

Young Adult Third Culture Kid Identity

- How a mobile upbringing can influence identity, personality, and future prospects -

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Abstract In this research, Third Culture Kids, or TCKs, refers to children who repeatedly accompany their parents into different cultural contexts. They “are not new, and they are not few...but because they have grown up with different experiences from those who have lived primarily in one culture, TCKs are sometimes seen as slightly strange by the people around them.” (Pollock and Van Reken 2009, xi) TCKs themselves also often feel as if they are strangers, both in host countries and in their passport countries. Through interviews of TCKs who are now in their twenties, this study explores how their nomadic upbringing has affected their identity formation.

I. Introduction

A) Who are TCKs?

The term “Third Culture” was originally coined by sociologists John and Ruth Hill Useem during the early 1950s “as a generic term to cover the styles of life created, shared, and learned by persons who are in the process of relating their societies, or sections thereof, to each other.” (Useem and Cottrell 1993, 1) Third culture is essentially an interspatial, abstract culture that the TCKs themselves form from their cross-cultural upbringing.

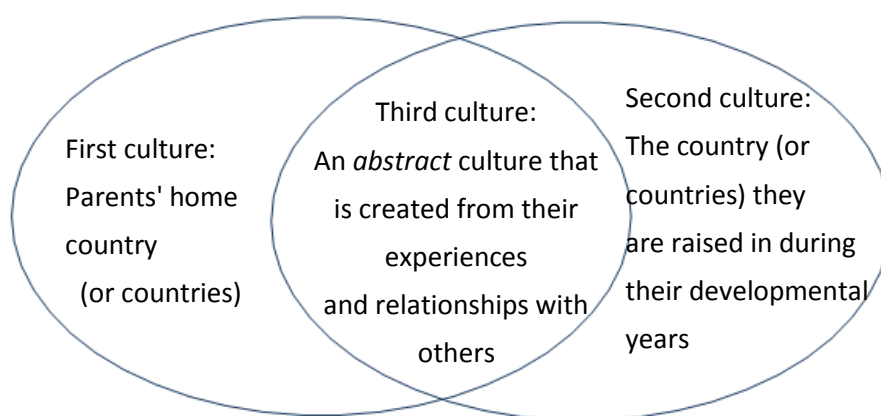


Figure I-1 Explanation of the term Third Culture.

(Created by the author using description by Limberg and Lambie, 2011)

This term became widely known with the publishing of the book *Third Culture Kids* by Pollock and Van Reken, who expanded the term and applied it to the present day

increasingly cross-cultural world. Their definition of a Third Culture Kid (TCK) is “a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents’ culture. The TCK builds relationship to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any.” (Pollock and Van Reken 2009, 13)

Pollock and Van Reken created a clear explanation of TCKs by comparing their major traits with that of others who also have cross-cultural backgrounds. For example, they referred to TCKs who became adults as *adult TCKs (ATCKs)*, distinguishing them from *third culture adults (TCAs)* who grew up in a more "monocultural" environment, but went overseas as adults. (Pollock and Van Reken 2009, 22)

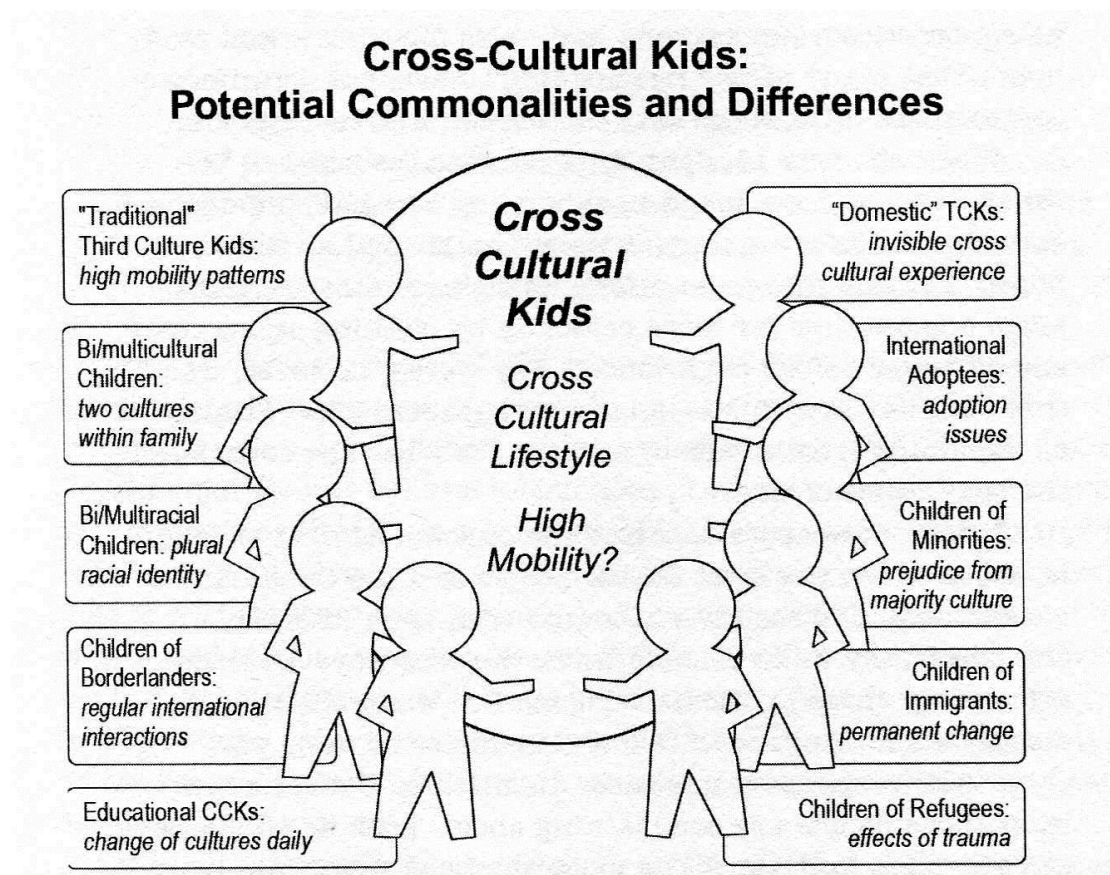


Figure I-2 The Cross Cultural Kid Model – Potential Commonalities and Differences
(source: Pollock and Van Reken 2009, 35)

Another term that was used was *cross-cultural kid (CCK)* that includes "all children who for any reason had grown up deeply interacting with two or more cultural worlds during childhood" for a significant period of time. (Pollock and Van Reken 2009, xiii) This is a very broad term, encompassing a wide variety of multi-cultural children. Figure I-2 illustrates the many different examples of CCKs. Of these CCKs, "traditional" third culture kids, or the focus of this research, have several distinguishing characteristics. Pollock and Van Reken (2009) argued that the major traits that differentiate TCKs from the rest of the CCKs are: 1) experience in growing up among many cultural worlds, and 2) their highly mobile upbringing. In addition, TCKs are often expected to eventually relocate back to their home countries. A final trait common to TCKs is that they had no choice in moving. This is the cause of uneasiness and stress that is discussed later, that does not concern those who voluntarily choose to study abroad during high school or university, etc.

Considering the stress and confusion involved, why do parents chose to move across borders? There are many reasons that bring about highly mobile circumstances, the most common being: business, military relocation, diplomatic job postings, and missionary purposes. Of the many different types of TCKs, this research aims to investigate those whose parents relocated internationally due to business reasons. Situations include a parent taking up a job offer from a company overseas, or being transferred within a multinational corporation to an overseas branch.

B) Why focus on corporate TCKs?

I, the researcher, have long been interested in how being a TCK affects values and life decisions. The reason stems from the fact that I am also a corporate TCK. I was born in Japan, and was subsequently raised in the Netherlands, the UK, Japan, and the US. Spending almost fourteen years outside of my home country has deeply impacted my personality and values. I often talk with other TCKs about the quandary we face- we often feel as if we do not completely “fit in” overseas, yet feel the same even after returning to our home countries.

Those who share our experiences are certainly not few in number. Eakin (1998) estimated that there may have been over four million TCKs worldwide 1998. This number has undoubtedly increased today. As the world became more globalized and multinational corporations expanded their presence overseas, many workers have increasingly been relocated across borders. Podolsky (2004) points out that the world wide relaxation of immigration regulation and foreign funds transfer contributed to the boost in global expansion of these corporations. The corporate TCKs, who are often the children of those relocated workers, came about as a byproduct of the globalization of labor. As Sheard (2008) argued, the expansion of global businesses in recent decades has led to the increase in the number of children with parents working overseas for business purposes rather than for other purposes. This is the reasoning behind focusing on corporate TCKs, and not on the other

types of TCKs which include, but are not limited to, military brats, children of missionaries, and children of diplomats.

C) Purpose of this research

This research is a summary and analysis of the various experiences eleven TCKs had, and their thoughts on their upbringing. Emphasis is placed on how their experiences and interactions with others shaped their identity and sense of belonging. The question of identity is a significant part of being a TCK, since they repeatedly face conflicting world views during their developmental years, when their “sense of identity, relationships with others, and view of the world are being formed in the most basic ways”. (Pollock and Van Reken 2009, 21)

Investigating TCKs who are currently young adults can provide us with an idea of where the young generation is headed in our globalizing world. According to an article by the New York Times, Ann Baker Cottrell, a sociology professor at San Diego State University once said, "This is the future. TCKs are showing us where we are going and we are just catching up." (Lang, 2002) By analyzing identity formation of these prototype citizens of the future, this research hopes to provide a guideline of how to best handle the multi-cultural adolescents who are ever increasing in number, and to consider the implications.

II. Methodology

This research was conducted by interviewing eleven TCKs. Seven of these

interviews were conducted in the fall of 2013 in North Carolina, US. Two were conducted over Skype and five were face-to-face. Another interview was conducted face-to-face in Sydney, Australia in the summer of 2014. An additional three were conducted in Tokyo, Japan in the fall of 2014, of which two were Skype interviews, and one was face-to-face. All interviews were one-on-one, and ran for approximately one hour. All eleven participants initially moved internationally due to their parents' jobs. All names are pseudonyms. Below is a brief chart – a detailed description of each participant can be found in the appendix.

Name	Countries of Residence	At the time of interview
Remi	Japan / US / China	Undergraduate student at a Japanese university, studying abroad in the US
Mary	Bolivia / US / Switzerland	Undergraduate student in the US
Phillip	US / Singapore / Cambodia / France / New Zealand	University graduate in the US
Chloé	France / Italy / Australia / US	Undergraduate student at a French university, studying abroad in the US
Marcus	Spain / Brazil / US	Undergraduate student in the US
Matthew	US / Singapore / Cambodia / US	University graduate in the US
Jennifer	South Africa / Switzerland / US	Undergraduate student in the US
Sigrid	Switzerland / Norway / Finland / US / England / Scotland / the Netherlands	Masters student in the Netherlands
Hannah	Nigeria / South Africa / US / China	Undergraduate student at an American university, studying abroad in China
Ann	Korea / Japan	Undergraduate student in Japan
Catherine	Australia / Philippines/ Indonesia	Undergraduate student in Australia

The participants were chosen based on the fact that they are third culture kids of international business persons, which is the focus of this research. Another factor was their

age. All participants are in their early to mid-twenties – old enough to be considered adults and to have made life choices on their own, such as which university to attend and their field of study. Also, they are all at the age where they are formulating an idea of how they want to map out their lives, including the career(s) of their choice. This involves looking back on their identity and upbringing – the key focus of this research.

III. Who am I? – TCK identity

We begin investigating the minds of TCKs with the process of identity formation and fluctuation. Identity is defined as “the stable, consistent, and reliable sense of who one is and what one stands for in the world”. (Josselson 1987, 10) For those raised primarily in one culture, the rules and regulations of that culture, both formal and informal, provide them with guidance on what is accepted and what is not. As children, “being ‘in the know’ gives us a sense of stability, deep security, and belonging. We may not understand *why* cultural rules work as they do, but we know *how* our culture works”. (Pollock and Van Reken 2009, 44)

However, since TCKs experience drastic cultural shifts during adolescence when their identity is still being formed, they often lack this sense of security. The cultural rules that they grow accustomed to at each location are repeatedly uprooted, thus complicating the process of identity formation. This causes confusion among many TCKs, while some find a sense of belonging in a culturally mixed setting. Some factors that influence TCK identity

are: the environment they live in, cultural differences, interaction with surroundings, and interacting with other TCKs.

A) Environment

i) Country of residence

The environment one is placed in is a strong factor in identity formation. For some TCKs, national identity fluctuates depending on where they live. This was true for Remi, Mary, Marcus, Catherine, Hannah and Matthew. For example, Remi felt American while living in the United States from age four to nine, since most of her memory came from growing up in the US. Her subsequent life in Japan was what she calls a “transition phase”, where she felt different as the token girl who lived in the United States, but was simultaneously being socialized by Japanese society. When she later moved to China, she strongly felt Japanese. Currently, as an exchange student at a university in the US, she strongly feels Japanese once more, since her nationality is what makes her different from the students around her.

ii) Schooling

In addition to the country, for children who spend the majority of their time in school, schooling is a key determinant. For example, when Matthew was homeschooled in Cambodia, his potential group of friends was much smaller; when he started attending French school he felt increasingly strong ties with France.

In addition, many TCKs have attended international schools. International schools are very diverse in terms of curriculums and student demographics. No universally accepted definition exists, since there are no criteria a school has to meet to call themselves an international school. (MacDonald 2006) However, they can be loosely explained as "any school that has students from various countries and whose primary curriculum is different from the one used by the national schools of the host country". (Pollock and Van Reken 2009, 209) Since many have a 30 percent or more turnover rate each year, attending these schools are very comforting for the TCKs because many peers, administrators, and teachers understand what TCK life involves. (Pollock and Van Reken 2009, 210)

TCKs such as Mary, Sigrid, Ann, and Catherine claimed that the question of identity was easier when attending international schools since most classmates also had similar experiences moving across nations. Sigrid explained the environment as follows: "International schools...it's a very different environment...people are really interested to know where you're from and where you've been and what your story is, and you're welcome wherever you're from."

For some TCKs such as Catherine, leaving international school increased their sense of identity as global nomads: "I feel more TCK here [at university in Australia] because I have so many people who aren't TCKs in front of me, whereas then [in international school] it was the norm."

iii) Societal perception of TCKs

In addition to schooling, the way the TCKs understand their experiences can be altered according to the society's general perception of them. There is a wide degree of variety in TCK experiences - the age, country, and type of schooling they received, to name a few. Not all TCKs have the same lifestyles in their host countries; some live in the confines of expatriate apartments and form their own communities, while others heavily interact with the host country's population. However, in some societies, TCKs are often faced with generalized perceptions of themselves that are not quite true. This discrepancy between how others identify them and how they actually identify themselves can be a source of frustration for TCKs.

For example, although there is no "widespread and quasi-uniform perception among the American public about who a TCK is, the Japanese have a very definite image of what a *kikoku-shijo* is, however skewed that image may be." (Podolsky 2004, 75) Since Japanese society has a widely used term *kikoku-shijo* for their repatriated TCKs, TCKs in Japan are generally expected to have the same qualities, such as high linguistic capabilities and high capacity for cultural adaptation (Podolsky 2008). For example, Remi argued that many expect her to be fluent in Chinese simply because she lived there, when in fact she is not. This stereotypical image society imposes on *kikoku-shijo* becomes imposing for some lacking those traits. Some repatriated Japanese TCKs feel the need to avoid extra attention to the

point that they hide their international background as much as possible.

It is clear that the environment, including country of residence and schooling, has influenced identity creation for TCKs. However, the interactions they had at each location have also had profound impacts.

B) Shaping identity through interaction

Taylor argued that “in order to understand the close connection between identity and recognition, we have to take into account a crucial feature of the human condition...its fundamentally *dialogical* character.” (Taylor 1994, 79) Since identity is dialogically formed through expression and exchanges with others, TCKs’ interactions with others have a profound influence on their identity. Although TCKs oftentimes feel as if they are different naturally, being mentioned of that difference reinforces their identities as strangers.

i) Recognizing the differences in national loyalty

For Marcus, it was the popularity of soccer at home and at his new home in Brazil that heightened his Spanish identity:

“I went to Brazil and became to identity myself strongly as a Spain and Barcelona soccer fan. I felt the need to represent Spain and Barcelona and cheer for them. The kids at my school were assholes and picked on me. There was one class leader that used to be the best at math but then I came and became the best in class. Then he put everyone against me, and I was really bullied. They gave me shit about being Spanish – Barcelona has a good soccer team, and every time they lost people would be all over me. When Spain lost the first game at the World Cup in 2010, the whole school swarmed on me. Some even wrote on my locker...which was ironic because Spain ended up winning the World Cup that year. Even though I love Brazil and feel Brazilian at times, when it comes to sport, I actually cared about Spain. Brazilians

rub everything in your face...especially when it comes to soccer because there is a massive population there that plays it, even at slums. They have to be big fans.”

Shared identity, which is symbolized by objects such as national flags and soccer uniforms, on one hand provides a sense of security and belonging, but on the other hand poses threats. Paul Gilroy (2000, 101) argues that identity, which binds heterogeneous individuals together and suppresses personal expression, functions as a “platform for the reverie of absolute and eternal division”. At his school in Brazil, Marcus’s classmates identified him as Spanish, creating a division between him and the rest of the class. For this reason, Marcus constantly felt the need to represent and defend Spain, and never became fully part of the Brazilian culture.

ii) Facing ignorance

Furthermore, all eleven TCKs mentioned questions they have been asked that reinforced their self-perception of being different. Jennifer offered an example of a seemingly bizarre question that is asked surprisingly often: “Oh I know so and so from South Africa, do you know them?” This is an example of Appiah’s “norms of identification” – once people recognize someone as X, they make predictions based on that identity, which may lead to misrecognition. (Appiah 2006b, 16-17) In this case, since Jennifer is from South Africa, the assumption was that she ought to know her new friend’s acquaintance. Jennifer added that there are certain expectations for African countries. For example, to questions such as “Why do you know Britney Spears?” she would answer, “Well...we have TVs in South Africa too.”

During the interview, Catherine spoke quite passionately about the shock she experienced that heightened her sense of South Asian identity. When we were discussing seemingly ‘racist’ words that we have been told, she told a story of a discouraging situation stemming from her background:

“One time...you know how there’s this whole thing about white girls wearing bindis? It’s the spot on the forehead worn by women in South Asia. This was something that used to get to me. It became a fashion statement. People would wear it at festivals and stuff. It always used to bother me so much...because there’s all those stereotypes on what it means to be brown, you smell, and things like that...I used to not want to wear Bangladeshi clothes because I didn’t want to be labeled as Bangladeshi, and I used to feel a little awkward about it. And it kind of upsets me because I feel like you can wear a Bindi and it looks cool, but when it stops being cool, you can just take it off and not be attached to it anymore, but I’ll always look like this.”

When faced with situations like this, some TCKs feel disheartened by the fact that they cannot let go of their minority identity, and not completely be part of the majority culture around them.

iii) Culture shock

However, there were also instances where TCKs themselves were the ones who were shocked by the people around them. When Ann came to Japan from Korea, she was expecting to be placed in a whole new world. Yet what she found was quite the opposite. In her interview, she recalled disappointedly telling her parents, “Oh, this is almost like Korea!”

Other TCKs have experienced the shock of moving between drastically different societies. Jennifer had a telling example of a culture shock she experienced when she moved

from South Africa to Switzerland:

“I still remember the day we arrived at the airport. In South Africa, a fourth of the population is white – so whites are the minority. At the Swiss airport, I saw a white person cleaning the bathroom. That was something I wasn’t used to seeing, and it hit me. South Africa has a bad racial history...and I remember noticing that, and my eight year old brain was like ‘whoa’. Looking back on it now, it is interesting that I thought that way back then.”

It is clear that TCKs’ identities have been largely influenced by the disparate environments they have experienced, and their interactions with others. Next, we aim to organize the various types of identity TCKs undergo.

iv) The PolVan Cultural Identity Model

Pollock and Van Reken (2009) have created an interesting model regarding the changing identities of TCKs shaped by interaction as they move between cultures.

The PolVan Cultural Identity Model Cultural Identity in Relationship to Surrounding Culture	
Foreigner Look <i>different</i> Think <i>different</i>	Hidden Immigrant Look <i>alike</i> Think <i>different</i>
Adopted Look <i>different</i> Think <i>alike</i>	Mirror Look <i>alike</i> Think <i>alike</i>

Figure III-1 PolVan Cultural Identity Box
(source: Pollock and Van Reken 2009, 55)

- Foreigner: they differ from those around them in both looks and worldview. This is the simplest situation to understand for the TCK and for those around them. Any anxiety or

difference in values they experience can be explained by the obvious difference in looks between the two parties.

- Hidden Immigrant: they physically resemble the majority of the society they are in, but their world view differs from the dominant culture. Those of the dominant culture are less aware than in the Foreigner situation of the TCK's internal differences. This discrepancy may lead to misunderstanding.
- Adopted: they look different from the members of the dominant culture around them but have lived there long enough to have become acculturated to the place. Although they may feel at home, since they look foreign, others expect these TCKs to have different values than the dominant culture.
- Mirror: since their looks resemble those of the dominant culture, others expect them to share their worldview- and they very much do. This is the pattern for those raised in a mono-cultural setting. This may be true for TCKs who have been back in their home societies for so long that they feel completely comfortable.

TCKs constantly change their position in this model as they move from one culture to the next. This model can be very much applied to the experiences of the research participants. For example, Sigrid often feels the effects of being in the Hidden Immigrant state when she visits her passport country of Norway. In response to the question, "When you go to Norway, do you think you're really at home, or do you feel like you're a little

different?”, she replied:

“I feel a little bit different. I would say I feel Norwegian because that is the place I fit in the most, but that doesn’t mean I’m 100% the same as everyone else, because like I said I haven’t lived there that long. There are certain differences, like the fact that I don’t have a big group of friends in Norway, I don’t know the slang terms, and I speak very politely. I learned Norwegian from my parents and grandparents, versus like other people my age speak in a very casual sort of way. And thinking about that, you feel a little different, but otherwise, it’s....still...my country. [laughs]”

Hannah explained that when she was in America in a racially diverse environment, it was easier for her to blend in, mostly because of how she looked. At that time, she was in the Mirror state. However, when she lived in South Africa, she and her siblings experienced the Hidden Immigrant state. She told a very powerful story:

“In South Africa, there was this one day when I was in art class and this guy comes in to take a survey of the class, to take like a...how do you say it, census! of the class, right. So he asked everyone to stand up, and he’s like ‘All of those who are South African stand on one side, and the others on the other side.’ So it was me on one side, and all the South African kids on the other side. And then he said ‘All of those who are Black African stand on one side.’ So the white South Africans moved to one side and the black South Africans on the other side. Well the white South Africans and the colors, if you know the history of South Africa, moved to one side and the black South Africans moved to the other side. And I was like in the middle, like ‘I don’t know which way to go.’ And then the black South Africans were like ‘You need to come to our side.’ So I was like ‘Okay fine whatever.’ And then he said, ‘If you are native to South Africa, stay on the black side, and if you’re not, move away.’ So then I had to move to the opposite side, and my black South African friends were like ‘I don’t understand why you’re moving. You’re also black like us, why are you moving?’ and I looked across the line in the middle to them and said ‘Well I’m Nigerian I can’t tell you guys!’ Because the thing is, they would expect me to speak their language like them, and I was like ‘I don’t understand what you are saying.’ They would expect me to hang out with them, but it was just very different cultures and I think maybe language has to do with it. Because in South Africa, the white South Africans speak more English, and in Nigeria we speak English as our main language. So when I came, I automatically was more comfortable with the white

South Africans because they spoke English. But that would also make conflict like in class, and in things on the playground, and in South Africa you also have to go through language schooling, so on certain days half the kids would go to Afrikaans and the other half go to Xhosa. But because I was black...I would go with the white South Africans to Xhosa class, but all the black South Africans would go to Afrikaans class...and they wouldn't put me with them, and it was just a lot of awkward situations."

Of the four types of identities of TCKs outlined in the PolVan Cultural Identity Model, three are situations where differences cause misunderstandings and confusion, mainly stemming from the interaction with others. In addition to interaction with others, differences in cultural customs also strongly influence TCK identity.

C) Difference in customs

i) Attire

A key example of customs is choice of clothing. In particular for girls, Jennifer and Remi felt the way they dress made them feel different and oddly stand out in school. Jennifer reflected that when she moved to the US, she "got picked on how [she] dressed differently". Yet when she started to buy more American clothing such as Softee shorts, her classmates would give her an even harder time by saying "Why are you changing?" For Jennifer, her desire to "fit in" was mirrored by her choice of clothing.

This example illustrates how humans define themselves through exchanges with others. Hegel explained this process using his master-slave dialectic. He proposed two recognitions of the self: the independent consciousness and the dependent consciousness. The

former, the master, is what one thinks of oneself; the latter, the slave, is what others reflect back at them. The master “relates himself mediately to the bondsman through a being that is independent”. (Hegel 1977, 115) The master-slave dialectic results in one-sided recognition that is quite unlike the slave’s original conception of himself. In Jennifer’s case, the “being” was nationality – her classmates recognized her as South African and foreign even though she was trying to be just like every other student at school.

ii) Language

Another example is the difference in language and accents, which Jennifer, Chloé, Marcus, Mary, Hannah, Sigrid, Catherine and Remi all mentioned. This influence of language on TCK identity is no surprise, since language and culture are very much intertwined. Agar (1994) coined the term "languaculture", arguing that language and culture cannot be separated. To him, "culture is in language, and language is loaded with culture"; in other words, culture is the bond between humans that is communicated through language. (Agar 1994, 28)

For instance, when Chloé moved from Italy to France, her peers and teachers at grammar school repeatedly asked her to speak Italian for them. Chloé, currently studying abroad in the United States, is still often reminded of her nationality through her interaction with others. Due to her noticeable French accent, she is oftentimes asked “Where are you from?” even when she does not mention being foreign at all.

In addition, Sigrid used language to explain the cultural difference between Norway and England:

“The way that people speak in Norway is very familiar...People are very friendly towards you, but without being strictly polite. There’s not really a lot of “Please” and “Thank you”. In English, I think there’s more structure to the way that people speak: ‘Hello, how are you?’ and then you listen, and say ‘Oh that’s nice.’ and you find a way out of the conversation.”

Cultural differences such as language and attire, together with interactions with others, shape TCK identity. TCKs pick up customs from each culture they experience, while simultaneously feeling a sense of alienation by perceiving themselves as different from the dominant population around them. In that case, which countries do TCKs tend to identify themselves with?

D) Where is home?

i) People over place

A key issue concerning identity is the question of home. “Where are you from?” and “Where is home for you?” are commonly asked questions that trouble many TCKs. Remi, Mary, Matthew, and Jennifer all mentioned that they felt as if they did not know where they were from at certain points in their lives. An alternative to a physical location that TCKs find “home” is in their relationships with people they have met at various locations. When asked “Where is home for you, and why?” Mary gave the question some thought, and concluded that the answer has depended on each stage of her life – where she lived marked those stages:

“I have felt that I am from nowhere...but this has changed over time. There were

times when I felt like I had no identity of my own, as if I was suffering an identity crisis. I was not Swiss enough, not American enough, not Bolivian enough...But people have to quantify you and put you into boxes, and it felt awkward. I am just a person that has just fluctuated – decisions [about where we lived] were made by my mom's job. [For now] I would say Bolivia [is my home], but not because of the place. I see it more in the people. Home is a people thing, not spatial. It's who I connect with, not a physical location. Connections that I have with friends, family, and people I have met around the world can mean home to me in their own way."

The subsequent question, "Then what defines who you are?" was not as challenging for Mary as the previous one. As a senior, she emphasized the intellectual growth she has been experiencing during her time at university:

"What I've seen and where I've been defines who I am. In the past four years I have grown so much. I am definitely different from who I was back then. Political beliefs are now big for me- now I am much politicized. I am from nowhere and everywhere. This can be harmful – it can erase your history and family. Your history can be erased by a dominant thing, and for me being Bolivian is not dominant. The relationships I have with people are important, I see home in people. I am not rooted to one place...the connections I have with others– that defines who I am."

Justin expressed similar thoughts, illustrated by his statement: "This may sound cheesy, but I think home is where the heart is." He owns American and French passports, but feels like he is from neither. He explained that currently, the closest place he can refer to as "home" is Singapore, where his girlfriend is. Additionally, for Remi, her decision to study abroad at UNC has made her realize that her friends from university in Japan "mean a lot" to her. The thought of not being able to see them for a year made her cry repeatedly, illuminating the fact that the emotional tie she has to Japan makes it her "home".

ii) Citizens of the world

Since identity fluctuates so easily and can be a confusing matter, some TCKs simply

state that they are citizens of the world. Phillip thought he was American until he moved to the US, when he realized that he was “sort of different” in the US as well. Thus, he likes to think of himself as “that guy who has lived all over the world”. For TCKs such as Phillip, their passion speaks more strongly for them than their nationality. Phillip is passionate about computer science and entrepreneurship; these are matters anyone regardless of nationality can be passionate about. He started teaching himself programming from age fourteen, and has since been fascinated by the fact that software is global. “You can reach the other side of the world in a few seconds,” he explained in his interview. Justin, whose passion is the internet, offered a similar explanation of his identity:

“I am a global citizen. Sometimes people spend time trying to understand that. They say ‘You’ve got to have an identity. Don’t you feel sad?’ But I do have an identity, just not a national one. I identify myself as a global citizen- a citizen of the internet. The internet is a truly global force. I feel strongly about the internet community.”

While some TCKs such as Sigrid were quick to pinpoint a certain country as their “home”, many others opted to identify themselves with the world as a whole, or find “home” in relationships with important people. This idea of refusing to be tied to one particular place reminds us of our next focus, cosmopolitanism.

iii) Cosmopolitanism

The experiences of TCKs draw many ties to cosmopolitanism. In his 2006 work *Cosmopolitanism*, Anthony Appiah took the term and analyzed it based on his own experiences of being raised in Ghana while sensing deep roots in both Ghana and England,

where his mother was from. The term dates back to fourth century BC, when it was coined to express the idea of being "citizen of the cosmos" - it was a rejection of the traditional perspective that each person belonged to and owed loyalty to a particular city or community. (Appiah 2006b, xiv)

In recent years, cosmopolitanism has faced a dilemma. On one hand, it calls for universalism and respect for humankind as a whole. On the other hand, however, it cannot legitimize disrespecting differences among societies. (Appiah 2006b, xv) To that, Appiah answers by refuting the general conception that only ignorance drives prejudice, but argues instead that we can respect other groups without approving them - "we can at best agree to differ". (Appiah 2006b, 11) For example, Appiah argues, those who wish to keep the amount of contact with others at a bare minimum, such as the Amish in the United States, should have the right to do so.

Cosmopolitanism reminds us that we are able to form connections not only through sharing the same identity, but also despite differences. "The connection through a local identity [such as being from the same country] is as imaginary as the connection through humanity". (Appiah 2006b, 135)

TCKs have had firsthand experiences forming deep connections with individuals who, at first sight, are remarkably different from them. As their tales illustrate, despite struggles, they have ultimately exhibited cosmopolitanism from a very young age. The

process of arriving at a foreign land and interacting with new people, and finally building lasting relationships experienced by TCKs can be summed up by what Appiah called the "golden rule of cosmopolitanism - 'I am human: nothing human is alien to me'". (Appiah 2006b, 111) This way of thinking maybe the backbone of how TCKs identify themselves to be citizens of the world.

E) TCKs relate to each other

Also, many TCKs find comfort in sharing their experiences amongst TCKs. In a 2009 research on TCKs, Walters and Auton-Cuff found that through interacting with peers of similar nomadic background, TCKs were able to normalize their experiences. They argue that these "normalizing relationships powerfully contributed to a stronger sense of identity and confidence in being a TCK". (Walters and Auton-Cuff 2009, 767) Pollock and Van Reken agree: Through normalization, "instead of feeling their history is a piece of life's puzzle that will never fit, they now see it as the key piece around which so many others fall into place." (2009, 250)

All TCKs interviewed for this research have also felt the connection. When Catherine discovered the term TCK, she said to herself "Oh this is what I am, I have a word to put to myself". Hannah described meeting other TCKs as having "an automatic understanding", and that she finds comfort in the fact that she doesn't need to explain herself as much.

It is apparent that TCKs struggled to secure a sense of belonging throughout their upbringing. The mobility and up-rootedness that characterizes their lives have resulted in many self-searching questions about their identity and sense of belonging. However, as they grew older, they gradually became to accept their way of life and were able to find peace with who they are.

Having gone through what some call “identity crisis”, do TCKs feel happy about their experiences, or do they wish their childhood was not as nomadic as it was? We move on to analyzing the pros and cons the TCK research participants addressed regarding their experiences.

IV. Is being a TCK a privilege?

A) Challenges

Like any situation, there are both positive and negative aspects to the TCK experience. We start with addressing difficulties that are common among TCKs. Frequently and repeatedly adjusting to cultures while growing up poses a myriad of challenges for them. Here are a few examples.

i) Language adaption and retention

A major issue for TCKs who move between areas of different linguistic backgrounds is language retention, whether it be the child’s mother tongue or otherwise. Holding on to a language while not being in an environment to speak it often is an arduous task. Sigrid

described the confusing situation she faced as a young TCK maneuvering between different language environments:

“When I was a kid, I went through a phase where I went to school in French. When I was four or five I did school in French [while living in Norway]. But at that time I was still really young. So I spoke Norwegian at home, and I was learning Swedish, because there was a Swedish kindergarten that I also went to. And then my dad spoke English every once in a while, and I went to a French school. And suddenly that whole thing changed when we moved to Finland. And then it was learning English and Finnish. And that is so incredibly confusing. It really sticks with you while you’re a kid...just suddenly, everything you learned, just wipe it clean, let’s start from scratch. Here’s a language for you to learn, and this is how you’re gonna live. And that was really hard.”

Having to adjust to a new school and making new friends is stressful enough for a child; when coupled with dealing with a new language, it is easy to imagine the hardships some TCKs endure. Retaining their mother language is a challenge when the TCKs want to focus their full attention on attaining a new language and assimilating into a new culture. Upon returning to their home country, TCKs are oftentimes confronted with the fact that they do not have the ability to speak their native language as fluently as their peers, leading to confusion and a sense of detachment. Sigrid pointed out that being behind in the latest slang and colloquial terms in Norwegian makes her feel as if she doesn’t fully belong in Norway.

ii) Potential to harbor pretentiousness

The second example of challenges TCKs face stems from the fact that many corporate TCKs are quite privileged; they are often children of global business people that enjoy adequate pay and many benefits from their companies. This leads to TCKs harboring “a

sense of entitlement and superiority” over others. (Pollock and Van Reken 2009, 105)

Catherine articulated this condition well:

“Going to another country for me, it was like ‘oh yeah, I’m just going home’ and for other people, their families couldn’t afford that, and I was one of those rich kids that was like ‘isn’t everybody like this?’”

Other than financial wellbeing, TCKs are often gifted in their wealth in multicultural experiences. Although this is a blessing, without proper consideration of the lives of non-TCKs, it can also be a curse. In words of Catherine, being a TCK has a “danger of being unaware of how it’s like to live in a mono-cultural environment”. This realization struck her when she ended her years of schooling at international schools and started university in Australia, where, for the first time, she was surrounded by students who had always lived there”:

“[As a TCK] you just have more experience to bounce your new experience on. So I feel like I can relate to things in different ways whereas for someone who’s just lived in once place, they don’t see much difference in their everyday world. It sounds really condescending actually but, I think it’s just different. But you can become pretentious...I was always like ‘I can go out anywhere and become friends with anybody’ and then I came here [to Australia], and I was like ‘that’s not true’ and realized that I wasn’t as world-y as I thought I was.”

Since many TCKs are so accustomed to moving, they often do not realize how stressful the same can be for someone who hasn’t traveled as much. However, with a balanced perspective and an open mindset, this situation is preventable. The next hardship, however, is more troublesome.

iii) Strain on familial relationships

Although some interviewees such as Hannah felt that their mobile experiences made the relationship among family members stronger, others including Remi and Sigrid stated the opposite. Pollock and Van Reken addressed this issue as well, arguing that the experience can end in a “disaster” if family members are not accepting of, and committed to, international adjustments (2009, 170). During her interview, Sigrid solemnly reflected on this issue:

“I think it was really really difficult for our family to...deal with extra stress that come about when you move around a lot. For example, my dad would travel a lot for his work because we were always moving and whatever...and so I think that portably put a strain on my mom and dad’s marriage and stuff. And I think everyone handled moving by figuring out their own situation, for my family...I think this is definitely different depending on the family but for my family, I think everyone was trying to figure out their own situation...in terms of the closeness of our relationships, my family is really not a very close family. Not saying we don’t give a shit about each other. But we’re not really...I don’t think it brought us any closer. If anything, it just made it difficult.”

Some TCKs face family issues that possibly would not have emerged, or had not been as serious, had they not been required to relocate repeatedly. Another potential negative factor of TCK upbringing also stems from high mobility – the feeling of being alienated from their surroundings and peers.

iv) Loneliness

The repetitive cycle of greetings, farewells and cultural adjustments caused by constant international mobility also leads to lonely feelings such as rootlessness and restlessness. Many TCKs face identity crisis, in which they become uncertain or insecure of

their identity. Multiple TCKs interviewed argued that they oftentimes worked hard to blend into new environments especially when they were younger, including Mary. “Before, I would conform a little, because I felt like an outsider and felt discriminated against. At that time, I was trying to fit in,” she explained. Sometimes, the constant assimilation leads to TCKs losing track of who they really are. An additional challenge TCKs share is the distance that separates them and their family and friends. Keeping in touch and reuniting with friends is especially a challenge for international school students since students usually disperse after graduation, or even after staying for a year or two. These factors all relate to “the major human needs we all have of belonging, feeling significant to others, and being understood.” (Pollock and Van Reken 2009, 80) Lacking this comfort leads to a feeling of isolation, which in turn causes the loneliness many interviewees have experienced.

v) Effects on personality

The final disadvantage of being a TCK we discussed in the interviews is negative effects on personality. However, one might argue that a child’s character is not profoundly influenced by their childhood conditions, and is instead derived from their genes. This question of heritability versus environment has been a topic of great interest amongst researchers. There are multiple studies conducted on identical twins separated at birth to evaluate the interaction of nature (inherited traits) and nurture (the environment(s) children are raised in).

One study points out that nature and nurture are both equally important, since "personality variables are roughly half inherited and half environmentally mediated" (Steen 1996, p.183) For the details, see the chart below.

INHERITANCE OF PERSONALITY TRAITS		
TRAIT	HERITABILITY	ENVIRONMENT
Extraversion	47%	53%
Openness	46%	54%
Neuroticism	46%	54%
Conscientiousness	40%	60%
Agreeableness	39%	61%
<i>Overall personality</i>	45%	55%

(Source: Cameron 2004, p. 120)

Another study estimates that inheritance accounts for approximately 35% of the variance of human traits and tendencies, more for cognitive abilities and less for traits of personality. They argue that "the answer to the nature - nurture question appears to be that environment is more important." (Plomin and McClearn 1993, 20)

Although the specific numbers vary from research to research, it is safe to state that the environment children are raised in has significant effects on their personality. Therefore, in what ways have TCKs' cross-cultural upbringing influenced their character? Studies conducted on TCKs and multiple interviews for this research indicate that repetitive cross-cultural mobility during adolescence causes TCKs to be prone to quietness and cautiousness. This stems from factors such as experiencing "conflicts and tensions in identity formation and role expectation during developmental years", and finding more comfort being

the outsider than being an insider. (Cameron 2004, 59; Giardini 1993) Catherine, who stated she is “better at being a foreigner than [she is] at being Australian” stated that she is “more of an introverted person... [and is] definitely in [her] head a lot.” While being observant and quiet are not necessarily negative characteristics, some TCKs including Sigrid and Catherine wish they could be more open and gregarious.

In addition, TCK upbringing has led some interviewees to be more distant and detached when it comes to relationship building. This tendency can be explained as a self-defense mechanism to avoid unnecessary emotional burden in chronically disrupted relationships. In a survey of 300 ATCKs conducted in 1986, forty percent of respondents said they “struggled with a fear of intimacy because of the fear of loss”. (Pollock and Van Reken 2009, 137) Since they have repeatedly experienced painful situations of saying farewell, TCKs sometimes subconsciously avoid getting too friendly with others, and keep a certain distance. Hannah illustrated her tendency to do so in her interview:

“I feel the most comfortable out of anybody else with [my family]...I think. Sometimes it’s hard to make friends, or be like really close to people...and that might be just something I learned because people weren’t around for that long. It’s like, what’s the point of getting too close, and it’s not like I’m consciously thinking about it, but something that’s just...I automatically do.”

Although personality varies significantly from individual to individual, the high mobility and frequent cultural adjustments TCKs endure during adolescence certainly affects them in somewhat undesirable ways.

Having clarified the negative side of TCK upbringing, ranging from linguistic

struggles to influences on personality, we move on to the brighter side – the benefits.

B) Benefits

Despite the many challenges, the benefits of being a TCK often outweigh the costs. Examples of the pros of being a TCK mentioned in the interviews include: linguistic abilities, more independence, and being able to make friends and work all over the world.

i) Open-mindedness

We have found that personality is affected by environment, and for TCKs, it could be unfavorable. However, it also has positive influences, open-mindedness being the prime example. All of the interviewees mentioned this factor; Hannah illustrated it by using a bridge as a metaphor:

“I think that TCKs are naturally reconcilers, as in we’re naturally the bridges between cultures, so...I think it’s also easier for us to be open-minded, and not so standoffish when something is different from what we’re used to. I’m sometimes like ‘that’s the way that person is’ without having to put your opinion on it.”

Also, experiencing life and creating emotional ties in multiple nations gives TCKs a more balanced political perspective. Phillip stated that he can relate to a “larger scope of people”, and has a “more global mindset” by being a TCK. He gave an example from current affairs: “When people freak out that jobs are being shipped out of America, I think ‘Great, now someone else somewhere now has a job.’” Other interviewees also mentioned that being a TCK allows them to have more balanced political views. For example, Japan and China have many ongoing disputes, including land claims and historical issues. Remi, who has lived

in both, explained that she is often angered by some Japanese who unilaterally criticize China.

Sigrid also shuns partisan arguments:

“I think everywhere you go, you start appreciating the differences between the places. You’re automatically very open-minded. And I think as you kind of grow older, you become more direct as well, like if you disagree with something, and you think that someone else is maybe not so open minded, you would be very quick to tell them ‘you piece of shit’. Like, ‘That is not right. I’ve lived here, and I can tell you that it’s not just like that.’ You become more defensive for open mindedness.”

Also, some research participants argued that another benefit of being a TCK is becoming humble. Jennifer, who grew up in South Africa where “cars will be gone if you don’t lock your doors” before moving to America, explained:

“Growing up in a third world country broadens your perspective. American culture is about bragging about yourself and what you can do...but my parents have instilled in me to be grateful for what I have. This is not as big of an element in American culture. My upbringing makes me humble. I have the perspective of knowing out what’s out there...and I feel so small.”

Finally, being open-minded allows TCKs to develop strong cross cultural skills, or the "ability to be sensitive to the more hidden aspects or deeper levels of culture and to work successfully in these areas". (Pollock and Van Reken 2009, 111) Catherine argued that by being a TCK, “you gain a lot of interpersonal skills, because [you] understand that cultures are different and not weird.” Because of the richness of their experiences, many TCKs can understand and appreciate the reasoning behind cultural differences, and communicate effectively with people of various backgrounds. This is an increasingly desirable trait that becomes a great asset in building a strong career – which leads us to the next example.

ii) Global career choices

Not only do many TCKs have confidence in working outside of their passport or home countries, they also take necessary preparation for international careers. An early 1990s research conducted on American ATCKs found that international childhood influenced their choice of study, and some chose international topics of study with the hopes of returning abroad for work. (Lang 2002) Sigrid, who has chosen to study abroad both for undergraduate and master studies, and to enroll in a global health course that requires considering conditions in different areas worldwide, is a good example. Another case in point is Catherine, who explained the rough idea of her career goals that involves mobility:

“It’s also the sort of work I am interested in doing. Eventually I would like to become a teacher and I would love to teach at an international school. But I would like to do like, maybe mental health policy work? I’m not sure...or something else human rights related where I could move around. Because that’s the sort of thing I feel most passionate about.”

To the subsequent question, “That probably stems from your background right?” She replied:

“Yeah, because my mom worked in development as well. And because she worked at [a developmental institution], I saw a lot of what was wrong with the system...my mom would always talk about how bureaucratic [the institution] is. And I was really into that in high school and stuff.” She pauses, and then continues, “I don’t see myself like, I don’t think I would be happy just getting some job in Sydney and living in Sydney. And that’s not really a reflection on Australia, it’s that I just want to do stuff, you know.”

Some researchers see TCKs as "a potentially promising source of recruitment" for globalizing firms since they have already acquired "a global mindset". (Selmer and Lam 2004,

431) This of course may not be true for all potential employers. However, after all, it is encouraging to know that world leaders such as Barrack Obama, president of the United States, and Henry Luce, cofounder of TIME magazine, are TCKs. (Pollock and Van Reken 2009)

Open-mindedness and the cross-cultural skills TCKs acquire are great assets that may be crucial as they explore different career options. Considering the positive outlook many interviewees mentioned, it seems that the hardships they faced as globally mobile adolescents paid off in the end, and that they appreciate their background. Or even with these benefits, do TCKs nonetheless wish they had been raised in a more mono-cultural setting?

C) Rating the experience overall

i) TCKs are glad to be TCK

In the end, all TCK research participants are glad they are who they are. “I wouldn’t be where I am today if I wasn’t a TCK” is a point of view Marcus, Matthew, Mary, Chloé, Sigrid, Ann, Catherine, and Remi all share. The language ability and versatility their experiences nourished has given them a spring board for the future. Both Matthew and Marcus added that being a TCK made them more “interesting”. At the end of her interview, Chloé expressed her gratitude by mentioning that her father often tells her to make the most out of experiencing different cultures, since he didn’t have the same opportunity when he was younger. For Mary also, being a TCK is a privilege that she embraces:

“You have to recognize the opportunities, like learning another language that comes with [being a TCK]. Schools that I went to are much better than in Bolivia, and being able to travel is a luxury. I wouldn’t have had access to this university if I had grown up in Bolivia. Being a TCK is not better or for worse – but it definitely is a privilege.”

ii) Do they want their children to be TCKs as well?

When asked whether or not they want their children to be raised as TCKs as well, Remi answered that she would definitely make her children learn English, but would allow her children to decide if they want to move or not if her job transfers her overseas. Marcus, Ann, Jennifer, and Mary said they would be comfortable either way, and are not against it. Phillip, Chloé, Sigrid, and Matthew gave a definite yes. Catherine valued the accepting environment at international schools over having a mobile experience as a TCK. In her interview, she explained the rough idea of her future that is mapped out in her mind, and proceeded to talk about her future children:

“And I think about my kids as well, not anytime soon. But in my thirties I would like my kids to go to international school, and I feel like I would hopefully know how to help them with any anxiety they feel more...I don’t want my kids to feel like there’s a shame in being Bangladeshi. I don’t feel that, but I feel like when I meet other kids, a lot of what they are going through our age is being able to get over the fact that it’s not a shame to be an immigrant, you know what I mean? And I don’t want my kids to be raised in an environment where there was any chance that they would feel that way.”

The TCK interviewees hope that by raising their children as TCKs, they would enjoy the benefits including language ability, being open-minded, and having rich cultural experiences. Also, some interviewees including Sigrid, who argued “I think I would identify more with my kids if they were TCKs”, stated that they can utilize their experiences if they

raise their children as TCKs as well. Hannah was the only interviewee who was not sure, but was leaning towards yes. To the question, “If you ever have children, would you like to raise them as TCKs?” she laughed and answered:

“You know what’s funny?? These questions have been in my mind...like those two. The one you just asked me and now this one. But it sounds weird saying them out loud...well I haven’t decided, but I’ve been looking at the pros and cons, so I’m like ‘Wow, if my kid is a TCK they will be kind of like me, and they would just be open to so many different things’ you know. And that’s good...and I think that’s an advantage. But at the same time, don’t I want them to be more comfortable? Don’t I want them to have the same friends, for their whole lives like some of my friends have had? Don’t I want them to branch out more, well in terms of just being more comfortable in who they are and what country they come from, have that patriotism? But then I’m like ‘Ohhh then they can just be close minded, and I don’t want that’. But the thing is, I’m like ‘If they’re TCK, I could help them.’ So yes, [I would like my children to be TCKs].”

Similar to many different situations children can face while growing up, being a TCK has both its virtues and shortcomings. It is up to each individual TCK whether or not to appreciate or despise their multi-cultural background. However, by analyzing the interviewees’ thoughts, it can be stated that being a TCK is a definite privilege. In that case, how can TCKs and those around them help make the most out of the TCK experience with the least amount of pain?

V. Conclusion

This research concludes by briefly outlining several suggestions for the ones capable of positively influencing TCKs, and for the TCKs themselves. We start with TCK parents.

A) To parents

Parents of TCKs often face many difficulties that most likely do not concern non-mobile parents. They may feel guilty at times for forcing their children to repeatedly adapt to new environments. They frequently feel burdened to make sure their children retain their mother tongue or any other language that they have acquired. Among these closely related issues, the biggest concern that TCK researchers address is the question of identity.

Since parents of TCKs raise their children in environments that are quite unlike their own upbringing, they may find their children to identify themselves with cultures that are completely different than their own. This difference in values, culture, and identity between parents and TCKs is the source of stress and agony for some, since "it can be painful...for a TCK's parents because they may feel their child is rejecting them along with their culture." (Pollock and Van Reken 2009, 207)

Although parents may feel the desire and need to shape their children according to their own values, the best solution is to let go of that hope. Cameron (2004, 91) sums up the argument well: "The pressure from patriotic parentage could be a great source of stress in identity formation for the TCK. Parents may feel betrayed if their child does not feel the strongest allegiance and identification to their passport culture. The TCK personally, may want to retain some measure of allegiance to all the countries and cultures that have been experienced throughout childhood." Overly trying to influence children's identity can add to

the stress that the TCKs already face from cross-cultural mobility. In many cases, it is desirable for the parent to accept the fact that their children may grow up to think and identify themselves quite differently from their parents.

In addition to the question of identity, Pollock and Van Reken (2009) suggest that once the parents find out about a cross cultural move, the children should be told. This way, they will have more time to make the transition as smooth as possible. Finally, like parents facing any difficult circumstances, TCK parents are encouraged to turn hardships into strengths, and encourage their children along the way. Although repeated cross-cultural mobility is difficult for children as well as parents, with careful measures, it can be turned into a blessing.

B) Institutions

In addition to parents, corporations that send its employees overseas can help alleviate the stress that comes with relocation. In many cases, human resource personnel choose to move their employees across borders for the benefit of the corporation. In doing so, it is key to be aware that the "ramifications of corporate and organizational decisions filter down through the family of every employee affected by them". (Pollock and Van Reken 2009, 239) It is part of the responsibility of the corporation to provide adequate care for their employees and their TCK children. In any case, since "the cost of sending an employee overseas usually costs two to five times that employee's annual salary", corporations cannot

afford to let their employees' new job posting overseas fail. (Pollock and Van Reken 2009, 240) Suggestions for measures corporations can take include: holding training sessions for the employees and their families before relocation, creating a network for expatriate spouses, and funding educational costs for the employees' children. Many corporations have already realized this need and offer these types of support, which has greatly benefited corporate TCK families. Providing ample care allows for stable, long term work in the host country, and in turn benefits not only the employees and their families themselves, but also the company.

Furthermore, schools that host TCKs can help as well. Some schools encourage class members to write farewell letters or to throw moving-away parties when a student is transferring out. For TCKs that are moving away, knowing that friends in the previous school care about them helps them start off life in the new school with confidence. Another way schools, in this case international schools, can support TCKs is to offer language classes in the children's mother tongue to make eventual repatriation easier. For example, the International School of the Hague has after-school groups for many of the mother tongues represented in the school population. (Pollock and Van Reken 2009) When the child returns to the home country, there is no question that having the ability to communicate in their native tongue will be an important asset.

We have outlined the ways in which institutions, namely corporations that send their employees on overseas job postings and schools, can be helpful for TCKs. These are just a few examples of the countless ways these institutions have been positively affecting TCKs for years and must be continued. These types of support are greatly beneficial for TCKs; however, in the end, as outlined in the interviews in this research, it is up to the TCKs themselves whether or not they can make the most out of their multi-cultural upbringing.

C) To TCKs

Van Reken, co-author of the book *Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds* and a TCK herself, was given touching advice from her father as a child: "Wherever you go in life, unpack your bags - physically and mentally - and plant your trees." (Pollock and Van Reken 2009, 218) Although TCKs interviewed for this research faced hardships stemming from their multi-cultural background, all of them were able to see their experiences in a positive light as well by enjoying it. It seems that the fundamental key to embracing one's TCK background and turning it into a positive experience is to simply let loose and enjoy. After all, "healthy adjustment is most likely for individuals who acknowledge identity as always in flux, rather than expecting stability." (Cameron 2004, 63)

Sigrid had similar words for TCKs: "Live in the now, try to enjoy every move and experience". This spirit of accepting ones circumstances and making the most of it can be

adopted by anyone, including those who are not TCKs. It seems to be that a healthy degree of flexibility and carefreeness are helpful for all – TCK or non-TCK.

In the end, being a TCK is just another, yet a particularly unique, way of living. Mary sums up this idea well: “Even if you stayed in one place you’re still unique. It’s just more complicated when you are a TCK.” I was delighted to find that, despite the hardships, the TCKs I interviewed for this research have all relatively enjoyed their experiences. Many even expressed their hopes in raising their own children as TCKs as well. However, analysis may be limited since data is limited. Only eleven people were interviewed – some occasionally slightly contradicted earlier answers they gave. However, the research still holds value as an in-depth analysis of how TCKs in their twenties reflect upon their experience. For future citizens of the world, especially TCKs and their parents, it is essential to take this into consideration, and to consider the consequences of growing up across cultures. I hope this research sparks more consideration and further discussion on the lives of TCKs.

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Appendix

Details of the TCK research participants at the time of the interview are as follows:

- Remi, from Japan, is a junior at university. She was born in Japan, and was raised in the United States from four to nine years of age. At nine, she moved back to Japan and lived there for three years. She then moved to China at age twelve, and stayed until high school graduation, at age eighteen. She attends a university in Tokyo, Japan and is currently studying abroad at an American university.
- Mary, from Bolivia is a university senior in the US. She was born in Bolivia and spent most of her time in Bolivia until age nine, except for eight months when she lived in the United States. She then lived in the United States from age nine to fourteen, and later attended high school in Switzerland. After high school, she moved to the United States to attend university.
- Phillip is a graduate of an American University. He was born in the United States, lived there for six years. He subsequently lived in Singapore for six years, Cambodia for six years, France for two and a half years, New Zealand for a year and a half, then the United States for another four years. He attended university in France, and business school in New Zealand. In his last year of business school, he exchanged to and graduated from an American university. He has stayed in the United States since graduation. He has French and American passports.
- Chloé, from France, is a junior at university. She was born in France, and moved to Italy

when she was six months old. She lived in Italy for six years, and then moved back to France. She also studied for a year in Australia during high school. She attends university in France, and is currently an exchange student at a university in the US.

- Marcus is a sophomore at an American university. He was born in Spain to Spanish parents, lived there for four years, lived in Brazil for a year, and then Spain for another three years. At age eight, he moved to Brazil and attended an American school for ten years. After graduation, he moved to the United States to attend university.
- Matthew is a college graduate. He was born in the United States and lived there until age five. He subsequently lived in Singapore for six years and Cambodia for seven years. He then attended a university in Singapore for five years and in the United States for a year. He and Phillip are brothers.
- Jennifer from South Africa is a junior at a university in the US. She was born and raised in South Africa until eight years of age. At eight, she moved to Switzerland and lived there for two and a half years. At age eleven, she moved to the United States and has lived there ever since.
- Sigrid is studying her master's degree in the Netherlands. She was born in Switzerland and lived there until age two, when she moved to Norway. At age four, she moved back to Switzerland and stayed until age seven. Then she moved to Finland for four years until the age of eleven when she moved to the US. At the age of sixteen, she moved to

England until the end of high school, at age eighteen. She then proceeded to attend university in Scotland for four years. She has just relocated this year to the Netherlands to further pursue her studies. Her passport country is Norway.

- Hannah from Nigeria was born in Nigeria and stayed there until the age of six when she moved to South Africa. At the age of ten, she moved to the United States, where she is now enrolled in university. She is currently in China on a study abroad program.
- Ann is from Korea, and was born in raised there until the age of eight, when she moved to Japan. She attended a public elementary school and an international school for middle school. She is currently a university student at a Japanese university. She studied abroad in the US for a year during university.
- Catherine, whose Bangladeshi parents met in England, was born in Australia. When she was four, she moved to the Philippines and lived there for two and a half years. She subsequently moved to Indonesia where she attended most of elementary school and all of middle school. She moved back to the Philippines at the start of high school and graduated there. She attended international schools in Indonesia and the Philippines. After high school graduation, she moved to Australia to attend university, and is currently in her second year. She has Australian, British, and Bangladeshi passports.