MISSIONARY KIDS' REPATRIATION NARRATIVES

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

BY

AMY M. COLLIER, B. A., M. S.

DENTON, TEXAS

AUGUST 2008

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is with deep gratitude that I acknowledge the individuals who mentored and supported me throughout this research. I am grateful to the brilliant and resourceful members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Lillian Chenoweth, Dr. Mary Bold, and Dr. Claire Sahlin for their support and enthusiasm for this dissertation. This dissertation represents the culmination of many years of caring mentoring from my committee, whose investment in my success was indispensable. Dr. Chenoweth has provided wisdom and guidance as a professor, as an advisor, and as a friend. I am lucky and grateful to have had an advisor who inspired me to be the best doctoral student I could be.

Thank you to Perry Bradford, the Director of Mu Kappa, for distributing my recruitment flyers to the MK contact list. The work Mr. Bradford does on behalf of MKs is invaluable. I would like to send special thanks to the participating faculty sponsors and MKs. I am honored to have the opportunity to interact with each MK and I learned so much from each of you. Your strength and resilience is an inspiration to all.

I want to say a special thank-you to my grandfather, without whom my pursuit of doctoral education would not have been possible. My grandfather stood beside me and supported me through difficult times. I am fortunate to have a grandfather who demonstrates his love through service to others. I respect and appreciate everything my grandfather has done for me and for others in my family.

Throughout my life, my parents have encouraged me to pursue the best opportunities for me and to seek out success in my education. The value that they placed on my accomplishments has pushed me to pursue excellence in my studies. I am so grateful for my parents' and sister's encouragement and support throughout my early life and my adult life. Thank you, Mom, Dad, and Jennifer.

The challenges of completing a doctorate and a dissertation have made me acutely aware of the importance of social support. Thank you to my gracious friends, Jerid and Jessica, Cody and Karen, Braggston, and so many others who provided that support I needed, even when I could not reciprocate. I love you all dearly.

Finally, I would like to thank my Michael, my husband and partner. You have been my inspiration, my rock, and my best friend through the fun times and the tough times. I am so thankful for our partnership. I dedicate this dissertation, the culmination of years of hard work, to us and to our future. I look forward to moving on to our next adventure with you at my side.

ABSTRACT

AMY M. COLLIER

MISSIONARY KIDS' REPATRIATION NARRATIVES

AUGUST 2008

This dissertation outlines a qualitative research inquiry into the repatriation narratives of Missionary Kids (MKs). The purpose of this study was to give voice to MKs in order to acknowledge their repatriation experiences. The focus of this study was MKs, as a subset of a larger population of Third Culture Kids (TCKs). The rationale for this study's focus on the repatriation experiences of MKs stems from an interest in the specific contextual factors that may influence MKs' repatriation. These contextual factors include the national context (interactions with host country), organizational context (policies, rules, structure established by the sponsoring organization), and the religious context (Ritchey & Rosik, 1993).

The researcher elicited narratives from 19 MKs at several universities in the United States by asking the MKs to write their repatriation stories. The researcher also conducted phone or Skype interviews with 9 volunteer MKs and with 2 faculty sponsors of MK organizations at universities. The MKs' repatriation stories, interview transcripts, and the researcher's reflexive journals were analyzed through hermeneutical processes. The researcher added rigor to the study through data triangulation, employing member-checking and rich descriptions to the study.

The findings of the study indicated that two key experiences of repatriating MKs are longing for the host country and discovering cultural differences/taboos between the home and host countries. Those experiences are often accompanied by sadness/depression or mixed feelings. During their repatriation experiences, MKs find support from other MKs, from their spirituality, and from parents. Though MKs typically re-acculturate quickly, many continue to struggle with the notion of home, cultural identity, and American culture. Structural analyses of the MKs' stories indicated that MKs' repatriation experiences resembled models of family adaptation proposed by McCubbin and Patterson (1982). This model emphasizes the roles of individuals' resources and perceptions of a crisis both prior to and after the crisis event.

It could be concluded that MKs' repatriation experiences are often difficult, as they deal with cultural differences and longing for the host country(ies). However, as MKs rely on their support systems (other MKs, spirituality, parents), they re-acculturate to their home countries. The issues of cultural identity and notions of home remain problematic for many MKs. The findings of this study were allowed the researcher to develop implications for parents of MKs, sponsoring organizations, universities and colleges, and family educators and practitioners.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS iii

ABSTRACT v

LIST OF TABLES xi

LIST OF FIGURES xii

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION 1

Purpose of the Study 4
Rationale for the Study 4
Rationale for Studying MKs 5
Rationale for Studying College-Attending MKs 6
Rationale for Studying Repatriation Issues 6
Rationale for Studying Narratives 7
Role of the Researcher 8
Theoretical Approaches 9
Framework and Research Questions 10
Definition of Terms 10
Summary 13

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE 14

Research on Re-Acculturation 14
Theories of Re-Acculturation and Reverse Culture Shock 14
Research on Re-Acculturating Sojourners 17
Research on Re-Acculturating Third Culture Kids 18
Research on Re-Acculturating MKs 19
Factors that Impact Repatriation and Re-Acculturation 22
Sojourners' Expectations 22
TCKs' Expectations 23
MKs' Expectations 24

Sojourners' Identity 24
TCKs' Identity 26
MKs' Identity 27
Sojourners' Social Support 28
TCKs' Support 29
MKs' Support 30
Sojourners' Individual Characteristics 31
TCKs' Individual Characteristics 31
MKs' Individual Characteristics 31
Characteristics of Third Culture Kids and Missionary Kids 32
Missionary Kids 33
Limitations of Previous Research 35
Theoretical Framework: Philosophical Hermeneutics 36
Theoretical Framework: Phenomenology 38
Summary 39

III. DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY 40

Research Questions 40
Participant Identification and Selection 40
Pilot Study 42
Gaining Access to Participants 43
Data Collection Methods 43
Stories 45
Interviews 45
Data Analysis Procedures 49
Data Management 49
Data Analysis 50
Structural Analysis 50
Themal Analysis 50
Holistic Analysis 51
Trustworthiness 51
Dense, or Rich, Descriptions 52
Member-Checking 52
Reflexive Journals 54
Ethical Considerations of the Study 55
Responsibility to the Participants 55
Responsibility to the University 56
Summary 57

IV. RESULTS OF THE STUDY 58

Description of the Sample 58
Gender and Age of the Sample 59
Host Countries of the Sample 60
Years of Host Country(ies) Residence 61
Sponsoring Organizations 62
Type of Schooling in the Host Country 63
Type of Housing at the Time of Repatriation and Current Housing 64
Data Collection Process 65
MKs' Stories 66
Interviews with Participants 66
Methods of Data Analysis 68
Analysis of the Stories 69
Loneliness 72
Sadness/Depression and Daydreaming/Ignoring Reality 72
Mixed Feelings 74
Excitement and Ready/Prepared 74
Discovering American Cultural Differences/Taboos 75
Critical/Dislike of America 76
Feeling Homeless and Not Belonging Anywhere 77
Missing the Host Country and Holding on to the Host Country 78
Wanting to Return to the Host Country 79
Saying Goodbye 80
Sources of Help 80
Adaptation 81
Structural Analysis of the MKs' Stories 82
Analysis of the MK Interviews 86
Analysis of the Faculty Sponsor Interviews 118
Analysis of the Researcher's Reflexive Journals 124
MKs' Responses to Member Checking 126
Summary 128

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS 130

Discussion of the Findings 132
Additional Themes 144
Home 144
Struggles with American Culture and American Cultural Identity 144

Conclusions from the Structural Analyses 145
Conclusions 147
Limitations 150
Implications of the Findings 151
Implications for Parents of MKs 151
Implications for Sponsoring Organizations 154
Implications for College and University Personnel 154
Implications for Family Prevention and Intervention Specialists 156
Recommendations for Future Research 157
Summary 160

REFERENCES 161

APPENDICES

A. Recruitment Flyer 173

B. Consent Form for MKs 175

C. Demographic Questionnaire 180

D. Sample Emails to Participants 183

E. Letter from Mu Kappa National Director 187

F. Informed Consent Form for Faculty Sponsors 189

G. Sample Emails to Faculty Sponsors 194

H. IRB Approval Letter 197

I. Structural Analysis of an MK's Story 199

LIST OF TABLES

Table Page

1. Research Questions and MK Interview Questions 47

2. Research Questions and Faculty Sponsor Interview Questions 49

3. Distribution of MKs by Age and Gender 60

4. Distribution of MKs by Primary Host Country 61

5. Distribution of MKs by Length of Stay in the Host Country 62

6. Distribution of MKs by Sponsoring Organization 63

7. Distribution of MKs by Type of Schooling 64

8. Distribution of MKs by Current Type of Housing at Re-Entry 65

9. Distribution of MKs by Current Type of Housing 65

10. Categories and Themes in the MKs' Stories 70

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure Pag

1. Data sources and data management for MK study 4

2. Interview time lengths in minutes 6

3. Adaptation of McCubbin and Patterson's Double ABC-X Model 14

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Children of missionaries, known as Missionary Kids (MKs), are underrepresented in social science research. Research that has been conducted with MKs as the primary focus has been mostly dissertation research or informal research for religious non-scholarly publications. However, these publications indicate that the experiences of MKs merit further research. In particular, MKs experiences of repatriation, the return to their home country after an extended absence, may be examined in-depth.

MKs account for a significant part of a larger population of Third Culture Kids (TCKs). A TCK is defined as an individual who

> ...has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership of any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK's life experience, the sense of belonging is in a relationship to others of a similar background. (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999, p. 19)

TCKs may be children of missionaries, military personnel, diplomats, international service workers, and international business workers (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). While most sojourners are adults when they move to their host country(ies), TCKs are children

or young adults who move to another country because of their parents' employment (Pollock & Van Reken).

Most research involving TCKs focuses on their experiences of repatriation, their return to their home country after an extended absence. Repatriation is a characteristic that differentiates TCKs from immigrant or migrant children. Past statistics indicated that an estimated 40,000 TCKs repatriate to the United States to attend university (Gaw, 1995). Though no new statistics for repatriating TCKs have been identified, the previous statistics indicate that a large number of TCKs repatriate for college each year. As the definition of TCKs implies, TCKs often do not claim their home country as "home" and, because of that, processes of repatriation can lead to problems (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Some researchers refer to repatriation as a time of reverse culture shock (Gaw). According to Gaw, reverse culture shock is "the process of readjusting, reacculturating, and reassimilating into one's own home culture after living in a different culture for a significant period of time" (p. 2).

Individuals undergoing reverse culture shock may experience academic problems, cultural identity conflict, social withdrawal, depression, anxiety, and interpersonal difficulties (Gaw, 1995). Barringer (2001) noted that repatriated TCKs may experience prolonged adolescence, feelings of rootlessness, alienation, and an inability to make commitments. Gaw found that repatriated individuals reported feelings of alienation, disorientation, stress, value confusion, anger, hostility, compulsive fear, helplessness,

disenchantment, and discrimination. Repatriated MKs also reported high levels of interpersonal distance and negative reactions to American cultural values (Huff, 2001).

Repatriation problems are exacerbated by a lack of social support that many TCKs experience upon reentry. Many TCKs report an inability to identify with their parents during repatriation (McLachlan, 2005). Werkman, Farley, Butler, and Quayhagen (1981) argued that, once re-entered, TCKs have less emotional investment in families and peers (c.f., Useem & Downie, 1976; Gerner, Perry, Moselle, & Archbold, 1992). Many returning TCKs become socially marginalized because of their interpersonal distance from family and friends (Gerner & Perry, 2000).

Most research studies to date have sought to explain why some TCKs experience more difficulties than others during repatriation and what factors might predict repatriation troubles (Austin & Van Jones, 1987; Cockburn, 2002; Gerner, 1994; Martini, 2005). These studies identified the concept of re-acculturation as problematic for repatriating TCKs, yet they did not provide much insight into how TCKs make sense of this re-acculturation. Narrative inquiry provides an ideal approach to the study of meaning in MKs' experiences of repatriation. According to Eakin (1999), autobiographical narratives "offer a precious record of the process of identity formation, of the ways in which individuals employ cultural models of identity and life story… to make sense of their experience" (p. 27).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to give voice to MKs in order to acknowledge their repatriation experiences. Repatriation is a complex problem that researchers can learn about through the application of a variety of research questions, methodologies, and methods of inquiry. The value of narrative inquiry for understanding repatriation is that it provides a framework for analysis of identity and meaning within a phenomenon. Narrative inquiry elicits stories from participants. According to Ellis and Bocher (2003):

> The usefulness of these stories is their capacity to inspire conversation from the point of view of the readers, who enter from the perspective of their own lives. The narrative rises and falls on its capacity to provoke readers to broaden their horizons, reflect critically on their own experience, enter empathically into worlds of experience different from their own, and actively engage in dialogue regarding the social and moral implications of the different perspectives and standpoints encountered. (p. 224-225)

Rationale for the Study

The researcher chose to focus this study on the repatriation narratives of college-attending MKs, as a subset of the larger TCK population. The following subsections address the rationale for studying: (a) MKs, (b) college-attending MKs, (c) repatriation experiences of MKs, and (d) narratives.

Rationale for Studying MKs

A study on repatriation issues of sojourners or TCKs could focus on children of military personnel, diplomats, international workers, or adult sojourners such as Peace Corps workers or exchange students. The rationale for this study's focus on the repatriation experiences of MKs stems from an interest in the specific contextual factors that may influence MKs' repatriation. These contextual factors include the national context (interactions with host country), organizational context (policies, rules, structure established by the sponsoring organization), and the religious context (Ritchey & Rosik, 1993).

Compared with sojourners and other TCKs, MKs tend to have longer and more substantial contact with host country culture and citizens (Firmin, Warner, & Lowe, 2006; Navara & James, 2002). This greater host culture contact may make home country re-acculturation more difficult for MKs (Navara & James). Missionary families are expected by their sponsoring organizations to learn the host country language(s) so that they can communicate with the host country natives (Kenney, 1987). Sponsoring organizations may also require missionary families' integration into local churches and communities (Kenney). These requirements often lead to more host country contact and integration for MKs than for other sojourners or TCKs.

The missionary lifestyle may be more stressful than the lifestyles of other sojourners due to the added weight of religious expectations (Firmin, Warner, & Lowe, 2006; Navara & James; Rosik, Richards, & Fannon, 2005). These expectations emerge

from the missionaries' sponsoring organizations as well as from the missionaries themselves. Chester (1982) described this weight as the missionary families' expectations of being all things to all people, in order to accomplish their ministry goals.

Rationale for Studying College-Attending MKs

Approximately 95% of TCKs who graduate from high school and return to the United States matriculate into American colleges and universities (Gaw, 1995). College adjustment, in conjunction with the difficulties of repatriation, can be challenging for TCKs. Schulz (1985) found that college-entering MKs reported financial problems, difficulty choosing a major or career, difficulty in finding their identity, and difficulty finding friends with similar backgrounds and values. Many MKs change universities because they never completely acculturate to their university. While these issues are typical with many college students, MKs must face these challenges while also dealing with adjustment to their home countries. According to Gaw, though sojourners reported severe problems with college adjustment and academic performance, few were willing to utilize campus services to address those problems.

Rationale for Studying Repatriation Issues

As an understudied population, MKs represent an underserved population in prevention and intervention services. A few reentry programs exist to help MKs adjust to life in their home country; however, none of these programs appear to be based in research or theory (Barringer, 2001). As repatriating MKs struggle with acculturating to their home country, they may need research-based services that identify the vast range of

experiences and attributed meanings associated with repatriation. Research suggests that, without appropriate services, repatriation problems faced by MKs may have further ramifications for them as they enter adulthood (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

Rationale for Studying Narratives

According to Butcher (2004), re-entry to a home country interrupts sojourners' narratives and impacts their perceptions of belonging and exclusion within social and cultural groups. Because of this, the study of MKs' narratives may help to illuminate their experiences of repatriation. Narrative methodologies take participants' stories as the objects of study (Riessman, 1993). In narrative research, researchers examine salience, creativity, and human agency in their stories. Like textual analysis, narrative analysis places emphasis on the language that participants use. In contrast to textual analysis alone, narrative analysis also looks at the sequence in which language is conveyed, or the way in which the story is told (Riessman).

Narratives tell the listener how the storytellers interpret their experiences (Riessman, 1993). Labov (1997) noted that narratives of personal experience are socially and emotionally evaluated and give the listener/reader insight into how those evaluations shape meaning. Stories often illuminate the neglected realm of human experiences (Polkinghorne, 2007). Participants' stories tell the researcher the events, the contexts surrounding the events, the participants' interpretation of those events, and the impact of those events on the participants. According to Riessman, the role of culture on individuals' interpretation of their events is also expressed in stories.

Within qualitative research traditions, narrative inquiry is valued for giving voice to participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Narrative inquiry acknowledges that humans' use of language is not neutral and is situated in experiences and meaning (Ellis & Bochner, 1996). Because of this, narrative researchers acknowledge both the language and structure choices of participants' stories in addition to the researcher's situated understanding of the stories (Ellis & Bochner).

Role of the Researcher

Riessman (1993) noted that the first level of representation in narrative research occurs when the researcher is attending to the research experience. That is, as the researcher observes or speaks with research participants, she is attending to phenomena that are meaningful to her. The researcher selected this topic for study because of her own experiences as a repatriating MK.

The researcher was an MK who lived in Brazil for 10 years. The researcher repatriated at the age of 16 for the purposes of attending her final two years of high school and college. The researcher's parents were employed with the International Mission Board, an organization sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention. The researcher's parents lived in Brazil for a total of 15 years.

The researcher's experience as an MK impacted the ways in which the MKs in the study interacted with the researcher. In addition, the researcher's previous experience as an MK impacted what phenomena were meaningful to her as she read the participants'

narratives and as she interviewed participants. The researcher maintained a reflexive posture throughout the study to continually account for her role in the research study.

Theoretical Approaches

Because of the long tradition of narrative inquiry in social sciences and the many methods of narrative interpretation, the research was situated within an interpretive paradigm. This study was aligned with philosophical hermeneutics (Feldman, 2005). Philosophical hermeneutics approaches understanding and interpretation as necessary conditions of human existence; interpretation and understanding cannot be viewed objectively without the inherent biases and assumptions that reside within human existence (Feldman).

The researcher also utilized a phenomenological approach to this study. According to Creswell (2003), phenomenology is concerned with the lived experiences of individuals. Phenomenology attempts to understand the human experience, explore meanings associated with experiences, and connect experiences to the everyday world (Giorgi, 1970). Smith (2004) argued that phenomenological inquiry involves examining individuals' consciousnesses. Thus, when examining human interactions, researchers must look at the intentionality, experience of, and context of each interaction. According to Labov (1972, 1997, 2006), individuals' narratives illuminate those aspects of human interactions, particularly the context of their interactions. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), phenomenologists utilize indexicality to understand meanings created in

everyday conversations and interactions. Indexicality is the examination of contexts to better understand the meanings that individuals ascribe to their interactions.

Framework and Research Questions

Narrative inquiry provided the framework for this study. The researcher elicited narratives from 19 MKs at universities in the United States by asking the MKs to write narratives, in the form of repatriation stories. The researcher conducted interviews with nine MKs who volunteered to be interviewed and two faculty sponsors of the Mu Kappa organization (a social organization for MKs). The MKs' repatriation stories, transcripts of interviews with MKs and faculty sponsors, and reflexive journals were analyzed through hermeneutical processes.

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are MKs' repatriation experiences?
2. What resources are involved in MKs' repatriation experiences?
3. What is the role of MKs' expectations regarding repatriation in MKs' repatriation experiences?
4. What is the role of identity in MKs' repatriation experiences?

Definition of Terms

Culture – According to Hiebert (1983), culture is a framework of beliefs, values, and assumptions from which individuals derive meaning.

Culture Shock – Culture shock is a term that refers to individuals' reactions to unfamiliar cultural environments; these reactions are typically characterized as negative

and impact how individuals think, feel, and act in those new cultures (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001).

Furlough – Furloughs are brief returns to the home country for vacation, continuing education, fund-raising, family emergencies, or a work assignment (Walters, 1991). Missionary families' furloughs are often determined by the policies of their sponsoring organizations.

Home country – In research on missionary families, the home country is most often the country in which the MK's parents have primary citizenship (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Because the term "home" is rarely used by MKs to designate one particular location, "home" refers to the parents' home country (Pollock & Van Reken). Some researchers may refer to the home country as the "passport country" (Pollock, Van Reken, & Gould, 2001).

Host country – The host country is the country in which the parents of the MKs work. Many missionary families are nomadic, so there may be multiple host countries for MKs. Additionally, many MKs attend boarding school in a location separate from their families.

Missionary Kids – Missionary Kids (MKs) are children of missionaries who are employed or sponsored by religious organizations (Kenney, 1987). Missionaries may work in host countries or within their home country.

Narratives – Stories, told by individuals, that describe the individuals' experiences of some phenomenon (Riessman, 1993).

Narratives of personal experiences – These narratives include a series of events that correspond to a series of events that occurred in the individual's biography (Labov, 1997). That is, narratives of personal experiences must include experiences that happened to the story-teller, not just observations the storyteller made about outside events.

Philosophical Hermeneutics – An approach to interpretation whereby researchers acknowledge their role in the co-construction of participants' meanings and understandings (Schwandt, 2003). In this approach, researchers do not seek understanding as an object, but rather they seek the negotiation of meaning that occurs between the researcher and the participant. Interpretation and understanding cannot be viewed objectively without the inherent biases and assumptions that reside within human existence (Schwandt).

Re-acculturation – According to Stringham (1993), re-acculturation is "the long-term process of readaptation after the return home" (p. 66).

Reverse Culture Shock - According to Gaw (1995), reverse culture shock is "the process of readjusting, reacculturating, and reassimilating into one's own home culture after living in a different culture for a significant period of time" (p. 2).

Repatriation – Repatriation is reentry, often permanently, into the home country. Repatriation may be characterized by experiences of re-acculturation and reverse culture shock (Schultz, 1985). These repatriation characteristics may be experienced by sojourners, expatriates, and Third Culture Kids (Raschio, 1987).

Sojourner – Individuals who take up temporary residence in a country that is not their home country (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). Most sojourner research focuses on international students, exchange students, or corporate business travelers. However, sojourners can also include TCKs, such as children of missionaries, military personnel, and diplomats.

Third Culture Kids – According to Pollock and Van Reken (2001), Third Culture Kids (TCKs) are individuals who spend a portion of their developmental years in a host country. TCKs may be children of missionaries, military personnel, diplomats, international service workers, and international business workers (Pollock & Van Reken).

Summary

The repatriation experiences of MKs are complex and they merit in-depth study from multiple perspectives and methodological approaches. This chapter delineated a study of the repatriation narratives of college-attending MKs from a philosophical hermeneutic and phenomenological approach. The purpose of this study was to give voice to MKs in order to acknowledge their repatriation experiences. Twenty-two college-attending MKs participated in the study. The researcher collected the MKs' narratives through stories and interviews; the researcher collected additional data from Mu Kappa faculty sponsors and from her reflexive journals. Narrative methodology was selected for this study because of its recognized role in giving voice to participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of literature points to the body of research on sojourners and an exploration of re-acculturation for those sojourners who return to their home countries. The focus of this review of literature was to apply findings from sojourner re-acculturation research to an understanding of the experiences of Third Culture Kids (TCKs) and Missionary Kids (MKs) upon their repatriation to their home countries and the role of support in their re-acculturation. The review also provided a foundation of research for understanding the characteristics of TCKs and MKs.

Research on Re-Acculturation

Research on re-acculturation emerged from the field of cultural psychology, which explores "the role of culture on self and groups" (Sussman, 2000, p. 356). As cross-cultural contact has increased over the past century, more and more research has looked at how cross-cultural transitions impact individuals (Sussman). Though repatriation and re-acculturation were once seen as the closure in cross-cultural transition cycles, researchers now see those processes as distinct (Sussman).

Theories of Re-Acculturation and Reverse Culture Shock

The preponderance of sojourners experiencing re-entry difficulties led several researchers to generate theories of reverse culture shock. Like traditional culture shock, reverse culture shock represents difficulties in adjusting to another culture. Reverse

culture shock, however, occurs when individuals struggle to re-acculturate to their home culture (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001).

Two primary explanations exist for understanding repatriation or re-acculturation difficulties. One explanation articulates that individuals who acculturate well to their host country will re-acculturate more easily to the home country than those who do not acculturate well (Sussman, 2000; 2002). This school of thought, often known as a reductionist perspective, "considers all transitions, adjustments, and adaptations as variants on the same process, so that the underlying mechanisms for overseas transitions, repatriation transitions, or domestic geographic transitions are equivalent" (Sussman, 2000, p. 361). This perspective views acculturation and re-acculturation as requiring a skill set that, once developed, will assist the sojourner with any cultural transition. The acculturation and re-acculturation skill set, as described by Sussman (2000), requires first that the sojourner has a moderate to strong sense of cultural identity.

An alternate and more prevalent perspective predicts an inverse relationship between host country acculturation and home country re-acculturation (Sussman, 2002; see also Fail, Thompson, & Walker, 2004). According to this perspective, a sojourner who experiences successful adaptation to his or her host country will experience more re-acculturation difficulties upon repatriation. This perspective is supported by Rohrlich and Martin (1991), who found that sojourners who had higher levels of communication and interaction with host country residents were more likely to experience home country

dissatisfaction and re-acculturation difficulties than sojourners who had lower levels of host country interaction.

Sussman (2000, 2002) proposed a third approach to re-acculturation that examines the roles of self-concept and cultural identity in sojourners' repatriation. In this perspective, sojourners' responses to repatriation are mediated by shifts in cultural identity, identity salience, and sociocultural adaptation (Sussman, 2000). According to Sussman's (2000) model, repatriation brings about a cultural identity salience. As the sojourner recognizes his or her cultural identity, he or she becomes aware of discrepancies between the cultural identity and the culture of the home country. Once aware of the discrepancies, the sojourner then begins the process to adjusting his or her cultural identity. For some sojourners, that identity adjustment is minimal while for others it is extreme. The adjustment is affected by the sojourner's identity centrality, or how important his/her host country identity is to him or her, and cultural flexibility which is the sojourner's ability to make changes in his/her behaviors (Sussman, 2000). The shift is also affected by whether or not the sojourner's perceptions of his/her cultural discrepancies from the home culture are viewed negatively by the sojourner.

In her testing of the cultural identity re-acculturation model, Sussman (2002) found that sojourners who experienced high levels of repatriation distress also reported a weak American cultural identity. Sojourners who reported a strong American cultural identity experienced lower levels of repatriation distress. Sussman noted that these findings point to a direct link between repatriation experiences and cultural identity.

Research on Re-Acculturating Sojourners

Before the 1980s, little research looked at re-entry experiences of sojourners as they repatriated to their home countries after an extended absence (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). Though few sojourners expect to have re-entry difficulties when returning to their home countries, many do experience those difficulties (Gaw, 1995; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham). When Gaw compared overseas-experienced students' scores on the Reverse Shock Scale (RSS; Seiter & Waddell, 1989) and the Personal Problems Inventory (PPI; Cash, Begley, McCown, & Weise, 1975), he found that the college students who scored high on the RSS (meaning that they were experiencing greater re-entry problems) were more likely than students who scored lower on the RSS to report problems on the PPI. Gaw also found that students who scored higher on the RSS were more likely to report adjustment problems, problems with shyness, psychological withdrawal, and less utilization of returnee services such as advisors, counselors, and health professionals.

Repatriating sojourners may experience academic problems, cultural identity conflict, social withdrawal, depression, anxiety, and interpersonal difficulties (Gaw, 1995). Gaw (1995) also found that repatriating sojourners report feelings of alienation, disorientation, stress, value confusion, anger, hostility, compulsive fear, helplessness, disenchantment, and discrimination. Repatriating sojourners often report a greater dissatisfaction with their lives at home than with their lives in their host countries (Rohrlich & Martin, 1991).

Though sojourner research can inform an understanding of the re-acculturation of TCKs, it may not take into account the unique characteristics that distinguish TCKs from other sojourners. For example, the length of stay of TCKs in the host country is typically longer than the length of stay of other sojourners (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Further, TCKs are children and young adults, while sojourners can include adults who expatriate (Pollock & Van Reken). Because of this, re-acculturation issues of TCKs may be different than those of adult sojourners in general.

In a literature review for counselors, Barringer (2001) noted that repatriating TCKs may experience prolonged adolescence, feelings of rootlessness, alienation, and an inability to make commitments. Repatriating TCKs also reported high levels of interpersonal distance and negative reactions to American cultural values (Huff, 2001).

Research on post-repatriation peer relationships indicates that TCKs have difficulty finding peers who understand and appreciate their experiences abroad (Huff; Raschio, 1987). College-entering Third Culture Kids report greater social adjustment problems than monocultural college-entering young adults (Schulz, 1985). These TCKs will often seek out peer relationships with international students or other TCKs.

Third Culture Kids' perceived struggles in dealing with repatriation and entry into college was examined by Lerstrom (1995). Repatriating TCKs were interviewed in order to identify key challenges faced when entering college. The students rated their

challenges in following order:

> (1) boredom; (2) no one wants to hear; (3) you can't explain; (4) reverse home sickness; (5) relationships have changed; (6) people see wrong changes; (7) people misunderstand; (8) feelings of alienation; (9) inability to apply new knowledge and skills; and (10) loss/compartmentalization of experience. (Lerstrom, p. 8-9)

Research on Re-Acculturating MKs

Though most MKs are accustomed to their highly mobile lifestyles, the transition to their home countries, particularly for the purpose of attending college, can be difficult (Firmin, Warner, & Lowe, 2006). Stringham (1993) noted that the re-acculturation of MKs to their home country is often accompanied by feelings of longing for the host country culture, grief over the loss of the host country and identity-enforcers, altered frames of cultural reference, and time management difficulties. Unlike sojourners, many MKs repatriate to the United States without their parents and other family members with whom they lived abroad (Firmin, Warner, & Lowe). This repatriation away from family members, rather than to family members, may also lead to difficult re-acculturation experiences.

Firmin, Warner, and Lowe (2006) elicited through qualitative interviews MKs' descriptions of their social adjustment upon re-entry into their home countries. In their interviews with 24 undergraduate MKs, Firmin, Warner, and Lowe found that MKs experienced a strong desire to fit into American culture or to "fit into mainstream culture"

(p. 118). For some MKs, that meant dressing and talking as American college students did; some MKs reported finding solace in MK social groups, because of their shared backgrounds. For other MKs, fitting in meant a rejection of their MK background and avoidance of MK-based social groups.

Van Reken (1996) found that repatriating MKs may experience religious culture shock. Religious culture shock involves a negative reaction to expressions of their home country spirituality or to perceived differences between host country spirituality and home country spirituality (Van Reken). MKs may also experience this religious culture shock as a result of leaving a missionary community in the host country. Religious culture shock may be expressed through confusion, frustration, or boredom. Religious culture shock may also be expressed by MKs when they are confronted with home country religious holiday celebrations (Van Reken).

There is little research on the repatriation and re-acculturation of MKs. There are, however, a few lay books designed to describe the process and prepare MKs and their families for MKs' repatriation. Gordon's (1993) *Don't Pig Out on Junk Food: The MK's Guide to Survival in the U.S.*, outlined a survey of 100 MKs that was conducted by the Missionary Information Bureau. Gordon addressed the preparation for repatriation including how parents can help their MK children and what skills MKs need to learn to survive in the United States. Gordon described how MKs might react to re-entry, including struggling with self-identity, dealing with faith/spirituality issues, and experiencing depression. Finally, Gordon addressed steps for a successful transition and

resources that MKs can utilize. Though Gordon's book provided helpful information, particularly resources for MKs, the lack of theoretical bases restrict the book's usefulness.

Viser's (1986) *It's OK to Be an MK: What It's Like to Be a Missionary Kid* described MKs' experiences including repatriation. Viser dedicated one chapter of his book to addressing the issues that MKs may face upon college repatriation. According to Viser, college-aged repatriating MKs struggle with separation from the host country and their families, academics, identity, dating, and American churches. Viser provided anecdotal data, gathered through informal interviews, to support his findings. Viser's book was more explicit than Gordon's (1993) about the data from which he drew his conclusions. However, his chapter on repatriation was brief and addressed only three resources for repatriating MKs.

Walter's (1991) book *An Assessment of Reentry Issues of the Children of Missionaries* described three case studies of repatriated MKs. Walter's goal was to develop a model for therapy with repatriated MKs. Walter found three primary re-entry issues for the repatriated MKs she studied: (a) separation/loss, (b) difference/values, and (c) alienation/culture shock. According to Walters, therapeutic strategies to address these issues should include Gestalt therapy, changing attitudes, and testing reality. Walters also concluded that therapy for repatriated MKs should address MKs' identity, sense of home, and resources.

Factors that Impact Repatriation and Re-Acculturation

A review of literature on re-acculturation points to several factors that may impact how sojourners, TCKs, and MKs re-acculturate. This section examines the roles of expectations, identity, support, and individual characteristics.

Sojourners' Expectations

Numerous studies have indicated that a major reason for home country re-acculturation difficulty is that sojourners do not expect re-acculturation to be difficult (Butcher, 2004; Fail, Thompson, & Walker, 2004; Moore, Jones, & Austin, 1987; Raschio, 1987; Sussman, 2001). In an article titled "We are the Rootless Ones," one sojourner, a repatriated TCK, noted:

> It is perfectly normal to feel foreign in a foreign country. What is not normal is to feel foreign in your own country. This is the essential feature of the conflict: you do not feel that you belong there, but you feel that you ought to do so… What he is not used to is being a stranger in his own land. (Dormer, 1979, p. 3)

Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) examined the experiences of repatriating sojourners and found that sojourners' expectations played a role in whether or not they experienced reverse culture shock. In most cases, the sojourners expected to return home to an environment that remained unchanged in their absence. These expectations impacted the sojourners' satisfction with their return home (Gullahorn & Gullahorn).

Raschio (1987) found that repatriating exchange students expected their families and friends to be receptive to their experiences and needs upon repatriation. According to

Raschio, these sojourners were surprised by their friends' and families' responses and noted that they felt rejected by their support systems. Raschio noted that this discrepancy between sojourners' expectations and experiences often led sojourners to feel isolated, lonely, and independent from their social support systems.

Sussman (2001) administered a Repatriation Experience Assessment Scale to 44 repatriated sojourners to assess the impact of their preparedness for repatriation on their experiences of repatriation. Sussman found a moderately significant negative correlation ($r= -0.28$, $p=0.03$, one-tailed test) between repatriation distress and preparedness for repatriation. In his narrative study, Butcher found that many repatriating sojourners experienced fear due to insecurities about what to expect and what would be expected of them by others.

TCKs' expectations. Though the researcher found no research studies addressing TCKs' expectations, one lay book provided anecdotal evidence of the impact of TCKs' experiences on their repatriation. According to Pollock and Van Reken (2001), TCKs' expectations regarding their re-entry may negatively impact their re-acculturation. Many TCKs do not expect their re-entry into their home country to be difficult because they are returning "home" (Pollock & Van Reken). However, TCKs may react negatively to peers and family who have changed since the TCKs move the host country. They may also report negative feelings when family and friends do not relate to their cross-cultural experiences according to the TCKs' expectations. Additionally, the TCKs may

experience dissatisfaction with their home country if the culture of the host country does not match their expectations (Pollock & Van Reken).

MKs' expectations. Like previous sojourner re-acculturation studies, MK studies have found that expectations play a role in the re-acculturation of individuals who return to their home countries (Moore, Jones, & Austin, 1987). In their study of 255 Church of Christ missionary families, Moore, Jones, and Austin found that missionaries' education level, months at previous host country, age range upon last return, expectation of repatriation difficulty, marital status, and type of school attended all contributed to re-acculturation.

Sojourners' Identity

Identity development is task that faces many young adults, even into college years (Marcia, 1966; Muuss, 1996). Identity development in adolescence and young adulthood includes tasks such as career decisions and political or values alignment (Marcia). For young adults, accomplishment of these tasks may involve crisis periods that catalyze their commitment to the tasks (Marcia). Many sojourners, TCKs, and MKs who repatriate are young adults who may be dealing with the tasks of identity development in addition to repatriation tasks. Some researchers hypothesize that the process of identity development may be impacted by repatriation and vice versa (Barringer, 2001; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001; Sussman, 2000, 2001, 2002). Because the focus of this study is college-attending repatriating MKs, the researcher examined research on sojourners' identity, TCKs' identity, and MKs' identity.

Acculturation research has proposed that cultural identity plays a key role in sojourners' identity development (Ward, Bochner, & Furham, 2001). Cultural identity is important for sojourners because of the multiple cross-cultural transitions they experience (Ward, Bochner, & Furham). According to Sussman (2000), cross-cultural transitions make sojourners' cultural identity salient. Because of this, cultural identity plays an important role in the sojourners' overall identity development (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham).

Sussman (2001) found that changes in cultural identity due to host country experiences often negatively impacted sojourners' repatriation. In particular, many sojourners experienced difficulties in associating a particular culture as "home" (Butcher, 2004). Ward and Rana-Deuba (2000) found that the quality of intercultural contact between a sojourner and his or her host and home countries impacted both acculturation and re-acculturation processes. Ward and Chang (1997) found that cultural fit of the sojourner impacted acculturation and re-acculturation processes. Specifically, cultural fit accounted for cultural distance (the perceived differences between the sojourner's home and host countries) and the sojourner's extraversion.

Butcher (2004) reported that repatriation interrupted sojourner's identity narratives. Further, Butcher found that sojourners who described having a firm sense of identity prior to their sojourn were less likely to experience repatriation difficulties. Similarly, Sussman (2002) found that sojourners who maintained a strong sense of their home culture identity experienced less repatriation distress than those who did not have a

strong home culture identity. Further, sojourners who returned home with a global cultural identity, rather than a solely home or host country identity, reported high levels of satisfaction with their repatriation experiences (Sussman). These findings suggest that repatriation and identity are connected and that a struggle with identity development might impact repatriation or vice-versa.

TCKs' identity. According to Schaetti and Ramsey (1999), TCKs' cross-cultural transitions can lead them to adopt a multicultural identity. When these TCKs return to their home countries, however, their multicultural identity leads them to feel culturally marginal (Cockburn, 2002; Schaetti & Ramsey). Schaetti and Ramsey acknowledge that, as TCKs experience repatriation, their cultural marginality can be encapsulating or constructive. When cultural marginality is encapsulating, TCKs tend to feel that there is nowhere they can call home. When cultural marginality is constructive, TCKs tend to feel that they are at home everywhere (Schaetti & Ramsey; see also Fail, Thompson, & Walker, 2004).

TCKs' cultural identity upon repatriation, whether encapsulating or constructive, can impact TCKs' overall identity development (Barringer, 2001; Pollock & Van Reken, 1999; Pollock & Van Reken 2001; Useem & Cottrell, 1996). Many researchers have found that repatriating TCKs experience prolonged adolescence because of their delay in adult identity development (Barringer; Pollock & Van Reken, 1999; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001; Useem & Cottrell). According to Pollock and Van Reken (2001), prolonged adolescence involves a delay in TCKs' establishing a sense of personal identity, a delay

in establishing strong relationships, a delay in developing decision-making skills, and a delay in achieving independence. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) noted that this delay is related to the TCKs' inability to rely on one culture for identity cues:

> While peers in their new (and old) community are internalizing the rules of culture and beginning to move out with budding confidence, TCKs are still trying to figure out what the rules are. They aren't free to explore their personal gifts and talents because they are still preoccupied with what is or isn't appropriate behavior (p. 152).

According to Useem and Cottrell (1996), many adult TCKs continue to struggle with identity well into their 30s and 40s.

In addition to a cross-cultural identity and personal identity, many TCKs report a system identity because of their affiliation with their parents' sponsoring organizations (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). TCKs' sponsoring organizations often provide policies, rules, values, and expectations that guide TCKs' behavior and attitudes. Often upon repatriation, TCKs experience a loss of that system identity (Pollock & Van Reken). While freedom from the constraints of the system identity may be liberating for some TCKs, for others its loss is detrimental. Some TCKs may feel as though they have lost a part of who they are or a system of support that provided guidance and direction to their lives (Pollock & Van Reken).

MKs' identity. Schulz (1985) reported that MKs ranked personal identity as their top concern upon repatriation to the United States. Despite indications that identity may

play an important role in MKs' re-acculturation, the researcher found only one study addressing MKs' repatriation and the role of MKs' identity, specifically MKs' organizational identity. Firmin, Warner, and Lowe (2006) discussed the role of MKs' identity as MKs in their repatriation experiences. Firmin, Warner, and Lowe found that some MKs socially reject their identities as MKs upon repatriation because they want to be identified with the home culture. Other MKs, however, embrace their MK identity, particularly when they are confronted with hallmarks of their home culture (Firmin, Warner, and Lowe). For example, an MK might embrace his or her MK identity when confronted with an American cultural event such as prom. This embracing of the MK identity also increases camaraderie among MKs, even MKs who are strangers.

Sojourners' Social Support

Social support may play a key role in the acculturation to both the sojourner's host country and home country. Researchers have found that social support is positively correlated with sojourner re-acculturation (Firmin, Warner, & Lowe, 2006; Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, & Van Horn, 2002). Hechanova-Alampay et al. found that the more friends a sojourner had, the better their adjustment to their home culture.

Butcher (2004) noted that sojourners often report a lack of belonging because of missing or estranged social groups. According to Ward, Bochner, and Furham (2001),

> Reentry has been shown to create a range of difficulties, and many returning students clearly experience psychological distress. Interpersonal relationships,

particularly those with friends, appear to suffer, and loneliness is one of the most commonly reported problems of returnees. (p. 167)

Many sojourners find that established support networks are not prepared to provide support for their re-acculturation (Raschio, 1987). In Butcher's (2004) study, participants reported that their social support networks expected that the sojourners would not have any repatriation difficulties. The lack of shared understanding between sojourners and members of their social support networks often leads to social isolation and interpersonal distance for the re-acculturating sojourners (Raschio).

TCKs' support. There is conflicting research about the impact of social support on TCKs' repatriation experiences. Some researchers find that repatriation problems are exacerbated by a lack of social support that many TCKs experience upon reentry (Gerner & Perry, 2000; McLachlan, 2005; Werkman, Farley, Butler, & Quayhagen, 1981). Many TCKs report an inability to identify with their parents during repatriation (McLachlan). For many TCKs, "home" is not defined in the same way that it is for their parents; most TCKs rate "home" in terms of relationships, rather than geographical locations (Fail, 1996). Because of this discrepancy in definitions of home, TCKs may feel as though their parents do no understand them or their experiences. Werkman et al. found that, once re-entered, TCKs have less emotional investment in families and peers. Many returning TCKs become socially marginal because of their interpersonal distance from family and friends (Gerner & Perry).

In contrast to the previous studies, several studies have found that social support, particularly family support, has positive impacts in their repatriation experiences. Many studies described TCKs' families as close-knit and interdependent (Cockburn, 2002; Gerner, 1994; Gerner, Perry, Moselle, & Archbold, 1992; Useem & Downie, 1976). According to Cockburn, TCKs may rely on close family members to be constants as they experience repatriation transitions. Similarly, Useem and Downie reported that TCKs' families may provide support for TCKs repatriation experiences because their families have shared experiences that allow them to understand what the TCK is experiencing.

MKs' support. For repatriating MKs, family support and family dynamics may impact re-acculturation (Huff, 2001). Huff found an inverse relationship between perceptions of social support and experiences of reverse culture shock. That is, MKs who perceived greater support from their parents and support networks experienced less reverse culture shock than those who perceived less support or no support from friends and family (Huff). Stringham (1993) found that re-acculturating missionary families experienced lower family cohesiveness and increased family stress, therefore increasing the likelihood of culture shock for MKs.

For many MKs, social support, particularly from friends, may not provide much help. According to Firmin, Warner, and Lowe (2006) many MKs report that social support does not help them because they do not feel as though other people understand them. Most of the MKs were grateful for others' attempts at support, but felt that the support was insufficient (Firmin, Warner, & Lowe).

Sojourners' Individual Characteristics

Few researchers have examined the individual characteristics that impact sojourners' re-acculturation. Though most researchers acknowledge the importance of individual characteristics in sojourners' adjustment, only a handful of studies have examined the impact of those characteristics on re-acculturation. Rohrlich and Martin (1991) examined the role of gender in sojourners' re-acculturation. Rohrlich and Martin found that female sojourners reported more satisfaction with their return to their host country than male sojourners. However, Rohrlich and Martin found that, regardless of gender, the more involvement sojourners' had in their host countries, the lower their satisfaction ratings at their return to their home countries.

TCKs' individual characteristics. The researcher found no studies that addressed TCKs' individual characteristics that may impact their re-acculturation.

MKs' individual characteristics. The researcher found only one study that addressed how MKs' individual characteristics may impact their repatriation and re-acculturation. In her study of 49 MKs at two American universities, Huff (2001) found that MKs' age at repatriation impacted their re-acculturation. That is, MKs who repatriated after the age of 15 typically experienced greater re-acculturation difficulties than MKs who repatriated before the age of 15.

MKs' schooling in their host countries may also play a role in MKs' experiences of re-acculturation. According to Huff (2001), MKs who attended several schools in their host countries reported greater duress and interpersonal distance upon repatriation than

MKs who attended one or a couple of schools. Additionally, MKs who attended boarding schools in their host countries were less likely than MKs who attended other types of schools to report interpersonal distance upon repatriation. Huff's study appears to be the only study that addresses the role of MKs' schooling in their re-acculturation; further study in this area may be merited.

Characteristics of Third Culture Kids and Missionary Kids

In the 1950s, Ruth and John Useem studied children raised in international countries following their own experiences as missionaries in India (Useem, 1993). They coined the term Third Culture Kids to represent these children, who experience different developmental processes than children raised in the United States.

Pollock and Van Reken (1999) noted that Third Culture Kids are positively and negatively affected by their highly mobile lifestyles and cross-cultural development. Third Culture Kids are typically more adept at language acquisition, more flexible and adaptable, more academically motivated, more tolerant, and more open to others' worldviews than children who are raised solely in the United States (Gerner, 1994; Useem & Downie, 1976). They are often more family oriented than American-raised children and they also show high levels of interest in internationally-mobile careers as adults (Gerner, Perry, Moselle, & Archbold, 1992). Lam and Selmer (2003) described Third Culture Kids as ideal business expatriates because of the characteristics that many TCKs develop. According to Lam and Selmer, adult TCKs have strong communication skills, interpersonal sensitivity, and multi-cultural interests. Cockburn (2002) suggested

that TCKs are more likely than children raised solely in the United States to have a system identity; children of missionaries, military personnel, and diplomats may feel a strong sense of allegiance to and identification with their parents' sponsoring agency.

Missionary Kids

Little empirical research has been published on MKs; most MK research can be found in unpublished doctoral dissertations (see Austin & Jones, 1987). Of the sojourner subgroups, the MK subgroup may deserve the greatest focus in research because they tend to have longer and more substantial contact with host country culture and citizens (Navara & James, 2002). In addition, the missionary lifestyle may be more stressful than the lifestyles of other sojourners due to the added weight of religious expectations and higher expectations for contact with the host country residents from the sponsoring organizations (Firmin, Warner, Lowe, 2006; Navara & James; Rosik, Richards, & Fannon, 2005). Chester (1982) described this weight as the missionary families' expectations of being all things to all people, in order to accomplish their ministry goals. Further, sponsoring organizations demand missionaries' compliance with rules and expectations for behavior (Ender, 1996).

Research has indicated that MKs experience high levels of stress in their families due to the pressures of missionary work (Chester, 1982). The stress may be compounded with the regular absence of one or both parents from the home because of the demands of ministerial work (Andrews, 1999). According to Andrews, many missionaries struggle to manage their work roles and host country roles within their sponsoring organization's

system (see also Ritchey & Rosik, 1993). Missionary families who were satisfied within their sponsoring organization experienced greater ministry satisfaction and spiritual life satisfaction (Andrews).

Wrobbel and Plueddemann (1990) noted that many MKs report their parents' missionary work received higher priority than family and it often negatively influenced their perceptions of family support. Huff (2001) found that MKs were more likely to have parents who encouraged and facilitated their independence. Andrews (1999) noted that, despite the promotion of independence, only 10% of adolescent MKs in her study reported a cold or distant relationship with their parents. Useem and Downie (1976) found that MKs' relationships with their parents are the most stable and consistent relationships in MKs' lives and are a source of interdependence in the missionary family.

According to O'Donnell (1987), the missionary family experiences a tripartite family life cycle. In this model, the three developmental stages of missionary families are the family life cycle (as delineated by Duvall & Hill, 1948), the individual psychosocial stages (as outlined by Erikson, 1963), and the mission stages. Mission stages for long-term missionary families typically include recruitment, preparation, host culture entry, ongoing ministry, re-entry for furlough, return to the host country, and retirement from ministry. The tripartite nature of the missionary family cycle emphasizes the co-occurrence of multiple developmental tasks within a missionary family at any given point (O'Donnell). That is, the family may be experiencing the family with adolescents stage, the adolescent's identity versus identity diffusion stage, and the return to the field stage

simultaneously. O'Donnell points to the launching phase as a particularly trying time in the missionary family and one that requires major restructuring of the family system. The launching stage, which typically involves the MK's repatriation to the home country for college, brings into conflict the developmental stages of the parents and young adults with the missionary life cycle. For example, the MK's repatriation often brings into question the parents' permanence as missionaries in the field (O'Donnell).

Missionary families, and MKs in particular, are exposed to many separations throughout their careers due to the transitional nature of the missionary life (White, 1983). Separations can occur due to work leave (often called furlough), boarding school, medical treatments, political evacuations, moves between host countries, or repatriation. According to White, MKs may deal with these separations through anger or denial, often through fantasy or daydreaming.

Limitations of Previous Research

The researcher identified the limitations of the research on repatriation of sojourners, TCKs, and MKs. Perhaps the greatest limitation is the lack of a cohesive body of literature addressing MKs, TCKs, and sojourners. Most of the research on MKs was found in unpublished doctoral dissertations; few of those studies have been published in scholarly journals. Research on TCKs and sojourners was limited and often did not draw from previous re-acculturation or repatriation research.

Sojourner research studies typically utilized theoretical models of re-acculturation as the foundation for the research. However, studies on TCKs' and MKs' repatriation

lacked theoretical models. Few studies on TCKs and MKs drew support from previous sojourner research. Additionally, the research on sojourners, TCKs, and MKs often did not draw implications for across the three groups.

Most of the research on sojourners, TCKs, and MKs was antiquated and did not address how globalization and changes in communications impact sojourners and repatriations processes. Immediacy of communications and the preponderance of global communications systems may impact sojourners' experiences of living abroad and of returning to their home countries (Eakin, 1996).

Theoretical Framework: Philosophical Hermeneutics

The philosophical and theoretical foundation for this study is philosophical hermeneutics, an exegetical model that rejects the notion that understanding is an activity in which the researcher engages (Schwandt, 2003). Rather, philosophical hermeneutics views interpreting and understanding as natural conditions of humanity. According to Polkinghorne (2007), a philosophical hermeneutic approach to narrative analysis takes into account that a researcher cannot transcend his or her previous experiences, background, and situated context in his or her understanding of a participant's narrative. As Gadamer noted, "The very humanity of our existence depends, finally, upon whether we have learned to see the limits which our own nature has set for us, over against the nature of others" (Gadamer, Misgeld, & Nicholson, 1992, p. 152).

In philosophical hermeneutics, research participants' narratives are co-constructed with the researcher through hermeneutic recollection (Risser, 1997). Comparing

hermeneutic recollection to a theatrical play, Gadamer noted that both represent a reproduction of previous experiences that transforms the "play of art into (a) figurative structure (that) produces a new present (new) meaning" (Risser, p. 100). This approach to narratives necessitates a view that new meanings are co-constructed between speaker and interlocutor when a speaker presents a narrative.

According to Gadamer (Gadamer, Misgeld, & Nicholson, 1992), the soul of philosophical hermeneutics is the understanding of another person's position, or their truth. This understanding is a process in which the speaker and interlocutor engage and it is guided by tradition (history, experiences, previous interactions; Risser, 1997). Gadamer called the tradition-based process through which understanding occurs a "historically effected consciousness" (Risser, p. 7).

The philosophical hermeneutic approach represents a facet of social constructivism. Social constructivism gained notoriety in the 1960s, as a result of the publication of Berger and Luckmann's 1966 book, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Furman, Jackson, Downey & Shears, 2003). Social constructivism acknowledges the importance of social influences on the manner in which individuals construct reality. According to Furman at al., social constructivism "contends that there are multiple stories or perceptions of reality, and that an individual's or family's experiences concerning events are more important…than the nature of their given reality" (p. 265). Researchers must, then, learn how individuals construct their realities through inquisition into individuals' perceptions and ascribed meanings. According to Creswell (2003), research

questions in social constructivist studies must be broad so that individuals have ample space to negotiate their meanings.

Theoretical Framework: Phenomenology

According to Farber (1941), phenomenology as an approach to inquiry is:

> ...the first method of knowledge because it begins with 'the things themselves,' which are the final court of appeal for all knowledge, and also in a logical, explanatory sense, because it seeks to point out all presuppositions. (p. 441)

Phenomenology acknowledges that world experiences are mediated through individuals' senses and consciousness and therefore researchers must look to individuals' consciousnesses to understand phenomena (Landgrebe, 1940). Phenomenological inquiry, then, is the study of individuals' experience of consciousness (Smith, 2004). According to Smith, individuals' consciousnesses are comprised of three facets: (a) forms, which are characterized by intentionality; (b) appearances, which can be described as how individuals experience acts of their consciousness; and (c) substrates, which are background conditions such as physical or psychological states and contexts such as cultural practices. To understand individuals' behaviors and actions, researchers must look at all three facets of individuals' consciousnesses. Therefore, when examining MKs' narratives, the researchers must look at the intentionality, experience of, and contextual conditions of those narratives.

Summary

This review of literature illuminates key themes in sojourner, TCK, and MK research, focusing on the concepts of repatriation and re-acculturation. The research points to the process of re-acculturation as potentially problematic for repatriating individuals. The impact of repatriating individuals' expectations and social support emerged as important considerations in repatriation research. These considerations helped to shape the research questions in the narrative inquiry of MKs' repatriation experiences.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to give voice to MKs in order to acknowledge their repatriation experiences. The researcher used narrative inquiry methodology to collect MKs' narratives regarding their repatriation experiences. The researcher gathered and analyzed four primary data sources: MKs' repatriation stories, MKs' interviews, interviews with Mu Kappa faculty sponsors, and reflexivity journals and data analysis memos from the researcher. The data were analyzed through structural, themal, and holistic analyses.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are MKs' repatriation experiences?
2. What resources are involved in MKs' repatriation experiences?
3. What is the role of MKs' expectations regarding repatriation in MKs' repatriation experiences?
4. What is the role of identity in MKs' repatriation experiences?

Participant Identification and Selection

A sampling frame of approximately 1,200 potential participants was identified through a social organization for college-attending MKs. Mu Kappa, a social organization, maintains a database of names and contact information for over 1,000

college-attending MKs, most of whom would be eligible for this study. The national director for Mu Kappa agreed to disseminate a recruitment flyer on behalf of the researcher to MKs in the Mu Kappa database (Appendix E).

Participants were also identified through direct contact with Mu Kappa faculty sponsors listed on the Mu Kappa website. The researcher emailed a recruitment flyer to each faculty sponsor as well as a request for an interview with the faculty sponsor. Additional participants were identified using snowball sampling through referrals from MKs during researcher-participant contacts.

Participants in this study were 19 American MKs who were attending college or university at the time of the study. The potential participants were required to be over the age of 18 to participate in the study. No delimitations regarding gender or host country (or countries) location were made. Participants had lived in a country outside of the United States for a minimum of 3 years and had repatriated to the United States for the purpose of attending university. Most of the participants in the study were recruited through emails dispersed through the Mu Kappa email list and faculty sponsors; however, some participants emerged through snowball recruitment by MKs who are participating in the study or through individuals who heard about the study and related the information to MKs they knew. MKs outside of the Mu Kappa sampling frame were allowed to participate in the study as long as they met the eligibility requirements for the study. While sample sizes in qualitative research tend to be small (often under 30) so that richness of detail and description can be achieved (Tuckett, 2004), sampling continued

until the data were saturated. Saturation occurs when no new information is forthcoming from additional data collection (Tuckett, 2004).

Participants were solicited through recruitment flyers sent out by the Mu Kappa national director to individuals in the Mu Kappa database. The recruitment flyer contained information regarding the study, a request for participation, and information regarding rewards for participation (see Appendix A).

Interviews with faculty sponsors were used as data triangulation in this study. The faculty sponsors were recruited through an email from the researcher (Appendix G). The researcher identified a list of Mu Kappa faculty sponsors on the Mu Kappa website. The researcher sent an email to each faculty sponsor listed on the Mu Kappa website. Faculty sponsors who were interested in participating in the study replied to the researcher's email and requested additional information. The researcher then requested a mailing address to which the researcher mailed an informed consent form (Appendix F).

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with two MKs who fit the criteria of the study. According to Nyatanga (2005), pilot studies increase validity of research studies because they allow the researchers to become aware of potentially flawed methodologies. The purpose of this pilot study was to ascertain any problems that might have arisen during the course of the study and any research design changes that needed to be made. In the pilot study, each of the MKs submitted a narrative and then was interviewed by the researcher. The researcher transcribed and analyzed the pilot study data using NVIVO.

Because both MKs fit the criteria of the study, their data were included in the analysis of the study. No major changes to the design of the study were necessary.

Gaining Access to Participants

Gaining access to the participants goes beyond identifying and selecting a sample for study. Gaining access requires that the researcher present his or her intentions and negotiate with participants their willingness to trust and be open with the researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). To gain access to the participants, the researcher divulged her identity as a former MK upon initial contact with participants. The researcher communicated to the MKs that their involvement in the study was confidential. The researcher articulated that the findings of this study may lead to better services for repatriating MKs. To increase reciprocity, she offered the participants a $20 gift certificate for their participation.

Data Collection Methods

The researcher followed a specific protocol for collecting data from participants. The researcher emailed the recruitment flyer to the Mu Kappa national director, for mailing list dissemination, and to Mu Kappa faculty sponsors at 40 universities listed on the Mu Kappa website. Interested individuals contacted the researcher via email for more information regarding the study. The researcher provided additional information and email to potential participants and mailed a copy of the informed consent form (Appendix B). After receiving an informed consent from a participant, the researcher emailed a short demographic questionnaire (Appendix C) and the story prompt to the participant. Also in

the email, the researcher suggested a timeline for returning the story to the researcher and requested a phone or Skype interview (sample email, Appendix D).

After the participant submitted his/her story to the researcher, the researcher mailed a $20 gift certificate to the participant. If the participant consented to be interviewed for the study, the researcher conducted the interview via phone or Skype. The determination of whether an interview would be conducted via phone or Skype was made by each participant.

To add rigor to the study, the researcher collected data from multiple sources. Data sources for this study included the MKs' written repatriation stories, audio and transcription data from interviews, and the researcher's notes in her reflexivity journal. See Figure 1 for a diagram of the data sources and data management information.

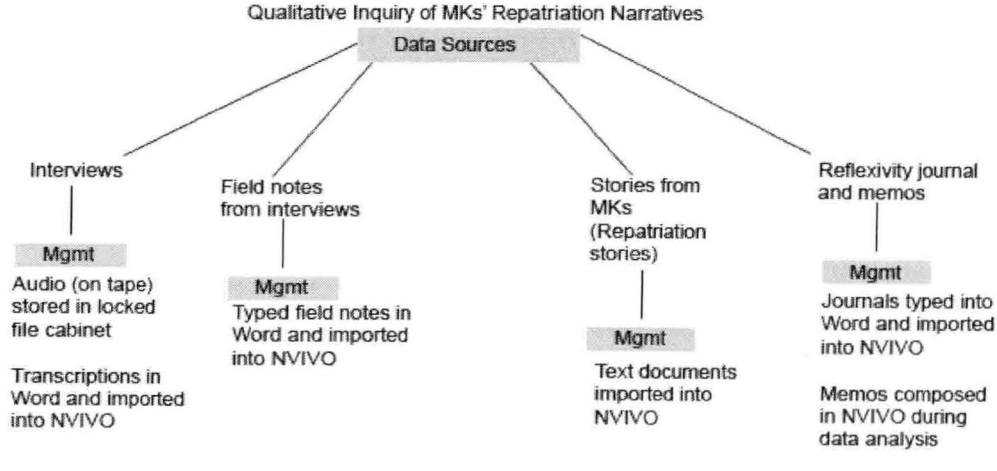

Figure 1. Data sources and data management for MK study.

Stories

Participants who consented to participate in the study wrote repatriation stories. According to Labov (2006), individuals will tell their story only if there is an internal or external stimulus and if they feel that the event in the story is reportable. That is, the individuals must feel as though there is some reason to tell their story and that the story is important. Because of this, the researcher emphasized in the story prompt that the experiences of repatriation are "important experiences." Also, as Riessman (1993) noted, it is important to create a story-prompt that is open-ended, so that the participant tells their story rather than just answers a question.

> To elicit the participants' stories, the researcher posed the following prompt: Returning to the United States after being in another country (or countries) for a period of time can bring with it a variety of important experiences. Tell me the story of your return to the United States after being in another country for some time. Feel free to write in a creative format (e.g., a letter, an magazine article, a diary entry, etc.)

Interviews

The interviews with participants were conducted after they submitted their written repatriation stories to the researcher via email. The interviews were intended to allow the participants to expand their narratives or to further explicate their written narratives. Because of this, the interviews were semi-structured and the questions were open-ended (Riessman, 1993). The semi-structured interview format provided flexibility and

participant control while still allowing the researcher to make connections to the research questions for the study (Fontana & Frey, 2003).

The researcher allowed volunteer participants to choose a phone or Skype interview format. Though most of the MKs requested phone interviews, some preferred Skype interviews.

For each interview, the researcher developed broad questions that guided the interview (Riessman, 1993). However, because the purpose was to expand or explicate the previous written narrative, the researcher gave the participants the power to take the interview in whatever direction they wished to go. Broad questions for each interview are listed in the table below.

Table 1

Research Questions and MK Interview Questions

Research Questions	Interview Questions
What are MKs' repatriation experiences?	1. Please tell me about your return to the United States after having lived abroad. What feelings do you experience when you tell the story of your return to the United States?
What resources are involved in MKs' repatriation experiences?	2. Who do you consider to be family?
	3. What do you consider to be home?
	4. If the parents still live abroad: How do you communicate with your family?
	5. Who has supported you through your experiences of returning to the United States?
	6. What role does your family play in your repatriation experiences?
	7. What roles do your friends (in your home and host country) play in your repatriation experiences?
	8. What role does spirituality play in your repatriation experiences?
	9. What other sources of support have you found?
What is the role of MKs' expectations regarding repatriation in MKs' repatriation experiences?	10. What did you expect your return to the United States to be like? How were your experiences similar or different to what you expected?
What is the role of identity in MKs' repatriation experiences?	11. How do you define identity?
	12. How would you describe your cultural identity?
	13. How have your repatriation experiences impacted your identity?

In addition to the semi-structured interview questions, the researcher often chose to follow-up participants' responses with additional questions. The researcher probed for more information from participants using one or more of the following prompts:

1. Tell me more about...
2. What was that experience like for you?
3. What else would you like to say about that?

In addition to interviews with several participants, the researcher conducted interviews with faculty sponsors of social organizations for MKs at two American universities. The purpose of the faculty sponsor interviews was to triangulate the data gathered through participants' stories and interviews and to inform data analysis. The researcher asked the interview questions listed in the table below.

Table 2
Research Questions and Faculty Sponsor Interview Questions

Research Questions	Interview Questions
What are MKs' repatriation experiences?	1. What is your perception of how MKs experience the process of repatriation?
What resources are involved in MKs' repatriation experiences?	2. What role does the Mu Kappa organization play in the support of repatriating MKs?
	3. What additional support services are available to MKs at this university?
	4. Describe your perception of what support resources Missionary Kids utilize as they experience repatriation.
	5. How do MKs on this campus interact with each other? How do MKs on this campus interact with non-MKs?
What is the role of MKs' expectations regarding repatriation in MKs' repatriation experiences?	6. What role do you think MKs' expectations play in their experiences of repatriation?
What is the role of identity in MKs' repatriation experiences?	7. What role do you think MKs' identity plays in their experiences of repatriation?

Data Analysis Procedures

The MKs' stories and narratives from the interviews were analyzed structurally, thematically, and holistically.

Data Management

The researcher utilized file folders and electronic file folders to manage the data collected in this study. Each participant in the study was represented by both a paper and

electronic folder. The paper folders were stored in a locked cabinet, along with the audio tapes and reflexivity journal for the study. The electronic folders were stored on a USB-drive, then stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office. Data from the participants' electronic folders were also imported into NVIVO for analysis. These data included the MKs' repatriation stories, the transcriptions from face-to-face interviews, and field notes from the interviews.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process was a continually-evolving process. Qualitative data analysis is recursive; therefore, the researcher consistently coded, and recoded, while engaging in reflexivity (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The early data analysis, particularly the analysis of the MKs' stories, shaped the interviews and later data analysis.

Structural analysis. Labov (1972, 1997, 2006) constructed a framework for analyzing stories from a structural perspective. According to Labov (1997), individuals' stories contain the following elements: (a) the abstract, which provides the summary of the story; (b) the orientation, which gives orienting information; (c) the complicating action, which Labov also termed the most reportable event; (d) evaluation, which is the teller's appraisal of the event; (e) the resolution, or the solution to the complicating action; and (f) the coda, where the teller relates the story back to the present. The researcher utilized Labov's structural approach for transcription and analysis of the data.

Themal analysis. In addition to examining the structure of the MKs' narratives, the researcher looked for themes that emerged from the narratives. While structural

analysis looks at the form of the stories and narratives, themal analysis looks for categories or themes (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The researcher utilized the method of open coding articulated by Strauss and Corbin (1990), whereby the researcher immerses herself in the data (Marshall & Rossman) and seeks categories that emerge.

Holistic analysis. A more holistic approach to the analysis of MKs' narratives was applied to look for common themes across cases. Strauss and Corbin (1990) called this approach axial coding, wherein the researcher makes connections between codes from multiple sources. It is also during this holistic, or axial, coding that the researcher analyzed and applied data from her reflexive journals/memos in order to provide a contextual look at the data.

Trustworthiness

According to Creswell (2003), validity in qualitative research carries a different meaning than validity in quantitative research. Qualitative researchers seek validity in their study through strategies that increase the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of their research (Krefting, 1991).

In philosophical hermeneutic approaches, understanding is validated through consensus (Freeman, 2005). This notion of consensus aligns closely with validity criteria of credibility in qualitative research (Krefting, 1991; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The alignment of consensus and credibility points to the importance of reflexivity, member-checking, and the authority of the researcher as validity-enhancing techniques for this

study. The researcher also utilized dense or rich descriptions (Creswell, 2003; Krefting) to increase the transferability and dependability of the study.

Dense, or Rich, Descriptions

The purpose of dense, or rich, descriptions is to give readers a complete sense of the phenomenon or situation being studied (Creswell, 2003). Dense descriptions also give the reader sufficient information to evaluate the transferability of the study's findings and the repeatability of the study (Krefting, 1991).

To provide rich, thick descriptions, the researcher provided a detailed description of each interview with participants. The descriptions were derived from the notes taken during each interview and included information such as the participants' nonverbal cues and salient statements from the participants.

Member-Checking

Because of the philosophical hermeneutic basis for this study, member-checking was a necessary method for increasing the validity of the study. Riessman (1993) argued that member checking cannot affirm whether or not the researcher's interpretations are correct because of the constantly-changing nature of narratives; however, member-checking was appropriate for this study because the philosophical hermeneutic tradition acknowledges the situatedness of narratives.

As each MK's story was examined, the researcher maintained contact with the MK through email. Maintaining an open communication line allowed the researcher to check and negotiate understanding of shared narratives.

After the researcher compiled the findings of the study, she assembled a 2-page executive summary of the findings. She emailed a copy of the findings to each of the participants. In the email, the researcher requested feedback from the participants on the findings. The email included the following text:

> Please see the attached document for a summary of the findings of this study. Though every finding may not apply to you, there may be some similarities between the findings and your repatriation experiences. As you read over the findings, consider the following questions:
>
> 1. How do these findings compare to my experiences?
> 2. What is missing? What would I add to these findings?
> 3. What additional comments would I like to make about my experiences or about the opportunity to reflect on my experiences in this study?

The researcher also mailed the study findings to the two Mu Kappa faculty sponsors who were interviewed and to the Mu Kappa national director. In her email to the faculty sponsors, the researcher asked them to respond to the following questions:

1. How do these findings compare to your perception of MKs' repatriation experiences?
2. What is missing? What would you add to these findings?
3. What additional comments would you like to make about the opportunity to reflect on MKs' experiences in this study?

Three MKs and two faculty sponsors responded to the researcher's email and questions. The MKs' responses were analyzed in Chapter IV.

Reflexive Journals

The goal of reflexivity was to allow maximum representation of the participants' experiences while understanding the participants' co-construction of the narratives as they shared those experiences. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), reflexivity is a process through which the researcher locates herself within the research. The purpose of reflexivity is to acknowledge one's biases, assumptions, experiences, and standpoints in relation to the topic or group being studied. According to Creswell (2003), the qualitative researcher "systematically reflects on who he or she is in the inquiry and is sensitive to his or her personal biography and how it shapes the study" (p. 182). Through reflexivity, the researcher attempted to understand how the meanings in MKs' narratives were co-constructed with her and impacted by her previous experiences as a MK.

To maintain a continually-reflexive stance, the researcher maintained a reflexivity journal, in which she wrote during the process of collecting and analyzing data. Throughout the stages of data collection and analysis, the researcher engaged in reflexivity through reflexive journaling and memoing. Reflexive journals/memos "assist...movement away from the data to abstract thinking, then in returning to the data to ground these abstractions in reality" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 199). The researcher utilized reflexive journals and memos to engage in critical analysis throughout the data

collection and analysis process as well as to inform her self-narrative throughout the study.

The researcher began the reflexive journals by writing her story, in the same manner that the participants wrote their stories. The purpose of the researcher's writing her story was to acknowledge her repatriation experiences and identify her voice in the study. The researcher's story was three pages in length and it followed a theme of snapshots of repatriation experiences.

In addition to writing her story, the researcher maintained reflexive journals throughout the study. During and after each interview, the researcher made notes about topics of statements that were salient to the researcher. The researcher also made reflexive notes, or memos, while coding the participants' stories.

The reflexive journal entries and memos were imported into NVIVO for coding. The researcher coded the reflexive journal entries and memos using open coding and axial coding. Analysis of the researcher's reflexive journals was described in Chapter IV.

Ethical Considerations of the Study

This section outlines the researcher's ethical responsibilities to the participants and the university that is sponsoring the study.

Responsibility to the Participants

As with most research studies, this study carried with it the potential for harm to the participants. According to Christians (2003), breach of privacy poses the greatest threat to the well-being of participants in a study. In order to reduce the risk to

participants in this study, the researcher maintained the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. Pseudonyms replaced the names of the participants and no identifying information regarding the university or location of the MKs will be released. The researcher also divulged to participants appropriate information regarding the study so that she did not deceive any of the participants.

The researcher obtained a consent form for each participant in the study (Appendix B). The consent form detailed the purpose of the research study, a description of the research study, the expected time commitment for participants, an explanation of the use of audio during interviews, and a description of the potential risks to participants, including the risk of loss of confidentiality. The consent form for the study was designed according to the requirements of the Institutional Review Board at Texas Woman's University and approved by the same.

The subject matter in this study may have lead to participants' experiencing feelings of discomfort, sadness, anger, or other potentially volatile emotions. The researcher provided all participants with a list of local resources for MKs, including counseling services. Though the study was not intensive or extensive for the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2006), the potential for evoking difficult memories or emotions merited attention.

Responsibility to the University

This study was conducted in accordance with the standards of the Institutional Review Board at Texas Woman's University. The participants were informed of their

rights, including the right to withdraw at any time and for any reason from the study. Participants were asked to sign consent forms (Appendix B) allowing their information to be used in the study.

Summary

This chapter described the methodology and data analysis for a qualitative study of the repatriation stories of MKs. The researcher obtained a sample of 19 American MKs who repatriated to the United States for the purpose of attending university or college. The researcher gathered and analyzed five primary data sources: MKs' repatriation stories, transcripts for MKs' interviews, transcripts from interviews with faculty sponsors, field notes from interviews, and reflexivity journals and data analysis memos from the researcher. The data were analyzed through structural, themal, and holistic analyses. The researcher followed participant-protection protocol, as outlined by the Institutional Review Board at Texas Woman's University.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to give voice to Missionary Kids (MKs) in order to acknowledge their repatriation experiences. The inquiry into MKs' repatriation narratives was conducted through the collection of MKs' stories and interview data. Data analyses included structural, themal, and holistic analyses of the MKs' stories, MKs' interview transcripts, and faculty sponsor interview transcripts. This chapter delineates the characteristics of the sample, data analysis processes, and the findings of the study.

Description of the Sample

The national director for Mu Kappa, a social organization for MKs, agreed to disseminate a recruitment flyer on behalf of the researcher to MKs in the Mu Kappa database (Appendix E). After the Mu Kappa director sent the recruitment flyer, the researcher received 32 responses from MKs who qualified for the study. Of those 32 persons, 19 completed the process of writing a story and submitting the demographic questionnaire. Two of the initial responders who did not complete the study were residents at a University that sustained heavy damage from storms and tornados. Because of the severity of the damage, those two students were unable to complete the study.

The researcher also encountered some difficulties in obtaining the participants' data in a timely fashion, after they had consented to participate in the study. To help MKs remember to submit their stories, the researcher utilized several friendly reminder emails.

Another sampling issue that emerged during the study was a large response to the recruitment flyer from MKs who did not match the criteria for the study. The researcher received emails from 23 MKs who did not qualify for the study because they were not currently attending college. Many of those MKs expressed regret that they would not have the opportunity to tell their story to the researcher.

The sample was comprised of 19 college-attending American MKs between the ages of 18 and 23. The researcher collected demographic data from each participating MK through an electronic form (Appendix C). All of the participants completed and returned the demographic form. A detailed description of the demographic data is provided in the following sections.

Gender and Age of the Sample

Of the 19 MKs who participated in the study, 84.2% (n= 16) were female and 15.8% (n= 3) were male. The MKs were between the ages of 18 and 23, with an average age of 19.7.

Table 3
Distribution of MKs by Age and Gender

Age (in years)	n=19 F	M	Group total	Group %
18	5	1	6	31.5%
19	3	0	3	15.8%
20	4	1	5	26.3%
21	1	0	1	5.3%
22	2	1	3	15.8%
23	1	0	1	5.3%
Total	16	3	19	100%

Host Countries of the Sample

The participants had lived in 10 countries across 5 continents. Nearly half (42.1%) of the MKs considered Brazil to be their host country. The oversampling of MKs from Brazil may have stemmed from the distribution of the recruitment flyer to a Brazilian missionary email list. The distribution of the recruitment flyer to that list occurred as a result of snowball sampling; an MK who was not eligible for the study disseminated the flyer through the email list.

Several MKs lived in more than one country during their time abroad. Six MKs reported living in 2 countries and 2 MKs reported living in 3 countries during their time abroad. Though these MKs lived in more than one country, they remained on the same continent throughout those moves. The secondary host countries included Rwanda, Kenya, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Peru, and Ecuador.

Table 4
Distribution of MKs by Primary Host Country

Country	n=19			
	F	M	Group total	Group %
Brazil	5	3	8	42.1%
Cameroon	1	0	1	5.3%
Venezuela	1	0	1	5.3%
The Solomon Islands	2	0	2	10.4%
Peru	1	0	1	5.3%
England	2	0	2	10.4%
Ethiopia	1	0	1	5.3%
Paraguay	1	0	1	5.3%
Thailand	1	0	1	5.3%
Senegal	1	0	1	5.3%
Total	16	3	19	100%

Years of Host Country(ies) Residence

The number of years the MKs lived in their host countries ranged from 4 years to 17 years, with the average length of stay of 11 years. The mode length of stay was 17 years, with 4 of the MKs reporting that length of stay.

Table 5
Distribution of MKs by Length of Stay in the Host Country

Length of stay	n=19			
	F	M	Group total	Group %
4-6 years	4	1	5	26.3%
7-9 years	3	0	3	15.8%
10-12 years	3	1	4	21.1%
13-15 years	2	0	2	10.5%
16-17 years	4	1	5	26.3%
Total	16	3	19	100.0%

Sponsoring Organizations

Missionary families are employed or sponsored by religious organizations in the home country. These sponsoring organizations provide various forms of support for missionary families, often including financial support, housing, travel assistance, and language schooling. Some missionary families also receive orientation, counseling, and re-entry services from their sponsoring organizations.

The majority of the MKs (36.8%) in this study were sponsored by the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention. Though it is unclear as to why the IMB had a large representation in the sample, the IMB may be one of the larger missionary sponsoring organizations in the United States. The IMB sponsors approximately 5,260 missionaries around the world (International Mission Board, 2008). Wycliffe Bible Translators supports 6,600 short-term and long-term missionaries (Wycliffe Bible Translators, 2008), and New Tribes Mission supports over 3,000

missionaries (New Tribes Mission, 2008). All of the other organizations represented in this study support fewer than 1,000 missionaries worldwide.

Table 6
Distribution of MKs by Sponsoring Organization

Sponsoring organization	n=19			
	F	M	Group total	Group %
International Mission Board	5	2	7	36.8%
Wycliffe Bible Translators	2	0	2	10.5%
Grace Brethren International Missions	1	1	2	10.5%
New Tribes Mission	1	0	1	5.3%
Lutheran Bible Translators	1	0	1	5.3%
Fellowship International Mission	2	0	2	10.5%
Free Methodist World Missions	1	0	1	5.3%
Word of Life	1	0	1	5.3%
Presbyterian Church USA	1	0	1	5.3%
The Christian and Missionary Alliance	1	0	1	5.3%
Total	16	3	19	100%

Type of Schooling in the Host Country

MKs utilized a variety of schooling options in their host countries, including boarding schools, host country schools, American/British schools, and home schooling. The demographic questionnaire (Appendix C) in this study asked participants to describe their schooling while living in their host countries. Almost half of the MKs (42.1%) experienced more than one type of schooling in their home countries. Six of those MKs experienced two types of school, while 3 of those MKs experienced 3 types of schooling.

Table 7
Distribution of MKs by Type of Schooling

Schooling	n=19			
	F	M	Group total	Group %
Homeschool	9	0	9	47.3%
Host country school	0	1	1	5.3%
American school	4	2	6	31.6%
Boarding school	2	0	2	10.5%
Missing data	1	0	1	5.3%
Total	16	3	19	100%

Type of Housing at the Time of Repatriation and Current Housing

The researcher asked the MKs to describe their housing situation upon repatriation to ascertain what support resources may have been immediately available to them. The researcher also requested information on the MKs' current housing situation to ascertain what resources the MKs may currently have.

Many MKs described a move across various residences within the first few months of repatriation. The most common explanation for the moves was that the MKs initially moved into a residence with family prior to moving to a college-based residence.

Table 8
Distribution of MKs by Type of Housing at Re-Entry

Housing at re-entry	n=19			
	F	M	Group total	Group %
With parents	5	0	5	26.3%
With aunts/uncles	0	1	1	5.3%
With grandparents	6	1	7	36.8%
Apartment	0	0	0	0.0%
Dorm	5	1	6	31.6%
Total	16	3	19	100%

Table 9
Distribution of MKs by Current Type of Housing

Current housing	n=19			
	F	M	Group total	Group %
With parents	1	0	1	5.3%
With aunts/uncles	0	0	0	0.0%
With grandparents	1	1	2	10.5%
Apartment	5	2	7	36.8%
Dorm	9	0	9	47.4%
Total	16	3	19	100.0%

Data Collection Process

The participants in the study were 19 college-attending American MKs. The researcher gathered the participants' stories and conducted phone or Skype interviews with volunteering MKs. The researcher also interviewed two Mu Kappa faculty sponsors to triangulate the data and add rigor to the study.

MKs' Stories

The researcher emailed the following story prompt to MKs who submitted their Informed Consent forms to the researcher:

> Returning to the United States after being in another country (or countries) for a period of time can bring with it a variety of important experiences. Tell me the story of your return to the United States after being in another country for some time. Feel free to write in a creative format (e.g., a letter, an magazine article, a diary entry, etc.)

All but one of the participants returned the stories via email; one participant returned his story via postal mail. Each of the stories was uploaded into NVIVO for analysis. The shortest story was 2 pages long and the longest story was approximately 6 pages long, double-spaced. Most of the stories were 3 double-spaced pages in length.

The writing style of the MKs tended to be first-person narrative. One MK wrote his story as a letter to his best friend in his host country; another MK wrote her story as a letter to the researcher. Several MKs wrote their stories as articles for a magazine. Many stories were written based on themes such as saying goodbye, changing clothes, airports, or airplanes. One MK added to her story a poem that she wrote regarding her repatriation experiences.

Interviews with Participants

Interviews with the participants were conducted via phone and Skype. Of the 11 interviews with the MKs and faculty sponsors, 7 were conducted via phone and 4 were

conducted via Skype. During the Skype interviews, the researcher allowed the participants to choose whether or not they wanted to enable their webcams; all of the participants chose to not enable the webcams. Each of the interviews was audio taped using a hand-held micro-cassette recorder.

Each interview began with rapport-building through personal questions regarding college, the weather, the location of the MK, or other topics of interest. The researcher then asked each participant if he/she would allow the researcher to record the interview. Each of the interviewees obliged the researcher's request. The researcher mentioned to the participants that she had read their stories and that they were welcome to build on the stories or to go in a different direction with their answers. Two of the MKs with which the researcher spoke requested that the researcher share her own story with them, at the conclusion of their interviews.

The researcher interviewed two Mu Kappa faculty sponsors to increase the rigor of the study. The researcher spoke with one Mu Kappa sponsor who had worked with MKs at her school for 3 years. This Mu Kappa sponsor also worked in a South American country as a teacher at an American school for 11 years. The second faculty sponsor had worked with MKs at his university for 19 years. This faculty sponsor was also a former missionary who had repatriated to the United States after having lived in Latin America for 15 years.

The average time length for the interviews was 34 minutes with the shortest interview lasting 19:40 minutes and the longest interview lasting 57:32 minutes. The Skype interviews typically ran shorter than the phone interviews.

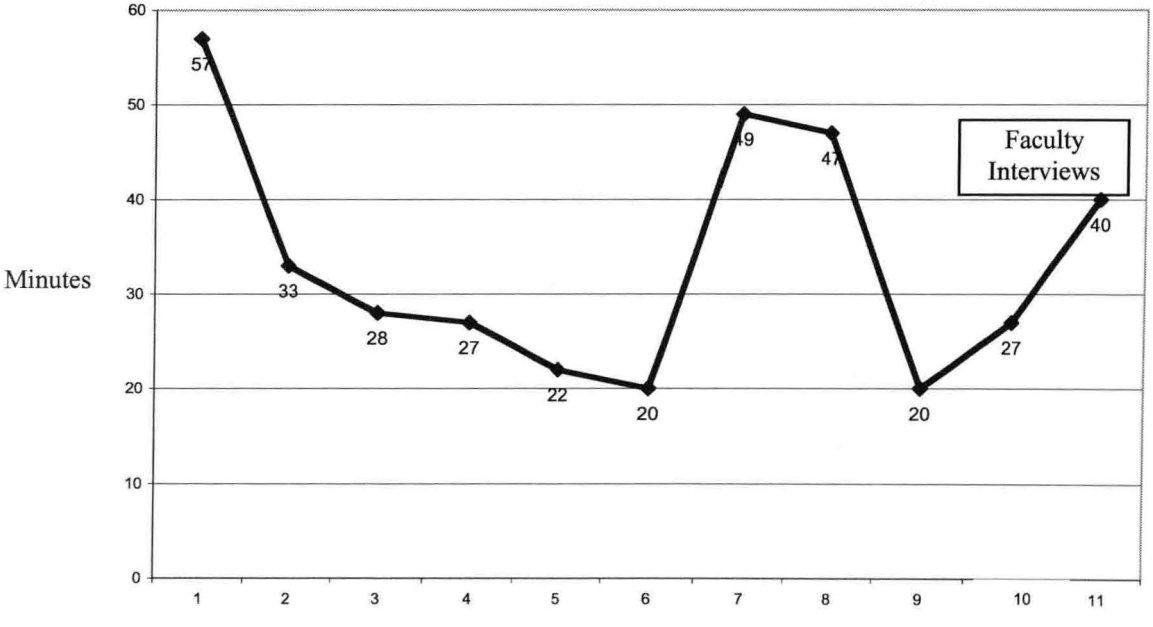

Figure 2. Interview time lengths in minutes.

Methods of Data Analysis

Each MK was represented in NVIVO by a case node that was linked to the MK's story and demographic information. Each MK case was also coded according to the MK's demographic information so that the researcher could aggregate the demographic data of all cases in a single table. The following sections delineate how the data in each of the NVIVO folders were analyzed and the findings of those analyses.

Analysis of the Stories

The MKs emailed their completed stories to the researcher who then uploaded those stories into an NVIVO documents folder. The researcher read through each story for comprehension first. After the first read, the researcher read each story again to begin themal coding. As the researcher coded themes within the stories, she began to draw connections across themes and stories as part of her holistic analysis. Finally, the researcher examined the stories, based on Labov's (1972, 1997, 2006) structural analysis methods.

The researcher identified 4 holistic categories of themes in the MKs' stories. Within each category, several themes were identified. Table 9 outlines the categories and themes identified in the MKs' stories and the number of MKs who discussed those themes in their stories.

Table 10

Categories and Themes in the MKs' Stories

Categories	n= 19 Number of stories with the theme
Emotions reported by the MKs	
Sadness/Depression	10
Mixed feelings	6
Loneliness	6
Ready/prepared	4
Scared/insecure/unprepared	3
Daydreaming/ignoring reality	3
Excited	2
Anger/hate	1
Repatriation experiences	
Missing the host country/wanting to return	14
Discovering cultural differences or taboos	8
Feeling homeless/lost	7
Not belonging anywhere	6
Saying goodbye	6
Not feeling normal; trying to seem like everyone else	6
Critical or dislike of American culture	5
Leaving friends and family in the host country	5
Adjusting to product choices	4
Making superficial friendships	4
Happy to see old friends and family	4
Holding on to the host culture	3

Table 10 (Continued)
Categories and Themes in the MKs' Stories

Categories	n= 19 Number of stories with the theme
Host country changes while they are away	3
No longer belonging in the host country	3
People treating them as Americans	2
Sharing their stories	2
Adjusting to American spirituality	2
Sources of help	
Other MKs	5
Family/Extended family	3
Parents	3
Re-entry seminars/Orientation class	3
Churches	1
Siblings	1
Methods of adaptation	
Relying on spirituality/God	5
Not letting go	4
Not mourning	2
Forgetting/ignoring	1

Loneliness. Several (n=6) of the MKs expressed feelings of loneliness upon repatriation, especially as they entered the college environment. One MK noted:

> I was in an unfamiliar culture with totally new people, and though my parents were only a phone call away—a new concept for me—I still felt very alone.

Another MK described her struggle with the feelings of loneliness in a college community in which she was expected to participate:

> The hardest part about moving to the United States that year was finding time for myself. I remember locking myself in my dorm room and the Resdident [sic] Chaplain knocking on my door telling me that I needed to participate. I bluntly told her I was there to get an education and did not want to be with a lot of people cramped in an auditorium to hear a person drone on about what a great college I was going to. I was constantly surrounded by people, yet felt extreamly [sic] alone.

Sadness/depression and daydreaming/ignoring reality. Several MKs (n=10) acknowledged feelings of sadness and, for some, that sadness led to mild depression. One MK described his feelings in a letter to his friend in his host country:

> Unfortunately, though, it's because many times since living in the U.S. I'll go through a rough period. A period that once lasted 3 months, and it was nothing but feeling out of place, and just longing and mourning to be back at MY sweet home...

Another male MK described the sadness he experienced and his longing to return to his host country:

> My window faced to the south, towards [host country], and there were some days where I stood alone in my room crying thinking about giving everything up and just running south until I got to [host country].

One MK identified continual depression, compounded by an increasingly problematic eating disorder:

> So by the time we arrived in America I was more depressed than excited... The depression continued, and it was coupled with confusion, anxiety and conflict... At the end of my junior year of high school I decided to stop eating... I felt completely unattractive and uncomfortable and self-conscious all the time.

To avoid sadness, a few of the MKs daydreamed or ignored the pain. According to one MK:

> I would whisk myself away into another time and place, and revel in the sense of security it would bring. I began to glaze over all of the hard times, creating a fictional past life that I would hold as a measuring rod against the present...the summer was hard and I lived in a dream, afraid to face the reality of my aloneness, my insecurity, and my uncertain future.

Another MK reported that, to protect herself from the sadness, she became emotionally numb:

> It seems as if my emotions were slowly turned off… When I boarded the plane, I didn't really feel anything. I was kind of "emotionally numb." As I think back on this, I think this was like a self defense I put up. I couldn't handle drawing out the process of grieving any longer, so my emotions were simply turned off.

Mixed feelings. Just over 31% of the MKs described mixed feelings during their return to the United States. For most of these MKs, the mixed feelings involved feelings of excitement for the return but also feelings of sadness for leaving their host country. One MK identified the shift from sadness to excitement:

> I remember missing my friends and teachers the moment I sat in seat 22F, but when my stomach moved up to my throat with the ascent of [the airline], a new feeling surged through my adrenaline-pumping neurons: anticipation.

Another MK noted:

> I had mixed feelings about moving back to the United States. On the one hand I was excited about seeing my grandparents and about going to college. On the other hand, however, I was increasingly saddened as I thought about leaving my home in [host country].

Excitement and ready/prepared. A few of the MKs felt excitement as they repatriated to the United States. One MK described her excitement for starting college, based on the expectations regarding college that her brothers instilled in her:

> At the same time though I was looking forward to college, it made me excited to think about living something [sic] completely new. I was excited because I was

> going to go where my oldest brother had gone, and where my second brother was… They had told me wonderful things about it, and I had visited before.

One MK allowed her excitement over the new events in her life to replace her feelings of longing for her host country:

> I was sort of surprised that a part of me was excited about the change, and for the first leg of that flight, I pondered the things I would be doing: attending an MK transition seminar… going to driver's ed and getting a license, getting a bank account…and then finally, driving out to college… As long as I kept my mind busy on the adventurous aspects of these thoughts, I didn't have to miss home. And, without those thoughts, I was busy enough with the summer, and transitioned well.

Preparation also played a role in the repatriation experiences of some of the MKs. A few of the MKs noted that events in their host country prepared them to transition:

> The greater amount of independence I exercised in this setting and the lack of frequent communication with my parents prepared me to be on my own in the American culture.

Discovering American cultural differences/taboos. Most of the MKs in the study described repatriation experiences, rather than emotions they felt upon repatriation. They most commonly described experience was the discovery of an American custom, tradition, cultural difference, or taboo with which they were previously unfamiliar. These anecdotes often demonstrated the comedic aspect of discovering cultural differences:

> ...the class I felt most awkward in was computer class. I did not like it that much as first because I remember feeling stupid. I did not know what a web page was, I might have seen one before but did not recognize it. We did power point presentations and other things about computers that I had never done before.

Other stories described the frustration and social isolation that can accompany cultural differences:

> At first, many people actually avoided me because they knew that I was bound to ask a stupid question that they were sure everyone knew the answer to.

Several MKs described not understanding race relations in America:

> Moving to the United States was like learning a new language. I remember wondering what the social rules were… I did not understand racism, state pride, or what it was to be at a college where some of the students did not care.

A male MK noted his lack of understanding of American consumerism:

> The rush between holidays is another cultural aspect that still blows my mind. I do not understand why it is necessary to start preparing for both Thanksgiving and Christmas immediately after Halloween. Of course, there's more to culture than holidays and what can be purchased at a store.

Critical/dislike of America. Several MKs (n=5) articulated a dislike for America or Americans throughout their repatriation experiences. Some of this dislike stemmed from the culture that they adopted in their host countries:

> The rest of the world had a distinct opinion on Americans and I shared it. I wasn't willing to give them a chance.

Another MK described her dislike for Americans as stemming from the stark contrast between American wealth and poverty in her host country:

> Apathy hit the hardest. I had never seen so many apathetic people in my life. They were amongst the privilaged [sic] few in the WOLRD, yet they did not care…I remember working in the dining commons and tearing up as I had to throw away food that the other students left on their plates knowing full well that there were people in [host country] that would gladly eat it.

Feeling homeless and not belonging anywhere. Feelings of homelessness were identified in 7 MKs' stories and 6 MKs noted feelings of not belonging anywhere. One MK succinctly said:

> I really struggle when people asked me where I was from. Where was I from?

Another MK described feelings of homeless after returning to her host country for a visit and finding the host country had changed:

> A realization that your home was not even a country. I remember how decieved [sic] I felt when I visited [host country] after being in college for six months. When I came back, it was not the same… I did not feel like I was home at all… The emptiness of not having a place that I could call home was depressing. I did not fit in anywhere anymore.

Feelings of homeless were often felt alongside feelings of not belonging anywhere. One MK descriptively wrote:

> But once in a while, usually on an international flight, I begin to ache with a strange, bittersweet longing to belong somewhere. Not to be a raft tossed between countries, unanchored anywhere.

Another MK expressed a similar struggle:

> I go through phases when I struggle with MK issues. Sometimes I reflect on my complete lack of home; I really do not belong anywhere anymore.

Missing the host country and holding on to the host country. Over half of the MKs (n=14) expressed longing for their host country and/or a desire to return to their host country. A male MK described his missing of the host country cuisine:

> I miss the rice and beans everyday. Most of the food is different here. There's none of the fruit that I was used to. Bananas tasted horrible compared to fresh ones from [host country].

Another MK described missing the nuances of her host country:

> I found myself really missing people back in [host country] – especially my family—and even just the little things that I was used to (for example, being able to walk practically everywhere, having a reliable public transportation around, and just hearing [host country] voices). I wanted to hear or see something or someone that would remind me of "home."

Some MKs held on to their host country. One MK described her constant contact with her high school friends:

> My entire graduating class would send group emails to each other, which kept me living on in the past.

Another MK mentioned her reluctance to let go of her host country:

> I didn't want to let go and in ways I still don't. I may be white as can be, but I have an African heart and pray that I always will.

Wanting to return to the host country. Over half of the MKs articulated a desire to return to their host countries. One MK described this longing to return during a Christmas break from school:

> I desperately wanted to go to the only place on this earth that ever deserved to be titled my home. I desperately wanted to see family.

A male MK described his desire to return to his host country on a permanent basis in the future:

> I realize this is a long way off, but I would actually love to retire in [host country] someday.

Another MK expressed this same excitement over the possibility of returning to his host country:

> The thought that [host country] might be in my future excites me so much!

Saying goodbye. This theme resonated in 6 of the MKs' stories as they discussed their repatriation experiences. One MK noted the difficulty of saying goodbye:

> It felt like someone was dying, even with all the encouraging words from the Lord, and saying goodbye to my parents was worse than leaving [host country].

A male MK wrote that the pain of saying goodbye remained with him, even in the present:

> I left behind some very dear friends in high school, and the pain of that night is still with me. I can still cry at any given moment if I think about saying goodbye that night to the people who were so close to my heart.

Sources of help. In their stories, the MKs described a number of sources of support during their repatriation experiences. Five MKs mentioned other MKs as a source of support and 3 MKs mentioned family or extended family. Three MKs described their parents as a source of help, particularly in providing support and understanding. Church and church groups provided support for one MK. One MK noted that her older siblings provided support for her through encouragement. Three MKs described re-entry retreats or courses as a source of helpful information and of mentors who understood their experiences.

The most frequently cited source of support for repatriating MKs were other MKs. Some MKs were roommates:

> My roommate had also been an MK so we could relate really well to each other's experiences. It was fun to have somebody who actually understood what perspective I was coming from.

Other supportive MKs were met through Bible study groups or Mu Kappa:

> Rachel was an MK from [host country]... Her story really helped me not feel bad about considering myself an MK, even though I had not lived most of my life in another country.

Adaptation. A few MKs mentioned what mechanisms they used to adapt to their new lives in the United States. A few MKs chose to forget or ignore their past in order to be able to cope; other MKs refused to let go of their host countries in their attempts to cope. Spirituality played a role in several MKs' adaptation:

> The most crucial factor to my overall smooth transition back to the States was finding a good family-like church and staying in God's Word everyday. The Holy Spirit comforted and guided me through that "shaky" time of life, and I owe my current peace of mind entirely to Him.

Another MK described her spirituality as helping her to accomplish adjustment tasks:

> God really took my hand and walked me through the time. He helped me form friendships and gave me people who would help me figure out all the little things I was ignorant about. He helped me in my classes...and helped me make

connections with other people who have been exceptionally important to my adjustment and my growth in the Lord.

Structural Analysis of the MKs' Stories

The researcher analyzed the MKs' stories using Labov's (1976, 1997, 2006) approach to narrative analysis. The researcher examined each MK story for the following elements: (a) the abstract, which provides the summary of the story; (b) the orientation, which gives orienting information; (c) the complicating action, which Labov also termed the most reportable event; (d) evaluation, which is the teller's appraisal of the event; (e) the resolution, or the solution to the complicating action; and (f) the coda, where the teller relates the story back to the present. By using this approach, the researcher was able to see what importance the storytellers placed on events and how he/she evaluated those events (Reissman, 1993). An example of a structural analysis is provided in Appendix I

Very few MKs provided an abstract for their stories. Most of the MKs moved directly into the orientation portion of the story. Those MKs who provided an abstract often did so by announcing the theme of the story. One MKs' story provides an appropriate example of a theme-based abstract:

> I always loved airplanes. I loved how they looked and smelled and felt and, most importantly, flew. I loved that I could get on one, fall asleep, and take up over another country, traveling the world in what seemed like the blink of an eye...Now, I don't like the whole experience much. Why? Well, I remember a flight that most recently changed my life...

Most of the MKs began their stories with the orientation, the information that orients the reader to the story. Often, the MKs began with an introduction of themselves and a description of their experiences as an MK in the host country. The orientation often included the MKs' names, the host country(ies), the length of stay in the host country, and a comparative time frame (e.g., five years ago, my senior year, or in 2003).

The complicating action in all of the MKs' stories was their return to the United States or their discovery that a return to the United States was impending. Many of the MKs articulated this discovery as surprising or sudden, as if they had anticipated not returning to the United States:

> [That day] was the worst day of my life, and also the best. I had just graduated from high school, *and* had my first dance! It was so exciting! The next day I packed up my life in two 30 gallon tubs and 3 suitcases. I had all my memories squashed together. My life has never been more out of control. I couldn't fathom what was in store for me, but I had every idea of what I was leaving behind.

Other MKs noted that the return to the United States was expected and timely:

> When I was ready to graduate from high school I was ready to head back to the U.S. and get as far away from home as possible.

The evaluation of the complicating event varied greatly from story to story. A few of the MKs focused on the excitement of the event and the opportunities to experience new things:

> I was not getting along well [with] my family, and I longed for a chance to get away and exercise my independence. I looked forward to a new start, a chance to establish my identity among people who didn't already think they knew everything about me.

Other MKs focused evaluated the complicating event in terms of what they were leaving behind and the difficulties they faced in saying goodbye:

> Have you ever felt your heart actually leave your body and then turned around and could see it lying [sic] on the ground where you should be? I have… I remember feeling…empty.

As discussed in the previous section of analysis, many of the MKs wrote anecdotes describing their re-introduction to American customs, culture, and people. In each of these short anecdotes, the MKs evaluated their repatriation in terms of the difficulties they encountered and how well they were able to deal with those difficulties. One male MK described the overwhelming nature of his repatriation experiences:

> Overall I would say that at first I felt totally lost and in a foreign country, even though it was my home country. So many things that I had no idea about. I knew very little about the culture, and yet I did know some things. Since I'm an American, people would talk as if I was one. It drove me nuts, and I didn't have my friends to ask about all the things I had no idea about.

In most of the MKs' stories, the resolution to the story was found in the MKs' description of support resources and adaptations they used:

> I had a rough start, strongly disliking my first two weeks of freshmen orientation. But, with unlimited minutes on weekends and after 9, I had a lifeline to my parents and older sister for emotional and spiritual support, and with an easy ice-breaking answer to the question, "Where are you from?" it wasn't too difficult to integrate into a social life.

Sometimes, however, the resolution seemed temporary or unstable, as the MKs continued to grapple with mixed feelings toward their repatriation experiences:

> It is easier for me now, being back in the States since I have now been back over here several times. I still have no desire to live permanently in the U.S., but I am content to be here as long as it is God's will. I still have a difficulty when people ask me where I am from, or where my hometown is, but then I guess that's not really a big deal…

According the Labov (1997), the coda of a story re-orients the reader/listener to the present and allows the storyteller to answer the question "what happened then?" The coda builds on the resolution in such a way that the listener/reader feels that the story is complete. If the coda does not build on the resolutions, the reader often feels as though there is missing piece of the story (Labov). Nearly all of the MKs provided a coda in their story, relating their experiences to the present and often reassuring the reader that they had successfully surpassed any repatriation difficulties. Most of the MKs described the length of time since their initial return to the United States and provided a synopsis of their current emotional state:

I am a work in progress, the same as everyone else. As time goes on, I begin to realize that I am similar to those around me. But I still strive to be different. I try my hardest to relive my MK days so that I keep my passion alive. I don't want to forget. Perhaps that's what I'm scared of most of all. Not being alone. Not facing a world different than the one I'm use to. But forgetting everything I hold dear. That would be a tragedy. But like I said before, God is my constant. Things of this Earth will fade. But God will keep my passion and faith alive and growing, if I but trust in HIM.

Analysis of the MK Interviews

The purpose of the MK interviews was to increase rigor through data triangulation and to provide the MKs with the opportunity to expand on their stories. The researcher transcribed each interview and imported the interviews into NVIVO for analysis.

Question 1: Please tell me about your return to the United States after having lived abroad. What feelings do you experience when you tell the story of your return to the United States?

The MKs reported a range from experiencing few to many adjustment problems. Four of the MKs noted difficulties in returning to the United States, particularly in adjusting to the culture and schooling. One of those MKs noted extreme fear of doing something that was socially incorrect, particularly while at school:

Interviewee 1: Absolute terror of doing something that as outside of the rules 'cause there was so many rules, um, just in surviving the American school system,

uh, and I didn't know them…and I was terrified; terrified that if I asked another kid to open [my locker] for me that they would like remember the combination and then steal my stuff. Or terrified that I struggled to open it myself and then I'd be late to class, that was like the ultimate horror.

Another MK discussed the difficulties of adjusting to American school after having lived abroad and experienced other types of schooling:

Interviewee 3: But, it was, um it wasn't like a lot of people talk about MKs having a lot of culture shock and everything and, for the most part, it wasn't too much. Just in the sense of I guess going back, going to school. I'd been home schooled for eight years of my life and so being able to go to a real school was different…I liked it and it had some challenges just because of some that that…I wasn't used to. I remember taking a computer class…and it was a very humbling experience just because of the fact that I had never taken anything like it before…

Four of the nine MKs said that the transition to the United States was not too difficult; however leaving their parents and family was difficult. In both cases, the parents brought the MKs back to the United States to help them settle in and then returned to the host country. A couple of the interviewees described the experience like this:

Interviewee 6: The first few months here were really really nice because I was still with my family and it was kind of I didn't notice the change quite as much at first because I was completely surrounded by family all of the time…it became a little harder I think once I got to college and wasn't with my family anymore. I

think I'm glad I came back because I feel like coming here to college was the right thing to do, but sometimes I wish maybe it had worked out to possibly stay in [host country] too…

Interviewee 8: So I really didn't have much culture shock, I just had to deal with the separation and just being completely away from my family for a really long time as I'd never done that before. Um so it was very difficult. My aunt lives about 20 minutes away so I get to see her a lot. The first year it was really hard because she sounds and acts exactly like my mother… So it was really hard to talk to my aunt and she was very supportive but it was really hard to talk to her because she sounds and acted like my mom.

Interviewee 9: And so I came and it was during the summer, so I didn't have to come to school and we were just traveling and seeing my grandparents. It was fun. But then, when I had to come to [college], I was just really, um, reluctant to stay. But I did and I remember when they drove away, I just felt so abandoned and I just cried, and I did not want them to leave me. But I was like, here I am, all alone, and I don't know anyone and everything just feels so foreign to me but OK, here I go.

With regards to the feelings the MKs experienced when they told the story of their return to the United States, 7 of 9 noted mixed feelings about their return, 1 noted feelings of sadness or pain, and 1 noted feelings of gratitude for the experience.

Interviewee 3: Its kind of in a sense, when I think about living down there [in the host country] and everything that I left, it can be kind of sad just because leaving friends and people who were very special to me and everything. But, for the most part, I've met a lot of friends, like, here in the States also and everything like that.

Interviewee 4: Um, I feel a lot of excitement; it was just like a lot of stuff that was so fun. So, like, stuff that I hadn't really experienced, and all of a sudden, like it was really exciting. So, like I said, a lot of feelings of wonder and excitement, along with a sort of displacement.

Interviewee 5: Um sometimes, like, I wish I could go back, I guess. Um well, let me think. I was pretty excited, I remember being excited when I cam, so when I look back at it, I do definitely remember being happy and just like a sense of like excitement to start college, to start a new life…

Interviewee 7: I remember feeling very excited and very scared. I hated the idea of leaving, I'm very close to my family so I hated the idea of leaving them… I actually waited until the last second to apply [for college] because my logic was that if I didn't apply, I wouldn't get admitted and I wouldn't have to leave my family… But um I remember being scared and excited at the same time and kind of not knowing what was going on.

One MK, who had repatriated within two years of writing her story, noted that the sadness and pain of the transition remained with her:

Interviewee 8: Um well I can tell you that when I was writing the story I got really choked up. And I may get choked up now. Because remembering [host country] is not that hard for me, but remember coming out of [host country] because it was home um um yeah there's still some pain. I don't know if I ever had closure from [host country]... Um so I think writing that story was kind of my closure. I was thinking about, "wow, I haven't ever really sat down and wrote about leaving." I wrote about [host country], I talked about [host country], I talked about the States, I talked about being here, what's happened. But I hadn't talked about leaving. Hopefully, it will get easier but it's still a little hard to talk about, it being still fresh in my memory. Last summer I realized that I had been away from [host country] exactly a year and that day was really really tough for me.

One of the MKs noted gratitude for her experiences:

Interviewee 1: Well, most of what I feel now is gratitude. I would not trade my experience of being abroad or repatriating for anything. People ask me whether I would do the same thing to my kids, if I would take them overseas and raise them there. The answer is heck yeah! Anytime! I wouldn't trade the perspective. I'm really grateful to the teachers who made it easier. I am grateful to my parents for being willing to give up...they had good jobs.

The MKs' responses to Question 1 indicated difficulties in adjusting to the United States as well as leaving their families and friends in their host countries. Each MK's response delineated experiences that shaped their repatriation and that were salient to them now.

Emotions reported by the MKs during the process of repatriation included excitement, sadness, gratitude, and mixed feelings.

Question 2: Who do you consider to be family?

All of the MKs included their parents and siblings in their responses to this question; however many also denoted additional people who they would consider as family. In response to this question, 8 of the 9 MKs noted who they considered to be a part of their family and 1 noted who would not be considered part of her family. The MK who noted who was not in her family explained:

> Interviewee 5: I didn't really grow up around my relatives, like I know them and stuff, but I feel kind of like they're still strangers just 'cause I haven't spent too too much time with them.

Six MKs included non-kin individuals and groups in their families:

> Interviewee 2: Um, everybody? <laughs> There's really my mom and dad and immediate family, definitely. And that extended family. But I mean, I have so many aunts and uncles, it's ridiculous, in the missionary world. And then there's a family in the [American city] area that I've lived with the summers when my parents have been traveling for deputation and such, but they're definitely family.
>
> Interviewee 1: Ah now I think family is <pause> my church has kind of adopted me…I feel they have a very missionary mindset that so many come in with, like, "You have another family? Come join ours." And they'll have me for dinner…so I would definitely consider my church to be a big part of my family.

Interviewee 8: Some people in my extended family, definitely my aunt who I've become very close to. One of my cousin's girlfriends, I've considered part of my family and they are now engaged so she kind is already. I have a few friends who I consider very close. My mentor I consider to be part of my family. I generally have, I've always had a very close-knit group of friends, I don't have a whole lot of friends. I generally just very close smaller group. But yeah my family would include a lot of people. Still lots of my friends from my graduating class. One of my best friends I would consider to be in my family.

Inteviewee 4: Like being an MK you have your missionary community family where everyone is auntie and everyone is uncle. But, like, since we've moved a lot, I still have relations with some people, but it's the people who have been with me the whole time that I really consider my family. But some others, like some families that I knew growing up down there [in the host country], I still consider very close. And it is weird, because we still refer to each other as brother and sister.

Interviewee 7: My grandparents are and aunts and uncles… Um MKs that I've known since I was in Brazil are still my best friends and um still family as far as I'm concerned…

Interviewee 3: Um, a lot of times, I have a lot of close friends that I would consider family and stuff like that. I think, I have friends that are closer to me than some family members…like I have my immediate family which I definitely call

my family and then I have the families that I have, like my really close friends and stuff like that, I guess.

For the MKs, family included their parents and siblings, for which they used the terms "immediate family." Additional family members included extended family and non-kin members such as friends, other MKs, missionary "aunties and uncles," host country friends, and the local church.

Question 3: What do you consider to be home?

Question 3 received non-verbal responses from the participants including laughs, sighs, and long pauses. Four of the MKs immediately noted that the question was a tough question for them and a fifth MK remarked that there was no answer to the question. Four of the MKs argued that home was not a physical location:

> Interviewee 6: Um for me, home has become my family. I used to think it was a place, but I think after moving to [host country] I um began to realize it wasn't so much a place as it was who I was around.
>
> Interviewee 4: I consider home <pause> yeah <pause> that's a good question. <laugh> Usually I've said that it is [current city of residence] because this is where I've been for the longest time, and then on the other hand, I also feel like home will change depending on....it's where I'm most comfortable...if I'm in a place that I love, and with people that I love, then I'm going to consider that home a lot more.

Interviewee 2: Hmm well, every week it changes? <laughs> I often say that home is just where my pillow is, wherever I am going to be is where I need to be… But at this point, it is really my main home, if that makes sense, is where my parents are.

Interviewee 1: <laughs> That is a question I've wrestled a lot with. The honest answer is that the more I study the kingdom of heaven, as Jesus proposes it in the gospels, the more I think that is home and I long for it. [Host country] is not home, mainly because I'll never belong there…Um, on the other hand, I'm not really sure I want America to be my home…Um, and I think the only answer to that is that we belong in the kingdom of heaven.

The five MKs who articulated home as a physical place had difficulty pinpointing one location as home:

Interviewee 9: Huh <pause> that's a good question. Um, well, I <pause> [host country], I think. But I lived for a really long time in the States, so that is kinda like home too. So, I don't know <pause> it was a long time ago. I used to say, like, some people have divorced parents, and I have divorced homes.

Interviewee 8: Hm. There is no answer to that question for me, I'm sorry <laughs>. Um kind of an interesting question because home to me is a very relative place. I use it all of the time, like "oh I am going home," meaning I am going to my aunt's house for the weekend. Or "yeah, okay [friend], I am going home now" I am going back to the dorm. Home is, you know, wherever I am I

guess. I have the majority of my belongings in my dorm room. So that's likely home. But people ask me where I am from and I am like, "that's an impossible question." But home is, I mean, on spring break I was down visiting my friend in [state]. And that was home for a few days. So, it's wherever.

Interviewee 7: <long pause> I don't know. Um, wherever my family happens to be right now…As much as I like [current city] and I like college, I don't want this to be home for some reason. I can't wait to get back to [host country]. But I feel horrible for wanting to be in [host country] all of the time because I am going to be a [military personnel]…

Interviewee 6: If I were going to pick a place, I would want to pick two places because I've grown up in two places. So it would be both [host country] and my grandparents' house.

Interviewee 5: That's a hard question. I would probably say [host country], like where I lived right before coming, that house. But it's kind of hard 'cause, like we talked about in our [MK orientation] class, and it was so true, like when I went back for Christmas, it didn't quite feel like home even then because a lot of my friends that had been there when I was there were gone. And um different things had changed a little bit, so I guess I would say [host country] but at the same time, it's not quite home either.

For the MKs in this study, the concept of home was a difficult one. Question 3 was received with more non-verbal cues than any other question the researcher asked. In this

study, five of the MKs articulated a physical location for home and four MKs articulated that home was not a physical location. Those MKs who did articulate a physical location noted that they struggled with pinpointing a single physical location as home.

Question 4: [If the parents still live abroad] How do you communicate with your family?

Six of the MKs who were interviewed had parents who still lived in the MKs' host country. The researcher asked how each of the MKs communicated with their parents while the parents lived abroad. The MKs provided a three different primary methods of communication. Three MKs mentioned Skype as the primary communication method. Another MK mentioned email as the primary communication method, noting that her father sent her emails every day. Two MKs denoted phone calls as the primary communication method, one of whom noted that her mother called her for a few minutes every day.

Secondary methods of communication were also noted by four of the MKs. Two of the MKs who used Skype also mentioned email as a method used by their families. The MK who primarily communicated through email also noted that her parents called her on the phone every 2-3 weeks. One MK who communicated via phone also mentioned email as a communication method.

Question 5: Who has supported you through your experiences of returning to the United States?

Seven of the MKs described their parents as a source of support in their repatriation experiences. All of the MKs (n= 3) whose parents returned to the United States permanently when the MKs repatriated mentioned their parents as the primary source of support. One of the five MKs whose parents did not repatriate with them did not mention her parents as a source of support; two mentioned them briefly, noting that they were not "as in the picture" as other support resources. The MK who did not mention her parents instead described her roommate, an MK from another Latin American country, as her primary source of support.

The MKs who mentioned their parents said that their parents provided support through encouragement and understanding:

> Interviewee 1: I think they were the people who really understood what I was going through. They were the ones who saw me when I came home and cried night after night after night. And they were good at comforting.
>
> Interviewee 8: My mom did a lot. I didn't share a lot with my parents what I was going through because I didn't want them to think…because I was going through the feeling, I am not American, I don't even feel American, I just look American. I don't even feel like I know what the culture is about and I was almost even a little anti-American. I didn't want to be included in that culture. I didn't want to fit their stereotype. A bit of rebellion I guess. Kind of pathetic <laughs>… Um,

but my mom sent me cards. She would send me emails that were very encouraging, just "I know you can do this..."

Parents were the primary source of support mentioned by the MKs. However, for the MKs whose parents did not repatriate with them, the support from the parents took on more of an encouragement role than for MKs whose parents repatriated with them. Other sources of support that were mentioned included other MKs, friends, extended family, teachers, siblings, Resident Assistants, and youth groups.

Question 6: What role does your family play in your repatriation experiences?

In response to this question, the MKs described in more detail how their parents and siblings helped them as they repatriated. Two MKs detailed the tasks that their parents and siblings helped them to accomplish or overcome:

> Interviewee 2: My brother is probably the key figure in it. Um, he's just <pause> we share a car and he's always willing to pick up what I need to have picked up after he gets off work or come and get me if I just need to get off campus for a few hours.
>
> Interviewee 1: When I couldn't open my locker, they took me back to school. The took me right back to school and they finally sat with me and made me open my locker until I could open it by myself...And they were always willing to get on the phone, we called it a 911 call, they were always willing to get on the phone and tell the teachers that they didn't think [allowing inappropriate behavior] was appropriate...They were also very very good about going with me to events.

Four of the MKs said that their families provided support and encouragement:

> Interviewee 6: Probably encouragement, I mean, they were always there for me to talk to, like if I needed to at all.
>
> Interviewee 3: Together we share memories together of the lives we had and we realize that...I guess it's just being the people who understand how I feel...they know what it was like, and they know how I feel about coming back and everything.
>
> Interviewee 9: Well, I know that they are praying a lot for me, and they just, I would call home all the time and just, um, complain to them and they would encourage me and tell me that over time it would get better.
>
> Interviewee 8: ...They were really good and not pitying me, because that wasn't what I needed at all. They would be there for me and they would listen. They would also tell me when I was overreacting....

One of the MKs said that her family, particularly her parents, played a role in teaching her about American culture and how to acculturate.

> Interviewee 4: Probably, a good bit of it was socialization... Because my parents knew how American society functioned, at least. Whereas I had no clue, you know...so they were able to give me a lot of insight into general culture...

Another MK, whose parents came to the United States briefly with her and then returned to the host country, lamented that her parents were not as much help as she needed.

Interviewee 5: I don't think they really did a whole lot, they just kind of expected me, I guess, to just learn. I guess because we had been back other summers, I guess I was at an American school so they just figured I'd be okay. I feel like they really didn't do a whole lot in that sense of like seeing what I was going through.

One MK, whose parents did not repatriate with him, noted that his grandparents played a key role in his repatriation experiences:

Interviewee 7: My grandparents were a huge part because they only live three hours away… they supported me and they let me store all of my stuff there over the summer.

The roles that family played in the MKs' repatriation experiences included helping with new tasks, providing encouragement, and providing socialization into American culture. For one of the MKs, her parents' roles were not as helpful as she had expected or wanted. Another MK whose parents did not repatriated with him focused on his grandparents' role in providing a place of comfort away from school.

Question 7: What roles do your friends (in your home and host country) play in your repatriation experiences?

The MKs interviewed had various responses to this question, particularly because a few of the MKs discussed non-MK friends and a few discussed MK friends. Those MKs who discussed non-MK friends noted their role in integrating them into groups and demonstrating support for them.

Interviewee 4: I think that the few friends I had in [state] during the first year, pretty much drew me into the [state] school system…they were just like, "Oh here is another person to play with. Here is how you do things" and they did it.

Interviewee 3: I have, like I was talking to my friend here, my roommate here, about some of the things we used to do and everything and she was listening, and like she was very into listening and asked a lot of questions, and I guess showing concern.

Interviewee 9: Um, well I, just by making an effort to be with me or like, acting interested in me. Asking questions, like, about [host country] and not looking at it like it was a weird thing, but as a cool thing. And, just, starting to do things together. Like we started having intramural football, and so that provided a connection, and just doing things together was helpful.

Interviewee 6: Like any of my friends, they've just kind of been there if I needed someone to talk to.

Interviewee 8: Um some of my friends on campus, they have open ears and they are willing to listen. By now, after a year, they kind of just roll their eyes at me when I am having my MK moments, ranting and raving about how ridiculous it is to use 1,000 plastic bags and oh it's so bad for the earth and "in [host country], we blah blah blah blah blah…" So they just kind of roll their eyes and go "yes, well, you're not in Kansas anymore now, are you?" They've been, uh, really good

about it. They just listened 'cause they really couldn't understand, but they were always willing to listen.

Three MKs specifically addressed the roles of other MKs in their repatriation experiences.

> Interviewee 2: [We would talk] to just like see if we were on the same page kind of situation. Share funny stories about what odd things happen in this country and such.
>
> Interviewee 7: There's a couple of [MKs] who are junior and seniors in college who I've known since I was seven… They told me, "this is my cell phone number, call me whenever you need to" and pretty much answer whenever I call. We speak [the host country language] all of the time. So it's better at times.
>
> Interviewee 8: She was from my host country in [host country]… And she would write me letters, she would write me emails, she would call me, check up on me through the week. She was very very supportive, very very encouraging. Very very sweet and very open. She would say, "I struggled with the same thing [name]. Let me tell you a story." It may not have been funny, it may have been sad but she said, "you know what, God did this."

These exchanges led the researcher to ask subsequent interview participants if they felt that their interactions with MKs differed from their interactions with non-MKs. The five interviewees who were asked that question responded with the following:

Interviewee 5: Mmm I think a little bit. Um I feel like when I talk to the MKs or even some girls that I know from [another international country] here, we end up talking about a lot of cultural stuff, like cultural difference, so yeah I guess I do relate differently. Sometimes I do feel a little more connected or like I know what they're talking about.

Interviewee 4: Yeah, I think the MK group definitely provided a core group, of just acquaintances at school but you know, we'd get together and share personal experiences, like we became close friends instead of just play buddies. Which made a big difference overall.

Interviewee 6: Yeah, probably. Like with my MK friends, I think we kind of share some of the same experiences, so there is an understanding there that isn't necessarily there with my non-MK friends. That's probably about the only difference.

Interviewee 7: Absolutely. MK are immediately family. Non-MKs are people that I don't know.

Interviewee 8: Oh yeah. I was down in Spring Break visiting my friend [name] and she had a lot of MKs and I never met them before but we clicked. And we were really good friends that whole week… we're all MKs and it's this kind of thing, this kind of connection you have. You're like, "oh, I'm an MK" and they're like, "oh you're an MK." And it's like you feel right at home and you can talk to them about anything and everything.

Interviewee 9: ....sometimes, because I can talk about things that happened in [host country]. And they will understand, like, the cultural differences or having an experience where you feel totally confused and you don't understand what is going on around you and that they can relate on certain things that other people can't.

Question 7 highlighted a distinct difference in the roles of MK friends and the roles of non-MK friends in the participants' repatriation experiences. Non-MK friends were considered supportive but were often described as unable to fully understand the MKs' experiences. MK friends, however, provided the MKs with opportunities to share stories from their host countries and about their repatriation experiences. The MKs cited an instant connection among MKs that allows this sharing.

Question 8: What role does spirituality play in your repatriation experiences?

Seven of the nine MKs responded to this question by addressing the role spirituality played as they dealt with issues of separation during their repatriation. Three of these MKs mentioned spirituality and God as "constants" during times of transition.

Interviewee 2: ...freshman year definitely and even sophomore year it was very much, "My friends are at different schools and going through the same things, so God is really my only constant."

Interviewee 8: ...I was faced with a decision one night in bed and I was just like, "oh I just have to trust God, he's like the only constant." Like nothing will ever be the same again. I may not go back to [host country] ever, a very scary thought.

But God will always be with me and I kind of need to let him do his thing and trust that he knows what he's doing and that was really my theme for the entire year and just had to kind of remind myself to trust God and to trust and obey.

Interviewee 3: I have a lot of people ask me what the hardest thing was coming back to the States…and I can say this personally, is honestly just how many times you have to say good bye to people and people that you are very close to…and yet you have to leave and you never know if you are going to see them again… Well, one thing that my spirituality has helped with that is, though I have cried a lot, it's just shown me how much God is there for us, no matter what. And He showed me that he's always there for me kinda thing…he's like a friend that's always there and you're guaranteed that he's never going to leave.

Interviewee 5: I guess I've just learned a lot about me since I've been here kind of and…this is one of those times where I just really need to cling to God and trust him to get me through this.

Interviewee 6: I don't like separations and stuff like that. So it was really difficult for me coming to college. So my relationship with Jesus Christ was really really important to me. Um, just praying in my Bible has strengthened me so much during times when I've been feeling alone or anything.

Interviewee 7: Um it's very big. I know that God has my family in [host country] for a reason and me here for a reason and that makes everything make sense…

And, whenever I, this is going to sound like a Sunday School answer but it's true, whenever I feel lonely, I know God is here and that's helpful.

One MK said that she struggled with negotiating her feelings that God wanted her to be at her college and feelings of frustration:

> Interviewee 9: Well…I knew that God had called me to come to [college] for a reason. I had heard so much about it, and actually, when I was trying to make my decision, it was between two colleges, and I just spent a couple of hours in my room reading my Bible and praying. For some reason, he was like saying in my head to come to [Bible]. So I like remembered that when I actually had to come. It was kind of like, I was kind of frustrated, like "God why do you want me to come here? It just doesn't make sense.

One MK mentioned that her faith had not played a large part in her repatriation except to help her clarify her morals when cultural differences of the United States made right or wrong unclear to her.

At different times during the interviews, three of the MKs mentioned how the differences between American spirituality and spirituality in their host countries had impacted them. In particular, they expressed disappointment in American spirituality:

> Interviewee 2: One of the hard things for me here was the worship differences; the difference of American spirituality…compared to the faith of the [host country] church. Just laying it all on the line kind of faith, complete trust that God will do it all and 100% of my life is yours, God, do with it what you will. And then here it

is definitely a Sunday Christian mentality, and I've seen myself turn into that in a way, not completely.

Interviewee 6: ...but I came back to the United States and there were so many Christians, but they didn't have the values that I'd grown up thinking were essential for a Christian whatever. And I think it kind of threw me off at first; I was just like, "I don't understand this."

Interviewee 8: So coming to America, and I am sure this would be in any country, moving to any country and facing things that you are not used to. Being in a bubble, a very MK Christian bubble and then coming out of it, you are faced with a lot of things... But it is a completely different culture and they may not know better, they may not have been raised to think differently. So what I believe to be wrong is often contradicted.

For all but one of the MKs, spirituality played a key role in their repatriation experiences. In particular, the MKs viewed their spirituality as a source of comfort and consistency, an unchanging presence. This seemed particularly important as the MKs experienced change and transitions due to their repatriation. For some, spirituality also was a source of frustration, as the MKs became aware of difference in host country spirituality and American spirituality.

Question 9: What other sources of support have you found?

Three of the MKs responded that they could not identify any additional sources of support in their repatriation experiences. One MK mentioned her home church as a

source of support because they had welcomed her when she arrived. Another MK mentioned a church that she joined since she moved back to the United States. Two MKs found support from their university professors and advisors. Another MK noted that the international students and other MKs at her university had been a source of support. One MK said that books had become a source of support, allowing her to step into a fictional world and escape the stress of repatriation.

Question 10: What did you expect your return to the United States to be like? How were your experiences similar or different to what you expected?

In their answers to this question, three MKs identified the role of furloughs in shaping their expectations of their return to the United States.

> Interviewee 6: I didn't have a lot of expectations because I'd been back to the United States for short visits before and I'd realized from then that it wasn't going to be everything that I had been expecting.
>
> Interviewee 5: ...Even like my teacher was saying in one of my classes, how when we would come to the States for the summer, and this is how it was for me too, it was a shopping time. You know, you visit churches, you go shopping, and it's just that fun summer time or whatever. So I guess life in America kind of seemed like it would always be like that, just fun. You never got to experience like the every day life.

Interviewee 3: Honestly, I don't think I knew what to expect. I really didn't. I didn't know what it was going to be like, honestly. I'd only known about what it was like on furlough, and most of those times, we had <pause> we traveled a lot.

Three of the MKs expressed divergent expectations for their return to the United States, with one expecting to face difficulties and two who were surprised by the difficulties because they had not expected them.

Interviewee 2: I was expecting not to make any friends, I think. I remember crying on the airplane, just thinking, "I'm going to this land that I don't like and I don't like the people there and I don't want to go there." I just expected it to be absolutely miserable. And I think I expected just to be a transitional phase like I'm going to sort of put in my four years of college and I'm going to go back…

Interviewee 9: Oh, I expected it to be super easy. I didn't expect it to be hard at all. But, I guess, I was little nervous about school, if college would be hard. But as far as just being here, I didn't think that would be hard at all…. Well, they were different because it was a little bit hard.

Interviewee 1: So I knew there was a possibility that it would be difficult and that school would be <pause> that I would be different from my peers. Um, I wasn't expecting it to the degree that I found it…in America, I wasn't expecting them to be so resistant to friendship. I wasn't expecting to be mocked quite as often.

Six of the MKs acknowledged that their repatriation experiences were similar to what they expected or that they were pleasantly surprised by their experiences. The MKs

gleaned their expectations from previous experiences in the United States through furloughs, from other MKs or siblings, and from boarding school teachers. Three MKs mentioned that they had no prior expectations regarding their return to the United States. Only three MKs noted that their expectations led to difficulties because they expected their experiences to be easier or they expected American spirituality to be similar to their host country spirituality.

Though the researcher's initial question regarding expectations yielded informative responses, the follow-up question did not elicit additional information from the respondents. In most cases, the MKs addressed the similarities and differences between their expectations and their experiences when answering the first question. In those cases, the researcher often did not include the follow-up question in the interview sequence.

Question 11: How do you define identity?

Though the MKs' responses to this question varied, most of the MKs (n=7) mentioned that identity involved who a person is or who a person thinks they are.

> Interviewee 5: I guess what you feel that you are, like what maybe part of what your origins are. Or who you are as a person, like you character, qualities… I guess like as an MK you think about where you grew up and, I guess that's part of your identity too.
>
> Interviewee 4: I think that identity for me might be the experiences that I've had applied to my life today, and also where I want to be in the future. Um, I think it's

very time-spanning. I don't think that I can call myself who I am without thinking of where I've been and also what I want to do later.

Interviewee 9: I guess, who you are? I don't know. Like, maybe who you believe yourself to be and what.

Interviewee 1: There's two parts to identity. There's something you see yourself as, and act on. And there's who you actually are. …I would say that identity encompasses both who you think you are and who you really are.

Interviewee 8: Identity is a lot of how you perceive yourself and what influences have caused those perceptions. Experiences, perceptions and what experiences have caused your own view of yourself, I think you make up your identity, actually.

Interviewee 6: I would probably um define it as who I am, who I am as a person, what I believe in, what my values are, what I like and dislike.

Interviewee 3: Identity, um, I think first of all, you identity is defined by who God made you and who you are in Christ. And, just second of all, I think my experiences defined who I am, just because it defines the attitude that I am.

One MK identified the role of her experiences in her host country in her definition of identity:

Interviewee 2: Well, I guess it sorta starts with passport for me, like where you're from, where you're born. Those two lines on that passport, nationality and place

of birth, in my family are important.... So that's part of it and then, m, what you've done, where you've been is important for who you are...

Another MK noted that, though identity is stable, different facets of an individual's identity may appear depending on the people or situations with whom the individual is interacting:

Interviewee 7: I think it is how you act in your situation. People tell me that, at least with me, that depending on who I am with, I act differently but every way I act is based on the same person. Like I show a different facet of myself depending on the group I'm with but it's all based on the same individual. So I think identity is kind of the result of your interaction based on your situation and your company.

Though the participants' answers to this broad question varied greatly, most of the MKs (n=7) mentioned identity as a combination of personality ("who you are") and self-perception ("how you perceive yourself"). Only one MK mentioned cultural identity in this initial question, describing how her host country experiences may have shaped her identity.

Question 12: How would you describe your cultural identity?

This question elicited the most similar responses from the participants. All of the MKs who were interviewed mentioned or described feelings of a mixed cultural identity. Cultural identity for these MKs represented a combination of two or more cultures.

Interviewee 1: I was very much a mixture of everywhere. I had a[n] accent, and had parents [from another country], I'd spent the majority of my life in [host

country]...I had friends from everywhere. So if you ask me to pin down a particular cultural identity, I was from everywhere...I belonged on the plane.

Interviewee 2: Um, global nomad? <laughs> Just I mean talk about melting pot, I guess. Like, I don't even know where to start with that. I'm definitely a white person with an African heart and just I don't even know...My culture is definitely that of [host country] [host country] Canadian American [host country], so.

Interviewee 3: I have a lot of culture from my parents and from <pause> I got a lot of American culture from my parents just because of the way they were...I would think that personally, I kind of, I like a lot of the culture that we lived in just because it is a lot more laid back...

Interviewee 4: ...when someone asks me about my culture, I would say, like, I would put it in the context of "this is what I am most familiar with." Mostly would be American right now, but I've got different flavors.

Interviewee 5: Sometimes, when people ask where I'm from...sometimes I don't want to be like "I'm from [host country]" because it sounds like I'm trying to show off. I don't know, I don't want to stand out too much...But other times, I do say, "I'm from [host country] or whatever...I'm not sure if I'm about 50-50 or I don't know. 'Cause I did grow up in American schools and I do have a lot of American ideas, too. So, not sure. Maybe about half and half or about 60-50 [sic].

Interviewee 6: My cultural identity has been kind of mixed because I have partly grown up in the American culture but then I have moved to [host country] and

was suddenly approached with another culture. And so I kind of had to, um I don't know, compare the two cultures, and I think I ended up picking things from the two, what I like and didn't like. And it kind of became mixed, maybe?

Interviewee 7: Ummmm I'm not [a host country native] but I am. I'm not American but I want to be and I am. I don't, when I go back to [host country], I don't fit in 100% partly because people haven't seen me in a year… The whole third culture kid idea, I'm a mixture of both and I don't know where I fit all of the time.

Interviewee 8: My cultural identity <pause> multicultural. <laughs> I don't really know what my cultural identity is. I don't think it's 100% American and I don't think it's 100% [host country]. Um, I think I have several cultures that I would identify with, just several aspects of each.

Interviewee 9: Um. I'm [cultural heritage], [host country], and American, because I feel like whenever I'm in the United States, I'm the most [from the host country] of the people that I know, and then when I'm in [host country], I'm the most American of the people that I know. So, either place, I don't completely have the culture that they do, but, it's OK.

A couple of the MKs expressed distress at the possibility of their cultural identities becoming American.

Interviewee 4: Well, I get a little frustrated with this because I'm sort of, I have yet to make up my mind if American people have culture or not. And, I think that,

completely that they have a culture, it's just not respected and so when I think about my cultural identity, I don't want to call myself completely American…I also don't want to say I'm completely American just because I don't ever want to be known as just an American. I don't like <pause> I feel like Americans are bland, culturally.

Interviewee 1: Now, after being in America for cumulatively the longest time, I would say that I am probably more American than anything else. Which makes me sigh. Um, kind of inevitable, I think. I held out being different as long as I could…

For the MKs in this study, cultural identity was a mixture of a least two cultures: their home culture and host cultures. Though eight of the MKs did not depict the mixture as positive or negative, one MK articulated noted a feeling of not fitting in anywhere. Negative feelings were expressed by MKs who were apprehensive about adopting an American cultural identity.

Question 13: How have your repatriation experiences impacted your identity?

Two of the MKs struggled to answer the final question and asked the researcher if they could have more time to think about the question. The two MKs who felt that they could not answer the question had repatriated more recently than the MKs who did answer the question; both were in their first year of repatriation. Both mentioned that they had learned a lot and that they felt that their experiences made them stronger.

Six MKs who responded to the question highlighted the positive changes in their identities as a result of repatriation.

Interviewee 2: Um, it's definitely changed my perspective on potential. And um I used to find my identity only in my history, in my past, in [host country] really. And now, I see that I have more potential in more places than I realized, I guess.

Interviewee 3: Um, I think personally, I'd have to say it's given me a wider perspective on life…I guess it's given me a wider view on life and how I approach it, in a sense, just because I've lived in two different cultures…

Interviewee 1: Um okay, so I think who I am has not changed…I see myself as someone who has become mostly American but has a tenured history of something completely different and I am not afraid to pull an experience from that into arguments…

Interviewee 7: It strengthened the American side of me for sure. It also strengthened my desire to go back to [host country].

Interviewee 9: I think they've made me more confident and secure in who I am. Like, that I don't have to just like, believe <pause> how can I say this, what other people think of me doesn't make me who I am. Like, I can have self-confidence, and I can just, like, be OK with myself and not have to think about what others think about me.

Interviewee 4: Um I think it's pushed me a lot in the direction of wanting to go back, like I know what it was like before and I can handle both situations. I don't

have any fear of returning to anything…I've lived through these things and I know I can handle that transition. Yeah, I think that's the main thing, it's given me a lot of confidence…

One MK noted both a strengthening in her identity and a weakening in her identity due to her repatriation experiences:

Interviewee 8: Um, in a way, I think it reaffirmed my identity. And on the other hand, I also believe that it probably um caused it to fade a little bit. Coming back to a culture where you're supposed to, you know, know the cultural norms and such. You know, because I look American therefore I must obviously know what Americans about and like. And that was hard. Um expected to know something. And I think in a few cases I was kind of, not in so many words, but people have this unspoken expectation for me to stop being in Thailand, you're in America deal with it. So on a few occasions, I felt like that. I would purposefully kind of push who I thought I was into the back of my head. And I think this year my second year in university has really helped me to just kind of come out and just be like, you know it's okay for me to be me. And it's okay with my identity and my cultural heritage, if you will, I can, I don't have to hide that. And people can accept me or they don't have to, it doesn't really matter. So, I think yeah, about 50-50 on each side

The MKs who responded to the final question articulated the positive changes in their identities because of their repatriation experiences. The MKs highlighted the changes in

their perceptions of the world, their self-confidence, and their self-affirmation. For two of the MKs, the repatriation experiences strengthened their desire to return to their host countries.

Analysis of the Faculty Sponsor Interviews

The purpose of the faculty sponsor interviews was to increase rigor through data triangulation. The researcher transcribed each interview and imported the interviews into NVIVO for analysis.

Question 1: What is your perception of how MKs experience the process of repatriation?

Both faculty sponsors responded that MKs experience the process of repatriation in a variety of ways. However, both sponsors divided MKs into 2 and 3 groups based on how MKs typically respond to repatriation.

> Sponsor 1: I think that some MKs love the whole process of coming back to their home country and um assimilate into the culture without too much problem, without noticing too much. Some MKs really fight the transition. I would say that most of them feel a little bit like misfits or they just feel a little different and I think sometimes relish that difference and don't want to lose that identity that is different from what their peers have experienced.
>
> Sponsor 2: Um they come in three categories. There's one group that doesn't want…they don't want anyone to know they're missionary kids. They just want to fit in immediately. So there is almost an attempt to shed an identity when they

arrive… Whereas, the opposite extreme from those, who sort of when you meet them is "Hi, I'm Ken Jones, I'm an MK."…They so emphasize their differentness that they kind of self-set themselves apart. And then there's that kind of middle group that do seem to find a balance.

Question 2: What role does the Mu Kappa organization play in the support of repatriating MKs?

Both sponsors mentioned that the strength of the Mu Kappa group on their campus changed from year to year, based on how involved the MKs wanted to be. Both said that their roles as faculty sponsors were support roles and that the leadership for the groups rested with the MKs. Sponsor 2 also acknowledged that Mu Kappa provided opportunities for MKs to interact with each other and share their stories with each other.

Sponsor 1: So I think that Mu Kappa has played somewhat of a minor role in the lives of these MKs. They seem to really enjoy getting together but none of them the last few years have wanted to really take charge and organize…

Sponsor 2: I think that one of the important things for incoming MKs is that the freshman MKs…knows who the other MKs are on campus. So that MK knows that he or she is not alone…So it provides a vehicle for them to see that there are other people on campus who are experiencing the same things and maybe are surviving…

Question 3: What additional support services are available to MKs at this university?

Sponsor 1 reported that no additional support services were available to MKs at her university. Sponsor 2 discussed campus services that were available to all students on campus (e.g., counseling) and outside support services such as local churches and former missionaries.

Question 4: Describe your perception of what support resources Missionary Kids utilize as they experience repatriation.

Sponsor 1 described other MKs as the primary support resource that MKs on her campus utilize.

> Sponsor 1: I think that they really appreciate just opportunities to get together with other MKs…But um, even just other MKs that <pause> somehow there is just an automatic bond when they find connection with somebody that was an MK or is an MK as well…

Sponsor 2 noted three support resources that MKs utilize to assist with repatriation: (a) re-entry retreats , (b) their families, and (c) international students' groups. He noted that one difficulty that MKs often encountered with re-entry programs was that the re-entry curricula and personnel create expectations that the MKs will have problems.

> Sponsor 2: It annoys some of the MKs, um, at least the way they do it out there. I had some MKs say to me, "You know they made it sound like I was, that I have problems. They assumed I was going to have problems.

Question 5: How do MKs on this campus interact with each other? How do MKs on this campus interact with non-MKs?

Both of the sponsors articulated the notion of shared experience as important when MKs interact with each other. MKs tend to discuss their host country experiences with other MKs because of the shared understanding between them. With non-MKs, they tend to not talk about culture and their international experiences.

> Sponsor 1: I think that when they interact with each other, they know that the person that they're talking to has an understanding of their life experience and so they are more likely to talk about things that they remember from growing up. Whereas interacting with um other students that don't have an international experience, I think they are less likely to talk about their experiences of growing up overseas.
>
> Sponsor 2: Well, sometimes when they're together…they'll get to telling stories that they won't tell other students… So with each other, they're more open about telling the weird stories about being caught in a riot, about the weird foods, so forth…

Question 6: What role do you think MKs' spirituality plays in their experiences of repatriation?

The sponsors both mentioned that spirituality could play a role in facilitating MKs' re-acculturation if the MKs' faith was strong. Sponsor 1 described problems when MKs are unsure of their faith during their repatriation. According to Sponsor 1, this uncertainty

can be exacerbated by the differences between American spirituality and host country spirituality.

> Sponsor 1: Uh, 'cause sometimes U.S. Christianity is different than what they remember experiencing as they grew up, so sometimes if they are just having struggles with their spirituality overall, that can play into their um adjustment into a Christian college back in the States.

Sponsor 2 said that spirituality played a key role in helping MKs adjust during repatriation, especially if the MKs became involved in the local church.

> Sponsor 2: ...so I think those who come back who have active walks with the Lord and are wanting to get involved with the local church, I think they do better than those who come back and, uh, mom and dad aren't here to tell them to go to church anymore so they don't. And so I think it, I think their spirituality, their level of commitment, and how adjusted they are in terms of their relationship with the Lord is a factor.

Question 7: What role do you think MKs' expectations play in their experiences of repatriation?

The sponsors said that MKs' expectations were important in their repatriation experiences because they impact how the MKs interpret their experiences.

> Sponsor 1: Their expectations and their attitudes about coming back, you know if they feel like, you know, "oh I have to go back" and "oh, I'm not going to like it..." then they won't. I think that a lot of times expectations can be self-fulfilling.

So if they expect nobody is going to understand them then they'll probably feel that nobody understands them.

Sponsor 2: I think they're huge. I think that's what initially divides them into those three groups. Um I think the group that hides it, I think their expectation is that, "if I don't, I won't be accepted." I think those that display it all over…I think their expectation is that they are going to be different so I think the expectations are huge in determining how they are going to experience it.

Question 8: What role do you think MKs' identity plays in their experiences of repatriation?

In response to this question, Sponsor 1 mentioned the lifelong impact of the MK identity on MKs, even as adults.

Sponsor 1: Well, I think that if they have kind of a strong sense that they are different than all of their other friends in college, I think then sometimes they don't ever really feel like they assimilate. And um, and I think they tend to have a strong sense that they are a little bit different than people who just grew up in one place and I think that sense stays with them for many many years. You know, into their thirties and forties and probably their whole life.

Sponsor 2 highlighted how MKs' cultural identity can often lead to difficulty as they negotiate that identity in the American culture.

Sponsor 2: A few years ago, a young lady was telling some of our Black students that she was much more African American than they were, thank you. She'd

grown up in Africa, and she was blonde and white, and their skin was dark. So, I think she was struggling a bit with identity issues you know, "Why do we call these people African American? I'm African."

Analysis of the Researcher's Reflexive Journals

The researcher maintained reflexive journals throughout the data collection and analysis processes. The researcher began her journaling process by writing her repatriation story using the same prompt she gave to the MKs. The researcher's story followed a theme of snapshots of her repatriation experiences. The researcher's story was three pages in length. The researcher found several similar themes in her stories and the stories of the participants. These themes included sadness, scared, mixed feelings, hate, leaving family, missing host country, saying goodbye, and not mourning. As the researcher re-read her story, one particular passage stood out in her story:

> There is the snapshot of my parents' goodbye at the airport. My guardians went to the airport so that I could follow them to their house afterwards. And my friends came to the airport, for support. It was a Sunday evening and we were missing church, I remember. This would be the first of many absences from church for me after my parents left. I hugged my mom first. We cried a little; she probably said some nice things to me and told me she loved me. I don't remember. All I remember is falling into my dad's arms, grabbing him by the lapel of his sports jacket and pleading, "Daddy, please don't leave me. Please don't leave me here." I cry every time I think about it—which is not often because it is too painful. My

dad and I wept, shaking, trembling, clinging onto each other. It was the hardest day of my life. And then they boarded the plane. I remember feeling completely numb; it was as if I was deaf.

The researcher's passage exemplified a sequence of complicating action and the evaluation of that complicating action. The researcher also provided an orientation to the story (when and where her story took place) and a coda (which brought the reader back to the present). In her coda, the researcher acknowledged how her experiences positively and negatively shaped her as a person. Unlike most of the MKs in this study, the researcher's coda also denoted mixed feelings towards her return to the United States; most MKs in the study commented that they were grateful for their experiences of repatriation.

Two particularly salient themes in the researcher's reflexive notes were the theme of home and the theme of cultural identity. During the interviews with participants, the researcher highlighted the following statements in her notes:

"I think you can make home wherever the people you are closest to are…"

"I often say home is where my pillow is…"

"…I don't ever want to be known as just an American…"

"…I'm a mixture of both [cultures] and I don't know where I fit all of the time."

"Sometimes, I still catch my breath and think, 'oh no, I've become one of them [Americans]."

MKs' Responses to Member Checking

The researcher received responses to the member checking from three MKs and two faculty sponsors. The three MKs mentioned that they agreed with all or most of the findings. The first MK replied with the following statement:

> I agree with all of it :) The only thing I would add is in #2 – I would say that not only MKs, but also international students in general are a source of support. Basically, anyone who has not grown up in the US.

The MK articulated that the importance of the MK support was related to a shared understanding due to growing up in another country. This shared understanding can also occur with MKs and international students. The researcher reviewed the MKs' stories and interviews after reading this feedback and found that 2 other MKs mentioned international students as part of their support systems.

The second MK noted his response to the researcher's feedback questions:

> 1) A lot of these experiences are similar to mine. My repatriation experiences were full of mixed feelings and some sadness, but no depression. I absolutely agree that other MK's were essential to the process; I trust other MK's more than non-MK's because they can relate and empathize. My parents played an essential role; my mother was back with me for the first month but long-distance help via Skype was also essential. No doubt spirituality was a huge help because I know i can always turn to God. I agree that cultural identity is complex. I also agree that it is very difficult for me to identify "home." I do not agree that I have a negative

view of America, I love America; however, I do not want to become so re-Americanized that I forget where and how I grew up.

2) I can't think of anything that is missing and I think your findings are quite thorough and accurate.

3) I really cannot think of any comments that need to be added to the experiment.

This MK agreed with the majority of the findings though he disagreed with the researcher's finding that many MKs struggle with a negative view of the United States. He affirmed, however, the notion that in the process of re-acculturating, he did not want to become too American because he did not want to forget the role of his host country.

The third MK who participated in the member checking did not provide any additional feedback. The MK noted, "Good Job on your findings :-) I think that you are pretty accurate. Thanks for sharing. Can't wait to see the end result!"

Both of the faculty sponsors agreed with the findings. One faculty sponsor did not elaborate on her agreement; however the other sponsor noted:

> I think the information as stated really coincides with what I see in the MKs that I work with. So it validates what I am seeing. Was good to see that MK are relying on their spiritual lives for part of their transition experience. Makes me want to do all we can to see MKs have a solid walk with Christ...authentic and vibrant.

> The issue as well on parents returning with their children is so key. Parents need to help their kids with a support network. Many times the parent's network is not the same as what the actual MK needs. So lots can be done to help this out.

This faculty sponsor's statement that "the parent's networks is not the same as what the actual MK needs" was a salient statement for the researcher. Though it was not a common theme in the MKs' stories and interviews, the researcher noted several instances in which the MKs expressed this sentiment. One MK, during her interview, expressed this sentiment by saying that she did not consider her extended family to be family, because she barely knew them. This issue may merit greater focus in future studies.

The MKs' and faculty sponsors' feedback indicated that the findings of this study were an accurate representation of MKs' repatriation experiences. Moreover, the feedback provided valuable information to the researcher and assisted with the development of the conclusions of this study.

Summary

The sample for this study included 19 college-attending American MKs who had repatriated to the United States. The sample consisted of 16 female and 3 male MKs between the ages of 18 and 23. The participants submitted their repatriation stories to the researcher via mail and email. Nine MK participants and 2 Mu Kappa faculty sponsors were interviewed to increase the rigor of the study. The MKs' stories and the interview transcripts were analyzed through themal, holistic, and structural analyses.

In addition to providing another data source, the interviews allowed the participants to expand their stories and further explicate their experiences. In many situations, the interviews helped to corroborate themes that were identified in the stories. The implications of the findings in this study will be discussed in Chapter V in light of previous research delineated in the Review of Literature.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This research study examined the repatriation narratives of 19 college-attending MKs. The purpose of the study was to give voice to MKs in order to acknowledge their repatriation experiences. Missionary kids, as a subset of Third Culture Kids, were selected for this study because of the researcher's interest in the specific contextual factors that influence MKs' repatriation.

The participants in this study were 16 female and 3 male MKs who had lived in one or more host countries for at least 3 years. The mean age of the participants was 19.7. The majority of the participants (42.1%) claimed Brazil as their host county; other countries represented in the study were Cameroon, Venezuela, The Solomon Islands, Peru, England, Ethiopia, Paraguay, Thailand, and Senegal. The average length of stay of the participants in their host countries was 11 years; the shortest host country stay was 4 years and the longest host country stay was 17 years. Four MKs lived in their host countries for 17 years.

The researcher utilized narrative analysis as the methodological approach for this study. The researcher collected three primary data sources: MKs' stories, interviews with MKs, and interviews with Mu Kappa faculty sponsors. Within qualitative research traditions, narrative inquiry is valued for giving voice to participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Narratives tell the listener how the storytellers interpret their

experiences (Riessman, 1993). Labov (1997) noted that narratives of personal experience are socially and emotionally evaluated and give the listener/reader insight into how those evaluations shape meaning. Stories often illuminate the neglected realm of human experiences (Polkinghorne, 2007). Participants' stories tell the researcher the events, the contexts surrounding the events, the participants' interpretation of those events, and the impact of those events on the participants. According to Riessman, the role of culture on individuals' interpretation of their events is also expressed in stories.

Two primary theoretical approaches were used in this study. The researcher employed philosophical hermeneutics and phenomenology in this study. Both theoretical approaches support the methodology that was chosen for this study, narrative methodology. According to Gadamer (Gadamer, Misgeld, & Nicholson, 1992), the soul of philosophical hermeneutics is the understanding of another person's position, or their truth. This understanding is a process in which the speaker and interlocutor engage and it is guided by tradition (history, experiences, previous interactions; Risser, 1997). A philosophical hermeneutic approach to narrative analysis takes into account that a researcher cannot transcend his or her previous experiences, background, and situated context in his or her understanding of a participant's narrative (Polkinghorne, 2007). Like philosophical hermeneutics, phenomenology acknowledges that world experiences are mediated through individuals' senses and consciousness and therefore researchers must look to individuals' consciousnesses to understand phenomena (Landgrebe, 1940).

Chapter IV delineated the findings of this research study. The findings were drawn from MKs' stories, interviews with MKs and faculty sponsors, and reflexive journals. Chapter V examines conclusions and implications from the findings in this study. In particular, the researcher examined themes found in MKs' stories and interviews in line with the research questions for the study:

1. What are MKs' repatriation experiences?
2. What resources are involved in MKs' repatriation experiences?
3. What is the role of MKs' expectations regarding repatriation in MKs' repatriation experiences?
4. What is the role of identity in MKs' repatriation experiences?

This chapter describes these findings in light of previous research, drawing conclusions, implications, and making recommendations for future research.

Discussion of the Findings

Previous research indicated that MKs' repatriation experiences were often problematic and that they led to numerous detrimental outcomes (Firmin, Warner, & Lowe, 2006; Gordon, 1993; Stringham, 1993; Walters, 1991; Viser, 1986). However, there was a gap in the research regarding why the MKs' repatriation experiences led to such difficulties. Several research studies examined what factors might play a role in the difficulties, including identity (Firmin, Warner, & Lowe), support (Firmin, Warner, & Lowe; Stringham), expectations (Moore, Jones, & Austin, 1987), and personal characteristics (Huff, 2001). No studies examined how the MKs' interpreted or made

meaning of their repatriation experiences. The purpose of the study was to give voice to MKs in order to acknowledge their repatriation experiences.

A discussion of the findings of this study will follow each of the research questions for the study.

1. What are MKs' repatriation experiences?

The MKs' stories highlighted two prominent experiences throughout repatriation: missing the host country/wanting to return and discovering cultural differences/taboos. The researcher's finding that longing for the host country is a key part of MKs' repatriation experiences supports Stringham's (1993) grounded theory findings. More than half (n=14) of the MKs noted experiences of missing their host country and/or wanting to return to the host country. Nearly half of the MKs (n=8) mentioned their discovery of cultural differences or taboos in their repatriation experiences. Both of these findings highlight the notion that repatriation can be difficult for MKs as they learn to adjust to the cultural differences between the home and host countries while also dealing with longing for their host country. According to Gaw, reverse culture shock is "the process of readjusting, reacculturating, and reassimilating into one's own home culture after living in a different culture for a significant period of time" (p. 2). Based on Gaw's (1995) definition of reverse culture shock, the MKs' experiences may be characterized as experiences of reverse culture shock.

The MKs' interviews supported the conclusion that missing the host country and discovering cultural differences/taboos are important components of MKs' repatriation

experiences. Eight of the nine MKs interviewed noted difficulties adjusting to cultural differences in the United States.

According to the MKs' stories, MKs' repatriation experiences are often accompanied by sadness or depression. Feelings of sadness or depression were reported in 10 of the 19 MKs' stories. The sadness or depression may be related to the following commonly reported repatriation experiences: (a) missing the host country, (b) saying goodbye, (c) feeling homeless/not belonging anywhere, or (d) leaving host country friends. Sadness or depression may also be related to the feelings of loneliness reported in 6 MKs' stories. The MK interviews illuminated another potential source of sadness or depression: leaving their parents and families in their host countries. Four of the 9 MKs interviewed said that leaving their families was the most difficult part of their repatriation transition.

In addition to feelings of sadness or depression, mixed feelings regarding repatriation were common in the MKs' stories. These mixed feelings were often feelings of sadness and feelings of excitement. The MKs expressed mixed feelings at the time of their return to the United States and in present time. The mixed feelings at the time of repatriation were related to sadness for leaving their host country and excitement for starting a new life in the United States. MKs who expressed mixed feelings in the present time expressed hesitation about their acculturation to American culture and sadness over no longer belonging to their host country(ies).

The MKs' stories and interviews illuminated the ways in which MKs might deal with their repatriation experiences. Both in their descriptions of their experiences and in their descriptions of their adaptation, the MKs expressed three ways in which they dealt with their repatriation experiences. The three ways MKs dealt with their experiences were: (a) daydreaming or ignoring their reality, (b) holding on to the host country or not letting go, and (c) forgetting the host country or not mourning. An example of an MK's daydreaming or ignoring reality could be found in the interview transcripts:

> I would whisk myself away into another time and place, and revel in the sense of security it would bring. I began to glaze over all of the hard times, creating a fictional past life that I would hold as a measuring rod against the present...the summer was hard and I lived in a dream, afraid to face the reality of my aloneness, my insecurity, and my uncertain future.

An example of the holding on to the host country or not letting go was found in an MK's story:

> My entire graduating class would send group emails to each other, which kept me living on in the past.

An example of forgetting the host country or not mourning was found in an MK's story:

> It seems as if my emotions were slowly turned off... When I boarded the plane, I didn't really feel anything. I was kind of "emotionally numb." As I think back on this, I think this was like a self defense I put up. I couldn't handle drawing out the process of grieving any longer, so my emotions were simply turned off.

Interestingly, the Mu Kappa faculty sponsors did not mention missing the host country or discovering cultural differences/taboos as characteristics of MKs' repatriation experiences. Further, the Mu Kappa faculty sponsors' descriptions of how they perceived MKs' repatriation experiences differed from the MKs' descriptions of their repatriation experiences. The faculty sponsors focused on MKs' feelings of identity upon repatriation and due to repatriation. The faculty sponsors' responses provided a meta-analysis perspective of MKs' experiences, in line with the researcher's findings, while the MKs' responses provided personal narratives of their experiences. This finding illuminates the importance of examining both the first-person narrative for delineating MKs' repatriation experiences and examining others' perspectives regarding how MKs experience repatriation.

2. What resources are involved in MKs' repatriation experiences?

The researcher found few studies that addressed what resources MKs utilize during their repatriation experiences. The research that was found described conflicting evidence regarding MKs' use of family as a repatriation resource. In fact, research on sojourners, TCKs, and MKs pointed to evidence that home country returnees may isolate themselves from interpersonal relationships, including family relationships, because of a lack of shared understanding with those support groups (Fail, 1996; Gerner & Perry, 2000; McLachlan, 2005; Raschio, 1987; Werkman, Farley, Butler, & Quayhagen, 1981).

Though only 13 MKs' stories mentioned resources they utilized, those who did mention them pointed to a few sources not identified in previous literature. The source of

help mentioned most by the MKs in their stories was other MKs. This finding was supported by the MK interviews and by the faculty sponsor interviews. In the MKs' stories, other MKs were identified as individuals who shared their stories and understood their experiences. In the MK interviews, other MKs provided support through communication (phone calls, emails) and through shared understanding of experiences. In both the stories and the interviews, the MKs said that other MKs understood their experiences, even if the other MKs were from other countries. This finding supports Firmin, Warner, and Lowe's (2006) notion that MK identity leads to camaraderie among MKs, including MKs who are strangers. Further, MK identity seems to create feelings of shared understanding among MKs and this shared understanding is a resource to repatriating MKs.

Despite the importance of other MKs to participating MKs' repatriation experiences, no MKs mentioned Mu Kappa as a source of help. The faculty sponsors echoed this finding in discussing the role that Mu Kappa played on their campus. The faculty sponsors said that MKs' participation in Mu Kappa was inconsistent. These findings indicate that, although MKs are important sources of help for repatriating MKs, organized social groups for MKs may not provide consistent assistance. Mu Kappa organizations on campuses should focus on providing consistent opportunities for MKs to spend time together.

In the MK interviews, parents emerged as a source of help when the researcher asked "Who supported you through your repatriation experiences?" Seven of the nine

MKs interviewed, including all 3 of the MKs whose parents repatriated permanently with them, mentioned that their parents helped them through their repatriation experiences. The researcher noted that MKs whose parents did not repatriate with them experienced their family's support differently than did MKs whose parents repatriated with them. The MKs whose parents did repatriate with them mentioned that their parents helped them with adjustment tasks (learning how to open a locker, learning to drive), provided socialization into the American culture, and provided support through shared experiences. Of the MKs whose parents did not repatriate with them (n=6), four mentioned that their parents provided encouragement, two MKs said that their parents were not as "in the picture" as other support resources, and one did not mention her parents as a support resource at all.

During the MK interviews, the researcher asked the MKs whose parents did not repatriate with them how they communicated with their families. The MK mentioned three primary forms of communication were email, Skype, and phone. MKs who used Skype to communicate with their parents seemed pleased with the opportunity to see their parents, despite problematic Internet connections. Email was also regarded highly because several emails could be sent in one day. The finding that missionary families often utilize synchronous and asynchronous web-based communications to keep in touch with their repatriated MKs is important. This finding points to the notion that MKs who repatriated prior to widespread use of those communication tools may have experienced repatriation differently than MKs today. The immediacy of synchronous and

asynchronous web-based communication tools may allow MKs to feel more supported by their families and friends in their host countries.

The question of who the MKs considered to be family yielded interesting insights into MKs' support networks. Six of the nine MKs included non-kin individuals and groups in their descriptions of family. These non-kin groups included church, home and host country friends, and missionary "aunties and uncles." This finding suggests that MKs have an expanded view of family. Further, the finding suggests that MKs view non-kin groups, such as church, friends, and missionary families as family because those are the groups that provide support for them during their host country stay.

In their stories, three MKs mentioned the role of churches as sources of help through repatriation experiences. In the MK interviews, two MKs also mentioned church as a source of support. One faculty sponsor confirmed the importance of church in MKs' repatriation experiences by discussing how local churches provided a place for MKs to find community and to become involved. Though no known research has examined church as a support resource for repatriating MKs, one lay book acknowledged the roles of churches. According to Viser (1986), the majority of MKs with whom he spoke felt that their local churches supported their spirituality and allowed them to become involved in the church community.

Spirituality was consistently mentioned in MKs' stories and interviews as a source of help and as a component of their adaptation processes. Four MKs mentioned that they relied on their spirituality during their repatriation experiences to help them

adapt. MKs' spirituality provided a consistency during a time of transitions and change. In their interviews, the MKs affirmed this conclusion by stating that spirituality was their constant and that they could cling to their spirituality for reassurance. Further, as Sponsor 2 mentioned in his interview, the MKs claimed that their spirituality made their repatriation experiences "make sense" because their experiences were part of "God's plan" for them. As Sponsor 2 said, this perception that their experiences are a part of a larger plan gave the MKs comfort during difficult times.

Though spirituality was a source of comfort and adaptation for the MKs, for some it also generated some confusion. In their interviews, three MKs said that American spirituality differed from their host country's spirituality and the discrepancies were incomprehensible. This confusion may be problematic as, the findings indicate, spirituality is an important source of support and adaptation for MKs.

The researcher's findings on MKs spirituality indicate that repatriation may increase MKs' feelings of connection to their spirituality or cause the MKs to re-evaluate their understanding of their spirituality. According to Fowler (1981), adolescents and young adults may undergo stages of faith development that include similar tasks. Fowler noted that observed contradictions in spiritual practices (such as the differences between host country and home country spiritual practices) may push young adults to further faith development stages. Future research studies should examine the impact, if any, of repatriation on this faith development.

3. What is the role of MKs' expectations regarding repatriation in MKs' repatriation experiences?

Only one prior study addressed the role of MKs' expectations (Moore, Jones, & Austin) in their repatriation experiences; however, research on TCKs' and sojourners' experiences provided additional support for the role of expectations in MKs' repatriation experiences. Specifically, previous research indicated that sojourners who felt prepared for their return to their home country experienced less repatriation distress (Sussman, 2001).

Pollock and Van Reken (2001) found that many TCKs do not expect repatriation to be difficult and are often surprised by how difficult their experiences are. In the present study, only 3 of the MKs noted that their expectations did not match their repatriation experiences. Two of those MKs said that they did not expect difficulties and were surprised by the difficulties they experienced.

In this study, the MKs highlighted the role of previous furloughs in shaping their repatriation experiences. As Walters (1993) found, furloughs tend to set up the MKs' expectations for their permanent return to the United States. The MKs in this study said that furloughs shaped their expectations of the United States but that they also knew that the furlough experiences would be different than their repatriation experiences.

Surprisingly, several MKs (n=3) said that they did not have any expectations about their return to the United States. However, six MKs acknowledged that their expectations (both positive and negative) were similar to their experiences or that they

were pleasantly surprised by their experiences. These findings suggest that MKs may have appropriate expectations regarding their return to the United States.

4. What is the role of identity in MKs' repatriation experiences?

Identity was a focus in this study because of the age of the sample (college-aged students), the organizational identity of MKs, and because of the impact of cross-cultural transitions on cultural identity (Sussman, 2000; 2001; 2002). The MKs' responses to the question of how they defined identity indicated that they viewed identity as a combination of personality ("who you are") and self-perception ("how you see yourself"). Additionally, the MKs identified experiences as a key component of identity.

Cultural identity emerged as a difficult construct for MKs. While the MKs had little difficulty expressing their identities, they struggled to identify their cultural identities. All of the MKs who were interviewed described having a mixed cultural identity. For some MKs, their mixed cultural identity was perceived positively and for some their mixed cultural identity was perceived negatively. The findings support Sussman's (2000) notion that repatriation brings about cultural identity salience that illuminates cultural differences between host and home countries. Further, the MK interviews suggested that Sussman's (2002) findings were accurate. That is, MKs who had a stronger American cultural identity reported fewer repatriation difficulties and, in particular, fewer problems adjusting to American culture. MKs who identified more with their host country culture reported greater re-acculturation difficulties. The findings also suggest that, because MKs stay longer in their host countries than sojourners, MKs may

tend to identify more with the host country and may struggle to negotiate the host country and home country identities. Sussman (2000) suggested that sojourners who embrace a multicultural, or global, identity, may experience better repatriation outcomes. Programs for repatriating MKs, TCKs, and sojourners may work with those groups to develop their multicultural identities.

The researcher identified a possible link between MKs' reports of support from other MKs and identity. The MKs reported that they connected with other MKs because they had a shared understanding, despite varying experiences. This finding suggests that MKs may connect because of their MK identities and because of their struggles with cultural identities. Several MKs noted that they would not share cultural stories with non-MKs but that they shared cultural stories with other MKs. It is possible that, as MKs struggle with their mixed cultural identities, they identify with other MKs who are struggling or may have struggled with similar cultural identity questions. This findings supports Firmin, Warner, and Lowe's (2006) notion that MK camaraderie is facilitated by a shared MK identity.

The Mu Kappa faculty sponsors noted that MKs' cultural identity often leads MKs to feel different, perhaps isolated, from their American college peers. This finding may help to explain the social isolation experienced by sojourners, TCKs, and MKs (Butcher, 2004; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001; Useem & Cottrell, 1996). According to one faculty sponsor, this struggle with cultural identity may continue into later adulthood.

More research is warranted to examine adult MKs' cultural identity issues in later adulthood.

Additional Themes

The following themes emerged during the course of this research study:

Home. In both the MKs' stories and in their interviews, the concept of home was a struggle for repatriating MKs. Six MKs' stories mentioned feelings of homelessness upon repatriation. Further, six MKs' stories mentioned feelings of not belonging anywhere, which might also be related to feelings of homelessness. In the MKs' interviews, the question of "what do you consider to be home?" brought about the most non-verbal responses from the participants. Heavy sighs, long pauses, laughs, and processing vocalizations ("hmmm" or "ummm") were non-verbal cues that indicated the participants' struggle to define home. The MKs' difficulty to identify home may be related to their struggles with identifying a cultural identity.

Struggles with American culture and American cultural identity. A pervasive theme in the MKs' stories and interviews was their struggles with American culture and American cultural identity. Their struggles with American culture were identified in the story themes of "Adjusting to product choices" (n=5) and "Critical or dislike of American culture." Many of the MKs expressed distaste for American consumerism and waste, particularly in light of the poverty they had seen in their host countries. As one MK noted, "The rest of the world had a distinct opinion on Americans and I shared it. I wasn't willing to give them a chance." Further, the MKs noted fear or distress that they were

becoming "too American" despite their desires to acculturate. There appears to be a struggle for MKs to acculturate to American culture without becoming a part of the American culture.

Conclusions from the Structural Analyses

The structural analyses in this study illuminated findings that may not have been apparent in theme analysis alone. In particular, the structural analysis of the MKs' stories showed how the MKs process their repatriation experiences and their adjustment to those experiences. Specifically, in their stories, the MKs provided a context for their experiences (the orientation), a description of their experiences (complicating action, evaluation), and how they adjusted to their experiences (evaluation, coda).

In addition to following Labov's narrative outline, the MKs' stories were reminiscent of McCubbin and Patterson's (1982) Double ABC-X model. That is, the MKs described the Event/Crisis (A/X), their emotional responses or perceptions of the event, and the resources they utilized as they reorganized. The MKs' perceptions and resources played a role both in the crisis and in the period after the crisis. For example, MKs whose parents repatriated with them provided a resource to MKs that impacted both the MKs' experience of the crisis (repatriation) and their reorganization or adaptation after the crisis.

Analyzing the MKs' stories through Labov's narrative framework and with McCubbin and Patterson's (1982) theoretical perspective, the researcher noted that the MKs' stories provide a framework for understanding re-acculturation processes for MKs.

The MKs' experiences of repatriation are impacted by resources and expectations/perceptions both prior to and after repatriation. In addition, drawing from theme analyses of the MKs' interviews and stories, MKs typically experience enduring struggles with cultural identity, American culture, and concepts of home regardless of their bonadaptation or maladaptation to the repatriation crisis. The researcher proposed the following conceptualization of MKs' repatriation experiences, building on McCubbin and Patterson's (1982) Double ABC-X model:

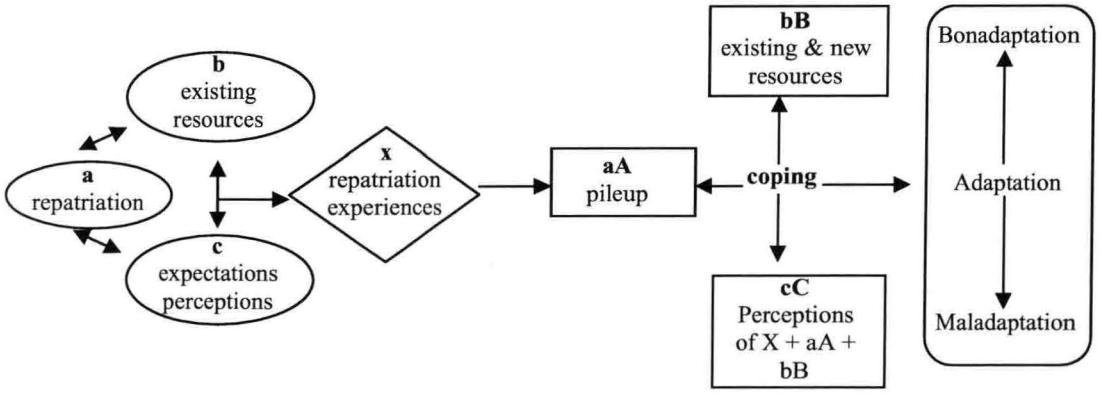

Figure 3. Adaptation of McCubbin & Patterson's Double ABC-X Model.

Adapted from "Family adaptation to crisis" by H. I. McCubbin and J. M. Patterson, 1982, in H. I. McCubbin, A. E. Cauble, & J. M. Patterson (Eds.), *Family stress, coping, and social support* (pp. 26-47). Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Using McCubbin and Patterson's (1982) model the researcher identified MKs' existing resources (b) and expectations/perceptions (c), as found in this study. The MKs' resources prior to repatriation included their family, host country friends, other missionary families (other MKs, "aunties and uncles"), and school programs that prepared them for re-entry. The MKs' expectations or perceptions prior to repatriation

included expectations that the experience would be easy, expectations that the experience would be difficult, and expectations that the experience would be like previous furloughs. New resources after repatriation included other MKs, siblings who had repatriated, parents, extended family, local churches, re-entry programs, and international students. Perceptions after repatriation included feelings of adaptation, expectations for continued adaptation, feelings of not belonging anywhere/having no home, perceptions that their experiences matched their expectations, and perceptions that their experiences did not match their expectations. The MKs, in most situations experienced bonadaptation; however, with regards to cultural identity, reactions to American culture, and the notion of home, many MKs still experienced maladaptation.

Conclusions

Based on stories from this sample, repatriation can be a difficult transition for many MKs. The present study illuminated what aspects of repatriation are difficult for MKs by giving them the opportunity to share their repatriation narratives.

Based on the present study, the following conclusions were made:

1. Two important components of MKs' repatriation experiences are longing for the host country(ies) and discovering cultural differences/taboos between the host culture and home culture. These experiences are often accompanied by sadness/depression or mixed feelings.
2. Other MKs are an important source of support for repatriating MKs. Other MKs provide shared understanding; repatriating MKs are more likely to share

their repatriation experiences and cultural identity with other MKs than with non-MKs.

3. Family, and in particular parents, were key support resources for repatriating MKs. However, there were differences in how MKs experience repatriation based on whether or not their parents repatriate with them. MK parents who do not repatriate with their MKs may need to develop a support plan to provide consistent support for their MKs from afar.
4. Spirituality was noted by the MKs as a primary source of comfort and adaptation. The MKs relied on their spirituality for a sense of guidance and purpose. The researcher suggested that MKs' repatriation may impact MKs' faith development and vice-versa.
5. While the notion of identity was not problematic for MKs, the notion of cultural identity was difficult. MKs feel as though their identity is mixed and they often struggle to negotiate their home country and host country identities. MKs may need assistance to learn the value of their multicultural identity.
6. The concept of home was problematic for repatriating MKs. The MKs' difficulty to identify home may be related to their struggles with identifying a cultural identity. Based on previous literature and the findings of this study, MKs' struggles with the notion of home and cultural identity may continue into adulthood. It may be concluded that MKs' struggles with home and cultural identity may be related to Pollock and Van Reken's (1999; 2001) notion of

prolonged adolescence for MKs and TCKs. That is, MKs' stuggles with those concepts may delay their accomplishment of identity development tasks and hinder the next stages of their adult development (e.g., intimacy development, generativity; Erikson, 1963). Because of this, family education programs and college support programs should address MKs' concept of home and cultural identity.

7. Repatriating MKs experience difficulties with acculturating to the United States and not wanting to become too American. Many MKs expressed distress that, in the process of adjusting to the United States, they were becoming too American. American culture was often viewed negatively by the MKs, particularly when they compared American consumerism and waste with the poverty in their host countries.
8. Structural analyses of the MKs' narratives illuminated the similarities of MKs' repatriation experiences and adaptations to McCubbin and Patterson's Double-ABC-X model of adaptation to crisis. Viewing MKs' repatriation experiences, and the repatriation experiences of other sojourners, in this light may help researcher to identify sources of support for MKs prior to and after repatriation.

Limitations

The researcher identified several limitations to this study. The limitations in this study were

1. The study was based on a sample of 19 college-attending MKs from several American colleges and universities.
2. The sample was comprised of a large percentage of MK from Brazil and MKs whose parents were sponsored by the International Mission Board. This oversampling was probably due to the researcher's communications with an adult MK who distributed her recruitment flyer to an email list for missionaries to Brazil.
3. The sample was comprised of 18 female MKs and 4 male MKs. Very few males responded to the researcher's recruitment flyer and the researcher was unable to obtain a more representative male sample.
4. Though the age group for this sample was selected purposefully, the researcher must acknowledge the limitations associated with the selection of a college-attending age group. In particular, the researcher acknowledges that many of the issues that MKs in this study faced may be related to typical adolescent or young adult development rather than to repatriation alone.
5. The researcher interviewed fewer than half of the MKs in the sample (n=9). The participants may have felt unmotivated to participate in the interviews

because there were no additional benefits to them for participating in the interviews.

6. All of the interviews were conducted via phone or Skype so there was no face-to-face interaction between the researcher and the participants. Though Skype provided MKs with the option to use webcams to interact with the researcher, none of the MKs chose that option. Because there was no face-to-face interaction, the researcher could not identity participants' facial and body cues.
7. MKs who consented to participate in this study may have more positive repatriation experiences or more negative repatriation experiences than MKs who were not willing to participate in this study.

Implications of the Findings

The purpose of the study was to give voice to MKs in order to acknowledge their repatriation experiences. The next step, then, was to acknowledge MKs' repatriation experiences in order to recommend programs and services for them. As an understudied population, MKs represent an underserved population in prevention and intervention services. Research suggests that, without appropriate support, repatriation problems faced by MKs may have further ramifications for them as they enter adulthood (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

Implications for Parents of MKs

An important finding of this study was that MKs' parents and families play an important support role in MKs' repatriation experiences. The most resonating finding,

however, was that MKs whose parents did not repatriate with them experienced their support differently than MKs whose parents did repatriate with them. The implication of this finding is that parents who do not repatriate with their MKs may need to make special efforts to demonstrate support for their MKs. This may mean taking a furlough or extended leave of absence during the first year of the MKs' repatriation. Missionaries who are unable to take leave to help their MKs' initial transition may consider setting up a network of support, such as extended family, that can provide consistent assistance during the MKs' initial repatriation.

In this study, residence with parents and family was common at the beginning of MKs' repatriation. The MKs indicated that having that parental and family support during the initial transition to the United States was helpful. Parents of repatriating MKs may consider residing in the United States for at least a few months while the MK becomes acclimated to the United States. The parents may also help the MK to establish roots with their extended family so that they have a sense of familiarity and home. During that time, parents should help the MKs to accomplish tasks in the United States such as writing checks, learning to drive, navigating a city, and purchasing items in a store. Parents may also help the MKs to learn how to fill out forms such as registration forms or taxes. All of these tasks help prepare the MK for life in the United States.

Parents who do not repatriate with their MKs may want to set up a communication plan with their MKs. Communication tools that allowed face-to-face interaction between MKs and their parents (e.g., Skype) were viewed positively by the

MKs in this study. Parents of repatriating MKs should explore the communication tools that will work best in their host countries while allowing the best interaction with their MKs. These may include free online phone service programs (e.g., Skype), free voice-over IP services (e.g., ooVoo, V-room), or social networking services (e.g., Facebook, Twitter).

MKs' parents should utilize furloughs as an opportunity to prepare MKs for their permanent repatriation. In this study, furloughs often allowed MKs to develop a sense of American culture but did not give them a sense of day-to-day living in America. This is most likely because furlough are often brief and focused on accomplishing specific tasks in the United States, such as fundraising, visiting family, or shopping. MKs' parents should use furloughs to teach MKs about day-to-day life in America including tasks such as navigating American cities and dealing with finances in America. Furloughs also can provide an opportunity for MKs to develop an American social support network. This can be important when MKs repatriate, especially if the MKs' parents are unable to repatriate with them.

Parents of MKs should make sure that their repatriating MKs feel connected to a network of support resources. This may include helping them connect to a local church, keeping in touch with host country friends and missionary families, and developing ties with their extended families. Parents should also consider enrolling their MKs in re-entry programs. MKs who attended re-entry programs noted how helpful those programs were;

additionally, re-entry programs give MKs the opportunity to meet and interact with other MKs.

Implications for Sponsoring Organizations

Sponsoring organizations provide missionary families with various types of support including financial, educational, and psychological support. However, not all sponsoring organizations address the issues that MKs face upon repatriation. Some sponsoring organizations supply optional re-entry programs for repatriating MKs. Beyond that, there is little support for those MKs.

Sponsoring organizations should provide re-entry programs that address the specific needs of the MKs from that organization. For example, if missionary families with an organization have long intervals between furlough periods, the re-entry program should take that into consideration.

Sponsoring organizations should also provide literature or information packets to repatriating MKs before they return to the United States. The information packets should address how to prepare for repatriation, what to expect, how parents should help, and information regarding support resources. Sponsoring organizations may also provide directories of contact information for all the repatriating MKs in that organization.

Implications for College and University Personnel

Few programs exist at the university level for repatriating MKs. The universities that do provide re-entry programs provide those programs because they have a large TCK or MK population. More re-entry programs should be available to MKs and TCKs,

particularly at universities where the MK or TCK population is small. Further, these programs should be based in research and theory.

Based on the findings of this study, re-entry programs should focus on helping MKs to build ties with other MKs and with support resources. Many program focus on helping MKs with repatriation tasks and adjustment to American culture. However, because of the wide variance in MKs' repatriation experiences, the focus should be less on discussions of American culture and more on building connections with support resources. Repatriation programs should also focus on helping MKs to discuss their cultural identity.

In addition to providing repatriation programs for incoming MKs, colleges and universities should offer services specifically designed for MKs and TCKs. According to the faculty sponsor interviews, few services are provided by universities for those populations, especially when the universities have small MK and TCK populations. Universities should provide financial assistance for MKs and TCKs and expanded housing options, particularly during between-semester times. University personnel might also consider providing freshman orientation week programs specifically for MKs, TCKs, and international students. Further, university personnel should promote opportunities for MKs, TCKs, and international students to interact through social organizations or special programs.

Implications for Family Prevention and Intervention Specialists

Family life education is designed to provide education based on the needs of individuals across the lifespan (Powell & Cassidy, 2001). As family life education becomes increasingly global, family life educators should begin to focus on providing education for families who are involved in cultural transitions. Family life education programs should be developed for families who are experiencing repatriation.

Family life education programs may focus on MKs and their families before they repatriate. Based on the findings of this study, programs for MKs and their families should help them to prepare for the MKs re-entry to the home country. Based on the structural findings of this study, pre-repatriation programs should focus on the MKs' and families' resources for repatriation and perceptions regarding repatriation. Programs may help MKs and their parents to identify communication strategies for maintaining communication with host country friends, host country MKs, and family. Programs may also provide resources for helping MKs and their families to learn about the home country and what has changed since the family moved to the host country.

Family life education programs may also focus on MKs and their families after repatriation. In particular, these programs should address the enduring challenges that face MKs as they repatriate: their concept of home and their cultural identities. Family life educators may work with MKs, particularly young adult MKs, to develop their sense of home and cultural identity. Family life education programs should focus on helping MKs to develop a constructive cultural identity, wherein the MKs perceive their identity

as multicultural rather than between cultures. As Sussman (2000) indicated, assisting MKs with their multicultural identity development may improve their repatriation experiences and outcomes. Helping MKs to develop their global identities during early adulthood may also help to prevent problems of identity development in later life.

Narrative therapy may be an appropriate as part of intervention services for MKs. This study has pointed to the importance of MKs sharing their stories, particularly regarding their repatriation experiences. Narrative therapy examines the stories that individuals and families create (Dallos, 2004). The goal of narrative therapy is to allow individuals to identify problematic portions of their stories and replace or rewrite those problematic portions (DeSocio, 2005). According to Habermas and Bluck (2000) narrative therapy is particularly useful with young adults because they are in the process of creating their life story, their perception of themselves in the past, present and future. Narrative therapy can help repatriating MKs to negotiate their repatriation narrative and their life story.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings and the limitations of this study and the researcher recommends the following foci in future studies of MKs' repatriation:

1. Studies should further examine the differences in repatriation experiences of MKs whose parents repatriate with them and MKs whose parents do not repatriate with them. Additionally, researchers should examine the communication tools available to missionary families, how those tools are used,

and how those tools have changed the repatriation experiences of MK compared with MKs who repatriated before those tools were available.

2. Studies should replicate the methodology of this study with a larger and more representative sample of MKs. That is, future studies should have more equal gender representation, more equal representation of MKs from various countries, and more equal representation of MKs from various sponsoring organizations.
3. Studies should examine the repatriation experiences of MKs who are no longer attending college. The large response of MKs who did not meet the age requirements of the study indicates that those MKs feel as though they have a story to tell. Researchers should examine those stories and see how the stories change as the MKs age and continue the re-acculturation process. Longitudinal methodologies may illuminate how repatriation impacts MKs across the lifespan.
4. Studies should examine the repatriation of MKs through additional data sources. These data sources may include reports from the MKs' family members, church leaders, re-entry seminar personnel, college support personnel, or other individuals who can observe the MKs throughout their repatriation experiences.
5. Studies should examine the impact of the following factors on MKs' repatriation narratives: (a) gender, (b) host country, (c) number of years in host

country, (d) age at repatriation, (e) type of host country schooling, (f) number of host countries, and (g) sponsoring organization. Researchers may also examine differences in repatriation experiences of MKs compared with TCKs and sojourners.

6. Studies may employ alternate methodologies to study MKs' repatriation experiences. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies are appropriate for the study of MKs' repatriation experiences.
7. Studies should evaluate current programs for repatriating MKs or TCKs. Numerous re-entry programs exist for repatriating MKs. These programs may be implemented by sponsoring organizations, colleges and universities, social organizations (like Mu Kappa), or third-party organizations. No known studies have examined the effectiveness of these re-entry programs. Studies are needed to evaluate effectiveness and suggest changes that may improve services for repatriating MKs.
8. Studies should extend the implications of the findings to other groups that experience repatriation, namely TCKs and sojourners. Findings from MK studies may help to inform theory development on re-acculturation for sojourners. Further, implications from MK studies may assist with the development of programs and services for TCKs and sojourners.
9. Studies should examine the complex nature of identity development for MKs, TCKs, and sojourners. This may mean examining separately MKs' personal

identity, social identity, and cultural identity (Fail, Thompson, & Walker, 2004). Studies should also examine more closely the impact of repatriation on those three aspects of MKs', TCKs', and sojourners' identities.

10. Studies should examine the repatriation experiences of MKs using Fowler's (1980; 1981) theory of spiritual development as a theoretical foundation. These studies should examine what impact repatriation has on repatriating MKs' stages of faith development.

Summary

The current study examined the narratives of MKs with the purpose of acknowledging MKs' repatriation experiences. The previous four chapters illuminated the purpose of the study, the rationale for the study, the review of previous literature, the methodology for the study including data collection and data analysis, the results of the study, and the conclusions and implications of the study. As MKs continue to repatriate to the United States each year, parents, sponsoring organizations, college personnel, and family specialists have a responsibility to support them in their repatriation experiences. Those support groups can facilitate MKs' acculturation to the United States while allowing them to value their multicultural identity. Future studies focused on MKs' repatriation experiences may will help to illuminate what support resources, programs, and services will benefit repatriating MKs. Further, the findings of studies on MKs may lead to better research and better services for repatriating TCKs and sojourners.

REFERENCES

Andrews, L. A. (1999). Spiritual, family, and ministry satisfaction among missionaries. *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 27,* 107-118.

Austin, C. N., & Van Jones, B. (1987). Reentry among missionary children: An overview of reentry research from 1934-1986. *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 15,* 315-325.

Barringer, C. (2001, March). *Counseling third culture kids.* Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Counseling Association, San Antonio, TX.

Butcher, A. (2004). Departures and arrivals: International students returning to the countries of origin. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal, 13,* 275-303.

Cash, T. F., Begley, P. J., McCown, D. A., & Weise, B. C. (1975). When counselors are heard but not seen: Initial impact of physical attractiveness. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 22,* 273-279.

Chester, R. M. (1982). Stress on missionary families: Living in "other culture" situations. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity, 2,* 30-37.

Christians, C. G. (2003). Ethics and politics in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 208-243). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cockburn, L. (2002). Children and young people living in changing worlds: The process of assessing and understanding the 'third culture kid.' *School Psychology International, 23,* 475-485.

Conle, C. (2000). Narrative inquiry: Research tool and medium for professional development. *European Journal of Teaching Education, 23,* 49-63.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dallos, R. (2004). Attachment narrative therapy: Integrating ideas from narrative and attachment theory in systematic family therapy with eating disorders. *Journal of Family Therapy, 26,* 40-65.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2003). *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

DeSocio, J. E. (2005). Accessing self-development through narrative approaches in child and adolescent psychotherapy. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing, 18,* 53-61.

Dormer, R. (1979). We are the rootless ones. *Ecolint Newsletter, 13*(Spring), 3.

Duvall, E. M., & Hill, R. (1948). *Report of the Committee on the Dynamics of Family Interaction.* Washington, DC: National Conference on Family Life.

Eaken, J. P. (1999). *How our lives become stories: Making selves.* New York: Sage House.

Eakin, K. B. (1996). You can't go "home" again. In C. Smith (Ed.), *Strangers at home: Essays on the effects of living overseas and coming "home" to a strange land* (pp. 57-80). Bayside, NY: Aletheia.

Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. P. (1996). *Composing ethnography: Alternative forms of qualitative writing.* Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira.

Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. P. (2003). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (2nd ed., pp. 199-258). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ender, M. G. (1996). Growing up in the military. In C. Smith (Ed.), *Strangers at home: Essays on the effects of living overseas and coming "home" to a strange land* (pp. 125-150). Bayside, NY: Aletheia.

Erikson, E. (1963). *Childhood and society* (2nd ed.). New York: Norton.

Fail, H. (1996). Whatever becomes of international school students? *International Schools Journal, 15*(2), 31-36.

Fail, H., Thompson, J., & Walker, G. (2004). Belonging, identity and Third Culture Kids. *Journal of Research in International Education, 3,* 319-338.

Farber, M. (1941). The function of phenomenological analysis. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 1,* 431-441.

Feldman, S. M. (2005). The problem of critique: Triangulating Habermas, Derrida, and Gadamer within metamodernism. *Comtemporary Political Theory, 4,* 296-320.

Firmin, M., Warner, S., & Lowe, A. (2006). Social adjustment among students growing up in foreign mission-field contexts. *Christian Higher Education, 5,* 115-124.

Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2003). The interview: From structured questions to negotiated text. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (2nd ed., pp. 61-106). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fowler, J. W. (1980). Faith and the structuring of meaning. In J. W. Fowler et al. (Eds.), *Toward moral and religious maturity.* Morristown, NJ: Silver Burdett.

Fowler, J. W. (1981). *Stages of faith: The psychology of human development and the quest for meaning.* San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Frank, C. (1999). Ethnographic eyes: A teacher's guide to classroom observation. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Furman, R., Jackson, R. L., Downey, E. P., & Shears, J. (2003). Social constructivist practice with youth. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 20,* 263-277.

Gadamer, H. G., Misgeld, D., & Nicholson, G. (1992). Hans-Georg Gadamer on education, poetry, and history: Applied hermeneutics (L. Schmidt & M. Reuss, trans.). Albany: Albany State University of New York Press.

Gaw, K. F. (1995). *Reverse culture shock in students returning from overseas.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychology Association. ERIC Document number 394082.

Gerner, M. (1994, March). *Developing skills for consultation with American schools overseas*. Paper presented at the National Association of School Psychologists, Seattle, WA.

Gerner, M., & Perry, F. (2000). Gender differences in cultural acceptance and career orientation among internationally mobile and non-internationally mobile adolescents. *School Psychology Review, 29,* 267-283.

Gerner, M., Perry, F., Moselle, M., & Archbold, M. (1992). Characteristics of internationally mobile adolescents. *Journal of School Psychology, 30,* 197-214.

Giorgi, A. (1970). *Psychology as human science: A phenomenologically based approach.* New York: Harper & Row.

Gordon, A. D. (1993). *Don't pig out on junk food: The MK's guide to survival in the U.S.* Wheaton, IL: Evangelical Missions Information Service.

Gullahorn, J. T., & Gullahorn, J. E. (1963). An extension of the U-curve hypothesis. *Journal of Social Issues, 19*(3), 33-47.

Habermas, T., & Bluck, S. (2000). Getting a life: The emergence of the life story in adolescence. *Psychological Bulletin, 126,* 748-769.

Hechanova-Alampay, R., Beehr, T. A., Christiansen, N. D., & Van Horn, R. K. (2002). Adjustment and strain among domestic and international student sojourners. *School Psychology International, 23,* 458-473.

Hiebert, P. (1983). *Cultural anthropology* (2nd ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.

Hsieh, T. (1976). Missionary family behavior, dissonance, and children's career decision. *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 4,* 221-226.

Huff, J. L. (2001). Parental attachment, reverse culture shock, perceived social support, and college adjustment of missionary children. *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 29,* 246-264.

International Mission Board. (2008). *Fast facts*. Retrieved May 15, 2008, from http://www.imb.org/main/page.asp?StoryID=4452&LanguageID=1709

Kenney, B. J. (1987). *The missionary family*. Pasadena, CA: The William Carey Library.

Kociszewski, C. (2003). A phenomenological pilot study of nurses' experience providing spiritual care. *Journal of Holistic Nursing, 21,* 131-148.

Krefting, L. (1991). Rigor in qualitative research: The assessment of trustworthiness. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 45,* 214-222.

Labov, W. (Ed.). (1972). *Language in the inner city: Studies in the Black English vernacular*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Labov, W. (1997). Some further steps in narrative analysis. *The Journal of Narrative and Life History, 7,* 395 – 415. Retrieved April 8, 2008, from http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~wlabov/sfs.html

Labov, W. (2006). Narrative pre-construction. *Narrative Inquiry, 16,* 37-45.

Lam, H., & Selmer, J. (2003). Are former 'third-culture kids' the ideal business expatriates? *Career Development International, 9,* 109-122.

Landgrebe, L. (1940). The world as a phenomenological problem. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 1,* 38-58.

Lerstrom, A. (1995, November). *International study transitions: Creating and leading a reentry workshop.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association, San Antonio, TX.

Marcia, J. E. (1966). Development and validation of ego-identity status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 3,* 551-558.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2006). *Designing qualitative research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Martini, V. R. (2005). Education on the transnational stage: A shared spotlight, a pocket of hope. *Global Trends in Educational Policy, 6,* 173-196.

McCubbin, H. I., & Patterson, J. M. (1982). Family adaptation to crisis. In H. I. McCubbin, A. E. Cauble, & J. M. Patterson (Eds.), *Family stress, coping, and social support* (pp. 26-47). Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

McLachlan, D. A. (2005). The impact of globalization on internationally mobile families: A grounded theory analysis. *The Journal of Theory Construction & Testing, 9,* 14-20.

Moore, L., Jones, B. V., & Austin, C. N. (1987). Predictors of reverse culture shock among North American Church of Christ missionaries. *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 15,* 336-341.

Muuss, R. E. (1996). Theoretical expansion and empirical support for Erikson's theory. In R. E. Muuss, *Theories of adolescence* (6th ed., pp. 58-83). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Navara, G. S., & James, S. (2002). Sojourner adjustment: Does missionary status affect acculturation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 26,* 695-709.

New Tribes Mission. (2008). *Who we are: Heritage.* Retrieved May 15, 2008, from http://www.ntm.org/about/heritage.php?page=heritage&io=1

Nyatanga, B. (2005). Do pilot studies have any value in research? *International Journal of Palliative Nursing, 11,* 312.

O'Donnell, K. S. (1987). Developmental tasks in the life cycle of mission families. *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 15,* 281-290.

Polkinghorne, D. E. (2007). Validity issues in narrative research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 13,* 471-486.

Pollock, D., & Van Reken, R. (1999). *The third culture kid experience: Growing up among worlds*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Pollock, D., & Van Reken, R. (2001). *Third culture kids: The experience of growing up among worlds*. London: Nicholas Brealey.

Pollock, D., Van Reken, R., & Gould, J. (2001). Always saying goodbye. *Journal of Loss and Trauma, 6,* 75-81.

Powell, L. H., & Cassidy, D. (2001). Family life education: An introduction. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.

Raschio, R. (1987). College students' perceptions of reverse culture shock and reentry adjustments. *Journal of College Student Personnel, 28,* 156-162.

Recruitment & Retention in Higher Education. (2005). *Third culture kids: 'Hidden immigrants' on campus*. Retrieved July 5, 2005, from the Academic Search Premier.

Riessman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative analysis.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Risser, J. (1997). *Hermeneutics and the voice of the other: Re-reading Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics*. Albany: University of New York Press.

Ritchey, J. K., & Rosik, C. H. (1993). Clarifying the interplay of developmental and contextual issues in counseling missionaries. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity, 12,* 151-158.

Rohrlich, B. F., & Martin, J. N. (1991). Host country and reentry adjustment of student sojourners. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 15,* 163-182.

Rosik, C. H., Richards, A., & Fannon, T. (2005). Member care experiences and needs: Findings from a study of East African missionaries. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity, 24,* 36-45.

Schaetti, B. F., & Ramsey, S. J. (1999). The global nomad experience: Living in liminality. Transition Dynamics website. Retrieved April 11, 2008, from http://www.transition-dynamics.com/liminality.html

Schulz, T. (1985). A study to determine the basic needs of MK's upon re-entry to the United States and to define and describe a re-entry program designed to meet the needs. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska – Lincoln, 1985). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 47,* 55.

Schwandt, T. A. (2003). Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry: Interpretivism, hermeneutics, and social constructionism. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 292-331). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Seiter, J. S., & Waddell, D. (1989, February). The intercultural reentry process: Reentry shock, locus of control, satisfaction, and interpersonal uses of communication. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western Speech Communication Association, Spokane, WA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No: ED 304 731)

Sicola, L. (2005). Communicative lingerings: Exploring awareness of L2 influence on L1 in American expatriates after re-entry. *Language Awareness, 14,* 153-169.

Smith, D. W. (2004). *Mind world: Essays in phenomenology and ontology.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Stringham, E. M. (1993). Reacculturation of missionary families: A dynamic theory. *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 21,* 66-73.

Sussman, N. M. (2000). The dynamic nature of cultural identity throughout cultural transitions: Why home is not so sweet. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 4,* 355-373.

Sussman, N. M. (2001). Repatriation transitions: Psychological preparedness, cultural identity, and attributions among American managers. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 25,* 109-123.

Sussman, N. M. (2002). Testing the cultural identity model of the cultural transition cycle: Sojourners return home. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 26,* 391-408.

Tuckett, A. (2004). Qualitative research sampling: The very real complexities. *Nurse Researcher, 12,* 47-61.

Useem, R. (1993). Third culture kids: Focus of major study – TCK "mother" pens history field. *Newslinks, 12*(3). Retrieved April 15, 2006, from http://www.iss.edu/pages/kids.html.

Useem, R., & Cottrell, A. B. (1996). Adult third culture kids. In C. Smith (Ed.), *Strangers at home: Essays on the effects of living overseas and coming "home" to a strange land* (pp. 22-35). Bayside, NY: Aletheia.

Useem, R., & Downie, R. (1976). Third-culture kids. *Today's Education, 5,* 103- 105.

Van Reken, R. E. (1996). Religious culture shock. In C. Smith (Ed.), *Strangers at home: Essays on the effects of living overseas and coming "home" to a strange land* (pp. 81-98). Bayside, NY: Aletheia.

Viser, W. C. (1986). *It's OK to be an MK: What it's like to be a missionary kid.* Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

Walters, D. L. (1991). *An assessment of reentry issues of the children of missionaries.* New York: Vantage Press.

Ward, C., Bochner, S., & Furnham, A. (2001). The psychology of culture shock (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Ward, C., & Chang, W. C. (1997). "Cultural fit": A new perspective on personality and sojourner adjustment. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 21,* 525-533.

Ward, C., & Rana-Deuba, A. (2000). Home and host culture influences on sojourner adjustment. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 24,* 291-306.

Werkman, S. L., Farley, G. K., Butler, C., & Quayhagen, M. (1981). The psychological effects of moving and living overseas. *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry, 20,* 645-657.

White, F. J. (1983). Some reflections on the separation phenomenon idiosyncratic to the experience of missionaries and their children. *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 11,* 181-188.

Wrobbel, K. A., & Plueddenmann, J. E. (1990). Psychosocial development in adult missionary kids. *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 18,* 363-374.

Wycliffe Bible Translators. (2008). *Financial Statement – 2007.* Retrieved May 15, 2008, from http://www.wycliffe.org/About/AnnualReportsFinancials.aspx

APPENDIX A

Recruitment Flyer

Seeking Missionary Kids to tell their stories

Graduate student at Texas Woman's University seeks Missionary Kids to participate in a research study of repatriation stories. Research focuses on how Missionary Kids experience repatriation, what resources they use, and the role of expectations and identity.

What will you do?

Participants will write about returning to the United States,
using the text-based format of their choice to tell their story.

How do you qualify to participate?

If you can answer yes to these questions, I want your story!

- *Are you an American Missionary Kid?*
- *Did you live abroad for at least three consecutive years?*
- *Are you enrolled in an American university or college?*
- *Are you over the age of 18?*

What will you get?

All participants will receive a $20 Barnes and Noble gift card, by mail, upon receipt of their repatriation story.

How do you enroll?

To participate, contact:
Amy Collier at **[email address]** (Subject line: MK Research)

APPENDIX B

Consent Form for MKs

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title: Missionary Kids' Repatriation Narratives

Investigator: Amy Collier.....(xxx) xxx-xxxx

Advisor: Lillian Chenoweth, Ph. D.....(xxx) xxx-xxxx

Explanation and Purpose of the Research

You are being asked to participate in Ms. Collier's doctoral dissertation research study. The purpose of this study is to give voice to MKs in order to acknowledge their repatriation experiences. Repatriation is defined in this study as the return to your home country after an extended absence.

Research Procedures

For this study, you will be asked to write a repatriation story. Also, you may participate in a one-on-one or group interview via phone, SKYPE, or in person, if you choose to participate. The researcher will ask open-ended questions during the interview. You will be audiotaped during the one-on-one or group interviews. The purpose of the audiotaping is to provide a transcription of the information discussed in the interview and to assure the accuracy of the reporting of that information. Only Ms. Collier and her advisor will have access to the audiotapes.

Your maximum total time commitment in the study is estimated to be 2 hours if you are writing a story, and 3 hours if you are both writing a story and participating in an interview.

Potential Risks

Potential risks related to your participation in the study include embarrassment, discomfort, fatigue, or anxiety during the interviews. To avoid discomfort, fatigue, or anxiety, you may take a break (or breaks) during the interview as needed. If you feel embarrassed or uncomfortable answering any of the questions, you may stop answering at any time. You may discontinue your participation in the interview or in the study at any time without penalty. The researcher will provide you with a referral list of names and phone numbers that you may use if you feel as though you need to discuss this physical or emotional discomfort with a professional.

Another possible risk to you as a result of your participation in this study is the release of confidential information. *Confidentiality will be protected to the extent that is allowed by law.* The interviews, including group interviews, will include only those present at the time of the interview. A three-digit code will be assigned to your story and demographic questionnaire rather than your real name, and no names will be transcribed from the audiotape. Only Ms. Collier and her advisor will have access to the audiotapes. Two peer reviewers will have access only to transcriptions and stories on which real names have been replaced with the three-digit codes.

The audiotapes, stories, demographic questionnaires, and computer external storage drive containing transcription files will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office. The audiotapes and transcription files will be erased and all paper copies of transcriptions, stories, and demographic questionnaires will be shredded 6 months after the researcher's dissertation is completed. It is anticipated that the results of this study will be published in the researcher's dissertation as well as in other research publications. However, no names or other identifying information will be included in any publication.

The researchers will try to prevent any problem that could happen because of this research. You should let the researchers know at once if there is a problem and they will help you. However, TWU does not provide medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because you are taking part in this research.

Participation and Benefits

Your involvement in this study is completely voluntary and you may discontinue your participation in this study at any time without penalty.

There are two direct benefits to you for your participation in this study. One benefit is the receipt of a $20 gift card to Barnes and Noble after you send your repatriation story to the researcher. The second benefit is that at the completion of the study a summary of the results will be mailed to you.* Upon receiving those results, you may contact the researcher to provide feedback on the results of the study.

Questions Regarding the Study

If you have any questions about the research study you may ask the researchers; their phone numbers are at the top of this form. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research or the way this study has been conducted, you may contact the Texas Woman's University Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 940-898-3378 or via e-mail at IRB@twu.edu.You will be given a copy of this signed and dated consent form to keep.

_____ _____

Signature of the Participant Date

*Please provide an address to which this summary should be sent:

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C

Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Questionnaire **Participant Number:**

Name: _____

Gender (please circle): Male Female

Age: _____

Place of birth (city, state, country): _____

Number of siblings: _____

Primary country of residence as an MK: _____

Please name the places abroad you lived as an MK and the length of time you lived in each place:

With which religious organization are/were your parents employed as missionaries?

When did you return to the United States?

Please describe your residence upon your return to the United States (e.g. with parents, with family, with friends, or in a dorm?)

Please describe your current residence:

Please describe the type of schooling you did in your host country(ies) (e.g. homeschool, host country school, boarding school, American school)

APPENDIX D

Sample Emails to Participants

Email 1: Initial response to MKs' queries

Hello [participant's name]!

Thank you for your interest in the research study "MKs' Repatriation Narratives." This email will provide you with additional information about the study to assist you with your decision about whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate in the study, after reading this email, please print the attached Informed Consent document. Please read the document, initial the first page, sign the second page, and provide a mailing address. Mail the consent form to:

Amy Collier

Street address

City, TX 76210

Here is what you need to know about this study:

The story – After I receive your Informed Consent in the mail, I will email you the story prompt and a demographic questionnaire. Please, spend no more than 2 hours on the story. After you email or mail your story to me, I will mail a $20 gift certificate for Barnes and Noble to you.

The interview – I am looking for some participants to volunteer to be interviewed in addition to writing a story. Interviews may be conducted face-to-face, via phone, or via SKYPE. If you are interested in being interviewed, please let me know. The interview will last no longer than one hour. Also let me know if you would prefer an individual interview or a group interview with several other MKs at your university.

The results – I will share with you the results of the study, after removing all identifying information. I look forward to sharing the findings with you!

Please read the attached Informed Consent document closely; it delineates the protections offered in this study. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Email 2: Story prompt email

Hello [participant's name]!

I received your Informed Consent; thank you for your willingness to participate in this study. Here is your story prompt:

> Returning to the United States after being in another country (or countries) for a period of time can bring with it a variety of important experiences. Tell me the story of your return to the United States after being in another country for some time. Feel free to write in a creative format (e.g. a letter, an magazine article, a diary entry, etc.)

Please try to spend no more than 2 hours writing your story. When you have finished your story, send it to me via email or mail.

If possible, please complete and send the story to me within two weeks of the date of this email. This will help me to continue the data collection for this study on time.

Feel free to email any questions or concerns at any time. Attached to this email is a list of service providers for Missionary Kids. Please consider contacting one of these professionals if you experience emotional distress while you are writing your story.

I look forward to receiving your story!

List of Service Providers for Missionary Kids:

Missionary Counseling Family Services

Web: http://www.mfcs.org

Email: care@mfcs.org

Phone: 1-877-623-5559

Missionary Outreach Support Services

Web: http://www.missionaryoutreach.net

Email: support@missionaryoutreach.net

You may also speak to someone at your university's counseling center or with a counselor with your parents' employer.

APPENDIX E

Letter from Mu Kappa National Director

MU KAPPA
INTERNATIONAL

A FRATERNAL
ASSOCIATION FOR MKS

A MINISTRY
OF
BARNABAS INTERNATIONAL

"BY MKS FOR MKS"

A CHANCE TO
EMBRACE OUR PAST
WHILE BUILDING
TOWARD OUR FUTURE

PERRY BRADFORD, DIRECTOR
MU KAPPA INTERNATIONAL
PO BOX 11211
ROCKFORD, IL 61126 USA

TELEPHONE: 815 · 395-1335
FAX: 815 · 395-1385
E-MAIL: MUKAPPA@BARNABAS.ORG
WEBSITE: WWW.MUKAPPA.ORG

Ms. Collier,

As the director for Mu Kappa, I am pleased to offer my assistance with your sample recruitment for the study entitled "Missionary Kids' Repatriation Narratives." I have reviewed your recruitment flyer and I approve the flyer for dissemination to my Mu Kappa contacts.

After you receive approval from your committee, the TWU Graduate School, and the TWU Institutional Review Board, I will email the recruitment flyer to my Mu Kappa contacts on your behalf.

By agreeing to this, I acknowledge that I may request a copy of the findings of the study and information on any subsequent publications.

I look forward to our working together.

Regards,

Perry Bradford 11/26/07

Mr. Perry Bradford
Mu Kappa
Barnabas International

APPENDIX F

Informed Consent Form for Faculty Sponsors

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title: Missionary Kids' Repatriation Narratives

Investigator: Amy Collier.....(xxx) xxx-xxxx

Advisor: Lillian Chenoweth, Ph. D.....(xxx) xxx-xxxx

Explanation and Purpose of the Research

You are being asked to participate in Ms. Collier's doctoral dissertation research study. The purpose of this study is to give voice to Missionary Kids in order to acknowledge their repatriation experiences. Repatriation is defined in this study as the return to a home country after an extended absence.

Research Procedures

For this study, you will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview via phone, SKYPE, or in person. The researcher will ask open-ended questions during the interview. You will be audiotaped during the one-on-one interviews. The purpose of the audiotaping is to provide a transcription of the information discussed in the interview and to assure the accuracy of the reporting of that information. Only Ms. Collier and her advisor will have access to the audiotapes.

Your maximum total time commitment in the study is estimated to be 1 hour.

Potential Risks

Potential risks related to your participation in the study include embarrassment, anxiety, or fatigue during the interviews. To avoid discomfort, fatigue, or anxiety, you may take a break (or breaks) during the interview as needed. If you feel embarrassed or uncomfortable answering any of the questions, you may stop answering at any time. You may discontinue your participation in the interview or in the study at any time without penalty. The researcher will provide you with a referral list of names and phone numbers that you may use if you feel as though you need to discuss this physical or emotional discomfort with a professional.

A potential risk of this study is your loss of time due to participation in this study. To minimize this risk, the researcher will use an interview protocol to reduce the interview time. Interviews are estimated to last 1 hour.

Another possible risk to you as a result of your participation in this study is the release of confidential information. *Confidentiality will be protected to the extent that is allowed by law.* The interviews will include only those present at the time of the interview. No names will be transcribed from the audiotape and your transcription will be identified by a three-digit code. Only Ms. Collier and her advisor will have access to the audiotapes. Two peer reviewers will have access only to transcriptions on which real names have been replaced with the three-digit codes.

There is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality on all email, internet, and downloading transactions. To reduce this risk, the researcher store all email communication on a USB-drive external storage drive. Each email will be saved to the USB-drive and then erased from the researcher's email account. The USB-drive will be stored in a locked storage cabinet in the researcher's office.

The audiotapes and computer external storage drive containing transcription files will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office. The audiotapes and transcription files will be erased and all paper copies of transcriptions, stories, and demographic questionnaires will be shredded 1 year after the researcher's dissertation is completed. It is anticipated that the results of this study will be published in the researcher's dissertation as well as in other research publications. However, no names or other identifying information will be included in any publication.

The researchers will try to prevent any problem that could happen because of this research. You should let the researchers know at once if there is a problem and they will help you. However, TWU does not provide medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because you are taking part in this research.

Participation and Benefits

Your involvement in this study is completely voluntary and you may discontinue your participation in this study at any time without penalty.

There is one direct benefit to you for your participation in this study. This benefit is that at the completion of the study a summary of the results will be mailed to you.* Upon receiving those results, you may contact the researcher to provide feedback on the results of the study.

Questions Regarding the Study

If you have any questions about the research study you may ask the researchers; their phone numbers are at the top of this form. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research or the way this study has been conducted, you may contact the Texas Woman's University Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 940-898-3378 or via e-mail at IRB@twu.edu. You will be given a copy of this signed and dated consent form to keep.

_____ _____

Signature of the Participant Date

*Please provide an address to which this summary should be sent:

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX G

Sample Emails to Faculty Sponsors

Email 1: Initial email to faculty sponsors

Hello [faculty sponsor]!

I would like to invite you to participate in a researcher study of Missionary Kids' repatriation stories. This study is part of my dissertation research at Texas Woman's University. As a former Missionary Kid to Brazil, I am interested in learning about how Missionary Kids experience repatriation, what resources they use, and the role of expectations and identity.

As a faculty sponsor for Mu Kappa at your university, you have interactions with MKs that may help to answer some of the questions I have. Interviews with faculty sponsors will supplement MKs' repatriation stories and will enrich the study.

If you decide to participate in the study, after reading this email, please email your mailing address to me. I will mail you the Informed Consent document. Please read the document, initial the first page, sign the second page, and write your mailing address. Mail the consent form to:

Amy Collier

Street Adress

City, State, Zip

Here is what you need to know about this study:

The MKs – As part of this study, I am recruiting university-attending MKs who repatriated to the United States to attend college. The MKs will be writing their repatriation stories. Some MKs, on a volunteer basis, will also be interviewed for the

study. If you think you may know MKs who would be interested in participating in this study, please print the attached MK recruitment flyer to disseminate to the MKs.

The faculty sponsor interview – I am looking for some faculty sponsors to interview. The interview will last no longer than one hour and may take place over the phone, via SKYPE, or face-to-face. All interview questions are related to MKs' experiences of repatriation.

The results – I will share with you the results of the study, after removing all identifying information. I look forward to sharing the findings with you!

Please read the mailed Informed Consent document closely; it delineates the protections offered in this study. Please let me know if you have any questions.

APPENDIX H

IRB Approval Letter

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY
DENTON DALLAS HOUSTON

Institutional Review Board
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
P.O. Box 425619, Denton, TX 76204-5619
940-898-3378 Fax 940-898-3416
e-mail: IRB@twu.edu

December 19, 2007

Ms. Amy Collier

[redacted]

Dear Ms. Collier:

Re: Missionary Kids' Repatriation Narratives

The above referenced study has been reviewed by the TWU Institutional Review Board (IRB) and appears to meet our requirements for the protection of individuals' rights.

If applicable, agency approval letters must be submitted to the IRB upon receipt PRIOR to any data collection at that agency. A copy of the approved consent form with the IRB approval stamp and a copy of the annual/final report are enclosed. Please use the consent form with the most recent approval date stamp when obtaining consent from your participants. The signed consent forms and final report must be filed with the Institutional Review Board at the completion of the study.

This approval is valid one year from December 19, 2007. According to regulations from the Department of Health and Human Services, another review by the IRB is required if your project changes in any way, and the IRB must be notified immediately regarding any adverse events. If you have any questions, feel free to call the TWU Institutional Review Board.

Sincerely,

Dr. David Nichols, Chair
Institutional Review Board - Denton

enc.

cc. Dr. Larry LeFlore, Department of Family Sciences
Dr. Lillian Chenoweth, Department of Family Sciences
Graduate School

APPENDIX I

Structural Analysis of an MK's Story

Orientation

I remember that it was only during my senior trip that the reality of

Complicating action

graduating and leaving [host country] started sinking in. I pretty much had always known that the day would come that I would head off to the States for college, but I didn't realize it would come so soon! I remember on the last night of the trip there was a time when anybody who wanted to could give their final words of advice or encouragement to us seniors. As people were saying things to us, I cried my eyes out. I thought about all the amazing people I had met throughout my life. It made me sad to think that my high school days were over, and that I had no idea when I would get to see some of my friends after graduation. At the same time though I was looking forward to college, it made me excited to think about living something completely new. I was excited because I was going to go where my oldest brother had gone, and where my second brother was – [college]. They had told me wonderful things about it, and I had visited before.

Evaluation

After the senior trip I remember crying several more times whenever I thought about leaving, but then I had a weird thing happen to me. It seems as if my emotions were slowly turned off. By the time graduation came, I could not shed any tears or feel any emotions. When I boarded the plane, I didn't really feel anything. I was kind of "emotionally numb". As I think back on this, I think this was like a self defense I put up. I couldn't handle

drawing out the process of grieving any longer, so my emotions were simply turned off.

Shortly after graduation, my family came with me to the States. I had a really nice, calm summer. I prepared for college, I spent time with relatives, and I visited my family's supporting churches. This was their "furlough" time. My family has usually come to the States every two years and had a summer furlough, which is different than most people do them. Anyway, August came and my dad and youngest brother went home to [host country]. My mom stayed and helped me settle into college and get me through orientation. It was very nice to have my mom here to help me fill out a ton of forms that I had no clue how to fill out.

Evaluation

School started and things went surprisingly well. Everything was new and exciting! My roommate had also been an MK so we could relate really well to each other's experiences. It was fun to have somebody who actually understood what perspective I was coming from. Since I had visited the States and since I grew up kind of surrounded by other American missionaries, I did not experience a great amount of culture shock, throughout the first semester though I did notice that my ways of thinking and even some of my habits were different because I had grown up in [host country].

Resolution

Something that really was helpful to me during my first semester was taking a class called Global Experiences. It is a required class at [college] for all military kids, missionary kids, and international students. This class was incredibly helpful, because it allowed me to be with other students that were still transitioning or had transitioned to the States. We were able to share current and past experiences. During this class the main thing that we did each week was discuss the book Third Culture Kid by David Pollack. What I really liked about the book was how it put many of my feelings and things I had experienced into words. I began thinking about how much growing up between the American and [host country] worlds had shaped who I am today.

One of the most important things that I learned from this class was just to avoid the urge to criticize the American culture. Although there are so many things that I could point out about the American culture that I do not like or that seem weird to me, I need to realize that those things are not all necessarily bad, but just different. The other thing I learned was that every behavior comes from an underlying belief system. In other words peoples' actions stem from what they value or view as important.

One main struggle I think that I have had since being here in the States was just realizing that life here was not perfect. Although I knew it would not be perfect before coming, I think I had set some pretty high standards

for what it would be like, and when those were not met I was al little frustrated. I came to realize that life even here in the States is not perfect. Because of our fallen world, anywhere on earth that we go, there are going to be problems. This is a simple but important lesson I have learned.

Coda

I have now been in the States for about 7 months now, after having lived in [host country] since I was five months old. I still have a lot to discover about life here and I am sure the process will never end. I have loved the experience so far though, because I have been able to learn so much about myself and about God in this new setting. I realize now, more than ever how blessed I am to have grown up in another country. It was defiantly a positive experience for me and I would not have traded it for anything else.