 71)*

Sensemaking is a form of social learning, an on-going activity undertaken to reduce uncertainty through shared understandings (tacit and explicit) to improve effectiveness (Osland et al. 2007). Sensemaking is a social process that occurs within a community formed by a shared network with interrelated meanings (Gertsen & Soderberg 2000). Collective sensemaking depends on the level of cultural cohesion and belonging (homophily and social capital). The more experiences the members of a group share, the more likely they are to develop common values and worldviews, and hence knowledge creation is easier and more direct. Then, the competence to create knowledge under an increasing degree of diversity would be an indication and a measure of cross-cultural competence. As a minimum, it would include the ability to identify, use and generate social capital, trust and learning expertise.

Intercultural sensemaking leads to higher level of cultural understanding (Osland et al. 2007) through schema development, either through a script (in a familiar situation) or a strategy (Bass & Bass 2008), if the situation is novel. Sensemaking 'arises from the interaction of cognition and context, and, in turn, directs individuals' attention, interpretation and actions' (Elsbach et al. 2005, 424) toward a collective mindset. Although the study participants expected to encounter a novel social and cultural environment upon entering the study programs, they discussed the various strategies they adopted to comprehend and make sense of the novel cultural environment individually and collectively.

## 6.3 How do the participants create cultural knowledge in a multicultural learning environment?

The participants' experience of socially and community-based cultural knowledge creation supports the view that human beliefs and behavior are influenced by social norms and values that are negotiated with other members of communities via communication and cooperation (Dewey 1925). When such negotiations occur among individuals from groups or communities with different norms and values, further belief-habit inquiry is needed to create a new belief-habit (Peirce 1878). Therefore, knowledge is created through a process of decision or solving similar problems as a function of social processes.

Based on the student participants' accounts of their experiences and perceptions, their cultural knowledge and social network development process was consistent with the models of multicultural knowledge development proposed by Skobeleva (2008). The first step of the process is the motivation to engage in the process of knowledge sharing. All participants explicitly expressed their desire to develop cross-cultural competence, and many stated that they believed it could be accomplished through developing networks with their local and international peers. Therefore, it appears that all participants arrived at this stage. In addition, there was strong support for the persistent motivation to engage in social and cultural networks, even when it proved to be challenging, as can be the case in a cross-cultural situation (Molinsky 2007).

This step is consistent with the sensemaking process of 'framing the situation' or building joint frames (Bird & Osland 2006), in which the collaborators strive to identify the situation and scan for conflicting interpretations. The participants, however, did not expect to observe familiar frames, as they realized that they were in a novel cultural situation and the purpose of the experience was to engage in learning and knowledge sharing. Although they might have defaulted to familiar ways of understanding the situation, they reported making conscious efforts to avoid doing so.

Making attributions, the second step of a cross-cultural sensemaking process (Bird & Osland 2006), is similar to 'knowledge symmetrization' (Skobeleva 2008): the learners recognize the limits of their knowledge and seek new knowledge of and novel solutions to common problems – it is a combined transfer of valuable experience and perception adjustment. Students at all four schools reported that they enjoyed having diverse team members, particularly in classes that addressed international subjects – marketing, business, and management – to allow them to use one another's knowledge of the environment, consider a variety of approaches, and develop novel solutions and entrepreneurship ideas. Many also stated that they actively seek connections with and knowledge from local communities, their local and international peers and faculty members to enhance their comprehension and engage in joint problem solving.

The final stage of the model (Skobeleva 2008) is a 'mental hologram,' in which new opportunities and possible courses of action are determined. This stage is characterized by intense trust building and collaboration; the process is facilitated by possessing a shared value of collaboration and knowledge, both professional and academic. It is consistent with the script or strategy (Bass & Bass 2009) selection step in a sensemaking process (Bird & Osland 2006). The creation of new knowledge, including cultural knowledge, coincides with deeper trust and a strengthening of social ties and a simultaneous increase in the social capital of all members, as presented in Figure 13 below.

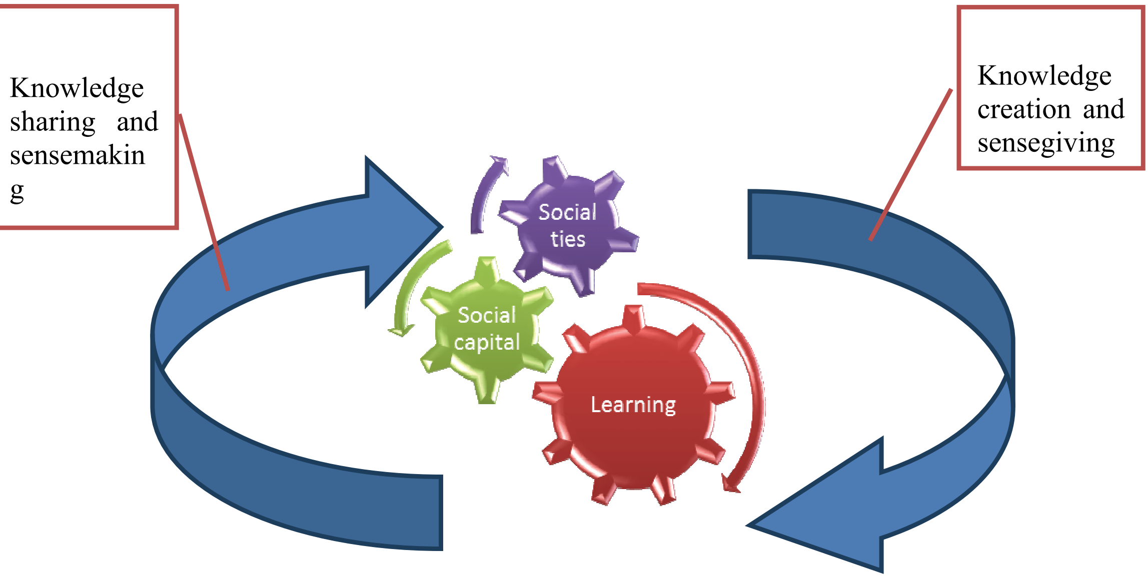


**Figure 13 Knowledge creation and sharing: Sensemaking and sensegiving**

The result is the discovery of new opportunities and solutions. Skobeleva and Gomes suggest that the model of cultural knowledge creation can be applied to learning, particularly in business-related subjects in cross-cultural environments (2011). Bartholomew and Adler (1996) propose 'collaborative cross-cultural learning' through the construction of cross-national and multinational networks for international and global managers. The importance, and even superiority, of building networks for knowledge sharing and learning was also apparent to the participants.

The participants regarded the development of cultural knowledge as a social-based process of participation and becoming a member of a community. The university itself can be considered a learning community; however, as the analysis of the learning environments as contexts and educational conditions in chapter 4 demonstrates, the researched programs, despite their academic rhetoric and possible intentions, at the time of the study, failed to create learning communities or adopt participatory teaching philosophies. Therefore, to engage in a cultural knowledge creation and sharing process, the student participants had to establish and develop their own networks, which were chiefly informal, but that, in many situations, overlapped with the formal academic structure, as they included their peers, faculty members and student service professionals, in addition to local community members.

Networking is recognized as a cross-cultural, knowledge-sharing activity (Holden 2002), and building and maintaining relationships in general is one of the main competencies of cross-cultural knowledge absorption (Kayes, Kayes &

Yamazaki 2005). Cross et al. (2001) note that individuals turn to their network connections for five reasons (1) solutions; (2) meta-knowledge; (3) problem reformulation; (4) validation and (5) legitimation. Similarly, the participants who were able to create ties in the new social environment used them for general advice, finding new solutions, providing meta-knowledge, problem reformulation, and more rarely, for validation and legitimation.

Adopting a cultural identity perspective, which regards identities as fluid, multiple and context dependent (Hall 1992), Kraimer and colleagues (Kraimer, Shaffer, Harrison & Ren 2012) suggest that to develop an international role identity in a novel cultural environment, individuals apply a sensemaking process (Louis 1980) that allows them to revise their role identity (Kohonen 2004) and realize personal and professional growth based on their experience (Dickman & Harris 2005; Kohonen 2004; 2008; Suutari & Mäkelä 2007). Involvement in the community increases not only their personal satisfaction (Tharenou & Caulfield 2010) but also the significance of their international identity, which differs from other personal and professional identities (Kohonen 2008; Peltonen 1999).

In social networks, in contrast to more formal academic networks, the connections are fluid and unstructured. The participants interact on the basis of shared interests, identities, and values; they contribute social capital obtained from other networks and relationships into the network in question (Lin 2002). The study participants stressed the need to develop new identities and adapt their behaviors to their existing identities and personalities rather than blindly mimicking the behavioral patterns of the local communities and academic mentors as the basis for maintaining personal integrity, trustworthiness and the resulting social capital. Participants who were able to integrate their various social roles and cultural identities were also able to develop and use what Molinsky terms 'cultural dexterity' (2013) and reported feeling a part of both local and global communities and satisfied with their life situation and cultural learning.

The organizational informational and emotional support, if it is perceived as valuable, reduces the sojourners' motivation to establish informal networks outside the organizations, and thus has a counterproductive effect on their long-term satisfaction and cultural knowledge creation (Farh et al. 2010). However, for young adults, the majority of the study participants (students), who initially had limited social capital and few opportunities to access and create it in a novel cultural situation, the lack of institutional structure and support might be devastating and create a sense of confusion (Mortimer, Zimmer-Gembeck, Holmes & Shanahan 2002), which is detrimental to their social and emotional well-being. Therefore, not all of the participants were able to create and develop new, informal networks in multicultural learning environments. However, in certain instances, not only professional or academic success but the very survival of international students requires the competence to make connections and develop networks with individuals from diverse groups and backgrounds, avoid social isolation and 'the ability to deal with multiple and diverse … social networks that become particularly diverse through globalization'. (Brimm 2010, 44)

Whereas there is general agreement on the benefits of developing social capital for individuals and organizations and the specific benefits of transnational capital, including emotional support, trust and global identity formation (Payne, Moore, Griffis & Autry 2011), there is debate over how social capital can be developed. The ability to create social relationships is considered a core factor in global managers' performance (Black et al. 1991; Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer & Luk 2005) and the development of a global mindset (Beechler & Javidan 2007; Osland et al. 2012), but the understanding of social capital is often limited to professional networks and international experience (Jokinen 2010).

The participants in this study discussed the specific strategies they employed to access and develop their social capital in a new location and means of extending their networks and strengthening existing ties. While being in a different geographical location enabled them to create social networks through their existing social capital and trust-building approaches, physical presence alone does not result in either social capital or developed networks. As most, but not all, student participants lacked professional status and professional networks, their approach to social capital and network building was primarily informal and ingenious: they had to exploit the diverse opportunities presented in academic and local communities, identify introductions and sources of information and were then likely to share information and in turn provide advice and support to other members of their networks, consequently increasing their social capital. It appears that the students' approach to transnational social capital creation was the most authentic; however, the development of social capital, while leading to a global mindset, requires other conditions, specifically cultural curiosity, motivation, and existing trust and social capital to pursue its further increase. These individual factors are discussed in subchapter 6.4.

Social capital facilitates knowledge transfers in networks (Inkpen & Tsang 2005) and provides access to advice, assistance, support and referral trust (Levy et al. 2013). It can benefit not only individuals but also the companies in a variety of ways, including promoting innovation (Lazarova & Taylor 2009). In addition, social capital per se can be the object of knowledge transfer (Homans 1958). Granovetter (1983) argues that '(w)eak ties provide people with access to information and resources beyond those available in their own social circle; but strong ties have greater motivation to be of assistance and are typically more easily available' (209).

Network participants are likely to seek connections with the members with high-value (high initial knowledge) and/or with equal knowledge; therefore, it is 'easier for networks members with high initial knowledge to gain relations and exchange knowledge because they are more attractive to other members and boost their acquisition of social capital' (Wang 2013, 285), which leads to the small-world phenomenon, namely, the gathering of network participants with low knowledge around those with high knowledge (ibid, 286). The student participants recognized this phenomenon and expressed the desire to connect and develop social ties with faculty and peer mentors, whom they perceived as highly knowledgeable in the cultural domain. The expatriates arriving at new locations also seek to establish social ties with those who are able and willing to share knowledge and provide emotional support and, in turn, those who are able to establish such ties, feel positively about themselves and the assignment in general (Farh et al. 2010). Information and knowledge can flow in informal networks without any party actively seeking it. Lin (2005) calls this the 'informal working of social capital, or its invisible hand' (10). However, seeking and using the resources of a more knowledgeable member of a network leads to more knowledge creation and an increase in individual social capital (ibid).

Therefore, while it is possible to generate and share knowledge simply by participating in networks, actively seeking and sharing results in more knowledge or a more central position in the network. This is consistent with the cosmopolitan strategy of cultural knowledge generation discussed in detail in subchapter 6.6.

Trust has a positive influence on knowledge creation and sharing (Blau 1964) and, linking social networks with the optimal level of trust, Gargiulo and Ertug (2006) suggest that while each 'new joint affiliation increases the level of initial trust linearly, it is more likely that the level of trust increases exponentially with the level of antecedent variables, at least up to a certain level' (182). Although trust is beneficial for the development of social capital and networks, the study participants had no opportunities to dedicate time to trust building, and simultaneously, both trust and social capital could be only developed in social relationships. All of these processes occurred simultaneously for the participants and reinforced one another in a continuous, fluid cycle.

The research on 'homophily' demonstrates that trust is 'more likely to emerge between parties that are 'similar' with respect to characteristics that are relevant in a specific social setting (Gargiulo & Ertug 2006, 167). McKnight and colleagues (McKnight, Cummings & Chervany 1998) further this reasoning and suggest that belonging to the same category alone is not sufficient: potential partners who share goals and values and have positive perceptions of one another are more likely to trust one another. However, direct experience is not an absolute prerequisite for the development of trustworthy social networks: Uzzi (1996) states that embedded ties characterized by a high level of trust can also result from third-party referrals and personal relationships – a statement that is supported by the study participants' accounts of their experiences.

Trust can be accorded to an individual based on personal competence – 'competence-based trust' – or on perceived personal integrity, benevolence, and goodwill – 'goodwill trust' (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman 1995). As it is generally less difficult to assess ability than intentions, trustees employ heuristics to evaluate the trustworthiness of a new partner. Perceived similarity might lead to trust (Nicholson, Compeau & Sethi 2001), and research suggests that individuals tend to trust individuals from their own national or ethnic group to a greater extent (Huff & Kelley 2003). However, while belonging to the same social groups and sharing interests appeared to increase the level of and intention to trust among the participants, national belonging or ethnicity had no significant influence. The trust in an institution or an organization can be extended to its members, for example, among academics, formal qualifications and recognized scientific knowledge might be perceived as indicators of personal integrity and goodwill towards students.

To minimize uncertainty and improve the quality of decisions, one can strive to distinguish between 'trustworthy and untrustworthy social actors' and only engage with those who are worthy of and reciprocate trust (Bacharach & Gambetta 2001; Yamagishi 2001). In this case, these actors could be peers, faculty members or the schools as represented by their administrations. However, this approach can be problematic for students in particular, as they are not only placed in a novel cultural and social environment in which the cues of trustworthiness and information concerning past actions could be difficult to obtain, but they also have less ability to disengage. It is not easy to avoid untrustworthy faculty members, and the decision to transfer to another school might be costly not only in financial but also in educational career terms. In such situations, a social actor might take a 'leap of faith' (Mollering 2006) – suspend judgment and act as if others had proven themselves trustworthy, a strategy that was employed by some of the participants.

In addition, trust has intrinsic value that 'can be hedonic or based on self-respect. People prefer to have trust-based relations rather than relations based on suspicion and opportunism for hedonic reasons' (Nooteboom 2006, 253). This is particularly the case when young adults are involved in their first independent living and educational experience in a foreign country or a new multicultural environment. Moreover, trust building is a crucial global competency (Bird & Osland 2004; Bird, Mendenhall, Stevens & Oddou 2010), and the study participants recognized the importance of this competency not only in connection with social capital and cultural knowledge creation but also as a core global management competence to be applied both in the present situation and subsequently in their careers.

This study was conducted in multicultural learning environments, in which numerous barriers to knowledge sharing and the development of cross-cultural ties were either non-existent or removed – the participants made a positive personal decision to participate in a multicultural education experience, expressed the motivation to learn and were expected to engage in knowledge creation in novel cultural and social situations and create informal social learning networks. All student participants operated under at least some degree of uncertainty, which is essential for the development of trust, and could only rely on their social capital and cultural knowledge to establish and nurture such networks. Balanced power and shared prior knowledge, grounded in general academic knowledge of management and international business, allowed the participants to create and develop their cultural knowledge in informal networks.

## 6.4 Factors that influence the cultural knowledge development process

### *6.4.1 Individual characteristics*

The individual characteristics, including the participants' specific knowledge and abilities, did not emerge as significant factors that influence cultural knowledge development or cross-cultural competence. Though many existing CCC development models suggest either particular types of personalities or personal traits as antecedents, among others, cultural empathy (Schneider & Barsoux 1997), cultural sensitivity (Kelley & Meyers 1999), interpersonal skills (Gudykunst & Nishida 2001; LaFromboise et al. 1993; Adler 2002), linguistic ability (LaFromboise et al. 1993; Schneider & Barsoux 1997; Adler 2002), cognitive ability (Kayes et al. 2005), the ability to tolerate and cope with uncertainty (Gudykunst & Nishida 2001; Kelley & Meyers 1999; Schneider & Barsoux 1997), patience with, sensitivity to and respect for other cultures (LaFromboise et al. 1993; Schneider & Barsoux 1997; Adler 2002; Kayes et al. 2005), a sense of humor (Schneider & Barsoux 1997), or stress-management and conflict resolution skills (Black & Mendenhall 1990; Black & Gregersen 1999; Bartlett & Ghoshal 2000), none of these factors proved to be a personal condition or other salient dimension of the explanatory matrix developed in this research. Similarly, prior cultural knowledge, which is suggested to be a pre-requisite for successful cultural knowledge acquisition by nearly all authors who address CCC/ICC development (e.g., Deardorff 2006; Hofstede 2001; Ting-Toomey 1999; Bird et al.

1993), was not, in contrast to cultural curiosity, commonly mentioned by the participants and did not emerge as a significant factor in the data analysis.

There are several potential explanations for this omission. The first, and most obvious, explanation would be that the participants took their own personalities, and even skills and knowledge, as given, and as no attempt was made to evaluate their personal characteristics through independent testing, it could be assumed that even if differences in personalities and knowledge influenced CCC competence and knowledge creation, it did not appear in the analysis due to the data collection methods I employed. However, based on observing the participants and other students during academic and social activities, differences in personalities that resulted in different behavior patterns, communication styles, and preferences were apparent. In addition, many participants discussed their personalities and preferences, which resulted in the initial theoretical category of '*self-awareness,*' represented with the initial code of '*Being able to describe or analyze own personality*' and *'Understanding own values and preferences'*. However, in the final analysis, the category of '*self-awareness*' was not supported as an independent salient condition and became a part of social capital. Despite the differences in the described and observed personalities, values and preferences, there was limited support for the notion that any of the participants' personality traits influenced the cultural knowledge creation process.

Another possible explanation is that international business students in general, and those who choose to be educated either abroad or in a foreign-language program in particular, already possess similar personality traits, among others those that are conductive to CCC development and cultural knowledge creation, for example, a tolerance for ambiguity (Kelley & Meyers 1999; Schneider & Barsoux 1997), extraversion, openness for new experiences, emotional stability (Leiba-O'Sullivan 1999), and prior knowledge of other cultures and cultural differences. These aspects were addressed in the required course work, for example in a cross-cultural management course that many of the participants had taken prior to the interviews.

The third explanation is that the majority of the existing cultural knowledge development models have a normative focus and stress 'awareness, valuing, and understanding of cultural differences; experiencing other cultures; and self-awareness of one's own culture' (Deardorff 2006, 247). In other words, they consider passive appreciation and experience and do not address the dynamic knowledge creation process, which is the learning mode experienced by the participants in the multicultural learning environment.

To summarize, the individual characteristics of the participants did not emerge as significant factors in the development of their cross-cultural competence and cultural knowledge creation process. This can be explained by the fact that the participants took their personalities for granted, and not something subject to drastic change, as they generally possessed the individual characteristics and prior cultural knowledge due to the academic courses and prior experiences in international learning environments, or because the prior models were not specifically designed for international business students who study in multicultural learning environments.

### *6.4.2 Curiosity and motivation*

Curiosity emerged as a salient dimension of the personal conditions conducive to the cultural knowledge development process. Curiosity can be understood as 'a recognition, pursuit and intense desire to explore novel, challenging and uncertain events' (Kashdan & Silvia 2008, 368). It is regarded as a personality trait, similar to the 'openness' trait, which is related to personal characteristics such as imagination, a preference for variety, and intellectual curiosity (Costa & McCrae 1992). In support of this notion, research on cultural intelligence has found that among global leaders, cultural intelligence correlates with high levels of the openness personality trait (e.g., Ang, Van Dyne & Koh 2006). Curiosity or inquisitiveness has been cited as a crucial element of intercultural effectiveness (Black & Gregersen 1991; Deardorff 2006; Bennett 2009), a global mindset (Gupta & Govindarajan 2002; Levy et al. 2007), and multicultural effectiveness (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven 2001; 2002). It has been suggested that curiosity is 'fuel for increasing … global savvy, enhancing … ability to understand and maintain integrity, and dealing with uncertainty' (Gregersen, Morrisson & Black 1998, 23). Bennett (2009) states that curiosity is essential to the ability to keep a learner's mind open to multiple perspectives; and Harvey and colleagues (Harvey, Novicevic & Breland 2009) posit that curiosity is instrumental in dual-career couples' global career orientation.

However, as no other personality characteristic or trait emerged as a salient condition, and curiosity can be either a personality trait or a motivational state (Langevin 1971), it is reasonable to adopt a more traditional view on the curiosity as the motivation for explanatory behavior (Dewey 1913; Berlyne 1960), particularly because motivation has emerged as another salient personal dimension. In addition, Osland et al. (2007) associate curiosity with sensemaking, suggesting that 'the greater level of curiosity, the greater the level of arousal attention' (16), which in turn triggers sensemaking (Weick 1995).

Curiosity was influenced by cultural distance, which is an ambiguous concept in the international business literature: other than Kogut and Singh's formula (1988), there are prior discussions of 'social distance' (Bogardus 1959) and, more appropriate to the participants' understanding, albeit less clearly defined, ‘psychic distance’ (Johanson & Vahle 1977) and Mendenhall and Oddou discuss ‘cultural toughness’ or ‘cultural novelty’ (1985). In addition, cultural curiosity corresponds to ‘cultural-emotional connectedness’ (Volet & Ang 1998) and the narrower ‘ethnic proximity’ (Kim 2002). The participants expressed the greatest interest, curiosity and desire to participate in cultural environments that were different from their own, had pragmatic value as a possible future place of employment or study, or a source of customers and/or business partners. Furthermore, the perceived ‘coolness’ or excitement value of a location was likely to increase its desirability, in other worlds, to decrease ‘psychic distance’ (Johanson & Vahle 1977). These findings are consistent with other studies that confirm that global cosmopolitans are likely to choose to live in different countries motivated by curiosity (cf. Brimm 2010).

Motivation is vital to the exchange and combination of learning, or what Quinn and colleagues (Quinn, Anderson & Finkelstein 1996) call creativity ‘care-why’. Learners are more likely to be engaged and perform well in a task when they perceive it as challenging (Csikszentmihalyi 1975) but not beyond their skills and abilities (Bandura 1994). However, this requires a personal standard of achievement, against which performance is to be measured (Derryberry & Tucker 1994). This is consistent with the participants considering the national cultures to which they assigned a moderate cultural/psychic distance to be the most attractive, both as a location to which they would like to move after graduation and from which they would like to have more social contacts, friends, peers and mentors.

Motivation affects learning in the choice of the strategies and learners’ persistence in their attempt to improve their performance (Derryberry & Tucker 1994). Feedback improves learning results even prior to receiving it, as learners choose better learning strategies when they expect to receive feedback on their performance (Vollmeyer & Rheinberg 2005). The desire to have a peer or a faculty mentor, as well as the use of social networks as collective mentors, appears to affect the choice of cultural knowledge creation strategies among the student participants: those who expected to move to a new location, or find employment in MNEs, were more likely to adopt a cosmopolitan approach to cultural knowledge creation and sharing.

While the emergence of the motivation to work and live abroad is a logical outcome of cross-cultural competence (Schneider & Barsoux 1997), particularly among self-selected expatriates and international students, various specific aspects of motivation, for example, attraction and openness to new information (Gudykunst 1993), openness to others, patience, tolerance, commitment, perseverance, and involvement in a novel culture (Kealey 1996), or a generally positive attitude toward a new culture (Imahori & Lanigan 1989; Lonner & Hayes 2004) have been found to positively influence intercultural competence and communication. The student participants who expressed a general interest in other cultures and novel environments were also more likely to express a desire to learn more about a specific culture, based on their cultural curiosity, and to live in a specific country for a period of time, which is consistent with Goldstein and Kim's (2006) findings that students with higher levels of ethnorelativism were more likely to study abroad and participate in exchange programs.

However, Blasco and colleagues (2012) caution that the motivations for cultural learning vary significantly depending on the context and goal: in a business environment, the motivation to transform one's individual identity is more likely to be influenced by 'instrumental' or pragmatic motives, with the aim of achieving personal goals, rather than 'impressionistic' or 'normative' ones. However, Lave and Wenger (1991) insist that 'intrinsic rewards', such as 'a deeper sense of the value of participation to the community and the learner lies in becoming part of the community,' (111) and the development of identity can also motivate learning, even in business and professional environments.

The student participants, while not always addressing their motivation to engage in cultural learning, agreed that participating in a learning community and becoming a member of it generates, in addition to the intrinsic value of becoming a member, tangible extrinsic rewards in the form of future (and, in some cases, current) career, financial and social benefits. Therefore, in this case, the differentiation between intrinsic and extrinsic (or instrumental) motivational factors appears to be impractical: the motivation to engage in a cultural knowledge creation process among student participants is influenced by their, potentially situational, interest or curiosity, as well as by educational and career goals (Hidi & Harackiewicz 2000). Students' interest in global careers depends on their perceptions of the professional advantages associated with such goals (Wang & Bu 2004), and while in the academic environment, students regard cultural knowledge in pragmatic terms of academic or social benefits and accomplishments, they are likely to develop a global mindset following social experience with other cultures and worldviews (Marcotte et al. 2007).

## 6.5 Contexts: The role of the educational environment

Scholars have repeatedly stressed the importance of the context in cultural identities (Hall 1992; Fog Olwig & Haastrup 1997), learning motivation (Blasco et al. 2012) and knowledge creation (Lave & Wegner 1991; Hidi & Harackiewicz 2001), along with the role of the organizational environment on the development of cross-cultural competence (e.g., Johnson et al. 2006). However, despite the drastic differences across the four academic environments considered in this research, including different locations, countries, national cultures, educational systems, learning and teaching philosophies, compositions of student body and the qualifications of the faculty, to name only the most obvious factors, the process of knowledge creation was similar in all four settings (schools), regardless of the attitude toward CCC development that was actually promoted and encouraged by the schools.

The difference was in the degree of student development. In schools in which network building and collaborative knowledge creation was induced, the students engaged in social and collaborative cultural knowledge creation. Where it was dissuaded, the students, while desiring to develop networks and appreciating their value for academic learning and future career prospects, were less likely to be actively engaged with their cross-cultural peers and the other members of the academic and local communities.

These findings are consistent with a review of 146 research studies conducted in 2002 by Zepke and Leach (2005), who found that the HEIs tend to adopt one of two distinct approaches to students' cultural integration – they either attempt to fit new students into the existing academic and local cultures or adapt their institutional cultures to the needs of the diverse students. The first approach is based on Tinto's (1975) model that stresses the need for clear and accessible information, the flexibility of timetables, accurate, comprehensive and easy-to-follow academic advice and counseling, personal contacts outside of classrooms, facilitating social networks and promoting social integration through clubs, cultural groups and sporting activities (Zepke & Leach 2005, 49-50). None of the four schools meets all of these requirements for integration (with each school performing better in certain areas than in others), yet in all four cases, in addition to a desire for social integration, the students expressed the desire for greater faculty contact and more academic advising.

Another emergent approach is to bridge the students' cultures of origin with the academic culture of the institution through a 'subtext of academic change, integration of collaborative learning and problem solving, reducing reliance on transmission modes of teaching and catering to the specific learning preference of particular groups' (Zepke & Leach 2005, 53). Central to this discourse is the notion that students should maintain their identity, retain their social networks outside the institutions, have their cultural capital valued and experience learning that conforms to their preferences (ibid).

Although the student participants in all four schools expressed a desire for deeper social integration into academic life, the emergent discourse of institutional adaptation to the diverse cultural environment that the students contribute to schools is more likely to be conducive to cultural knowledge creation and CCC development. The official positions of the researched programs on internationalization and the development of intercultural competence, as expressed in their mission statements, student and faculty handbooks and other organizational and promotion materials, were not always consistent with their actual academic policies, which is not atypical for HEIs (Slaughter 1991) and can be considered in light of the discrepancy identified by Argyris and Schon (1974) between the espoused theory of action and theory in use. Nevertheless, in certain respects, the schools have passed the integration stage and arrived at the *de facto* adaptation stage. One could speculate that clear rules and flexible timetables, as well as more and better academic advice, would enhance the students' educational experience and are likely to improve retention and academic outcomes. However, the focus on collaborative learning, problem solving, and developing and retaining social networks outside the institutions would be more likely to promote knowledge creation and sharing.

## 6.6 Consequences: Learning strategies

The four cultural learning strategies that the participants might apply correspond, to some extent, to Howell's (1982) stages of expertise development – from unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence through the stages of conscious incompetence and conscious competence.

**Table 6 Typology of the learning strategies**

| Types | Curiosity | Motivation | Social Capital | Trust | Knowledge | Competence | Conscious |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tourist | High | Low | Low | Low | Gained | no | no |
| Ambassador | Low | High | High | Low | Provided | no | yes |
| Chameleon | High | High | High | Low | Applied | yes | yes |
| Cosmopolitan | High | High | High | High | Created | yes | no |

Although the choice of learning strategies cannot be equated with competences that depended on ability, learners adopting the tourist strategy are more likely to be at the same time unconsciously culturally incompetent, or unaware of the personal limitations to successfully interacting in a diverse environment. Therefore, they choose an environment with which they are familiar, at least through the media, for example, exotic locations, where they perceive that their identity as a foreign visitor would be validated and their behavioral role would not differ from other holiday destinations.

Ambassadors could be aware of their incompetence and therefore intentionally limit their contact with diverse community members, or, if contact is unavoidable, as in an academic environment, to promote one's own home culture, in which the ambassador perceives him/herself to be an expert participant.

The chameleons' strategy of adapting to the changing environment appears to correspond to conscious competence, as those who select the chameleon strategy often comment on their ability to 'blend in' and vary their behavior based on the cultural setting. However, because they are consciously aware of their competence and intentionally select one set of behaviors and attitudes over another, it appears that this choice is not natural or effortless.

Those who adopt a cosmopolitan strategy integrate their identities and incorporate diverse viewpoints and conflicting attitudes. Their level of cultural expertise allows them to apply tacit cultural knowledge and select behaviors appropriate to situations. Alternatively, as Osland and colleagues (2007) state, in the process of integrating aspects of additional culture into one's self-identity:

> *Expert cognition includes a more extensive knowledge base developed by experience and the increased ability to perceive and correctly interpret relevant cues, to recognize patterns, anomalies and typicality and devise creative solutions.* (14-15)

Perlmutter (1969), the first to introduce the concept of global mindset in the international business literature, distinguishes among three stages of executive development, from ethnocentric to multinational to international or global. As he addresses strategic choices, albeit corporate and not personal, the orientation toward one's home culture (tourist and ambassador), multiple cultures (chameleon) and the integration of cultures (cosmopolitan) are somewhat similar to the individual choices that participants make, although different factors clearly influence individual strategic choices than corporate ones.

Bennett's (1986) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) suggests that an individual learner moves through consequent stages from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism (Denial, Defense Renewal, Minimization, Acceptance, Adaptation and Integration), and according the DMIS, the participants were at least in the three final, ethnorelative stages of their development – from acceptance (Tourist and, possibly, Ambassador) to Adaptation (Chameleon) and, finally, integration (Cosmopolitan). However, the typologies that emerged from the interview and observation data are not of stages of development but of the selected learning strategies, and while it is possible that at a specific level of development, a learner is more likely to select one strategy over the others, there is no evidence in the constructed data to support this assumption.

LaFromboise and colleagues (1993) distinguish between multicultural individuals, who adjust their behaviors based on context (alternation) and those who identify with an emergent culture, not with any of their original cultures (fusion). This is consistent with the chameleon (alteration) and cosmopolitan (fusion) strategies that emerged from the analysis.

From the identity negotiation perspective (Swann Jr. & Bosson 2008), individuals might select different modes: integration, or a multicultural identity, when elements from multiple cultures are blended, alteration, when a person moves between different cultural identities based on the context, and synergy (Hong, Wan, No & Chiu 2007). The cosmopolitan strategy is most consistent with the synergy mode, and the chameleon strategy with alteration, while a multicultural identity might be a transitional stage between the two.

In conclusion, there are various models of development, adaptation and strategies that address cultural learning and adaptation to novel social situations. While none of them is perfectly compatible with the emergent typology of the cultural learning development strategy the participants employed, there is clear support for the notion that not only are individuals likely to adopt different approaches to cultural learning and competence development but an individual is likely to employ diverse approaches based on the context.

### *6.6.1 Chameleon strategy: bicultural, marginal or multicultural identity?*

Both the tourist and ambassador strategies, namely, of observing and promoting, are common: in certain contexts, all travelers are likely to behave as either tourists or ambassadors of their home countries by engaging in new activities and sharing knowledge. Conversely, the more sophisticated chameleon and cosmopolitan strategies require an advanced level of cultural expertise and prior experience. In addition, it is not always simple to differentiate between the two based solely on observed behavior. In the academic literature, the use of the terminology is not consistent, and the terms global, cosmopolitan and intercultural are used nearly interchangeably. Byram (1997; 2003), for example, differentiates between being bicultural and intercultural: a bicultural person is willing and able to interact in two cultures but has personal identity conflicts, while an intercultural person mediates between cultures, maintaining a flexible individual identity and integrating the aspects of several cultures into it. According to Byram's classification, those who choose the chameleon strategy would be more likely to be bicultural rather than intercultural individuals. Kim (1998; 2001; 2009) differentiates between bicultural identity and hybrid identity, which is composed of a combination of various cultural characteristics.

Another term, marginals, which is also applied to certain bicultural individuals, is based on social identity theory, in particular, on an individual's limited identification with any cultural group (Berry 2001). Marginalized biculturals are individuals who have internalized cultures but do not identity strongly with any. Their acculturative experience is considered highly stressful, and they experience 'cultural homelessness', being trapped between cultures and not belonging to any (Vivero & Jenkins 1999), which leads to poor adaptation to expatriate roles (Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder 2006). Such individuals are captured by internalized cultures but lack an integrated global identity (Bennett 1993).

A similar experience was reported by the study participants who, while expressing confidence in their ability to function successfully in multiple cultural environments, were distressed about their lack of belonging and '*not being at home'*. There is an argument that such culturally marginalized persons, who have the experience of living simultaneously inside and outside their cultural 'fishbowls' (Fitzsimmons, Lee & Brannen 2013) and existing in a state of 'dynamic in-betweeness' (Yoshikawa 1987), simultaneously independent and interdependent (142), and who do not identify with any culture but are able to function in numerous cultures, can act as a link and contribute new cultural perspectives and multiple worldviews (Adler 1975). 'Multicultural person has come to grips with a multiplicity of realities and can move from place to place … is always in the process of becoming a part of or apart from a given cultural context. His (sic) orientation of the world transcends his indigenous culture.' (Adler 1977, 26)

Therefore, the participants who employed the chameleon strategy, whether they were marginal, bicultural or multicultural, could become a sort of a cultural bridge among various groups, as they have experience moving into and out of cultural groups (Richter, West, Van Dick & Dawson 2006). In addition, they might have a clear awareness of how different cultures are perceived by others, adopt cross-cultural perspectives and possess behavioral flexibility (Bird & Osland 2004). Adopting the chameleon strategy could be means of achieving a cosmopolitan identity, as both are globally oriented (Fitzsimmons et al. 2013).

The limitation of adaptation, or using the chameleon strategy, is apparent when both or several actors would apply it: when all actors are 'adapting to each other's cultures (host and sojourner) they become chameleons without a clear target pattern to which to adapt' (Spitzberg & Changnon 2006, 35). This can result in compromising personal identities and potential barriers to competent performance. Bennett (1993) also cautions against overadaptation, in which both parties attempt to adapt to one another and ultimately adapt past one another, instead of meeting in the middle. Moreover, despite the usefulness of applying the chameleon strategy for other actors, the physiological and emotional cost to the individual indicates that this strategy is ill advised for a long period of time and is best employed as a transitional stage to the cosmopolitan one.

### *6.6.2 Developing a cosmopolitan strategy and global mindset*

First introduced by Gouldner (1957), cosmopolitanism is a 'perspective, a state of mind, or – to take a more process oriented view – a mode of managing meanings' (Hannerz 1996, 102) and characterized by a 'willingness to engage with the others … open toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrast rather than uniformity…' (ibid, 163). 'It's not travel that defines cosmopolitans – some widely travelled people remain hopelessly parochial – it is mindset' (Kanter 1995, 23). Beck (2006) notes that '… cosmopolitan sensibility and competence arise from the clash of cultures within one's own life. The constellation *qua* domain of experience and horizons of expectation means the *internalization* of difference, the co-presence and coexistence of rival lifestyles, contradictory certainties in the experiential space of individuals and societies' (89). Cosmopolitan learning approaches culture as 'dynamic and creative' and in a constant state of 'becoming as a result of interactions of various kinds,' and instead of learning about cultures, it 'helps students explore the crisscrossing of transnational circuit of communication, the flows of global capital and the cross-cutting of local, trans-local and transnational social practice' and encourages them to explore 'the dynamic process relation to the formulation of individual, group, national and transnational identity, and their corresponding fields of differences' (Rizvi 2008, 30-31). Using multiple identities at multiple locations, learners recognize the '(d)ynamic nature of our identities and cultures, now changing more rapidly and intensively than ever before, mostly as a result of their interaction with identities and cultures that potentially span the world' (ibid, 29).

Hall (2002) discusses 'vernacular cosmopolitanism,' which 'is aware of the limitations of any one culture or any one identity' (20), and Rathje (2007) states that 'intercultural competence is best characterized … by the transformation of intercultural interaction into culture itself' (263): the participants in a cultural setting, instead of imitating dominant identities, produce new, shared identities. Through cosmopolitan learning, students 'enacted cosmopolitan identities that are not fixed or mutually exclusive and differed in saliency and intensity depending on contexts'. They 'engaged in a process of cultural transmission and cultural transformation through the creation and exchange of identity capital' (Gargano 2012, 154).

In contrast to chameleons, who are likely to experience stress and be psychologically overwhelmed (Berry et al. 2006), cosmopolitans benefit from multicultural effectiveness, which Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2001) define as psychological well-being in novel cultural environments, combined with the ability to interact with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Brimm (2010) presents narratives of her international MBA students and, based on their experiences, posits that such international students generally represent a specific group of a globally mobile, professional elite or 'global cosmopolitans' with high cultural adaptation ability. Yet, she realizes the challenge of creating a global identity, as 'global mobility provides an opportunity for experimentation and reinvention, but questions arise about global identity' (ibid, 4).

Developing a new, hybrid culture or a third culture (Earley & Mosakowski 2000; Tjosvold & Leung 2003) that integrates elements of two or more cultures but does not replicate them, namely, creating cultural blends to match behaviors in a new culture to individual personality and values (Molinsky 2013), appears to be the most successful approach to cultural learning and sharing. Those who select the cosmopolitan learning strategy are experts in forming new identities for themselves in new cultural contexts and relationships, based on their prior learning and cultural experience (Brimm 2010), as 'by necessity, they develop an extraordinary capacity to learn: [their] identities can be spurred by inner change or social dislocation' (31).

The student participants who applied the cosmopolitan strategy reported enjoying their cultural experience and the intention to engage in further cultural learning and share their knowledge with their network members. They have developed social capital and the ability to build trust and make apt decisions to extend trust in contexts of uncertainty. They expressed cultural curiosity concerning a variety of cultures and locations and exhibited primarily instrumental and, to some degree, intrinsic motivation to develop cultural knowledge. The most crucial characteristic was their ability to engage with and develop transnational and transcultural learning networks for cultural knowledge sharing and creation. Being proficient participants in numerous national and social cultures, they regarded their cultural identity as global, dynamic and fluid, incorporating and developing features from a multitude of cultures.

## 6.7 Summary

In chapter 6, I present the summary of the research findings with respect to the original questions guiding this study. By describing the process of cultural knowledge creation and the factors that facilitate this development from the perspective of the international and local student participants, I have identified specific considerations that can promote current understandings of the development of cultural competence and motivate further research. Based on the research findings, I have also presented a holistic and dynamic conceptual model of cultural knowledge development. Central to this model is the notion that social networks are crucial for the creation and sharing of cultural knowledge. Therefore, the administration's commitment to supporting and encouraging student and faculty networks could be vital to such development.

Furthermore, the theoretical concepts that are relevant to the findings are presented in this chapter. Discussing the findings in light of these theoretical concepts has allowed me to elevate them to a more theoretical level and position the participants' comments, observed and reported behaviors and experiences in theoretical context, which, although originating from diverse scientific fields, nevertheless relate to one another and to the reported findings. While the objective of the study did not include testing or proving any of the above-discussed theories, the emergent model and the explanation matrix presented in the analysis lend empirical support to many of these concepts.

International business students experience a multicultural academic environment as a learning network, a collaborative community for building transitional social capital and engaging in cosmopolitan learning and knowledge creation. They create cultural knowledge through communal sensemaking, sharing and a long-term expertise development process. Their cultural curiosity, instrumental motivation to develop cultural knowledge and cross-cultural competence, existing social capital, and their ability to develop further social capital through trust influence the cultural knowledge creation process. The HEIs, or the programs, are likely to support the process of cultural knowledge creation by creating and nurturing environments conductive to social exchange, network development and social capital creation, as well as exciting cultural curiosity among students and encouraging cultural feedback and mentorship for the students from the faculty members and culturally competent student peers.

Among the four identified cultural learning strategies, the cosmopolitan one appears the most appropriate for long-term cultural learning and expertise development. The participants who employed it use continuous adaptation, regard change as normal, rely on creative thinking rather than rules, reinvent themselves and experiment with new identities, learn easily and use novel ways of thinking.

# 7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 7.1 Evaluation of the study

In this study, I have qualitatively explored the cross-cultural and intercultural experience of the international and local students in four multicultural learning environments. The research addresses the holistic experiences of learners and international sojourners in a novel cultural environment and specifically focuses on cultural knowledge creation and sharing. The data were constructed through in-depth, semi-structured qualitative interviews, participant observation and document review and analyzed using the dimensional analysis method (Kool et al. 1996; Schatzman 1991); the research process, including the final presentation of the findings, was informed by the grounded theory research framework. To evaluate the quality of the research, I first address the data sources and the data collection, then the analysis process, and finally, the contribution that this study has made to theoretical and methodological knowledge.

### *7.1.1 Sufficiency of data sources*

To evaluate his/her data, a researcher should ask the following questions:

- Have I collected sufficient background data on the persons, processes, and settings to have ready recall and understand and portray the full range of contexts of the study?
- Have I obtained detailed descriptions of a range of participants' views and actions?
- Do the data reveal what lies beneath the surface?
- Are the data sufficient to reveal changes over time?
- Have I garnered multiple views on the participants' range of actions?
- Have I gathered data that enable me to develop analytic categories?
- What types of comparisons can I make among the data? How do these comparisons generate and inform my ideas? (Charmaz 2006, 18-19)

To answer the above questions posed by Charmaz (2006), I can state that I have a profound knowledge and understanding of all four settings, having been an employee at every one of them. In the first case (school A), I was employed as a lecturer for a semester. However, I taught several courses, conducted research and stayed on campus overnight during the week (in guest facilities), which allowed me to meet many students and colleagues that I would not have had I only arrived to teach the assigned classes. In addition, I participated in student activities as a guest speaker and as a guest (particularly memorable were the salsa lessons that were useful during the research for the fourth case study) and met some of the students during social activities. Once I began my research, I had been in Finland for over a year and, by the time the analysis was finalized, I had lived in Finland on and off for six years, being a part of academic life as a graduate student and a lecturer.

I worked for schools B and C since they began operations – five years for school C and three for school B. I had close, collegial and friendly relationships with the school administrators and fellow faculty members (many of whom taught with me in other schools in Prague) and had taught some of the participants before. I participated in program development, advised students, taught a wide variety of courses from college skills to the postgraduate level and was an involved faculty member.

In the last case study, at school D, I worked for 18 months and did not begin the interviews until I was certain that I understood the complexities of the setting and its cultural differences and became proficient in my new role. As at the other schools, I became friendly with my colleagues, administrators, and staff members, taught many classes over the course of the research, and studied school materials and history, spoke with lecturers from other department to obtain a multifaceted comprehension of the issues that all, not only international, students faced, was very active in the social life of the city, became acquainted with neighbors, participated in social activities (art, international and cultural events), and had acquaintances from all walks of life. The extent of my evolvement in local social and cultural life can be demonstrated by the fact that I often met my students and colleagues during these events, even those that were not organized or sponsored by the school.

A diversity of views should not be confused with cultural, ethnical, gender, age or other diversity. However, 95 participants from 30 countries, with ages ranging from 18 to retirement (I did not ask the ages of the faculty and administrators, but the oldest student participant was 41, and while the median age of the other participants was approximately in the mid-30s, some were clearly closer to retirement than to high school graduation), had different family status (married, single, divorced and single, married parents and step-parents), from a variety of social and ethnic backgrounds and cross-cultural experiences ranging from bicultural to no international experience other than school, provided for rich diversity of views. In addition, the participants reported a diversity of approaches and behaviors that enabled me to develop a typology of the cultural learning strategies.

Participant observation, discussions/interviews and the other data construction methods used and discussed in this chapter were possible due to the trustful and open relationships I had with the other participants, i.e., students, fellow teachers, and administrators, all of whom shared their personal stories and experiences. I was an integrated part of the setting, not only because of my intense involvement in the data construction process but also because I played a vital role there – an instructor to my students, a colleague and often a friend to other faculty members, an employee (or a former employee in one case) of the university/college and, of course, a resident of the community. In addition, in the first setting (Finland), I was not only an instructor but also a student, just as the participants, although obviously not in the same school but in the same educational system. Therefore, not only was I part of the setting, but I could also compare my own firsthand academic experience with those reported and thus further develop rapport and mutual understanding.

The prolonged contact with the participants and the settings allowed me to understand their concerns, and the fact that I invited the participants to discuss the issues that they considered important during the interviews ensured more than superfluous engagement with the process and the experiences of the participants as they perceived them.

Although the study did not have a longitudinal element, and the data collection was necessary limited by the students' stay, either as exchange students or graduating seniors, in the program, the participants discussed their prior academic experience and the steps they were planning to take following graduation. While the relatively brief period of data construction in each location might be considered a limitation of the study, the fact that four programs were researched and the interviews and observations continued until the emergent categories were saturated in the particular setting illustrates that the data collected in all four settings, interview- and observation-based, were sufficient to reveal changes and create a model of the process under study.

The data collected at four locations over more than two years yielded rich descriptions of the findings, as presented in chapters 4 and 5 and in the explanatory matrix, which is analyzed from different perspectives. The analytic categories were developed and saturated by the end of the data collection process and the simultaneous data analysis. They allowed me to develop salient dimensions, make comparisons across the four settings, various participants and the numerous analytical categories, as presented in chapter 3. These comparisons generated a substantive theory of the cultural knowledge creation process and informed my ideas.

### *7.1.2 Trustworthiness of the research*

Cousin (2008) stresses that the notions of research validity, which is traditionally applied to objectivist projects, in the interpretive, constructivist tradition are replaced with trustworthiness, which can be archived by triangulation, verifying accounts with the research participants, demonstrating research flexibility, including sufficient data for plausibility and providing rich descriptive and analytical accounts. Gummesson (2000) suggests discussing the issues of credibility, access and contributions that would allow readers to draw their own conclusions from the descriptions and analysis (160-161). Morse (1994) adds that successful qualitative research relies on inference, insight, logic, luck, hard work and creativity and proposes four criteria for evaluating a qualitative study – comprehension, synthesis, theorizing and reconceptualization. C*omprehension* is achieved in the GTM by using 'unstructured interviews and by observing participants in their daily lives', s*ynthesis* by the 'adequacy of the data and the process of analysis', *theorizing* follows from the theoretical sampling, and *reconceptualization* is determined by the level of the abstraction in the final model development. (ibid, 39-40) Alternatively, Creswell (2012) recommends that a researcher use at least two of the following eight 'validation strategies' (which he used in preference to the terms trustworthiness and authenticity) in any study:

- Prolonged engagement and persistent observation
- Triangulation
- Peer review and debriefing
- Negative case analysis
- Clarifying researcher bias
- Member checking
- Rich thick descriptions
- External audits (250-252)

In this study, only member checking was not accomplished. First, it was not feasible, as most of the participants had left the setting prior to the completion of the study, having graduated or moved to other jobs – even administrators left the schools, meaning that once the data analysis was complete, only one school of the four had the same person in charge of the program. Second, Glaser (1992) specifically cautions against sharing theoretical findings prior to writing the final draft to avoid either disappointment or undue encouragement from outside.

The sufficiency of data sources is addressed in subchapter 7.1.1, and the paradigm of inquiry is discussed in subchapter 3.1. In addition, I examined and presented my personal background, history and attitudes, as they might influence my perceptions and the values that I contribute to the study (subchapter 3.6), and provided a positionality map (***Appendix G***) and detailed descriptions of the settings as the contexts and environmental conditions (chapter 4), as well as the transparency in coding and theoretical development process (including ***appendices A, B, C, D, E,*** and ***F***). This will allow the reader to draw his/her own conclusions based on the data constructed.

### 7.1.3 Triangulation of methods, theoretical perspectives, settings and points of view

Denzin (1978) states that triangulation, in addition to multiple data collection procedures, includes multiple theoretical perspectives and multiple analysis techniques, as the use of multiple research design strategies and theories increases the depth of understanding that an investigation can yield. Stake (1995) suggests data source, investigator, theory and methodological triangulation, all of which are widely used in qualitative research (Glesne 2010; Gummesson 2000; Merriam 1988; Miles & Huberman 1994; Patton 2002). Although I was the only investigator, I used several data sources – students, faculty, administrators, and myself, with data constructed through interviews, observation, and document review, and a variety of theories (while adopting a theory-suspended stance to permit the appropriate theoretical development to emerge from the data), while methodological triangulation was achieved by using GTM in a dimensional analysis framework.

Four programs in three countries were described using various data construction methods – interviews, observation, grey materials, school materials, and student work. Students, teachers and administrators from diverse cultural and ethnical backgrounds, of different ages, genders, sexes and SES participated in the study, and the data were analyzed using GTM manually, and finally, the CAQDAS NVivo software to consolidate the data. The use of multiple data sources, construction strategies and methodological perspectives ensured sufficient data saturation, methodological triangulation and theoretical depth.

### 7.1.4 Quality of the analysis and the proposed theoretical models

Charmaz (2006) proposes four criteria to evaluate grounded theory research studies: credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness.

To ensure credibility, I ensured that the process remained rigorous and comprehensive. The presented findings are situated within the richly described contexts of the specific programs, the salient dimensions are clearly described and justified through the presented codes and participant statements and references to the specific observations and documents. The interrelationships among the salient categories have been supported through rich analysis based on the symbolic interactions (Blumer 1969) and the dimensional analytical technique (Schatzman 1991; Kools et al. 1996). The supporting information, including the examples of the coding process and the initial codes presented in the appendixes, ensures the transparency of the analysis. Furthermore, the engagement with four settings in three countries provided for broad outreach and the length of involvement and prior knowledge of the environments allowed me to explore the process under study in depth.

This is one of very few international studies that researched different multicultural business and management study programs in dissimilar educational systems (Nordic, as presented by the Finnish program, Central European with both US and UK influences and Latin American). To the best of my knowledge, there is no other study that addresses four business and management learning programs in three regions, in particular, none that privileges the students' voices and perceptions and provides a holistic and dynamic model of their experiences as the students perceive them. Therefore, the originality of the study is assured simply by the selection of the settings and the phenomenon under study.

Moreover, due to the empirical method employed, which relies on emergent data to analyze the phenomenon, rather than on justification using existing theories and pre-stated hypotheses, many of the findings of the study proved to be original, including the connection of social capital and networks to the development of cultural knowledge and the role of cultural curiosity and instrumental motivation. Even the salient dimensions, or the theoretical categories discussed in this study, are novel in the context of cross-cultural competence and cultural knowledge, e.g., 'cultural curiosity', 'existing social capital'. Some of the analytical codes, while not achieving the status of salient dimensions, for example, '*real people'* or '*cool culture',* provide valuable insights into sojourners' motivations for engaging in cultural learning. In addition, the study presents an original typology of learning strategies. Some of the negative findings that challenge the dominant view of the cultural learning process, in particular the lack of support for individual differences and characteristics, might also prove to be interesting for both management and educational researchers.

The study explored and discussed a phenomenon that attracts continuous interest in various academic domains, including international management, IB, IHRM and education. The knowledge creation process was examined from various perspectives, a number of dimensions and categories were analyzed and presented to ensure the resonance of the study, and the findings demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the investigated process. The experiences and perceptions of the participants are situated within the current theoretical concepts and explained from both theoretical and practical positions. The study makes a significant contribution to current knowledge, addressed more completely in subchapter 7.2, which demonstrates the research's resonance; the usefulness of the study is addressed in subchapter 7.3, which discussed the managerial and possible educational implementation of the research.

Hall and Callery (2001) suggest additional criteria for rigor in grounded theory studies that are based on symbolic interactionism: reflectivity, or the acknowledgement of the social construction of the interview, and participant observation and pragmatism, based on reciprocity, equity and social action (270). In subchapter 3.6 I discussed the reflectivity and relationality of the research process, as well as the steps I undertook to acknowledge the social construction of the data collection process, and in subchapters 3.3.2 and 3.4, I addressed the balance of power, reciprocity and the possible actions that could result from the findings. Subchapter 7.3 further addresses the pragmatic application of the findings.

## 7.2 Theoretical contribution of the study

This study makes a contribution to existing knowledge on cultural knowledge creation among international business and management students in higher education. First, it is one of few studies that address cultural knowledge creation from the international management students' perspective, and it is unique in its comparison analysis of four business programs covering a combination of five educational systems in three regions. Due to the increased globalization of business and education, a record number of students study abroad and at home in multicultural learning environments, particularly in business administration programs, and an increasing number of individuals live and work in countries other than that of their birth and/or citizenship, either temporarily or permanently (Carr et al. 2005), and they collaborate with and supervise other employees from diverse cultural and national backgrounds (Osland et al. 2007). Therefore, the study of how individuals, and specifically business students, develop cultural knowledge in a novel environment is timely and significant.

In addition, the study illustrates the value of applying a qualitative research methodology for investigating individuals' perceptions and experiences and addressing a phenomenon that has been to some degree overlooked. Specifically, it underlines the value of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz 2006) and the dimensional analysis method (Kools et al. 1996) as a rigorous methodology that enables the development of theoretical concepts, grounded in empirical data, and positioning them in the context of current theoretical concepts. The rich description of the contexts is combined with a rich comparative analysis (Clarke 2003) of the constructed data, and the findings are supported by the participants' views, opinions and reports of their experiences, and they were related to and observed by the researcher.

The study adopts a holistic perspective on the process: instead of testing prior assumptions regarding the nature of the cultural knowledge creation process, it encouraged the participants to express their own perceptions and experiences of cultural knowledge creation in multicultural learning environments. The findings from four locations were compared through the dimensional analysis process

(Kools et al. 1996), and the resulting model of the cultural knowledge creation process reflects the experiences of diverse student bodies (Halualani 2008). The fact that the study was conducted in four programs, in three countries, with participants originating from 30 countries, and representing all groups of international and local students, as well as faculty and staff, allows the study to present a rich and unique picture of the process, which, while not generalizable to all learning environments, nevertheless presents a convincing illustration and model.

Specifically, the research has identified the conditions that support the development of cultural knowledge and produced a typology of learning strategies that the participants were likely to use. The study proposes an empirical model of cultural knowledge network creation, which incorporates cross-cultural sensemaking and sensegiving (Bird & Osland 2006, Halualani 2008) and knowledge creation in multicultural environments (Skobeleva 2008). The role of knowledge creation networks and the development of trust and social capital discussed by Inkpen and Tsang (2005) was also highlighted, in particular, the positive influence of existing social capital and the individual ability to increase it (Lin 2002), as well as to develop trustworthy connections. Because the research was conducted in educational settings, numerous barriers to knowledge sharing and the development of cross-cultural ties were either non-existent or removed – the participants, who made a positive personal decision to engage in an education experience either in a foreign country or, for the local participants, in a multicultural learning environment in a foreign language, were motivated to learn and were prepared to find themselves in unfamiliar cultural and social situations. All of the student participants expected to meet new people and to create social learning networks.

The study was conducted in several programs, and the impact of the institutional factors and learning cultures were incorporated into the holistic model of knowledge creation and evaluated. However, although the researched learning environments were vastly different from one another, it appeared that the primary valuable contributions that they made to the students' cultural knowledge development were facilitation and support of the social networks and creating conditions for social interactions (Zepke & Leach 2005) and social learning (Bandura 1977) on campus.

In addition, the study illustrated the understanding of culture as fluid, contextual, and dynamically shared and created knowledge (Myers & Tan 2003; Holden 2002), rather than based on group norms and attitudes and stable over a period of time. While the student participants' perceptions of cultural knowledge are limited by the educational context and their experience of the learning environment, this is, nevertheless, a valid contribution to understanding cultural knowledge creation as a participatory process (Elkjaer 2004), and it could provide valuable insights into the practices of cultural knowledge sharing.

## 7.3 Limitations of the study and directions for further research

Based on the specific characteristic of the study, certain limitations could be noted. As the selection of the settings and the individual participants to be interviewed was driven by theoretical emergent themes, there was no opportunity to return and discuss the themes with the original participants, as they would have left the programs. Therefore, the final models remain theoretical, as, while they are grounded in data, they have not been confirmed by the participants. Further empirical testing of the models can be achieved through long-term observations or detailed participant accounts that concentrate on the process of the development of social capital and trust in cultural knowledge sharing networks, either in an educational or professional setting. In addition, the choice of the constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz 2006) permitted collecting and analyzing data on the experiences as they were reported and made sense of by the participants, but such findings cannot be generalized to a large population, to all international students, or even to international business students at these four schools. The findings remained snapshots of the situations as experienced by the participants at that time in those settings.

Nevertheless, possible recommendations for international educational institutions or other organizations that seek to promote cultural learning in multicultural environments can be proposed, as the findings are consistent with the current state of knowledge on social capital, multicultural networks and cultural knowledge creation.

As an exploratory study, grounded in emergent data, this research has revealed a number of topics and issues that merit further investigation. The process model itself might be verified in the same, or a different, academic environment, for example among master's students with previous professional experience or students in an executive education program, to investigate the process model's salience in other contexts.

An interesting point of investigation would be the social capital and network creation steps and the strategies that learners employ in multicultural environments. Although the participants reported the actions *they believed* had enhanced their social capital and established new ties, a holistic approach that incorporates the perceptions of other members of the networks and the cultural learning community might be conducive to understanding the network view of social capital and knowledge, as well as the factors that influence their development.

A longitudinal study of the managerial careers of international business students might address the question of whether and, if so, how social capital and networks, or the school ties developed during undergraduate education, assist individuals in launching and advancing global careers and whether and how school ties actually translate into the tangible professional and business benefits that the participants expected.

Finally, the typology of learning strategies might be further developed and modified to include additional strategies and specify the situational context in which they might be effectively employed. At present, the typology can be best described as a tentative one, and a study that specifically addressed the range of strategies employed, their selection and the contextual factors that influence this choice could be useful.

## 7.4 Managerial implications of the study

There are numerous practical implications of the study that can be utilized by management practitioners, global organizations and business educators. The enhanced understanding of how individuals develop and share cultural knowledge could support the recruitment and selection process in international assignment and international student exchange programs, pre-departure preparation and training, and continuous developmental and social support for academic and business sojourners, multicultural team development, and approaches to cultural knowledge creation at the organizational, group and individual levels. Moreover, some of the commonly provided training and support might be reevaluated, as excess social support might discourage students and employees from creating multicultural networks and developing social capital.

While institutional and organizational support and cultural training decrease uncertainly and hence promote adjustment (Aycan 1997), not only does the lack of uncertainly and interdependency prevent the development of trust (Nooteboom 2006) but it also decreases the need to create new social networks and is thus likely to hinder cultural learning and knowledge sharing. Such organizations and educational programs would more likely promote long-term cultural knowledge creation and sharing by establishing and supporting social spaces, such as common projects, clubs, and even physical spaces that can be used for interacting and socializing, by providing social resources and referrals, and by encouraging mentorship by experienced expatriates or other knowledgeable and trustworthy organizational members to enable students or newly arrived organizational members to engage in their own network building and development that is more likely to result in larger and longer lasting benefits.

In addition, the schools (and organizations in general) might consider promoting not only their reputations as trustworthy and desirable places to be and learn but also enhancing the reputations of their faculty (or managers) by indicating the trust in their abilities and good will to facilitate trust in the learning process and individual faculty members. In brief, allowing and assisting learners to create and develop their own social ties based on shared trust and existing social capital would stimulate cultural learning and, ultimately, cultural sensemaking and sensegiving.

Although the typology of learning strategies requires additional investigation with a broader and different group of participants it to be of immediate use for managerial practitioners, even in its present form, it provides guidance on the possible strategies a learner can adopt with respect to adjustment and cultural knowledge creation. The cosmopolitan strategy appears to be the most effective and beneficial not only for individuals, as it promotes social integration within the local and transnational network and the development of social capital, but also for organizations, as it promotes innovation and knowledge sharing. Thus, educational institutions and international and global organizations might consider not only attracting and retaining employees (and students) who already utilize this strategy but also attempting to promote a cosmopolitan learning approach among their members. The other strategies, while not effective for any considerable period of time, could nevertheless be applied in specific contexts, and therefore, a uniform approach to cultural knowledge development should not be expected or encouraged.

However, the most significant implication for management practitioners is the strong support for the connection between existing social capital and networks and the prospect of developing them further or anew in a novel cultural environment. Although social capital and, in particular, transnational social capital, is a complex construct that is still being defined in the academic community, I can only echo Taylor's (2007) call to develop and/or attract employees who are capable of increasing their transnational capital and, therefore, that of their organizations. As the saying goes, the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton[12], and now the future graduates and employees of global organizations are building new, transnational and lasting school ties while they are still in school.

[12] Attributed to Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington, 1856

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Data construction matrix

| **Information/** Information Source | Interviews | Group Interviews | Observations | Documents |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| School A | | | | |
| **Local Students – Finns** | X | X | X | |
| **Local Students – Non-Finns** | X | X | X | |
| **International Students** | X | X | X | |
| **Exchange Students** | | X | X | |
| **Faculty** | | | | |
| **Administration** | X | | | |
| **Conducted classes** | | | X | |
| **Facility** | | | X | |
| **School events** | | | X | |
| **Social events** | | | | |
| **Promotion materials** | | | | X |
| **Teaching philosophy** | | | | X |
| School B | | | | |
| **Local Students: Czechs** | X | | X | |
| **Local Students: Non–Czechs** | X | X | X | |
| **International Students** | X | | X | |
| **Exchange Students** | | | | |
| **Faculty** | | | | |
| **Administration** | X | | | |
| **Conducted classes** | | | | |
| **Facility** | | | X | |
| **School events** | | | | |
| **Social events** | | | X | |
| **Promotion materials** | | | | X |
| **Teaching philosophy** | | | | X |
| School C | | | | |
| **Local Students Czechs** | X | X | X | X |
| **Local Students Non–Czechs** | X | X | X | X |
| **International Students** | X | | X | X |
| **Exchange Students** | | | | |
| **Faculty** | X | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Administration** | X | | | |
| **Conducted classes** | | | X | X |
| **Facility** | | | X | |
| **School events** | | | X | |
| **Social events** | | | X | |
| **Promotion materials** | | | | X |
| **Teaching philosophy** | | | | X |
| School D | | | | |
| **Local Students: Ecuado-rians** | X | X | X | X |
| **Local Students: Non-Ecuadorians** | X | X | X | X |
| **International Students** | X | | X | X |
| **Exchange Students** | X | | X | X |
| **Faculty** | X | X | X | |
| **Administration** | X | | X | |
| **Conducted classes** | | | X | |
| **Facility** | | | X | |
| **School events** | | | X | |
| **Social events** | | | X | |
| **Promotion materials** | | | | X |
| **Teaching philosophy** | | | | X |

## Appendix B: The list of the interview participants

Nickname (Anonymity) – all participants are given pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality. The names assigned are consistent with their origins and real names but bear no similarity to the real first names. Due to the large number of participants with Czech and Spanish names, certain assigned names might be identical to the real names of other participants but are never identical to the real participant's name.

Codes

- Position: S – Student; T – Faculty; A – Administrator
- Status: L – Local Czech, Finn, Ecuadorian; n – Local, non-Finn, non-Czech, non-Ecuadorian; I – international; X – exchange
- School: A, B, C, D
- Gender: F – female; M – male

Age – is approximate, as the participants were not asked to provide their exact ages

C/C experience – cross-cultural experience: all participants were asked to summarize their prior cross-cultural experience.

Country of origin – based on self-reports from the participants (not necessarily the country of current permanent residence)

Interview – the assigned interview ID – interviews in school A were not numbered originally, and hence they are also assigned a letter. If more than one participant has the same ID, this means that they were interviewed as a group.

| Nickname | Code | Age | C/C experience | Country of origin | Interview ID |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Megan | AIAF | 25-33 | Worked in EU, the US | Canada | 1H |
| Laura | SIAF | 19-22 | Russian origin | Estonia | 2H |
| Juhani | SLAF | 19-21 | | Finland | 3H |
| Polina | SXAF | 19-21 | Born in Russia, lived in the UK | Germany | 4H |
| Irina | SnAF | 19-21 | | Russia | 2H |
| Helmi | SLAF | 19-20 | | Finland | 5H |
| Maija | SLAF | 19-20 | | Finland | 5H |
| Eeva | SLAF | 19-20 | | Finland | 5H |
| Jackson | SIAM | 20-25 | | Nigeria | 6H |
| Riitva | SLAF | 30+ | Travelled widely | Finland | 7H |
| Omar | SIAM | 30+ | | Pakistan | 8H |
| Zhen | SIAF | 20-22 | | China | 9H |
| Fang | SIAF | 20-22 | | China | 9H |
| Lin | SnAF | 22-27 | Lives in Finland, married, has a child | China | 9H |
| Mai | SIAF | 20-22 | | China | 9H |
| Liene | SXAF | 19-20 | | Latvia | 10H |
| Ilse | SXAF | 19-20 | | Latvia | 10H |
| Edite | SXAF | 19-20 | | Latvia | 10H |
| Inga | SXAF | 19-20 | | Latvia | 10H |
| Ritvars | SXAM | 19-20 | | Latvia | 10H |
| Laima | SXAF | 19-22 | | Lithuania | 11H |
| Arune | SXAF | 19-21 | | Lithuania | 11H |
| Tereza | SLBF | 20-25 | Works for an Italian retail company | Czech Rep | 7B |
| Leo | SIBM | 18-22 | Active in the Nigerian com-munity | Nigeria | 3B |
| Ken | SIBM | 18-22 | Int'l high school | Nigeria | 6B |
| Zhenia | SnBF | 20-25 | Works in Prague | Ukraine | 2B |
| Marina | SnBF | 20-23 | Lived in Ukraine, studied in France for 2 yrs. | Russia | 2B |
| Leah | SnBF | 18-21 | Mother from Poland, father Spanish-Egyptian | Israel | 5B |
| Vlado | SIBM | 18-19 | Lived in Mexico, the US | Macedonia | 1B |
| Leslie | AIBF | 30+ | Travelled widely | Australia | 8B |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Thierry | SnBM | 18-20 | Parents were expats in the CZ, now are in France | France | 4B |
| Goran | SnCM | 41 | Works in Int'l high school | Sweden | 3C |
| Tomas | SLCM | 24-26 | Worked and studied in Ireland | Czech Rep | 5C |
| Dimitrios | SICM | 20-22 | | Cyprus | 12C |
| Niko | SICM | 20-22 | | Cyprus | 12C |
| Filip | SICM | 21-23 | Studied in the US | Serbia | 10C |
| Marko | SICM | 21-23 | | Croatia | 10C |
| Karolina | SLCF | 20-24 | Bicultural and bilingual, studied in France and Austria, lived in the US, speaks Spanish | Czech Rep/Germany | 11C |
| Miras | SICM | 20-22 | Studied in the US, lived with multicultural host family – host mother was from Mexico | Kazakhstan | 9C |
| Oscar | TIBM | 35-42 | Grew up in the UK | India/UK | 9B |
| Jakub | SICM | 20-22 | Int’l high school, worked in the UK and in the US | Slovakia | 8C |
| Lakhi | TnCF | 40-45 | | India | 9C |
| Nurislan | SICM | 21-25 | Worked in China and the UAE, studied in VSE (the CZ), speaks five languages | Kazakhstan | 4C |
| Linda | AICF | 30-38 | Married to a Greek, bilingual | US | 5C |
| Misa | SICF | 19-23 | Studied in the US | Slovakia | 14C |
| Katka | SICF | 19-23 | | Slovakia | 14C |
| Vasek | SLCF | 19-23 | | Czech Rep | 14C |
| Matus | SICM | 19-23 | | Slovakia | 14C |
| Thanh | SICM | 20-25 | Lived in Japan and Singapore | Vietnam | 7C |
| Adelka | SLCF | 20-25 | Studied in the UK | Czech Rep | 13C |
| Jana | SLCF | 20-25 | Studied in the UK | Czech Rep | 13C |
| Nela | SLCF | 19-23 | Studied in Spain | Czech Rep | 6C |
| Simona | SLCF | 19-23 | Studied in the UK | Czech Rep | 6C |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Omer | SnCM | 21-27 | | Israel | 2C |
| Madga | SLCF | 21-27 | Works for a US company | Czech Rep | 1C |
| Vera | SLCF | 23-28 | Lives in Germany | Czech Rep | 1C |
| Marketa | SLCF | 23-28 | Worked in Australia | Czech Rep | 1C |
| Karel | ALCM | 23-26 | | Czech Rep | 3C |
| Paul | TICM | 40-50 | Greek roots, also teaches in Bratislava | US | 12C |
| Zdenek | TLCM | 40-50 | | Czech Rep | 11C |
| Aleksi | SICM | 21-25 | Father is Russian and lives in St. Petersburg | Finland | 10C |
| Artem | SICM | 21-25 | Lived in Russia | Ukraine | 10C |
| Sierra | TIDF | 34-38 | | US | 18D |
| Jill | TIDF | 34-38 | Worked in Japan, China, Mexico | UK | 23D |
| Brian | TIDM | 33-37 | Worked in Oceania, studied in Finland, worked for Canadian Commonwealth | US | 19D |
| Sam | TnDM | 28-35 | Travel writer | UK | 26D |
| Ahmet | TnDM | 38-45 | Worked in Cyprus and the US | Pakistan | 30D |
| Mike | SnDM | 20-23 | Lived in Uruguay and the US (during high school) | Russia | 12D |
| Eduardo | TLDM | 35-38 | Worked in the US | Ecuador | 25D |
| Helga | TIDF | 40-50 | Family in the UK and the US | Germany | 20D |
| Diego | SLDM | 20-22 | Worked in the US | Ecuador | 6D |
| Joshua | SnDM | 20-25 | Works in the US and Ecuador, was on a religious mission in Venezuela | US | 21D |
| Johanna | SXDF | 20-22 | Travelled in Europe and Latin America | Germany | 29D |
| Melissa | SLDF | 20-22 | Boyfriend in the US, she visits him often | Ecuador | 17D |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dolorez | SLDF | 20-22 | Exchange student and worked in the US (NY) | Ecuador | 1D |
| Camila | SLDF | 19-21 | Studies Chinese | Ecuador | 14D |
| Andrea | SLDF | 19-21 | Visited the US | Ecuador | 14D |
| Pilar | SLDF | 21-23 | Studied in Canada and the UK, visited the US and Europe | Ecuador | 13D |
| Sebastian | SLDM | 20-23 | Studied in the US | Ecuador | 15D |
| Andres | SLDM | 19-21 | Exchange student in Australia, teaches Spanish | Ecuador | 11D |
| Alfaro | SLDM | 18-21 | | Ecuador | 16D |
| Isabella | SLDF | 20-22 | Exchange student in the US (NY), travelled in Argentina, bilingual | Ecuador | 24D |
| Sara | SXDF | 20-23 | | US | 5D |
| Carlos | SnDM | 20-24 | Studied for a year in France, summer camp in Norway, travelled in Europe | Columbia | 4D |
| Brandon | SLDM | 19-22 | Studied in the US, works for an MNE | Ecuador | 8D |
| Olive | SXDF | 20-22 | Gap year in China | Canada | 7D |
| Carla | SLDF | 22-25 | Exchange student in the US, travelled in Latin America | Ecuador | 2D |
| Luisa | SLDF | 19-23 | Studied in the US | Ecuador | 3D |
| Santiago | SnDM | 19-22 | Works for a French company | Chile | 3D |
| Cesar | SnDM | 21-24 | Lived in the US | Mexico/US | 28D |
| Daniella | SXDF | 20-23 | Studied in the US (high school), worked in Guatemala | Germany | 27D |
| Ana | SLDF | 20-25 | Multicultural family - all four grandparents from different countries | US/Ecuador | 9D |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alejando | SLDM | 20-23 | Studied for 2 yrs. in the US (middle school), goes to the US and Europe on vacations | Ecuador | 10D |

# Appendix C: The interview guide

## Interview Protocol

All interviews began with an overview of the goals of the interview, presented based on the participant's familiarity with academic research in general and qualitative research in particular, and the topic of cross-cultural competence

> ***Example.*** *Thank you for coming. As you know, I have asked you to participate in this interview to help me with my doctoral dissertation. As I have explained in class (or prior to the interview), my dissertation addresses the ways in which international students develop cross-cultural competence, and so I invited you to help me to learn about this topic based on your experience as an international student/local student/teacher/etc.*
>
> *This interview is not related to the class, the school or my role as a teacher. I will not share your answers or anybody's answers with anyone in this school. You can stop the interview at any time and you don't have to answer any questions that you don't like or don't know the answer to. I would like to hear your personal opinions and about your experiences, so of course there are no wrong answers. As you see, I have a list of topics to cover, but I am interested in what is important to you, so please don't worry that you'll get off the subject. This interview normally takes about an hour, but we can spend more or less time – it all depends on the person. You are welcome to ask me questions as well.*

- statement of confidentiality
    - no transcript, only written notes and the interview to be summarized by the researcher
    - pseudonyms for the participants and schools
    - the country and the city are to be indicated
    - and the exact name of the school and the year of the data collection could be determined based on the researcher's work history
    - the participant's statements could be presented in the final manuscript, conference papers and articles, in an edited form, but not verbatim
- explanation of how a participant could withdraw his/her consent prior to the final analysis

The questions were asked in a logical form, primarily following the format below, but if a participant addressed the topics in a different order, he/she would be encouraged to discuss them as he/she found most natural. At the end of the interview, the researcher reviewed the topics and the specific questions, and if any topic was not addressed during the discussion, she would ask questions about it/them. Certain topics were only addressed during the later part of the research, as they were emerging and developing from the prior data. The questions under the specific topics only provide an example of the questions asked. While all of the topics were covered to some extent in all interviews, none of the participants was asked all of the questions. Conversational questions, used to encourage the flow of the discussion, are not provided, as they were altered to conform to the knowledge of a participant, the degree of familiarity between the researcher and participant, the language skills of the latter and the specific school situation and shared history.

Instructors were asked similar questions but related to their students and ways the participant/instructor viewed his/her role as an educator in promoting the students' CCC. If the participant/instructor wanted to discuss his/her own CCC development process, this topic was also explored in addition to the students' CCC.

The administrators' interview questions are presented separately, although the explanation of the purpose of the interview, the confidentially and the informed consent were similar for all participants.

**Topics Addressed in the Interviews**

Part 1. General participant information and warm-up

- Verify the year at school (student) or teaching experience (teachers). Prior education, particularly for the teachers.
- Management classes taken/taught at this school/ other schools
- Country of origin and ethnicity
- Other countries where the participant had lived, studied or travelled for an extended period of time
- Other cross- or multicultural experience the participant had (family, professional, social)

Part 2. The value of cross-cultural competence (CCC)

- Why have you selected this school/program (and/or the country) to study/ teach in?
- How important is it for you to have cross/cultural skills/CCC?
- How would you personally define cross-cultural competence (if a participant was expected to know the term)? OR What skills, knowledge and abilities are important to live, work and study in a different culture (if the participant was not expected to know the term)?
- What is your personal educational goal in regards to CCC?
- Do you expect to develop it further during your studies?

- Do you expect that CC competence would be important for you upon graduation? If yes, in what way? If no, why not?

As all participants stated that CCC development (or an equivalent concept if they did not know the term) was very important to them and was one of the main educational goals (or, in the case of the teachers, they thought that it was of crucial importance for their students and was one of their teaching goals) the participants moved to the next part.

Part 3. The ways to develop CCC in an educational environment

- What steps do you take to develop your CCC?
- Does the coursework you do in class help you? How?
- What about the group work? Can you give me examples of when you've learned something besides the subject of your project?
- Can you give me examples of group work when something went wrong? Why do you think it happened? What do you think could have been done to make it work?
- Do your teachers help you to develop CCC? How? *NB. This question was developed in a separate topic in the later interviews – See Part 5*
- Can you give me any examples of when a teacher helped you to develop CCC and to understand other cultures, to learn important cross/cultural skills? What was particularly helpful?
- Any negative examples? You don't need to give me teachers' names, just describe what you did not like or what went wrong and why.
- What is the role of your classmates? Have you made friends with any of them? Do you see them outside school? What do you do together? *NB. This question was developed in a separate topic in the later interviews – See Part 5*
- Does the school administration (student services, program coordinators, deans, program directors – depending on the school) help you to understand academic requirements and the local cultural/academic norms? What activities, initiatives, and events have you liked and why? Which you did not like? Why? What more could be done/or differently?

Part 4. The ways to develop CCC in a general social environment

- What do you do outside of school? In what social activities do you participate?
- Did you make /or do you have/ friends from different cultures? How did you meet them? What do you do together?

- What about your host family/roommates? Do you get along well? Do you do things together? What kinds of things? Do you enjoy them? Do you think you learn from them?
- Do you see you classmates outside of school? Do you plan to do things together?
- Do you plan to stay in touch with your classmates in the future? What kind of professional connection or business cooperation would you like/expect to see? Would you do business together? What about other people (friends, teachers, host relatives, etc.) you've met during your study?

Part 5. The emergent topics – the role of the social networks and mentoring

- How do you meet people outside school? Where do you meet them? What do you do together? Do you think you will stay in touch with them (when you leave or graduate)?
- What activities (school or social) do you find useful/important in developing your CCC?
- What is the role of teachers as cultural mentors? What do they do? What do you like them to do outside of class/school? Do you find their advice /feedback helpful? In what way?
- If you have a problem (in school, with local services, business problem, depending on a participant) how would you solve it? Whom would you ask for help or information? What is going to happen then? Would you be able/willing to help other people (your classmates, friends, teacher/students) in a similar situation? How?

Part 6. Recap and suggestions

- Is there anything else you'd like to add related to CCC?
- Do you have any suggestions on what the school can do to help you and other students to develop CCC? The teachers? Your classmates? Yourself?
- Anything that holds back students' CCC development in school X? Anything that the school/the teachers/ your classmates should stop doing?

**Closing the interview**

Express gratitude for their time and sharing their stories and experience, offer to show interview notes, remind them how to contact with the researcher to add or clarify anything, to withdraw consent or for any other reason.

**Topics for discussion for administrators**.

The school administrators' interviews were used more as policy statements and descriptions of the programs and events than to obtain the personal opinions of the specific administrator. Therefore, at each school, the interviews focused on the particular programs and initiatives unique to the school. The questions depended on the administrator's role, position and involvement in student life. The topics presented below provide the general outline of the discussion.

- Importance of CCC to the school's mission
  - It is stated in the school materials (promotion brochure, study guide, graduation speech, etc.) that promoting cross-cultural (or intercultural) competence of the students is an important educational goal of school X. Do you personally consider it to be of major importance? Why?
- School programs and initiative intended to develop students' CCC
  - What does school X do to introduce students to the local culture/help them develop CCC/solve intercultural conflict/prepare them for a multicultural learning environment?
- Teachers' role in CCC development
  - Do you think that it is important for the teachers to have CCC and to be able to help students in their development? Does school X make an effort to select teachers who have highly developed CCC? Why? OR Why not? And if yes, then how?
  - Does the school encourage teachers to have contact with students outside of school? Why? Can you give me examples of the positive/negative outcomes of such contact?
- Social networks
  - What kinds of clubs, programs, or initiatives do you have to promote multicultural contact and develop friendship among the students? Please describe them. Do they fulfill their goals? What can be improved? How?
  - Do you cooperate with local organizations, businesses, or other groups to promote students' CCC? How? Do you consider it successful? What can be improved?

## Appendix D: Extracts from observation field notes, interview facsimile and documents with the initial codes

| **Text from Interview Notes (Facsimile), Observation and Document** | **Initial Code Assigned** |
|---|---|
| **Interview summary - Miras 9C**<br>**Topic - team work**<br>Miras said that he likes to work in groups with students from different backgrounds, because Russian speaking (and Kazakhs in particular) are 'lazy',(2) and unlike him (3), don't care about their grades (to pass is OK). So when the students come from different backgrounds, more work gets done, not just socializing (4). He noticed that Kazakhs like to have Vietnamese and Chinese (5) students in groups, because they '*work hard'* – '*love work'*, they are '*work horses'* (5) and do the most work (6). | 1) Preferring to work with diverse group of students<br>2) Believing that diverse teams produce better work than Russian-speaking teams<br>3) Preferring to work with students who have the same attitude toward studies<br>4) Believing that diverse teams apply more effort than homogeneous teams<br>5) Students like to work in groups with students who come from a background that has a reputation for hard work<br>6) Chinese and Vietnamese students doing the most of the group work |
| **Observation – class work school C**<br>Students form groups to work on a recruitment assignment. The instructor assigned leaders and asked them to select the group members. The leaders selected the students sitting next to them (1), with the resulting diverse groups. Group 1 - C with Russian speakers and Z; Group 2 - X with Czechs and Group 3 - J with S, F and G(2). The groups work on the assignment in the PC Lab, with the leaders conducting the internet search (3) and typing ads and slides and the rest of the group (5) members (in all three groups) contributing ideas (4). After fifteen minutes of group work, other members are sitting at the PC – looking up other suggestions (4, 6, 7) for ads. Group 1 found a nursing journal, and Group 2 is looking | (1) Choosing group/team members bases on convenience or proximity<br>(2) Not choosing to work with similar students (based on the country or origin, shared language or ethnicity)<br>(3) Assigned leaders taking the lead /situational leadership?<br>(4) Group members contributing ideas for group work<br>(5) All group members are participating in the work<br>(6) Switching roles, tasks based on the (4) contribution<br>(7) Opportunistic learning<br>(8) Sharing culture-specific knowledge<br>(9) Asking questions/ requesting cultural information |

| | |
|---|---|
| at a hospital website. Group 3 is not searching but is discussing the approach – international or local (4). G explains nursing training in Kazakhstan (8). S quizzes him on the English language skills of the graduates (9). F states that normal nursing practices are different in different countries, gives examples of Italy, Serbia and the US. (10) Group 2 is listening in.(7) C asks other group members whether they should find Russian and or Vietnamese nursing publications.(9) | (10) Giving examples from a different country / cultural practices |
| **Group interview (10C)**<br>**Topic – team work**<br>**L** said that he preferred to work in groups with diverse students (1), however, only the ones he knew well (2), because such teams produce better and more ideas (3), group members apply effort (4), and the meeting are easier to coordinate (5) because when you work with close friends they don't care so much (4), do not make the meeting a priority, (5) have no time to meet (4), and in the end don't complete the assignments. (3)<br>**R** agreed that friends often do not take a 'professional attitude' to the team work (4) because they are not afraid that their friends would get mad (6) at them, but stated that he preferred to work with people he knew,(2) and that were mostly Russian speaking (7) students.<br>***Interviewer****: Is that because you share a language or because you just know more students from the FSU?*<br>**R**. said that he thought it was because he and his friends just have the same attitude to studies. (8, 9) They wanted to pass and didn't want to spend a lot of time on assignments. (10)<br>**L**. agrees that the same expectations were | (1) Preferring to work with diverse group of students<br>(2) Preferring to work with students he knows well<br>(3) Believing that diverse teams produce better work than homogeneous teams<br>(4) Believing that diverse teams apply more effort than homogeneous teams<br>(5) Believing that diverse teams are easier to coordinate than homogeneous teams<br>(6) Friends not being afraid of negative sanctions from their friends<br>(7) Being friends with the students who share a language (Russian)<br>(8) Preferring to work with students who have the same attitude toward studies<br>(9) Preferring to associate with people who share his attitude (toward studies)<br>(10) Preferring to work with the students who expect to spend a similar amount of time on schoolwork |

| | |
|---|---|
| important (8, 10, 9) | |
| **Document - Vision Statement (school C)**<br>To offer multicultural (1) and impactful higher education (2) with a high sense of responsibility towards our stakeholders (3), and with a focus on quality (4) so that *the school* becomes students' first choice for English language (5) higher education in the region (6) | (1) Offering multicultural education<br>(2) Offering effective? education<br>(3) Responsibility towards all stakeholders, not just students or community<br>(4) Focusing on quality<br>(5) English language<br>(6) Regional (Central European?) |

## Appendix E: Examples of coding process

| Extracts from the constructed data sources: interview and observation notes, document review | Initial codes | Focused codes | Theor. Code | Core Cat. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Interview note 24D*: Isabella believes that simply being in class with international students enhances her cross-cultural competence, and she likes to hear examples of the experiences and points of view of the international students in class. | Sharing cultural knowledge with international peers | Sharing knowledge | Collaborative learning | Social capital development |
| *Class Observation 27D*: Q, an international student, provides examples of management practices in Malawi based on her experience assisting in running a family business there. | Discussing business experience | | | |
| *Class Observation 45D*: Students are engaged in an animated discussion on the best country to choose for a group project – country B is more interesting for their classmates, as little is known about management practices there, but there is more information available on country A. Asking an opinion of another student whether he thinks a third choice, country C, in which he had working experience would be sufficiently different from Ecuador to be of interest. | Sharing cultural knowledge with local peers | | | |
| *Interview note 13C:* Teamwork is more important that simply completing the assignment. When we discuss the project, we find out more about each other, and sometimes that leads to cooperation outside of class. For example, when we worked on a project with D, we realized that we both have had professional experience in the Middle East and in hospitality. There is something that we could use for the project but could also result in something bigger in the future. (Adelka) | Finding connections with similar experience | Finding common ground | | |
| *Interview note 7H*: Riitva said that she was glad to find out that many international students shared her love of athletic dancing. She believes that the school should sponsor more clubs and hobby groups to help all students to get to know each other so they could be more open and friendly when they have to work together in class or on group projects. | Finding similarities | | | |

## Appendix F: Tables of codes

**Table 7 Examples of codes supporting the role of the 'cultural curiosity' dimension**

| Code Name | Location |
|---|---|
| Valuing the US-type of educational practices | A, B, C, D |
| Enjoying the US-type of team work | C, D |
| Enjoy socializing with 'American' instructors | C, B, D |
| Interested in literature/media/art | A, B, C, D |
| Interested in the social life of the location | C, D |
| Wanting to know about business | A, B, C, D, |
| Perceiving culture as fun | A, B, C, D |
| Knowing a lot about Latin American countries | D |
| Not needing to know about neighbors<br>- Nordic<br>- Eastern Europe<br>- Slavic countries<br>- Ukraine<br>- Russia | A, C, D<br>A, C<br>C<br>B<br>C<br>A |
| Finding culture prohibiting /strict | A, C, D |
| Needing to know about future business partners | A, D |
| Not needing knowledge about<br>- Africa<br>- Mongolia | -<br>A<br>C |

**Table 8 Examples of codes supporting the 'motivation' dimension**

| Code Name | Location |
|---|---|
| Being interested in cross-cultural management | A, B, C, D |
| Being interested in cross-cultural marketing | C, D |
| Learning to appreciate different values | A, C, D |
| Leaving CCC development to chance (-) | B |
| Expecting to develop CCC naturally through increased CC contacts (-) | C, D<br>A, B |
| Believing that cultures cannot be changed or learned (-) | A, B, C, D |
| Valuing cross-cultural skills (+/-) | A,B, C, D |
| Expecting future benefits from acquiring CCC skills | A, B, C, D |
| Planning to use CCC skills right now | A, B, C, D |
| Enjoying new cultural knowledge/skills | A, C, D |
| Believing that practical applications will lead to competence | A, B, C, D |
| Making a conscious effort to accrue CCC | A, C, D |
| Expecting to have diverse business partners | B, C, D |
| Expecting to manage a diverse workforce in the future | A, C, D |

**Table 9 Examples of codes supporting the 'trust' dimension**

| Code name | Location |
|---|---|
| Trusting students | A, B, C, D |
| Trusting teachers | A, B, C, D |
| Trusting strangers | A, D |
| Trusting local institutions | A, D |
| Trusting administration | A, B, D |
| People trust me | A, D |
| Looking trustworthy | D |
| Believing that people are generally good | A, C, D |
| Believing that experience is worth the risk | D |
| Thinking the best about people | B, D |
| Signaling intentions | C, D |

**Table 10 Examples of codes supporting the 'social capital' dimension**

| Code Name | Location |
|---|---|
| Meeting friends of friends | A, B, C, D |
| Participating in local events | A, C, D |
| Engaging in hobbies/interests | A, B, D |
| Participating in events with foster family | D |
| Enjoying school events | A, B, C, D |
| Meeting people everywhere | A, B, D |
| Asking new acquaintances for advice | A, C, D |
| Finding common ground | A, B, C, D |
| Asking for introductions | B, C, D |

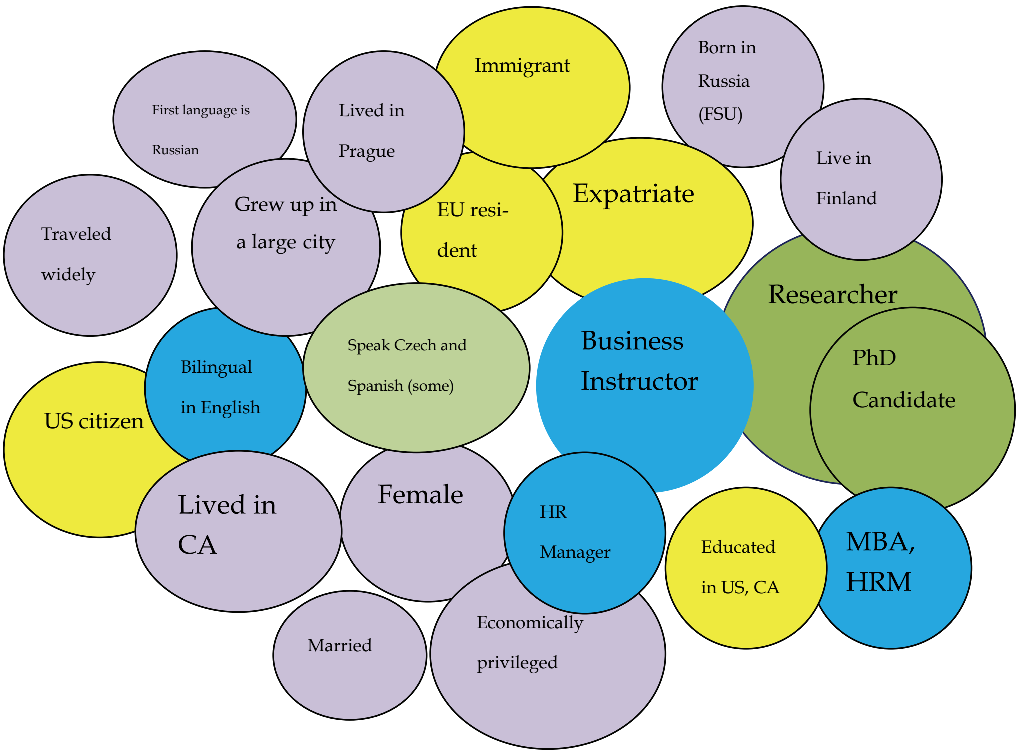
**Table 11 Examples of codes supporting the 'social network' dimension**

| Code Name | Location |
|---|---|
| Meeting friends of friends | A, B, C, D |
| Participating in local events | A, C, D |
| Engaging in hobbies/interests | A, B, D |
| Participating in events with foster family | D |
| Enjoying school events | A, B, C, D |
| Meeting people everywhere | A, B, D |
| Asking new acquaintances for advice | A, C, D |
| Having transnational networks | A, B, C, D |
| Asking for introductions | B, C, D |
| Sharing advice | C, D |
| Building networks at school | A, B, C, D |
| Having multicultural networks | A, B, C, D |
| Expecting future benefits | A, B, C, D |

**Table 12 Examples of codes supporting the 'cosmopolitan learning strategy' dimension**

| Code Name | Location |
|---|---|
| Being myself | A, B, C, D |
| Asking for explanations in ambiguous situations | A, D |
| Not making assumptions – asking for a local meaning | D |
| Seeking a 'second opinion' | C, D |
| Explaining the (cultural) background | A, B, C, D |
| Being interested in the origins of customs, festivals | A, C, D |
| Double-checking the evaluation, feedback | A, C, D |
| Finding a support group | A, B, C, D |
| Asking teachers' advice | A, B, C, D |
| Knowing where to get advice | A, B, C, D |
| It depends on the situation (context) | B, C, D |
| Liking being with different people | A, B, C, D |
| Talking with friends (about culture) | A, B, C, D |
| Discussing unclear situations | A, B, C, D |
| Planning to keep in touch with peers | A, B, C, D |
| Establishing business with peers | A, C |
| Planning to move to another country | A, C, D |
| Successful past experience (+/-) | A, B, C, D |
| Planning to stay in the country | A, B, C, D |
| Planning to have business interests here | C, D |

# Appendix G. Positionality map



## Appendix H. List of theoretical and focused codes

| | Theoretical Code/ Salient Dimension | Focused Code | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| Individual Conditions | Curiosity | Psychic distance | 1 |
| | | Excitement | 2 |
| | | *Cool Culture* | 3 |
| | | Future professional benefits | 4 |
| | Instrumental Motivation | Professional goals | 5 |
| | | Academic goals | 6 |
| | | Social goals | 7 |
| | Pragmatism | Opportunistic approach (this is my chance…) | 8 |
| | | Prioritizing need (now or later) | 9 |
| Social Network Aspects | Social Capital | Finding common ground | 10 |
| | | Recognizing social capital | 11 |
| | | Using social capital | 12 |
| | | Transferable social capital | 13 |
| | | Culture specific knowledge | 14 |
| | *Trust* | General attitude to trust | 15 |
| | | Signaling intentions | 16 |
| | | Maintaining trust | 17 |
| | | Agency trust | 18 |
| | Ties | Creating loose ties | 19 |
| | | Maintaining networks | 20 |
| | | Acquaintances | 21 |
| | Feedback and Support | *Seeking mentors* | 22 |
| | | Providing mentorship | 23 |
| | | Seeking feedback | 24 |
| | | Evaluating feedback | 25 |
| | | Having a variety of mentors | 26 |
| Learning Strategies | Tourist | *Real people* | 27 |
| | | Immersing in new environment | 28 |
| | | Getting the most out of it | 29 |
| | Ambassador | Seeing as a moral duty to promote home/X culture | 30 |
| | | Seeing as a professional duty to promote home/X culture | 31 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Compartmentalization of social and professional lives | 32 |
| | Limited time | 33 |
| Chameleon | Continuous practice | 34 |
| | Blending in | 35 |
| | *No home anywhere* | 36 |
| | Feeling lost | 37 |
| Cosmopolitan | Increasing ambiguity | 38 |
| | Integrated cultural identity | 39 |
| | Sharing knowledge | 40 |
| | Finding new solutions | 41 |
| | Helping others | 42 |
| | Context-dependent identity | 43 |
| | *I'm in for the long haul* | 44 |
| | *I can go anywhere* | 45 |

Codes in *italics* are *in-vivo codes*

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