

**Intercultural relationships:  
Assessing East and South-East Asian international  
students' adaptation levels at universities in  
Aotearoa/New Zealand.**

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## **GLOSSARY**

This is the list of acronyms used in this study.

APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
AUT	AUT University
CEP	Closer Economic Partnership
CUAP	Committee on University Academic Programmes
DMIS	Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity
ESEA students	East and South-East Asian students
ESEA states	East and South-East Asian states
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Approach
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
NZVCC	New Zealand Vice Chancellors Committee
MA	Master of Arts
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MOE	Ministry of Education
PTE	Private Teaching Establishment
SAGD	Stress Adaptation Growth Dynamic Process Model
UA	University of Auckland
UW	University of Waikato

## **ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_



## **ETHICS APPROVAL**

Ethics approved by:  
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)  
Ethics application number: 05/10  
Date October 13, 2006  
(Refer Appendices 2 and 3, pp. 294 – 295)

## CO-AUTHORED WORKS

Reference	Author
Benson, S. J., and Rahman, K. H. (2007). Pan-Asian identity in a globalizing world. <i>International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Community and Nations</i> , 7(5), 205-212.	Benson 50% Rahman 50%
Baker, S., and Benson, S. J. (2008). The suitcase, the samurai sword and the pumpkin: Asian crime and news media treatment. <i>Pacific Journalism Review</i> , 14(2), 183-204.	Baker 50% Benson 50%

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There are many ways to describe this thesis, but the very best description is “an adventure”. For me, it has been a leap into the unknown and the void between myself and new understanding. As this thesis progressed, I have learned a lot about myself and others. I would like to say this has always been an enjoyable experience. But, like all adventures, it has contained many elements of risk and uncontrollable aspects of raw life that are generally difficult. These are the spaces where real adaptations take place and cultural learning takes place. I like to believe that through my thesis I have gained some insight into negotiating at least one such ‘uneasy space’ that I have observed in the life of many of my participants.

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## **ABSTRACT**

“Everywhere is home, if you know enough about how things work there” (Bennett, 2011, p. 5). This thesis critically assesses the relationships formed by East and South-East-Asian international students as they sojourn in New Zealand and attend university during that period. As the students gradually alter and develop their cultural perceptions toward a framework that enables them to learn, live and make sense of their intercultural relationships, they make friends among their East and South-East-Asian international student peers, domestic students, host-families, work-colleagues, flatmates and university and educational support-staff in Aotearoa/New Zealand. To critically assess these relationships, the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett and Hammer, 1998), or the DMIS, was used. There are six levels of the DMIS. These begin with the three ethnocentric stages of denial, defense and minimization where the individuals maintain the supports where possible from their own home-country cultures, rather than accessing the social supports offered in the immediate host-country context. The ethnorelative levels are acceptance, adaptation and integration and in these levels the individuals are able to access and draw from the cultural resources in their host-country cultural context.

International students from AUT University, the University of Auckland and the University of Waikato comprised the sample of 50 participants, and they were interviewed in groups where possible and individually in some cases. The analysis of the interviews involved two types of analyses drawn from the interview data. Firstly, the students’ intercultural adaptation level was assessed from the interview transcripts, supplemented by field notes and sound files from which key moments of intercultural self and other-awareness were noted. The second analysis involved a close exploration of students’ reflections on their own intercultural adaptation and experiences. These were looked at across the five DMIS levels that were present in this sample. The relationships between the

students and their various social networks of both fellow nationals, and other East and South-East-Asian international student peers and social groups in Aotearoa/New Zealand were examined because intercultural adaptation is premised upon intercultural communication confidence and the creation of relationships in the unfamiliar host-country.

Overall, the findings showed that intercultural adaptation levels were internally regulated by the students, who were strong agents of their own intercultural adaptation levels. This suggests that intercultural adaptation is reliant upon the motivation of the individual rather than an external process created by host-country experiences. For some students, maintaining their study goals and returning to their home-countries to work was the main priority and their intercultural adaptation levels were typically lower. Those hoping to extend their sojourn had increased reliance upon intercultural relationships and established social groups in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This emphasis on agency showed that the students were more reliant upon maintaining the integrity and structures of their home-country culture than had been previously suggested within the frameworks of the DMIS.

To better understand the agency of the students and the prevailing influence of their home-country culture, an alternative model for the sociological examination of the students is proposed in this thesis. This is the Adapted Model of Intercultural Skill-Sets for East and South-East Asian international students (AMISS). The AMISS was specifically developed for East and South-East-Asian international students as, in addition to intercultural communication, it incorporates the key experiences of negotiating from adolescence into young or emergent adulthood (Arnett, 2004) that is usually part of university experiences. The emphasis on a young sample undergoing emergent adulthood was combined with the Confucian family values (Hwang, 1999) of filial piety that are so important to the East and South-East-Asian region. Notions of *guanxi* that are prevalent among the Chinese diaspora throughout South-East Asia (Lew and Wong, 2004) were incorporated because the expectation of reciprocity and the duty of returned favours and services lies at the heart of many intercultural miscommunications between the student sojourners and their host-country. Although this project became methodological

in focus and resulted in the development of a new model, this process was made possible by examining the relationships that ESEA students formed with their peer networks as well as their relationships and, in addition, provides some of the sojourners' direct observations on the ethnic relationships between Pākehā and Māori groups in New Zealand.

# **CHAPTER ONE EDUCATION IN AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND: WHERE EAST MEETS WEST**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Although East and South-East Asian international students (ESEA students) arrive from their home-countries to study in Aotearoa/New Zealand (NZ) at all stages of their educational cycle, it is at university that almost all make the important transition from teenager to adult. As burgeoning adults, they are placed in the position of forming relationships with other adults around them and negotiating the many processes of daily care and responsibility for their own lives which enables them to create career opportunities in a rapidly globalising work-force. To that extent, they share similar experiences with domestic students as both domestic and international students alike are very much engaged in creating career opportunities through study (Arnett, 2004). Unlike domestic students, however, as international students they are placed within an even more challenging position - which is to negotiate these difficulties as 'other', outside of mainstream Pākehā-dominated society. Pākehā is a term commonly used in NZ to indicate people who identify as "non Maori or [of European or] British ethnic origin (Glossary, n.d. para 2). These differences between ESEA students and mainstream Pākehā groups are compounded by a visibility that is summarised by the descriptive term 'Asian students', as they are dubbed by many domestic students, university staff and wider society alike. Often, the usage of this term identifies the students as foreigners and can supersede all other types of social categorisations such as age, gender, class, and interest groups (Mathews, 2001). This, in turn, may serve to reinforce their position as separate to domestic students, or as foreign students in NZ universities.

University study, however, is just one aspect of ESEA student experience as they sojourn in NZ. Many are brought into close contact with New Zealanders and the associated services or NZ 'social infrastructure' as they navigate life in a private home-stay, reside in university accommodation, rent apartments or flat-share, or take on any other private

accommodation arrangements that they choose. These new relationships take them beyond the relatively sheltered environment of university into wider NZ society where the students are forced to negotiate the challenges of everyday life (Bennett, 1998). Although all students must learn to take care of themselves to an extent, ESEA students must learn to make these developments in an alien and largely unfamiliar world (Sovic, 2008). As young adults, this may be their first experience of living away from their family home, and the advice and experience of their home-country resident parents who may not provide enough support in a foreign context. Unable to rely on the daily input of their parents and national peer groups, the students are required to create their own solutions to daily difficulties, form their own routines, and evaluate the impressions they gain of New Zealanders and other national groups around them (Sovic, 2008). Many, however, do form substitute social networks with their peer ESEA student groups. In this position, the students have an opportunity to form friendships with NZ peer groups, as well as encounter the attitudes of New Zealanders towards them.

East and South-East Asian students (ESEA students) are clearly in social transition which places them in a position to reflect on their relationships and interactions with New Zealanders. Each day they are required to interact with New Zealanders, but have to draw upon experiences with separate national and social cultural foundations. The students are in a position to observe points of difference and similarity with New Zealanders and daily life in NZ, and to make comparisons with their own national home-country experience. This provides me, and other researchers in this area, with a key opportunity to gain insight into New Zealanders through the eyes of the students as they enter more deeply into the national social infrastructure and develop their relationships with social and ethnic groups in NZ.

Having introduced the ESEA students, it is now necessary to explain the layout of this chapter. The first section examines Export Education in NZ and explains some of the broader policy and organisational context of international students, as well as the basic structures and concerns of Export Education. This leads to an examination of the problem, or the need to research accurately among ESEA students while they sojourn in NZ. Having situated the thesis, the specific research questions that direct the research are laid out. The next section discusses the delimitations and limitations of this project. Having outlined the context of the research among ESEA students and explained how



this will be done, this chapter then explains the significance of this study and identifies the organisations and policy bodies that will be interested in this research. Finally, a guide to the organisation and content of the subsequent Chapters Two – Six is provided. Further assistance in reading and understanding the key ideas in this thesis are outlined in the key terms section which is placed at the end of this chapter.

## **EXPORT EDUCATION IN NZ**

ESEA students in NZ are a recognisable presence because they are an integral part of the export education market. According to the Ministry of Education, or MOE (2007b), ESEA students can be found across all types of education providers and are an established market-base or sector of international education. Export Education covers a diverse network of international student services and includes partnership deals with international education providers, the development and promotion of curricula to developing educational providers in other states, as well as student and teacher exchange. The MOE divides the international export services into four categories (Ministry of Education, 2007b):

- Consumption abroad and international full fee paying students.
- Cross-border supply or distance education.
- Commercial presence or partner agreement between existing tertiary educational providers in two (or more) different states.
- Presence of individuals which means that the students involved emigrate to the country/state where the qualifications or courses are offered.

Export Education is strongly guided by government policies from both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). Both refer to it as ‘Export Education’ which encompasses the full spectrum of the export of NZ-based educational products and services (Ministry of Education, 2007c). Individual state-funded education providers, including universities and polytechnics, as well as a range of colleges, middle schools and even some primary schools throughout NZ, view Export Education as a critical necessity to increase funding (Ministry of Education, 2005). Private ventures by private educational providers and entrepreneurs are also active in this sector to compete for specific markets and operate in conjunction with governmental support rather than in direct competition. This interconnectedness was

officially reflected at a 2007 International Education Summit where Trevor Mallard, then Minister of Education, suggested that NZ education providers need to “build on the strengths of different organisations to bring together the very best” (As cited in Brainwave, 2007, para 2).

Although the Export Education industry refers to activity in a variety of world-wide regions and individual States, it is important to recognise the primacy of the East and South-East Asian region (ESEA region) for Export Education in NZ. In the tertiary sector, ESEA students have consistently comprised the majority of the international student totals (Ministry of Education, 2007b). In this study, ESEA states are limited to China (and Macau), Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Viet Nam, and Taiwan. This particular list of ESEA states has been defined by the nationality of the participants. Other possibilities, omitted from this coverage due to lack of participants from these home-countries, are Indonesia, Singapore, Cambodia, the Philippines, Burma (Myanmar) and Laos. The selected ESEA states in this study are all active in developing international educational relationships at universities in NZ<sup>1</sup>.

**Table 1:**

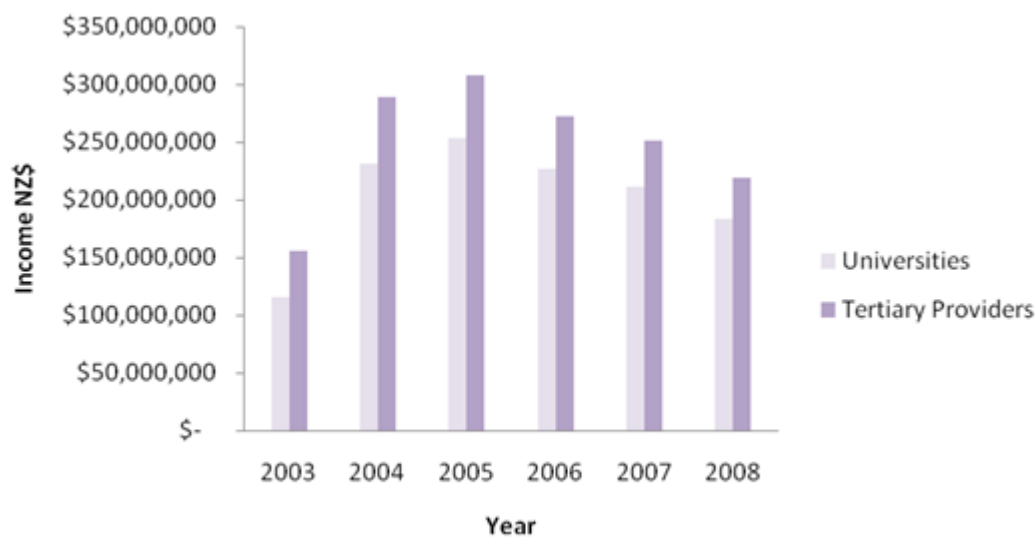
*International Student Export Education Levy in NZ 2000 - 2013*

Year	International Students	ESEA Students	Percentage ESEA Students
2001/2	33666	29671	88%
2002/3	50502	45736	91%
2003/4	63285	57628	91%
2004/5	59449	54015	91%
2005/6	52736	47510	90%
2006/7	50805	44778	88%
2007/8	40635	33803	83%
2008/9	53,977	34433	64%
2009/10	57,712	35820	62%
2010/11	60,305	35802	59%
2011/12	59663	36390	60%

(Figures sourced from Education New Zealand, 2010;2013)

<sup>1</sup> There are many problems with developing a concrete boundary for the states that make up ESEA and these definitions are often based on economic agreements and boundaries such as APEC and ASEAN. The term ESEA in this thesis is defined by the nationality of the participants and there were many other states that could have been included. My usage of the term ESEA region is not intended to act as a limit but, simply, to reflect the range of participants.

Within the 2000 to 2007 period, the percentage of ESEA students peaked at 81% in 2004 but had dropped to 64% in 2008/9 (see Table 1.). ESEA students have been the primary ‘market’ of Export Education proponents and the bulk of the international students (Education NZ, 2010). A measure of direct income from international students from 2003 to 2008 indicates that universities and other types of tertiary providers maintained their market share of ESEA students. In 2003, the international student income at universities was estimated to be around \$11.5m. It grew to \$25m in 2005 and dipped to \$18m by 2008. For an overall indicator of tuition fee income for university and tertiary providers the following figure 1 provides more detail.



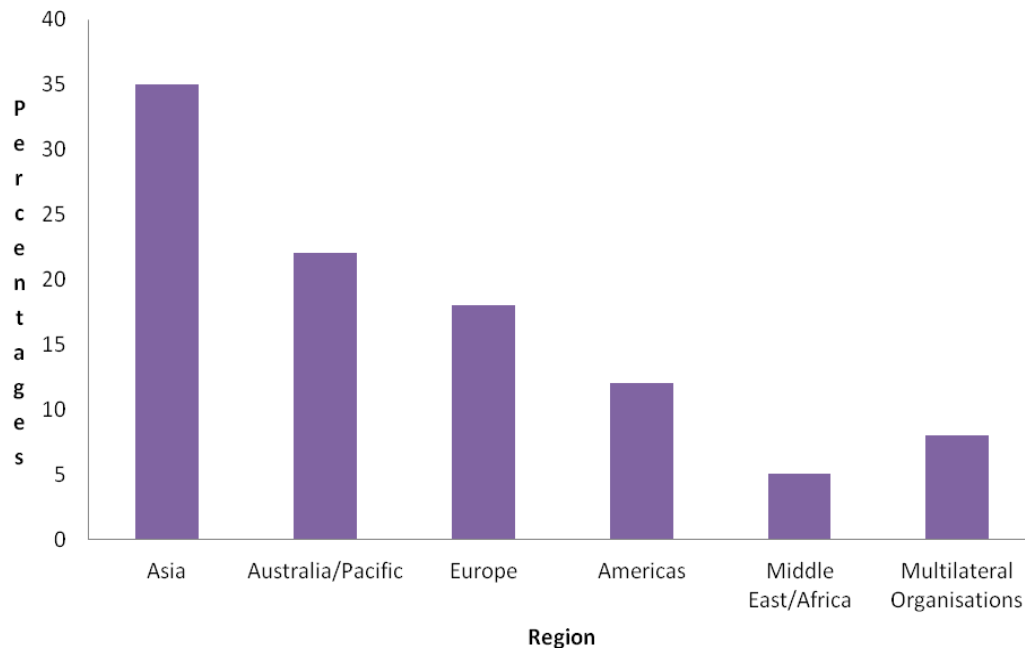
**Figure 1: Tuition fee income to educational providers in NZ from Education Counts (2008)**

But, for accuracy, it must also be noted that these benefits have been concentrated in the centres of NZ where there are universities, such as Auckland, Christchurch, Wellington and Dunedin, rather than those centres, such as Nelson, that have polytechnics and other types of tertiary institutions. The bulk of the students (62%) from 2003 through to 2006 were enrolled in the eight universities across NZ (Education New Zealand, 2010). Rather than an even spread, however, in practice this means that the majority of the students were concentrated in Auckland (53%), with Christchurch holding 19% (Education New Zealand). University education is particularly beneficial to the Export Education sector because the courses undertaken by the international students require that they study for a significant number of years. An even greater financial benefit, however, is that the national economy benefits from the ‘hidden’ income that the international students generate as they are compelled to spend money on consumables

and services in NZ towns and cities during the course of their study (Asia 2000 Foundation, 2003; Robinson and Vuletich, 2007). In recent years, there has been a further shift in university policy to promote postgraduate study, necessitating that some of the PhD students would study in NZ for even greater periods of time (Ministry of Education, 2007c). Concentrating on postgraduate study allows the NZ universities to promote themselves within the international student market base of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation region (APEC), as well as domestically. The Ministry of Education policy guidelines currently promote postgraduate services as the channel to develop NZ universities.

Despite the breadth of educational services offered in international education, it is the provision of education directly to the students enrolled and attending studies in NZ that generates most of the income. Since 2002, Asian students were estimated to contribute \$2.1 billion to the *general economy* in NZ, a figure which held steady in 2003 and peaked in 2004 at \$2.2b (Ministry of Education, 2007c, 2007d). Although the figures have since dropped slightly to \$2b and \$1.9b in 2005 and 2006, their fees and other contributions to accommodation, public transport, rent and so forth continue to provide significant income.

There is a tendency to associate Export Education with a world-market base that includes any and all possible states across the globe but, in practice, there has been an increased trend in NZ to developing educational relationships with the Asian regions. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), NZ's current offshore interests in ESEA regions are estimated to be 35% of the overall trade activity within ESEA regional trade in NZ, which is significantly higher than any other single region or country (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2007b). In that context, it is important to understand that China, along with Japan and India, are officially rated by MFAT as three of the ten largest economies in the world. India and China are predicted to grow even more influential by increasing Asia's current 35% dominance of the world market to 43% by 2020 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2007b). The following Figure 2 illustrates how significant off-shore representation in the Asian regions is to the NZ economy as a whole.



**Figure 2. New Zealand representation of off-shore education in 2007.**

(Sourced from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2007b, p. 14).

The growth in NZ trade with the ESEA region has been consistent with the growing network of trading relationships that many Asian-Pacific states have been developing. MFAT defines the Asia-Pacific region as the 21 economic member economies of APEC that span five continents and account for almost 50 per cent of the total world trade (What is APEC?, n.d.). In 1989, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group, was formed and included NZ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, n.d.). APEC's primary aim is to promote trade and investment throughout the Asia Pacific region and this includes education (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2006). For NZ this also increased the opportunities for trade with its ESEA neighbours: China, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Singapore, Taiwan, Indonesia, Philippines and Malaysia and Viet Nam (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2006).

With this increased opportunity, NZ has been able to set up a number of critical trade agreements throughout the ESEA regions. The most important and lucrative trade agreements have been the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), also known as Closer Economic Partnerships (CEP) or Strategic Economic Partnerships (SEP) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2007a). These include establishing relationships with Singapore and Thailand in 2005. The initial CEP with Singapore in 2001 was superseded in 2006 by the Trans-Pacific SEP which includes Brunei and Chile. A very

important FTA with China was initiated in 2004 and concluded in December, 2007, while the Malaysian–NZ FTA was concluded in August 2010 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, n.d.).

China, in particular, has been extremely influential in the education sector. In the period 2003 to 2005 over half of the international students in NZ originated from China (Education New Zealand, 2010). In 2006 the total percentage of students from China dropped to 34% (Education New Zealand, 2010), and the Ministry of Education attributes this decline to negative media feedback in China and the high exchange rate of the NZ dollar (2007c). Malaysian international student numbers were extremely low, at less than 2%, in the same time period (Education New Zealand, 2010).

A major characteristic of the Export Education system since the late 1990s has been the primary focus on education as a source of revenue and, secondarily, the opportunity to increase social and trading networks between educational providers in NZ and their ESEA clients (Ministry of Education, 2007c; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2007b). Seemingly wide-spread throughout all levels of government and across educational providers, this ideological perspective of ‘student user pays’ (or ‘neoliberalism’) has, in fact, been comparatively recent (Kelsey, 1995).

‘User pays’ owes its implementation to the fourth Labour Government (1984 – 1990), whose policies of reform addressed the then heavily regulated welfare economy. Neoliberalist advocates viewed this as an important opportunity to enact a powerful change in the way that the government administered state owned enterprises (Kelsey, 1995). Many state owned enterprises (SOEs) were sold off, the centralising force of the state began to recede over a period of time, and former government services such as education became ‘market driven’. Though not sold off, the Department of Education (as it was then known) was separated into five distinct bodies by the 1989 Education Act. This Act formalised the better known recommendations from the policy report *Tomorrow’s Schools* (Kelsey, 1995, pp. 219-220). This legislation allocated responsibility to:

- The Ministry of Education (MOE) for policy development and purchase of educational services.

- The Education Review Office (ERO) for curriculum review and school audit functions.
- The Teachers Review Council (TRC), for leadership functions and to oversee the standards of teacher training
- The Parents Advisory Council (PAC) to provide feedback on the parents' expectations to the Minister of Education. (PAC was disbanded in 1991)
- New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) for educational quality standards in both state funded and private educational providers.

During this period, provision was also made for NZ universities to operate within overlapping, but separate educational committees. One such organisation is the Committee of University Academic Programmes or CUAP (*Universities New Zealand - Te Pōkai Tara*, n.d.). CUAP consists of representatives from each of the eight universities and they work to establish standardized academic procedures and developments, as well as the transfer of university students and the assessment of cross-accreditation of course qualifications (New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit, 2011; *Universities New Zealand - Te Pōkai Tara*, n.d.). An equally important university organisation is the New Zealand Vice Chancellors Committee (NZVCC), which was established in the 1989 Education Act ("Education Act, 1989," 1989) to maintain the procedures and academic processes for each of the universities as well as to maintain quality and accountability with NZQA.

Once a cohesive administrative system, education has thus been dis-assembled into a number of separate organisations and advisory bodies. Policy, curriculum, professional teaching ethics, and qualifications are each governed by the separate controlling bodies listed above (Education Act 1989, 1989; Kelsey, 1995).

The key ideological belief underlying the economic structures of the market driven education system was to enact a system in which the educational providers would undertake the responsibility of administering their individual funding (Kelsey, 1995). While this could, and did, open opportunities for the educational providers to allocate their budgets according to their own priorities, the subsequent funding based on Equivalent Full Time Student (EFTS) totals left many individual educational providers with shortfalls (Peters, 2001). For the tertiary education sector, an influx of full-fee

paying foreign students provided a tailored solution. This influx provided funds in the short term for the individual educational provider, and in the longer term provided a platform to develop international education into an Export Education industry (Ministry of Education, 2000). Reframing educational qualifications as commodities meant that each could be bought, sold or traded according to market demand (Kelsey, 1995).

Prior educational systems had once required education to have a cultural value in NZ, but with the new 1989 Education Act, education was reinterpreted as an individual 'right' to educational qualifications under the neoliberalist model. This operated to gradually shape the current system into a context or environment where education is judged upon its market value, rather than its cultural merit or as a public/social good (Kelsey, 1995). This affected the curriculum, as both employers and would-be employees alike now demanded that student qualifications have an extrinsic and tangible value in respect to future job placements. Tertiary students, both NZ domestic and international, have become 'customers' to the competing individual tertiary education providers and the onus is on providers to provide value-for-money services (Snook et al., 1999). More recently, Malcolm and Tarling (2007) suggest that neoliberal restructuring in universities across NZ has been hurried, and this haste has further added to the lowered academic quality of curricula, resulting in narrower courses with more emphasis on workplace application. Effectively, the type of education students profess to be willing to pay for has become prioritised. The foundations of educational development that may be less obvious in their application, but are perhaps more valuable for a balanced education, have become less important within the current educational system (Boston, 1996; Kelsey, 1995). To summarise, "Those in favour of the 'reforms' seem to have been more keen to 'market' them than to analyse them" (Snook et al., 1999, p. 2). This meant that short term savings obtained from infrastructural changes were prioritised over the longer term costs to individuals, communities and organisations.

## **STATEMENT OF THE THESIS PROBLEM**

The educational sojourn provides a unique opportunity for researchers to learn more about the process of intercultural adaptation among ESEA students. The students arrive here at the critical juncture of emergent adulthood between the ages of 18 – 28, when



they should be open to new ideas and relationships (Arnett, 2004). Effectively, students are in the ideal position to gain increased cultural capital as a result of their experiences living abroad (Bourdieu, 1986). But not all develop intercultural relationships or gain significant intercultural insight into the social groups in NZ. Instead, research tends to suggest that many students prefer to stay within their national groups and this is a feature of ESEA student groups according to the Ministry of Education (2007b) and the Department of Labour (2007). Intercultural contact and total immersion within a host-country context are seen to be desired goals of international students, yet the behaviours of the international students reflect a resistance to intercultural adaptation. Understanding the nature of this resistance and how it operates alongside intercultural adaptation processes is a gap in knowledge that requires research.

To understand the consequence of this knowledge gap, it is important to revisit the reasons, or pull-factors to NZ as a host-country, for ESEA students to take their educational sojourn in NZ. International education is a strong financial and family commitment to gaining intercultural experience for future globalising work-forces (Marginson, 2002). Lack of intercultural adaptation is potentially concerning for the students as it means that they have been unable to fully actualise the benefits of their family's sacrifice in the immediate future. Further down the track, future employers may well be denied the global competency that was supposed to be implicit in the appointment of an individual after an educational sojourn (Olson and Kroeger, 2001; Sidhu, 2002; Weber, 1999). For the quality of Export Education degrees and the reputation of educational institutions in NZ, ESEA students' lack of intercultural adaptation progress may also be important.

ESEA students are offered structural supports upon arrival in the form of orientation and international student services by government agencies and organisational networks (Ward, 2005; Ward and Masgoret, 2003). But once these initial supports have been offered, students are largely left to create their own support networks. ESEA students, then, presumably form very different impressions of social groups in NZ as their intercultural adaptation deepens and social insights and understandings are reached through greater intercultural relationship experiences (Butcher and McGrath, 2004). The manner and method by which the students gradually become aware of the foreign host-country context that surrounds them is a critical factor in their reflections on and

experiences of New Zealanders (or “Kiwis” as they are often referred to). This adaptation is dependent on the duration, as well as the range and depth, of experiences that each individual undergoes in her or his host country (Bennett and Hammer, 1993; Bennett, 2005; Bennett, 2005a). Fragments of knowledge gained at various points in the process of intercultural adaptation are likely to be equally valid, but to differ substantially in character and expression as individual student experiences develop in their social environment.

From a theoretical perspective, there is a notable lack of interest in, or, perhaps more accurately, lack of cultural knowledge that ESEA students gain during their study sojourn. Considerable attention has been paid to the students’ ‘difficulties’ in adjusting to daily life in their foreign host-country (see for example, Ministry of Education, 2007a; Ward and Masgoret, 2004). Accordingly, intercultural observations are often presumed by many researchers to be the domain of established New Zealanders in that the onus of the interpretation is from the host-country perspective commenting on students’ abilities to adapt to life in NZ (McFedries, 2002; McGrath, Butcher, Pickering, and Smith, 2005; Ward, 2005). In many ways, this limitation suggests a ‘natural’ conclusion, which is that the students are focused on their own experiences. In fact, ESEA students are gaining a wealth of knowledge and insight into ‘New Zealanders’ individually and, over time, into the wider NZ society.

The presence of ESEA students also provides a key opportunity for social groups in NZ to learn more about interacting with individuals from the ESEA region. From this, a potential interest in developing and expanding into a globalised future with the ESEA regions may arise (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2007). Yet many of these social groups have little direct intercultural contact (Butcher, 2006; Sovic, 2008). The main source of information about the students available for the wider public in NZ is generated from the media. These same media sources also suggest that the students appear to be either culturally troublesome or requiring too many extra social resources (Mabbett, Mok, and Ng, 2006; Munshi, 1998). Conclusions based on ESEA student misbehaviour are due in part to the students’ position as outsiders who have daily and repetitive contact with a foreign environment in which they can take very little for granted (Mabbett, Mok and Ng, 2006).

ESEA students experience this complex economic and social context, and their cultural understanding of it grows and changes over time. For the ESEA students, understanding their host-country context is a challenge. This difficulty is created by a lack of understanding due to their relative youth as students and social isolation in a foreign host-country. Focusing this study on the individual experiences of ESEA students alone could mean that the reasons that they choose NZ as a study destination, their requirement for a foreign degree, and their preparation for a global workforce would become subsumed by their intercultural adaptation experiences. To resolve this short-sighted approach and to understand the ESEA students as a recent wave of educational sojournment and increased global relationships, I chose a classical sociological approach that links the personal experiences of the individual and places it into a larger structural process that takes into account macro processes of international education and globalisation. With the ESEA students' potential lack of social understanding and my own as an outsider, this research project may have seemed impossible. But by using a classic sociological approach, I was able to understand the context of Export Education and the relationships between that and the individual experiences of the ESEA students in their foreign host-country world. Mills (1959) explains this social perspective as the sociological imagination and describes this process as covering the "range from the most impersonal and remote transformations to the most intimate features of the human self – and to see the relations between the two" (p. 7). For this project, the aim was to interrogate the intercultural relationships of the ESEA students as they gain further intercultural adaptation and understandings and consider them as they are placed in the wider social context in NZ. To effectively achieve this, it was necessary to draw from the intercultural communication field and to find a means to measure and understand the process of intercultural adaptation of the ESEA students.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE KEY ANALYTICAL TOOL IN THIS THESIS**

To address the requirement for an analytical tool to understand intercultural adaptation, this study was based upon an attempted application of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) by Bennett and Hammer (1998).

**Table 2:**

*Tabular Representation of the DMIS (1998)*

Levels	Cognitive understanding of new culture as expressed by the individual.
1. Denial	Differences downplayed. New host-culture not well understood.
2. Defense	Differences between home culture and host culture perceived, but marked resistance to perceiving value in the new host country environment.
3. Minimisation	Differences in behaviour are understood, but the different values and cultural assumptions of the host-country social groups are not well perceived or understood.
4. Acceptance	Differences between home and host country well understood. Understanding of cultural values and assumption has grown, but as yet, the individual may not choose to participate in many new situations. Instead, retaining a marked tendency to keep within their social groups.
5. Adaptation	This is when the individual achieves a strong level of understanding with the new host-country environment. They are able to move freely between the cultures.
6. Integration	This describes the state when an individual moves fluidly between cultures. The individual is able to independently assess each culture and choose different aspects from each culture to suit them.

Note: This table has been created from the information available in *The Intercultural Developmental Inventory (IDI) Manual* (Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

The thesis has also an interrogation and analytical assessment of the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). The research was based on a sample of 50 mixed ESEA students who were interviewed within a group interview of 3-6 participants and/or individual interviews across three universities in NZ: The University of Auckland (UA); AUT University (AUT); and the University of Waikato (WU). Participants were assessed as to where they fell within the six stages of the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) and this process is fully explained in Chapter Three. From these intercultural adaptation assessments, a qualitative representation of the DMIS and the five levels that were found in this sample was constructed, and the experiences of the ESEA students are mapped in Chapters Four and Five. The major themes of the intercultural adaptation of the ESEA could then be mapped from these experiences.

## **STATEMENT OF SPECIFIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This thesis is a broad study that provides a range of insights into the intercultural adaptation of the ESEA students in NZ. To focus this project, an overall research aim was to measure intercultural adaptation with the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) in relation to the ESEA students. In turn, this was sub-divided into five specific research questions. The first research question was a preliminary step to guide the bulk of the data analysis and is addressed in Chapter Three. All following four research questions are addressed in the analysis sections of Chapters Four and Five.

- 1) Can the intercultural adaptation levels of the ESEA students be assessed with the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998), and can this be accurately observed through their social relationships and activities?
- 2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) for measuring intercultural adaptation among a specific ESEA student sample undergoing an educational sojourn, rather than immigration?
- 3) What types of social relationships do the ESEA students report with New Zealanders during their sojourn, and what impact do these have on their opinions of New Zealanders as a social group?
- 4) What types of social relationships do the ESEA students report with other social groups and what impact do these have?
- 5) To what extent and in which observable patterns have the ESEA students' observations and opinions of all types of social groups in NZ changed as a result of their intercultural adaptation? It is essential to note that this is based upon the participants' own perceptions and memories around their intercultural adaptation experiences.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The first key limitation of this study was that it does not use a longitudinal approach to observe the ESEA students as they adapt to life in NZ. Superficially, it might appear that longitudinal data would provide a clear insight into the changing intercultural adaptation levels and would seem to be suited to a level-based model such as the DMIS (Cresswell, 2007). However, the advantages of providing a longitudinal approach are heavily outweighed by the disadvantages of interfering with the intercultural adaptation

process, and creating a potentially artificial data set that could emerge as a result of increased reflection and discussion by the students within a research setting (Neumann, 2003). Instead, this study used a snap-shot approach that gathered the data in a single interview and minimised any alterations to respondent intercultural adaptations and relationships formed with others in NZ. This approach draws from the social relations approach toward social sciences and is focused on the micro-connections of the social context and the impact that this has on the individual, rather than the narrative (Mills, 1959; Giele and Elder, 1998).

The other major limitation of this study was that it was based on a broad sample of ESEA students, and so was not limited to specific nationalities. Therefore, some national and cultural variations may have affected the intercultural adaptation process, but this study was unable to pick these up. Instead, this study was based on the level of intercultural experience that the students had developed and the relationships that the students had formed with New Zealanders as they sojourned in NZ. As such, it cannot be viewed as a definitive work in the area of ethnic or national identity formation. In an age where diasporic sojourns are the norm rather than the exception (Hall, 2003), the formation of intercultural relationships takes on an increasing importance in theoretical frameworks. As these experiences are inextricably entwined with the attitudes and assumptions of social groups in NZ toward the students, it was critical to draw the sample from across the range of nationalities that are likely to be perceived and categorised as 'Asian students'. The study was focused on exploring students' experiences of the ethnic categorisation they have received by New Zealanders primarily, and to some extent, their own perceptions of ESEA student groups. Consequently, there was less emphasis on concrete regional, ethnic, or even nationality based parameters.

More practically, sampling within such a broad range of nationalities cannot be seen to provide the accuracy or depth of the specialist research that is needed. Qin (2003), for example, notes that NZ born Chinese students report difficulties resulting from their conflation by New Zealanders with other sojourning Chinese immigrant groups. Mack (2003) reports that Vietnamese students feel isolated due to being fewer in numbers than Chinese students, for example, and have little support beyond the limited services offered by the universities. Usefully in these cases, however, these studies were

undertaken by ethnically-appropriate researchers who, by language and experience, were in a position to gain data and to interpret this type of data accurately. Rather than attempt to produce a shallow reproduction of these studies, it seemed more important to investigate the impact that 'Asianisation' has on the site of intercultural relationships. This thesis was formulated on the concept that when ESEA students as a group are compelled to undergo similar experiences, these experiences could result in a similar transformational process of intercultural adaptation as a result of negotiating similar circumstances in daily living challenges and the attitudes of New Zealanders. In effect the intention was to introduce a study that challenges the past stereotypical assumptions of 'Asianisation' so prevalent in the media and casually adopted by researchers and academics (Bennett, 1998; Munshi, 1998; Palat, 1996; Vasil and Yoon, 1996; Zhang and Dixon, 2003). Past studies (see for example Vasil and Yoon, 1996; Zhang and Dixon, 2003) have tended to emphasise the importance of regional cameos and failed to recognise the specific identities and differences of each state, or even each ethnic group which is not replicated in this thesis because the onus is on the intercultural adaptation of the ESEA students in NZ, not upon their identities as 'Asians' or even a specific nationality.

This study did not examine the ethnicities represented within the NZ population, despite making frequent references to 'New Zealanders'. ESEA students are in a position to consider for themselves who 'New Zealanders' are, and it is these impressions by ESEA students and their ethnic identifiers that were used throughout this study. To enable this study to operate, though, as the researcher I used a narrow range of ethnic group terms for the participants to consider when classifying New Zealanders, and these were generated by participants themselves and were limited to "Asian", "Māori", "Kiwi", "Kiwi-Asian" and "Indian". These cover other ESEA social groups as well as Māori, Pākehā and, in some cases, Pasifika social groups. Though this may unwittingly have contributed to the lack of intercultural specification by the ESEA students, limitations were required in order to communicate to the entire sample across a broad range of language and cultural abilities.

Subjugating national social groups goes against the grain of current government policies. Current policy perspectives on ethnic status suggest that Māori and Pākehā form the dominant ethnic categories in NZ and have traditionally gained priority due to

the on-going debate between these groups as *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (Treaty of Waitangi) partners (Walker, 2001). But this is a formal governmental and policy usage that is based on self-nominations of ethnicity that have emerged as a result of multicultural and bicultural debates dating from 1983–1984 that were designed to challenge the then specialist Ministry of Māori and Pacific Island Affairs that reinforced Māori in particular as minorities (Hayward, 2012). These types of categorisations can have many meanings apart from visual identification and cultural categorisation (Phillips, 2009). In this study, the students were in a position to make ethnic distinctions based on appearance in regard to Pākehā and Māori and/or Pasifika groups, which did not require a full understanding of the ethnic variations amongst New Zealanders. Statistics New Zealand (2007, para 6.) listed “eight separate ethnicities consisting of NZ European, Māori, Samoan, Cook Island Māori, Tongan, Niuean, Chinese and Indian” in the 2006 Census forms. But the 2006 Census also received self-selected or added responses representing many separate groups including three East or South-East Asian states - Japan, Korea and Cambodia. Individuals can indicate that they belong to single, dual or even multiple ethnicities, which can make it difficult to identify the various ethnic groups (Statistics New Zealand, 2007).

Identifying ethnicity comprehensively in NZ is further complicated by the creation of new social and ethnic identities such as Pasifika groups which are often applied to people from a number of states from the Pacific region and can be based on the length of time or even generations that various social groups have resided here (Walker, 2001). McLennan, Ryan and Spoonley (2004, p. 193) state that: “Ethnicity occurs when a group shares a particular history, a set of cultural practises and providers, and is conscious of a shared identity as a result.” This means that ESEA students clearly belong to a separate ethnic category from established NZ-born Chinese, NZ-born Korean, or, more contemporarily, “Kiwi-Asian” (New Zealand Asia Foundation, 2006, Para 6). This is a multi-ethnic categorisation that is often applied to many ethnic groups affiliated with the East and South-East-Asian regional states. Though ESEA students are not yet “Kiwi-Asian”, this thesis does show there are ethnic linkages that tend to help ESEA students to form intercultural relationships between themselves and the previous ESEA immigrant groups.



Though there are limitations to this thesis, each of these has provided opportunities to consider ESEA student data more carefully. The snapshot approach of a single interview has meant that this project is a representative cross-view of a relatively short time of 2 - 4 years after the international student boom in 2002 and 2003 (Ministry of Education, 2007). Cross sectional approaches are typically associated with limits on examining causal relationships, which means there is less scope for determining the cause of intercultural adaptation level changes for the ESEA students (MacIntyre, 2003). However, the cross-sectional approach has offered more scope for looking at a broader range of variables that are associated with intercultural adaptation (Neumann, 2003) among the ESEA students such as educational experiences, leisure activities, homestay, part time work experience and so forth.

Another key advantage to using a cross-sectional study is that it provided me with an opportunity to examine a common host-country assumption that many ESEA nationalities are ethnically similar. This opinion of ESEA students was borne out in earlier media explorations around international student representation in the mainstream media (Benson, 2003; Benson, 2005). I refer to this process throughout this thesis as Asianisation and it involves the subsuming of national boundaries into a regional association (Mathews, 2000). Finally, this cross-sectional approach allows me to examine the affect that Asianisation has on the ESEA students' intercultural adaptation and/or their perceptions of New Zealanders.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY**

For host-country support groups dealing with ESEA students there is a multitude of literature on the perceived immediate problems faced by students upon arrival which range from language difficulties and culture shock to loneliness (see, for example: Butcher, 2002; Butcher and McGrath, 2004; Butcher, Spoonley and Trlin, 2004; Poyrazli and Lopez, 2007; Pyvis and Chapman, 2005). However, for those support organisations that work directly on a longer term basis students and/or immigrants from ESEA regions (such as Education NZ) there is a much smaller sphere of understanding of their social difficulties, to do with language barriers, behaviour expectations and the practicalities of studying. ESEA students who are entirely immersed in their alien host-country, as with all immigrant groups of short or longer

term duration, provide opportunities to examine the process of intercultural adaptation in greater detail.

Though not strictly intercultural in approach, Kim's (2001) definition of cross-cultural adaptation describes the enormity of the task that a sojourning or immigrant group must face in a new host-country environment:

... the dynamic process by which individuals, upon relocating to new, unfamiliar or changed cultural environments, establish (or re-establish) and maintain relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationships within these environments. (p. 31)

For sojourning groups the transition between home and host country entails a consistent change of perspective, and each individual must build completely new frames of cultural reference to make sense of the host country. Data that maps these transitions for ESEA students is an important indicator of the intercultural challenges and adaptations which are likely to follow for other future international student groups. The NZ population is characterised by continuous immigration and immigration resettlement (Greif, 1995). For this reason it is my premise that the insights about the sojourning and immigrant experience of ESEA students in this study can also be used to ease the transition for future groups of sojourning students. Additionally, these insights will help to create awareness of the complexity of that process for both sojourning students and immigrants alike.

ESEA students are consumers of Export Education and future trading partners in the globalising market-place of the Asia Pacific regions. They are compelled to gain new values and insights into their host-country environment, in order to negotiate it successfully as student participants at their host educational institutions and in their forays into wider NZ society. The presence of ESEA students is an important phenomenon with far-reaching social and economic consequences for NZ. Trade and development in NZ are dependent on the educational system instilling cultural skills and values in students that will enhance their focus on the Asian-Pacific regions. Therefore, Export Education offers this opportunity by 'educating' or immersing young New Zealanders during their formative years alongside ESEA students. However, some past researchers and policy makers arguably have assumed that ESEA students have static cultural identities that maintain their major character despite the many

intercultural experiences that they undergo during their study sojourn (see for example Bennett, 1998). Similarly, it has also been thought that domestic NZ students learn much more about their Asian world-context from the presence of ESEA students (McGrath and Butcher, 2004).

In this study, the close examination of the ESEA students and their gradual climb into intercultural competence and relationships with New Zealanders provide insight into the changing face of intercultural perceptions during their educational sojourn. Culture is not conceived or experienced as static, but as dynamic and fluid, adjusting to the various experiences and relationships that the ESEA students undergo. Though specific to ESEA students in NZ, this process is one that is recognisably experienced by many ESEA sojourning student groups across many states and regions such as Europe, North and South America as well as the Pacific regions (Giddens, 1999). These ideas can also be applied to the many diasporic work-forces that are also affected by increasingly globalised relationships.

Thus, researchers and academics need to keep the field of intercultural research abreast with current trends and to reflect the critical global trends of significance. Account must be taken of the principles of globalisation theory and this approach is highlighted by the observation of Giddens (1990): “It seems certain that some of the leading sociological theories and concepts will have to be substantially overhauled if we are to seek to comprehend both this and the consolidation of something like a world society” (p. 16). There is now so much interconnectedness between states due to increasing travel, trade and educational relationships. Examining the intersection between ESEA students and NZ social groups requires maintaining on-going attention.

Current research tends to portray ESEA students as minority groups of lesser social importance in NZ. It was the responsibility of this work, then, to look beyond the minority status and to ask the students to critically reflect on their experiences with New Zealanders and daily life in NZ, that is, to position the students as ‘experts’ or at the very least, as observers. This is a departure from contemporary theory which tends to position participants as a minority ‘other’ with respect to the majority in the host-country (Latif, Bhatti, Maitlo, Nazar, and Shaikh, 2012; Lee and Morrish, 2012; Raciti, 2012). This project premises that ESEA sojourners are not from minority cultures but

effectively represent a larger diaspora of ESEA groups across many parts of the world. It was critical that this work recognised the larger ESEA context under globalising relationships, as the sojourning students do not represent minority ethnic groups as they appear to be in the NZ host-country context, but are actually representative of a much-larger diasporic movement of international students/immigrants and sojourners from ESEA states.

## **LAYOUT OF THE CHAPTERS**

### **Chapter Two: Contextualising the literature.**

Chapter Two reviews the general processes of globalisation, the knowledge economy and internationalisation, as well as the reputation of the knowledge economy. There are a range of international student studies that concentrate on ESEA sojourn experience, which include key experiences that illustrate various marginalising or transformative experiences. This chapter also presents and critiques the important intercultural adaptation model, the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) developed by Bennett and Hammer (1998) that underpins this analysis. Supplementary material is provided from Kim (2001) that is used to incorporate the Stress Adaptation-Growth Dynamic (SAGD); and, finally, the chapter discusses the principles of Scollon and Scollon (2001) that are utilised to interrogate the analytical gaps that emerge in this project. This overview is then enriched with insights into intercultural communication required to understand cross-cultural interview processes.

### **Chapter Three: Subjective strategies.**

Chapter Three presents the research approach used in this project. It explains how the qualitative framework underpins the entire methodological approach as intercultural adaptation is measured from the subjective position of intercultural communication between the participant and researcher. This is followed by an explanation of the *bricolage* approach to sampling and a representation of the sampling statistics. Methodology concerning the focus groups and single interviews is then explained. This is followed by an account of the two processes of analysis that are used in this project. Firstly, individual assessment of intercultural adaptation by transcript assessment is described. The second process that is explained in this chapter is the thematic analysis taken from the interview transcripts and the field notes.

#### **Chapter Four: Testing the ethnocentric section of the DMIS.**

Chapter Four is the initial analysis chapter and it contains the first three levels of the DMIS analysis in the ethnocentric section. At these levels, the ESEA students are largely influenced by their home-country cultures. Each level is explained and defined, and this is followed by an analysis across each of the key experiential domains: education, accommodation, and extra-curricular activities that include formal organisations, work, relationships and tourism. These levels are then summarised, showing key characteristics or themes that have emerged. With all testing of analytical models, there were themes that could not be fitted within this analysis and these are outlined before moving to the next of the three levels.

#### **Chapter Five: Testing the ethnorelative section of the DMIS.**

Chapter Five is the second analysis chapter and it contains the last two levels present in this sample, L4 and L5. At these levels, ESEA students are largely influenced by their new understandings and insights into host-country cultures. Each of the levels is explained and defined, and this is followed by an analysis across each of the key experiential domains: education, accommodation and extra-curricular activities that include formal organisations, work, relationships and tourism and summarised with the key characteristics that have emerged. There were findings that did not fully reflect the structure of the DMIS and these are subsequently outlined before moving into the next level.

#### **Chapter Six: Where West meets East: The final insights.**

This chapter summarises the entire project and discusses the key findings. It explains the importance of altering the existing model designed for culture-specific contexts and creating an intercultural adaptation model that is specific to ESEA students' youth groups. These ideas are consolidated in the key methodological finding which is the adapted model of intercultural skill-sets for East and South-East Asian international students (AMISS) model. Finally, this chapter concludes by examining the unique findings in this research and the transformative social experiences that can be used as a theoretical template for understanding the increasingly globalised relationships and educational sojourn experiences throughout the world.

## **APPENDIX: KEY TERMS USED IN THIS THESIS**

This is the list of key terms or ideas used throughout this study which have been chosen because they are specific to the study of ESEA students.

- **East and South-East Asian international students**

East and South-East Asia are not regions with a concrete geographical boundary, but include states whose citizens are likely to share an easily identifiable experience of being ‘Asian’ in NZ. This contemporary categorisation is based in part on colloquial usage which Rasanathan (2005, p. 15), suggests is a recent conflation of the older term “Chinese” which was then extended to Asia and is applied to those peoples who share a regional or ethnic similarity. These colloquial references are often overlooked in official discourse, but the distinction between South Asian people (Indians) and Asians (East and South-East-Asian peoples) remains a factor in media representation and daily social interaction (Rasanathan, 2005).

The study region is also dominated by East-Asian states and regions (Simone, 2001). These include China, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Taiwan. The study also includes students from selected Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) states such as Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam, (Simone, 2001). There are other states that could have been included in this sample, such as Laos, Cambodia Philippines and Indonesia but as students from these states did not participate in the sample, they have not been included in the definition.

- **International Students**

This term refers to full fee paying students enrolled at various educational providers across NZ. This term has emerged in more contemporary media discourse and in research in conjunction with the Export Education industry. From 2001 onwards, the full fee paying foreign students of the late 1990s have become known in the media as “international students” (Benson, 2006). International students is a significantly broader term than full fee paying students and its application is more

suggestive of the globalising education markets that the Export Education industry relies on (Benson, 2006). Furthermore, its continued usage in the media has reinforced the term in common or daily social discourse.

- **Intercultural Communication**

Intercultural communication is a term that is often misunderstood because many find it interchangeable with cross-cultural communication (Jandt, 2007). Although it is very similar, it is best understood as a term with a shifting and changing meaning that in its earlier construction was interchangeable with cross-cultural communication. An early definition is offered by the Language and Intercultural Communication Group (LInC Group) which relies on the work of Samovar and Porter (1986) for the primary definition:

Intercultural communication entails the investigation of culture and the difficulties of communicating across cultural boundaries. Intercultural communication occurs whenever a message produced in one culture must be processed in another culture. (As cited by LInC Group n.d., Para 2)

More recently, this explanation has developed into a broader definition that allows for greater subjectivity in its usage and no longer includes the context-specific cross-cultural definition. For Scollon and Scollon (2001), intercultural communication can be used interchangeably with inter-discourse communication. By moving from culture to discourse, they allow discourses beyond individual, national or ethnic groups to be considered simultaneously. This, Scollon and Scollon argue, is just one factor in many. In their words:

...the cultural differences between people in professional communication are likely to be rather less significant than other differences which arise from being members of different gender or generational discourse systems, or from the conflicts which arise between corporate discourse and professional discourse systems (p. 4).

Effectively, intercultural communication encompasses the wider context of different communication systems and is not limited to the interactions between individuals.

- **Intercultural adaptation**

In this study, intercultural adaptation is viewed as a contested idea of theoretical development and understanding, and ranges from models based on social psychology, such as Kim (2001), to discourse based models, such as Scollon and Scollon (2001). Consequently, a variety of models of intercultural adaptation have been utilised in intercultural research. In this study I relied on the theory of Bennett

and Hammer (1998). For Bennett (2005), intercultural adaptation is the process by which individuals adapt to other cultures. Most importantly, individuals have varying levels of intercultural adaptation and its most complete forms are biculturalism or multiculturalism where “people have internalized one or more cultural frames in addition to that in which they were [additionally] socialized” (Bennett, p. 25). Within this framework, intercultural adaptation is a process that can be measured in levels. The cultural cognition of participants deepens as their intercultural sensitivity and experience increases and this, in turn, affects their intercultural relationships.

- **‘Asianisation’**

In NZ the term ‘Asianisation’ has been used in media research to refer to the way that East and South-East-Asian groups are represented in the media. First employed in 1998, it was used to describe how the various individual characteristics of Asians in the print media were subverted below the main categorisation of Asian (Munshi, 1998). In this instance, ‘Asianisation’ is closely linked with ‘Orientalism’ in which, according to Said, all those who can be categorised as the ‘Oriental other’ are assigned imagined characteristics which suit the aims of the Western majority (Said, 1991). Although Said may have been referring specifically to the Middle East, the concept of Orientalism extends to the Far East, or what I call the ESEA states in this thesis.

Spoonley and Trlin (2004) also referenced ‘Asianisation’ in their media portrayal of the discourse around Asians in NZ. They found that the marked trend of news media in the late 1990s led to an irrevocable link with the term, or concept, of ‘Asian’ from both the APEC and the ASEAN regions. This gave rise to the popular colloquialism – ‘Asian immigrants’. As suggested previously, the term Asian is used regionally in this study. This is a contrast with popular discourse usage in both NZ and Australia. The popular usage is best described by Mathews (2000, p. 29):

Asian’ is a catch-all term that not only subsumes cultural, historical, linguistic and national differences, but also disregards the complex heterogeneity of contemporary circumstances of being or becoming ‘Asian’ in terms of local and global continuities and fractures.



Asianisation' has been noted in media trends in contemporary research and it has been a marked trend in the reporting of ESEA students to the general social discourse (Benson, 2006).

- **Biculturalism**

Biculturalism is a term that is difficult to accurately summarise in the context of NZ-based research because it is actively contested as a political term that has to accurately encapsulate the intentions of the researcher. At its heart, biculturalism is a relationship between two founding cultures in Aotearoa - the Māori or (indigenous peoples) and the British settlers. This relationship became official with the signing of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (Treaty of Waitangi) in 1840, but has been contested in the political, social and educational domains since then (Hayward, 2012). For researchers, this highly contested political term has to be defined to accurately represent their intentions. In this project, there is very little direct focus upon the relationship between the two founding cultures in NZ, but ESEA students are aware of some tensions between Māori and Pākehā which centre around notions of cultural identity and the establishment of dominance in a common Kiwi culture (Durie, 2005). As ESEA students are outsiders, this relationship is more accurately framed around contemporary notions of biculturalism which are typically based upon “a multi-ethnic society with an indigenous culture and with a founding document that regulates the relationship between *iwi* [or Māori tribal groups] and Crown” (Fleras and Spoonley, 1999 as cited in Hayward, 2012, p. 2) These formal structures, however, are often invisible to ESEA students who do not necessarily have a formal education in this area, and by their legal and social status as non-residents and youth are excluded from the bicultural debate. A critic might note that the Ministry of Education is focused upon biculturalism in teaching practise and this is especially important for all students (Terreni and McCallum, 2010), but this is an issue that was notion raised directly or indirectly in the ESEA student interviews.

- **Multi-ethnic groups and Multiculturalism**

Both multiculturalism and multi-ethnic groups are key concepts that lie at the heart of social identity debates in NZ (McLennan et al., 2004). As the researcher, it was important for me to engage with both terms, but to select the one that best fitted the purpose of this project. Multiculturalism is a term used to encapsulate a variety of political, historical and social debates (Phillips, 2009). For some, multiculturalism is simply the “acceptance of cultural difference generally” (Durie, 2005, p. 43), while others view it interchangeably as an explanation of a multi-ethnic identity that has been present since the 1800s with the Chinese sojourners and many other ethnic groups in NZ (Phillips, 2009). The ESEA students themselves can be viewed as another wave of this type of immigration as some of them remain here permanently. In this study, all of these ideas were inherent and summarised accurately in my chosen term, ‘multi-ethnic groups’. This choice must be made because the innocuous explanation of multiculturalism neglects the real concerns and tensions of the potentially competing needs of the different ethnic and national groups (Durie, 2005). These concerns and tensions centre on visibility, cultural customs, political representation and human rights. Multiculturalism has been discarded as the central term because to use it is to lessen the impact of biculturalism and the notion of partnership between Māori and Pākehā (Walker, 1995). Biculturalism is established in law and social practice (Hayward, 2012). The term multi-ethnic group maintains an understanding of cultural difference at the level of identification and social interaction which is consistent with the aims of this thesis.

## **CHAPTER TWO CONTEXTUALISING THE LITERATURE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

To undertake the literature review for this thesis, three primary principles were incorporated and I discuss these here as a lead in to the review. The first principle was my approach to this study. It needed to be consistent with the theoretical sociological and intercultural adaptation approaches that contextualise this research. Secondly, the material chosen for this literature review needed to provide a comprehensive background of information that is relevant to studying ESEA students. Finally, the material and discussions provided must also provide some contextual insight into existing research on ESEA students and other related research topics. To meet these three aims, a contextual literature review was chosen because it demonstrates familiarity with the topic and helps to establish the credibility that is vital in academic research (McIntyre, Durham, 2004; 2005; Neumann, 2003). A research project is not developed in isolation from the participants or the body of knowledge that it is adding to. Consequently, a contextual literature review approach was necessary to explain how and where this project relates to the developing body of knowledge around ESEA student experiences in NZ (Neumann, 2003).

Furthermore, a contextual literature review approach is consistent with the theoretical parameters set by C. Wright Mills (1959) in the sociological imagination that underpins this thesis. In the words of Mills, (1959, p.ii), “neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both”. The sociological imagination requires that the social forces that affect the individual under study need to be incorporated as much as possible because these inform the individual’s and the researcher’s underlying beliefs about their social experiences. An individual’s social experience exists somewhere between the personal troubles or private problems of the

individual, and larger social problems or the aims, actions and influences of larger social organisations, states and global groups (Mills, 1959). Mills was concerned with seven social institutions that affect the individual - government, technology, economy, family, education, religion and the media. These all affect the cultural experience of the individual in their relationships to themselves and society (Hammond and Cheney, 2009) Accordingly, the literature review had to include the wider contextual social and political forces like the globalisation of workforces and internationalisation of education, as well as the personal intercultural adaptation experiences of particular individuals, which in this case were the ESEA students. Consequently, this necessitated a broad traversal of literature in a range of different fields and topics in order to incorporate the seven institutions that affect ESEA student's cultural experience of intercultural adaptation, and to gain insight into the policy overviews and key political and cultural relationships between ESEA regions and Western regions. For this thesis, I focused on four institutions - government education, economy and family - which are more relevant. The less central institutions of technology, religion and media would have been too broad an approach to incorporate meaningfully into a single PhD thesis.

To cover the range of topics required for a contextual overview, the literature review is sectioned into three main categories. The international contextual literature is posited within the first section, titled *International Literature*. This consists of five subsections that cover the following topics: knowledge-based societies; economic rationalism and globalisation; Confucian values; collective groups and guanxi associations in the ESEA region; Australian policy and international education; and the last sub-section, international student experience, that is used to provide analytical insights and comparisons throughout this study. The second section, *Literature in NZ*, covers the literature that has been generated nationally. In this section, there are a further three sub-sections. Export Education development and the commodification of educational services; early sojourners, immigration and media discourse; and international student literature. Finally, the third main section – *Theory and Methods* – focuses on the literature that pertains to the theoretical structures and the methodological approach used in this study. These are divided into three sub-sections: theory that informs the entire study; intercultural theory that structures the methodology; and methodological processes for data collection and analysis.

## INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

To incorporate the principle of the sociological imagination (Mills, 1959) and the four institutions that are particularly important to this thesis (government, economy, family, and education), I created a macro-contextual approach to the development of knowledge-based societies and the growth of economic rationalism, as well as the general trend toward globalisation. These factors are all cornerstones of the increased number of sojourns of ESEA students to Western states generally, and in this case, NZ. These macro-contextual themes are encapsulated in the following three related, but quite separate, fields of research.

### **Knowledge based societies, economic rationalism and globalisation.**

#### ***Knowledge-based societies.***

Closely linked with the drive for international education are related requirements of a global workforce, such as lateral thinking (Latham, 2001). According to Latham, lateral thinking in a modern day workforce is an essential skill and mirrors the research and development model. Broad-based education is the most likely source of this skill and this, again, leads to a demand for international education. International education is reliant upon a range of skills and knowledge, and cultural and personal differences which necessitate inter-cultural relationships and produce the ability to think laterally. Finally, Latham suggests that a broad-based education is insurance against allowing the growth of a population of under-educated individuals who would have to be 'carried' within a knowledge-based economy. In the interests of a strong economy, providing education to most, if not all, members of society would decrease the 'dead wood'. International education offers opportunities to develop lateral thinking because of the inherent challenges of living within a foreign host-country environment.

#### ***Economic rationalism.***

The development of knowledge-based societies is a priority for many states because this is consistent with dominant ideologies that prioritise technology and 'progress'. Economic rationalism prioritises knowledge that is cost-effective and seeks to justify educational curricula in terms of work-based viability. International education has sprung up in this context and it has resulted in a prominence of business related skills.

Economic rationalism has resulted in vast changes in many Asian states (Mok and Welch, 2002). Mok and Welch outline the changes brought about in Hong Kong as a result of the pervading economic rationalism. In particular, economic rationalisation is often associated with ‘MacDonaldisation’ of educational institutions in Hong Kong - that is, creating a franchised-based learning environment where the students choose standard courses from a narrow range of options. Within international education, economic rationalisation refers to the economic benefits of obtaining and/or marketing international education for both home and host countries and states. Mok and Welch (2002). This is supported by the related Mok and Currie (2002) article, which suggests that this is a reaction to earlier grand narrative approaches which tended to overlook direct economic benefits. In the contemporary climate of economic rationalism, economic benefit is of primary importance and has led to a new language with terms such as “excellence”, “competitiveness” and “accountability” (Mok and Welch, 2002, p. 28). These terms take on a greater significance when the thrust of international education becomes linked to economic returns for minimal economic input. These terms or concepts take on an even greater importance when considering international education because they are used to justify the educational strategies that are used within the Export Education field, as outlined in the *Literature in NZ* section which follows.

In fact, within an environment based on economic rationalism, culture itself is often capitalised and this is particularly significant in the area of international education. The work of Bourdieu (1986) adds to the understanding of cultural capital and its role and function for international students. Firstly, the concept of embodied cultural capital is that which is learned and/or absorbed, and is significant in the field of understanding intercultural learning and host-country ideals. The second concept is less significant for this study because it refers to the objectified cultural capital such as books and/or items of learning or education. These principles may not have emerged significantly in this thesis because educational topics were secondary to the central theme of intercultural relationships. The institutionalised state is the final cornerstone and is central because it refers to the qualifications which are sought by the students and marketed by the educational organisations. Social capital in all its forms is important in considering ESEA student experiences and, as this thesis shows, participants are aware of seeking cultural values to improve their own future cultural capital as they sojourn. Bourdieu (1996,) would suggest that:

The volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent thus depends on the size of the network or connections, he [or she] can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected. (p. 51)

In this thesis, I map some of those connections in ESEA students' burgeoning social capital as they sojourn, or more concretely the relationships that they gain within NZ as they sojourn. This thesis is concerned with identifying the social networks created by ESEA students and analysing the impact that these networks have on their intercultural adaptation. In turn, the value placed on these social networks is governed or influenced to some extent by greater global processes so that this literature review must now turn to globalisation.

### ***Globalisation.***

One of the major difficulties faced when interpreting a study that utilises concepts of globalisation is that it can be problematic to define exactly how that author is using the concept. Globalisation is a term which has several major theoretical branches of understanding and usage. Cochrane and Pain (2004) offer four main interpretations. Firstly, globalisation is often used to mean the stretched social relations which happen as relationships between regional, transcontinental and inter-regional bodies are formed. An example is the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) that forms multilateral economic relationships and regional priorities for 21 different states (*About APEC*, n.d.). This includes the political, social and cultural relationships which can be understood and interpreted on the basis of a specialised education which Cochrane and Pain (2004) suggest is most often sought through international education. More specifically, the particular types of skills needed to negotiate these political, social and cultural relationships are most frequently provided through international education. The second concept that the term globalisation refers to is a process of flows or interconnectedness. International education mirrors this process by increasing flows of students between countries. While some students may gain qualifications to deal with the economic demands and opportunities, others may choose to do so as an opportunity to leave their own home-country. Thirdly, globalisation often implies increasing interpenetration: individuals from distant places are brought together - for example an international research and development project where researchers from several countries work together. Finally, the fourth use of globalisation refers to global infrastructures which operate outside their own national boundaries, such as multinational corporations (MNCs).

For Giddens (1999), globalisation is the result of increasing connectedness around the world, and these connections result in economic, political and social links. This process operates as a simultaneous two-way interface that operates in theory across all globalised processes, of which international education is just one. In practice, international education emerges simultaneously as both a cause and as a result of globalisation. Stretched global relationships between states increases the need for international education experiences because the students gain experience studying and working abroad. This raises the bar, so that subsequent students must continue to study internationally. Furthermore, while globalisation may result in certain cultural spreads, it also brings with it increasing local nationalisms within state boundaries, sub-nationalisms, smaller regional groups and tribes, and ethnic or kinship groups such as the Han group prevalent in China, Macau and Singapore (Giddens, 1999). Several educational theorists believe that increasing international education will increase cultural spread and interconnectedness (McConnell, 2000, McCabe 2001, and Huang, 2003). Nevertheless, the implications of Giddens' theory point to an outcome in which the students cling together in national factions and become increasingly nationalistic in their ideals. Importantly, Giddens also offers the observation that traditions are not always formed in the past, but are constantly invented and reinvented to the extent that they gain mythological proportions in the present.

Colonisation by the West is another historical factor that has had significant impact upon a number of states in ESEA region (Simone, 2001; Steven, 1989). It forms a significant part of the history throughout ESEA states because it involved a complete political restructuring throughout the region. This also wrought vast social changes and eliminated sometimes centuries-old evolutions of state structures. Colonisation also impacts upon identity, as shown by Hall (2003, 1996), who focuses on cultural difference for diasporic groups. In terms of this study, it was important to note two of Hall's key ideas. Firstly, Hall (1996) focuses on cultural difference or 'otherisation' for diasporas, and this is evident among ESEA students throughout this thesis. His later work builds on this notion and expands to cultural identity development for diasporic groups in Western states (Hall, 2003). Though ESEA students do not themselves reach this point, the Kiwi-Asians who have been here for one or more generations become a



cultural reference point for ESEA diaspora, or provide a method for ESEA students to identify more readily with New Zealanders.

Global citizenship is a necessity in this context and many commentators say this should be incorporated into educational syllabi (Tsolidis, 2002). To be equipped for global citizenship, students are required to function in a variety of cultures. Globalisation is then characterised by increasing mobilisation of individuals across borders. Many individuals and families live in several states. This places pressure on international education to provide knowledge structures that assist students and recognise their global mobility.

A continual theme alluded to throughout this thesis is the requirement for many states to improve their work-forces through education and, in particular, tertiary training. This theme is based on the supply of specific work based skills and competencies for contemporary work-forces. International education can be seen as the result of specific governments' attempts to up-skill their emergent workforces. While I cannot provide a specific set of ESEA regional workplace requirements because of space constraints in this literature review, I do provide some insight into the economic and political forces that propel ESEA to seek international education in the following Australian policy and international education sub-section (p. 41).

Similarly, examples of Chinese internationalisation are important to this literature review. Outlining the process from 1978 to 1992, Huang (2003) points out that Chinese internationalisation is often overlooked by Western theorists. Initially, the government played a role in sending Chinese undergraduates and graduates overseas to learn required skills (Sidhu, 2002). However, in 1984 there was a distinct shift away from governmental funding and into private funding. At this time the Chinese Ministry of Education moved away from Soviet based models and prioritised Western models and the English language. More recently, in 1993 the Chinese Ministry of Education began negotiating relationships between Chinese and foreign tertiary institutions (Ministry of Education, 2007). Foreign lecturer numbers have increased as a direct result, and many science courses are now taught with significant portions in the English language.

Having examined a portion of macro-contextual themes which are used throughout this thesis, it is now time to turn to the next section of international literature that provided the important building blocks for this project. This thesis is characterised by a divide between Western regional cultural understandings and Eastern regional cultural understandings. To make a closer examination into this area, it was necessary to include literature on ESEA regional cultural characteristics in order to interpret a number of the broader cultural misunderstandings between myself and ESEA students.

### **Confucian values, collective groups and guanxi associated with ESEA region.**

It is problematic to assume that there are overall ESEA regional or what might be described colloquially as 'Asian' cultural characteristics, because this is a vast region. But the literature that follows in this section suggests that there is a case to be made for some shared cultural characteristics that unite in particular some of the Chinese ethnic and national groups in this study from and includes Malaysia, Taiwan and Macau as well as those from the East Asian states such as South Korea and Japan that originate from overlapping histories and geographical boundary variances over the centuries (Simone, 2001). This section reviews the key literature that investigates these shared cultural characteristics.

#### ***Confucian values and collective family groups.***

The Western perception of Asian shared regional values is premised on the notion of shared philosophical and religious beliefs (Simone, 2001). To frame this, the work of Simone is used to explain that the religions associated with Asia are Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and a secular tradition of Confucianism. In particular, both Buddhism and Confucianism stretch across most of the East Asian region and have filtered through succeeding diasporic waves throughout the South-East Asian region. It is this close association with the diasporic ethnic Chinese as well as the associations in Japan, China and South Korea that have made it so essential a component of interest for this study. Religion is not a central facet of this thesis, but there is regular reference to Confucianism. Confucianism, according to Hwang (1999) and Simone (2001), involves the belief system of filial piety. Within filial piety, the father is the head of the household, with the mother deferring to him ultimately, though she may disagree on some matters of lesser importance. The children, however, are reciprocally bound in

duty and deference to respect both of their parents. A family model such as this one can be critiqued immediately because this model is not represented often in reality (Hwang, 1999) as families are not always wholly representative of the three generations associated with Confucianism. Despite this, in China many young couples continue to live with one or both parents, and this suggests the filial piety models are structurally followed in practise (Ting and Chiu, 2002). But this is the ideal that is used in the model, which is then generalized to the community, city and state, with the ruler as the ultimately respected leader to be deferred to in all important matters (Hwang, 1999). Most importantly, this model becomes part of the belief system and identity of individuals born in Confucian-based societies, and is especially prevalent in China and South Korea (Hwang, 1999). Research in China by Yue and Ng (1999) suggests that for older people in Beijing there is a consistent belief that younger people will endorse filial piety. Younger people, Yu and Ng explain, are less certain of this, but the older people in their sample suggest that younger people will grow into it as they gain adult experiences.

De Bary (2000), and Leung Koch and Lu (2002) concur that Confucianism is not a norm for East and South-East Asian individuals, but an aspirational ideal. Confucianism, as explained by De Bary, has long been out of favour in China, in particular, but also to some extent throughout the ESEA region. In recent times, however, Confucianism has been viewed by policy-makers as an ideal to unite the Asian region. This neo-Confucianism does contain elements of Western individualism in that the individual is encouraged to accumulate wealth and to pursue his or her ambitions, but is united in working toward a model of group harmony because the community should benefit from these efforts.

### ***Guanxi and the ESEA region.***

Another widespread cultural characteristic that is often described as central to intercultural understanding of Chinese nationals or ethnicities is *guanxi*. Guanxi is described and interrogated in the work of King (1994), and is most superficially understood as the process by which one individual is able to elicit or call upon another for a favour due to shared connections. But, in more depth, guanxi can also mean that the two individuals are then locked into a reciprocal arrangement where that favour and others can be drawn upon at any time and without limit. King also explains that guanxi is not simplistic, and includes a deeper layer whereby an individual or representative from one group may be able to call upon a group or community to lend aid for larger

projects. This process includes an understanding that the individual requiring this aid is aware of the need of the individuals or group that she or he is requesting aid from, and will incorporate this within their project. In short, the welfare of the group is the responsibility of the individual requiring aid. For all groups working with members of the Chinese diasporas, a basic understanding of *guanxi* is essential (Lew and Wong, 2004). Lew and Wong explain that many clan associations, or the extended networks of lineage, often operate well beyond the Chinese mainland and are particularly significant throughout the South-East-Asian region. One extra factor that Lew and Wong believe enhances these linkages is the need for members of diasporas to retain an emotional or geographical link with the Chinese mainland or other homeland.

A final theme that is important in this section of the literature review is policy and international education in Australia. These form a direct comparison with the review of the policy and international literature that follows in the *Literature in NZ* section.

### **Australian policy and international education**

Australian policy and international education is important to the study of ESEA students in NZ as many of the social conditions are likely to be similar. This is also true of the international literature more generally in the Western states, but the inclusion of the Australian policy literature provides a more similar framework due to its perceived proximity by the students, and the international education arena in which Trans-Tasman relationships are the norm, rather than the exception.

The premise of an international education market is dependent on there being a requirement for international education. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) recognise this factor and attempt to outline the 'push' factors that impel international students to seek education, as well as the 'pull' factors or the attraction of the study destination. Push factors include such variables as the expense of domestic education in many countries, the competitive nature of postgraduate study, and the importance of English as an international business language (Marginson, 2002, 2008). Pull factors are cited to be the relatively low cost of Australian tertiary study, the quality of Australian education, and a strong support network from the Australian government (Marginson, 2002, 2008). As 'pull factors' are controllable for specific international student markets where 'push factors' are beyond the controls of host-countries, it is unsurprising that the

Australian literature focuses on improving services and regulations for international students.

### **International student experience literature**

This section is based on relevant studies with findings that are applicable to ESEA students in NZ. There are some key emergent themes in international education, and these lend support to the basis of this study which has been to assume that the students from various ESEA regions experience a similar process of intercultural adaptation that can be generalised across each ethnic group. This section consists of a range of literature on ESEA and international student challenges such as: career challenges, sojourn challenges, and social themes for university and tertiary students that are inherent in those experiences.

#### ***ESEA student career challenges.***

A study by Wang, Sing, Bird and Ives (2008), undertaken in Australia, found that a group of Taiwanese students were focused on the challenge of learning within a foreign and sometimes seemingly hostile host-country environment. The various challenges that these Taiwanese students experienced as foreigners, or 'other' were seen as opportunities to develop their coping skills and to enhance their understanding of the Australian host-country. Wang et al. were more focused upon critiquing the various failures of the service providers, which is shown in their conclusions, rather than the upbeat attitude of the nursing students who participated in the study. Resistance to immigrants by host-country groups within a multicultural workplace is a theme that is given depth by Tilbury and Colic-Peisker (2006). Tilbury and Colic-Peisker explain that some middle-managers in Australia are thought to discriminate against immigrant workers. Rather than creating an issue around the immigrants' ethnic capabilities, many Australian employers, Tilbury and Colic-Peisker suggest, are more likely to downplay the immigrant applicants' credentials and over emphasise the requirements of English within the jobs. To support this further, the empirical study by Bodycott (2009) surveys the factors that make destinations for studying abroad more desirable to 251 parents of Chinese international students and 100 Chinese international students. Bodycott suggests that for the students in their study, the opportunity to work and gain relevant work experience is a top priority, while quality programmes and security rate to a lesser extent.

***ESEA student and international student sojournment challenges.***

Zhang and Dixon (2003) show that Asian students are reluctant to seek help during the early stages of their acculturation. As they acculturate, Zhang and Dixon indicate that the students are more willing to get help. One reason for this, the authors posit, could be that the health industries in the USA are dominated by non-Asian practitioners and/or immigrants that do not understand the students' home-country experiences. The students are likely to be in 'culture shock' and they may have to go through a period of social withdrawal that is characterised by extreme anxiety (Pyvis and Chapman, 2005). Most (if not all) participants in this study remembered a period like this. This is shown in Raciti's (2012) research on first year students and their transitions to Australian universities, which offered a perspective on how to analyse in what ways ESEA students in this study adapted to the new home-country environment and Culture shock was prevalent among them.

International student conditions are important to this study and there have been a number of empirical studies on their conditions. For many ESEA students, speaking and learning in English as a second language can be daunting. Mgquwashu (2005) reflects on learning English as a language, as well as the study of English literature. Learning English language use, as well as attempting to learn the technical language required for literature critique, showed up some significant gaps for the South African university that Mgquwashu attended. The university offered English support aimed at students studying computer science, and was not focused or able to cope with the special requirements and vocabulary of English literature. Although it is outside of the ESEA region, this study shows that the international students' requirements for English language support can be complex. Mgquwashu felt this was a secondary reminder of what he felt to be assumptions that only those with English as a native tongue would be interested in or possibly worthy of, the study of English literature. This, Mgquwashu felt, was a barrier to his personal success. Although this was actually a failure to provide adequate services for ESL students, in the absence of more support, Mgquwashu struggled to find solutions. This need for mutual support is borne out in Chinese international students' experiences where the challenges faced by the students forced a solution to a common problem with mathematics. The work of An (2008) provides some insight into how Chinese students are used to working in class groups to solve

mathematics problems from a young age, and this adds depth to their mathematics understanding.

One element in the Sovic (2008) report that was especially important for this project was how the process of stereotyping by host-country social groups could obscure some real challenges for ESEA students because of the tendency for 'Asianisation'. Assumed difficulties with language, rote learning style, and passivity meant that this group were sometimes misunderstood in regard to their practical concerns and their need for study assistance. But one area where many of the Sovic sample diverged from this current project is that those international students were focused on integration with the domestic United Kingdom students because they wanted to exchange design ideas and utilise them in their creative applications. Yet the day to day concerns are very relevant in this project, because in both cases the international student samples are experiencing a foreign host-country environment.

One example of the competition to educate young people from the ESEA region can be seen with the work of Lee and Koo (2006), who explain that many South Korean families are very comfortable with sending their children to foreign host-countries for an education. Lee and Koo (p. 53) suggest that this ease of acceptance is due to the advent of the "wild geese" fathers or male workers who sojourn internationally for indeterminate periods in their work. For these families, having their children experience study abroad is an extension of an already accepted convention. Effectively, the idea of living apart in different states is a common experience for many South Korean families and both children and father may be living separately from the mother.

Frey and Roysircar (2006) look more directly into acculturation for East-Asian international students in comparison with South Asian international student groups in a United States of America (US) university context. One key finding by Frey and Roysircar was that East-Asian international students needed more direction in locating and receiving assistance, and they held themselves back from expressing their need for help. South Asian students were more forthcoming in these arenas, but those same students also noted more incidences of resistance by the domestic students. Whether defensively or by nature, East-Asian students were perceived by both South Asian and domestic students to be more withdrawn in their manner, and this perceived lack of social

initiative is a common theme in this literature review. For this thesis, the element of withdrawal and withholding on the part of international students is relevant in NZ contexts. For intercultural adaptation to take place, ESEA students need to be open or interested in intercultural contact between themselves and the host-country context in NZ. Therefore, literature that examines these patterns of withdrawal from intercultural contact is relevant to this thesis.

A second common element in the international student literature that offers insight for this study is the homestay experience. Schmidt-Rhineheart and Knight (2004) examined three key themes, or areas, in their study abroad programmes for US students in Mexico and Spain. These were homestay adjustment assessments, homestay problems, and a reflection on the advantages of homestay experiences. Despite the ethnic differences from ESEA students, the US students vocalised many of the same challenges expressed by the ESEA students in this study. Overwhelmingly, the students reflected upon their lack of interaction with homestay families and their regrets around this (Gill, 2007; Schmidt-Rinehart and Knight, 2004). Utilising the findings in these studies is important because the researcher and respondents in this thesis were able to communicate fluently in the same language. A broad report executed for international students at a performing arts college in a London University contributed some insights into the international student experience (Sovic, 2008). Sovic suggested that the students talked of a need for educational relevance and a sense of achievement to make the stress of international study worthwhile.

A review article by Beaty and Alexeyev (2008) provides insight into the symptoms of low esteem that can emerge as a result of school bullying and how this will become evident in the students' scholastic performance. Preliminary research was to be applied to homosexual students, yet, these principles are important in this thesis because bullying is an important challenge faced by international students and can result in similar outcomes during the secondary school experiences many undergo. Khoury-Kassabri, Astor and Benbenishty (2008), examined the prevalence of bullying by staff at an Israeli secondary school, and explain how difficult it can be for the students to report it and for other staff to detect the bullying or its resulting symptoms in the students. International students also commonly face a number of dangers associated with their youth and lack of cultural experience (Nyland and Forbes-Mewett, 2008), and these are



important because several of the participants did report some anxiety-producing situations, and, in some cases out-right social danger. A review article by Zygmunt-Fillawalk and Clark (2007) provides some insight into promoting multicultural awareness for educators. Though not based on empirical evidence, this literature provides some insight into the reflective process that could be informing the teachers who are successfully interacting with the international students.

***Social themes for university and tertiary students.***

In this project, the East and South-East Asian students were largely in the youth categories or emergent adults. The relative youth of ESEA students was an important consideration in this thesis because relative inexperience and/or lack of adult developments forms a “private orbit” (Mills, 1959, p. 3) or a perceptual limitation for them. Emergent adults are defined as a separate category from late adolescence because it involves more adult choices (Arnett, 2004). The work of Arnett on US domestic students and emergent adults in the workforce is an important addition to the literature because it offers a definition and breakdown of this important life-stage. Compared to Arnett’s study, the ESEA students are of similar ages and stages of experience in their lives because they are stationed away from family and their home-country and must take initial daily responsibility for themselves. Importantly, this theory provides insight into the major challenges of negotiating intimate relationships and friendships that define emergent values, establishing initial career steps and grappling with the formation of their spiritual beliefs as adults. These four key themes were used throughout the analysis of this project.

Arnett’s theory cannot be used in isolation because his theory was developed for use in a US sample, which deviates from this case in many ways, especially the ethnic categorisation of his participants. Ethnic differences are complex, and often less formal than nationality categorisation which tends to be clear-cut. Using theory generated for a different sample population as a comparison necessitates a clear understanding of the differences between domestic processes and intercultural processes. Jandt (2007) provides some clarification of these different forces by explaining how intercultural adaptation and marginalisation differ. Intercultural adaptation involves the gradual adjustment of an individual to a host-country and is effectively a re-socialisation. It is experienced by sojourners and first-generation immigrants. Marginalisation is an independent process, and is the subjugation of a minority group by a (or several)

majority groups. It is possible however, for sojourners and immigrants to suffer marginalisation in a host-country as well as dealing with the challenges of intercultural adaptation and some of these have already been outlined (see, for example, Beaty and Alexeyev, 2008).

Literature on mature students is less focused on psychological development because this is not as relevant to the international students' experiences in general. Yet the experiences of mature ESEA students are important in this study. Accordingly, this literature review incorporates a small cross-section of international literature. A study by Ramsay and Barker (2007) comparing mature students to younger students reveals that there are significant differences in the perception of these two international student groups. In this case, age was not the primary indicator of adjustment to the first year at university, but the level of social support offered by family, friends and/or social networks was. Marriage and/or relationships, according to Higgins, Zheng, Liu and Sun (2002), can make a significant difference to the way that the ESEA students negotiate their first year adjustment, and this can also impact on their gendered behaviour in public.

To extend this, the work of Leder and Forgasz (2004), has been included in this review. Leder and Forgasz conducted an empirical study on mature international students in an Australian university. Their findings provide a map of some obstacles experienced by many of the students and these were: financial hardship, loneliness, university performance, and language. As mature students, they were conscious of the depth of communication that they were lacking, and tended to be highly sensitised to language barriers. This publication used quantitative data which is a subset of a much larger study of over 600 students, and represents sound information providing insight into international students' overall experience.

Having looked at relevant themes that are found in the international literature, this review turns to the national literature. This section began with the dominant discourses, or macro-context within international education and the need for lateralisation and social connections in the globalising workforces which are the many themes (specific to ESEA states) that foster the requirements of international education. The focus was then refined down to address the literature regarding the experiences of international

students, that was used to locate and support the findings in this thesis. Having incorporated a range of international literature, it is now important to examine the NZ literature.

## **NZ LITERATURE SECTION**

This section maintains the integrity of the contextual structure and the theoretical paradigm established by the sociological imagination (Mills 1959). According to Mills, history informs the perceptions of the individual under study as well as the researcher. Thus, the domestic literature review begins with the macro-contextual themes and refines the process downwards towards the specific studies on international students in NZ. The following sub-section provides an overview of the policy development of Export Education in NZ, and then moves onto the relevant social discourse that provides the backdrop of associations that many New Zealanders/ethnic groups have of the immigrants and students from the ESEA region. Finally, this section then refines down to focus on relevant research on international students in NZ.

### **Export Education development and the commodification of educational services.**

The previous section identified the macro-contextual elements within international education as well as some day to day challenges experienced by international students. Having established these broader parameters I am now able to investigate a more nuanced investigation into NZ based literature and focus on educational policy and international education studies.

The presence of East and South-East-Asian students as the antidote to institutional financial shortfalls in the education system in NZ can be traced back to the 1984 general election (Boston, 1996; Kelsey, 1995). The fourth Labour Government rose to power and the state owned enterprises were restructured. 'Rogernomics,' an economic policy to reduce government involvement in health and education services and to privatise these areas, was deployed as a solution to the economic tensions of the time. The profits from asset sales were used to provide a temporary relief from national debt (Kelsey, 1995). The rationale for this change was that a deregulated industry with less control

would generate individual private funding for health and education services, rather than their continued reliance on government subsidies. This was part of a much broader move to deregulate industry and remove direct governmental controls.. As Kelsey (1995, p. 4) has suggested, “Tertiary institutions were recast as delivering private benefits to fee-paying students, in order to justify reduced government funding and force the institutions to respond to market demand.” Two significant features emerged in the NZ education system; the first was a diverse range of privatised educational institutions offering courses in such subjects as English language, golf, computer skills and hairdressing (Maharey, 2002; Peters, 2001). The second feature was that international students were aggressively sought as a market. As a result their numbers increased, so that their presence became commonplace in both public and private institutions, and from primary school through to adult tertiary level institutions (Bennett, 1998). By itself, this literature lacks context, and this is provided by the addition of further work by Kelsey (1999). International students alongside immigrants were desperate solutions that provided quick-fixes, but ultimately that did not change the outcome for the economic deficits in NZ. Kelsey suggests that international students were seen as an adjunct, rather than an integral consideration for educational institutions. In contrast, private institutions viewed international students as a possible expanding market. These two opposing views have led to tensions between the private and state regulated aspects of the education system.

A range of government-focused research towards managing and building the sector began to emerge, and will now be briefly summarised. The first project of this nature was the Massey University investigation by Snook et al. (1999) that examined the growth potential of international students. It noted that there was room for growth throughout NZ which could benefit smaller centres as well as larger ones (Snook et al.,1999). A more official report followed that examined the specifics of how the Ministry of Education might develop this sector and place some controls over the rapidly emerging private Export Education industry (Malcolm and Tarling, 2000). Unlike its predecessor, the Ministry of Education report (2000) also showed that international education in NZ could not be isolated to the Asian-Pacific regions. Further work in the area of off-shore education was included in a Ministry of Education (MOE) stock-take (International Policy and Development Unit, 2002; Malcolm and Tarling, 2007). This stock-take (Ministry of Education, 2002) included public and private institutions that

participated in off-shore education programmes with overseas institutions and private initiatives.

The next wave of literature dealt with the need for pastoral care and the achievement of establishing legislative protection for international students. There was a build-up of stories about ‘unsupervised’ students gathering momentum in the media (Baker and Benson, 2008; Benson, 2005, 2006; McFedries, 2002; Spoonley and Trlin, 2004), and the MOE began to assert controls over the private industry (Ministry of Education, 2005). Policies for Export Education began to interact with lessened demand from the Asian-Pacific region and the trend towards fewer undergraduate enrolments began. There was also the growth of off-shore educational partnerships in 2005 (Ministry of Education, 2005). These historical reports have been very important guides to understanding the policy-based aspects of this project. They have also helped to make sense of the discourse that surrounds the international students and the growth and shape of Export Education. More recent developments in this area were formalised by the MOE (2007b) in their strategy from 2007 to 2012 where postgraduate students would be sought and offered study incentives to bring them to NZ.

Equally importantly, the MOE had a profound impact on the international education industry in NZ. For the MOE, NZ’s political relationship with APEC influenced the development of the international student market. In 2001, the MOE produced *Export Education*, a report that looked primarily at developing international education in NZ (2000). Within this report, APEC is referred to frequently because the report was aimed at assembling data for tertiary institutions and private education institutions that are based on the aims of APEC. APEC classifies international education into three categories: consumption abroad or cases involving full fee paying students in the country where education is offered; cross border supply, or distance education, where courses are supplied extramurally; and commercial presence in which there is a partner agreement with existing tertiary institutes. (Ministry of Education, 2004b). A related, but not central, adjunct to this material is the manner in which local government, in this case the (then named) Auckland City Council, began to support these endeavours (Robinson and Vuletich, 2007). To that effect an organisation called Study Auckland was initiated, and its role was to reinforce Auckland’s access to the international student market across all levels of educational organisations.

But a closer look at the benefits of Export Education revealed why the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) was, and continues to be, involved in educational policy. At an estimated \$2.3 billion dollars per year in 2007/8, international students are considered to be big business (Butcher, 2009; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2007). Around 118,000 international students from 2000 to 2006 have contributed this amount through tuition and service costs (such as accommodation and transport) to the economy as a whole (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2007). International students pay full fees in tertiary institutions, and have a bolstering effect on the local cities and towns by using facilities and services. Importantly, international students contributed an estimated \$1.1b to the economy in 2001 alone, and this has brought a considerable economic boost to city regions, particularly Auckland and Christchurch (Asia 2000 Foundation, 2002, 2003). Furthermore, employment opportunities are created through the education and care of international students. International education has been developed in NZ through a range of international trade agreements and these will be outlined in the following sections. The following literature explains and contextualises the role of APEC. Free Trade Agreements (FTA) and Closer Economic Partnerships (CEP) are then examined.

An important FTA between NZ and China was completed in 2008 (Clark, 2005; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, n.d.), and resulted in an enhanced bilateral trading relationship between China and NZ. Within the documentation there is reference to Chinese students choosing NZ as a preferred destination, and that the outcome of this could be extremely profitable for NZ international education because China has such a large population base (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2003). Chinese students prior to the FTA made up 32% of the international student totals and have remained strong contributors at around 24% from 2008 – 2011 (Ministry of Education, 2013). This was subsequently followed through in the emerging bilateral agreement drawn up between NZ and China in April of 2008 (MFAT, n.d.). The eight universities and training establishments are located in NZ which is alluded to by China as a ‘most favoured nation’, and there is an active scheme to work together in a joint venture to accept qualifications between these two states. Private institutions are not recognised as such, but if the schemes meet the standards of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, then they are included (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade,

n.d.). Interestingly, these are described mainly with reference to existing tertiary relationships and private education providers. The rapid expansion of this industry is mentioned, but there is little specific reference to the existing international education market. Exchange programmes, on the other hand, are listed extensively. These include the Higher Education Exchange Programme (HEEP), media programme, collaborative research programmes, and business fellowships. It is important to see that the international student market is considered as only one sector of the international education market in relation to China. The FTA means that Export Education in NZ now has more potential to claim greater market share in the expansive Chinese international education market industry (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2003).

Having explained the policy developments that have led to the growth of Export Education in NZ and the presence of the ESEA students in NZ universities, this review now turns toward studies of the social discourses and immigration narratives. These are important because they affect the attitudes of various ethnic groups to one-another in NZ.

### **Early sojourners, immigration and social discourse**

Since the colonial period of the 1840s onwards, there has been considerable focus in NZ on immigration, and immigrant groups have often served as scapegoats and attracted immense attention. Identifying the different ethnic communities in NZ is important because ESEA students are located within a discourse where immigration and sojourning groups are the norm rather than the exception. Greif (1995) challenges the inherent assumption that Pākehā (i.e., non Māori) in NZ are a single homogenous mass. Instead, ethnic groups have been created from successive waves of immigrants from many states throughout the European and Asian as well as the Pacific regions. Recent debates have centred on East-Asia immigrants and this approach is common to the way in which NZ Pākehā society has handled immigration since the 1800s (Greif, 1995). Regular waves of immigration have brought immigrants from Europe, such as those from Yugoslavia and Poland. The Pacific Islands sent many immigrants originating from Samoa, the Cook Islands, Tonga and Niue. Immigrants have also come from the Middle Eastern states. Sub-groups and religions have also brought increasing diversity, and these include people of Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, and Islamic faiths – all of which

have had profound influences on NZ. Greif offers an overall summation that serves as a basis to question assimilative narratives of the British, or colonial culture, from the United Kingdom, and to look toward the diverse range of cultures and sub-groups in NZ. Palat (1996) provides an historical account that the awareness of 'Asians' as a group has actually become somewhat confused because some of these groups have migrated from the Pacific to NZ, and this is evident in the case of South-Asian Fijians.

From an *iwi*-centred perspective (Māori tribe-based), Walker (1995) questions the benefit of encouraging a wide spread of Asian immigration. For Walker, East-Asians are a part of the *Tau-iwi* or Pākehā, and their presence in large numbers challenges the balance of a bicultural society. There has often been considerable debate in NZ on the topic of bi-culturalism, with some academics, researchers and government bodies suggesting that this is effectively a multicultural society (See for example Spoonley and Trlin, 2004). But they also suggest that there is a special emphasis or importance given to the political and social concerns of Māori as an indigenous group (Pearson, 1996). Some Māori are concerned that new immigrant groups will reduce their status as partners in a bicultural state which will lead to even more social injustices. By adding more pressure to mainstream society, Walker feels that the needs and rights of Māori may become overlooked. Māori are under considerable pressure, fighting against the majority mainstream (comprised of the dominant Pākehā and other ethnic groups) in order to exert their political presence in NZ, and the struggle for basic rights and political representation in a 'Pākehā' mainstream majority is a primary concern. With the introduction of yet more "tau-iwi", or Pākehā, Walker fears that the political influence of Māori could become weaker, and the perspectives of Māori could be thrust even further into the background as the stronger Asian voices emerge in mainstream culture. This leads to a closer examination of some of the important tensions for ESEA ethnic groups.

One important study on Asian immigrants was conducted by Vasil and Yoon (1996). It was an important study during its time (the mid-1990s) because it began to challenge the notion of a single Asian cultural group. They explain that this monist concept is applied from outside by other cultural and ethnic groups in NZ. Immigrants from different countries, such as South Korea and Japan for example, have little in common with one another, do not share a language, and may not even share religious or cultural



beliefs. Therefore, their needs for social support and acceptance are likely to vary, and there is a call for more specific understanding on the part of policy makers and governmental agencies.

Asian immigrant groups have long been vulnerable to hounding by the NZ media. According to Munshi (1998), this can be linked to key political agendas such as in the case of Winston Peters, a Member of Parliament (MP) who represented the National Party in the years 1990 – 1993 and later established the New Zealand First Party. Munshi explains that Peters was able to utilise public fears and uncertainties around Asian immigrants by introducing a polarised debate of burgeoning numbers of Asians utilising already depleted public resources, and placing the established social groups in NZ in social jeopardy. Linkages with Asian immigrants were so persistent that Munshi was able to identify a new term or concept of ‘Asianisation’ that has been observed and utilised at key points in this thesis. It is also an idea that has persisted into media debates today (Mok, 2006; Rasanathan, 2005).

Public uncertainty about the sudden increase of Asian immigrants in NZ was the focus of the report commissioned by the Asia 2000 Foundation (Asia New Zealand Foundation, 2002b). These fears, the Asia 2000 Foundation suggests, may be a result of the sudden increase of East-Asia immigrants since the 1990s. Closer examination of the census figures bears this out as the ‘Asian’ population, or those peoples from the ESEA regions and the South-Asian regions, has risen by 50% from 1991 to 2001. Statistics NZ shows these figures in 1991 as 33,348 and rising to 110,298 in 2001 (2002). These figures differ slightly from those used in Chapter One (see Table 1, p. 4), supplied by Education New Zealand (2010) but the peak of ESEA student numbers was 57,000 in 2003/4 which had dropped to 33,803 by 2007/2008 (Education New Zealand, 2010).

It is clear that ESEA students have not operated in a social vacuum, and that there are a number of social factors that have influenced their intercultural acceptance. For this reason, it is now time to look more closely into the research on international students in NZ, and to provide an overview of its’ relevant themes.

## **International student literature**

Studies on ESEA students have been a significant focus for export education and an area of curiosity for many emergent researchers. International students have been a significant focus of educational and policy research, and much of this has centred on the vast pool of East-Asian students. A number of comprehensive studies have been commissioned by the MOE and produced by interested researchers. Rather than cover the entire range, which is broad and based on industry concerns, this review contains a cross-section of the most relevant research – as well as a synopsis of the different research approaches, beginning with the most recent.

Verbitsky (1998) explored the difficulties that international students experience while studying in NZ. Based on first year students, that study discusses the day to day difficulties faced by students, including inadequate bus routes and the difficulty of finding familiar food. These are common concerns for any group entering a new city and/or host-country environment. But Verbitsky also notes that the Asian students report the difficulties of interacting with unhelpful and sometimes hostile host-country individuals. This shows that the difficulties of intercultural resistance reported by Trinh continued to be experienced 32 – 35 years later by the respondents in the Verbitsky study. A result of this could be that the students return to their home countries with an unfavourable impression of cities with poor infrastructure and a limited ability to supply cheap and appropriate cuisine, and this will impact upon their sojourn experiences. More realistically, however, the students who experience intercultural resistance may remain in relative isolation during this important sojourn period. Ultimately, this isolation and withdrawal from intercultural contact deprives both host-country social groups and international students of the opportunity to engage in intercultural communication. Reflections on the difficulties of international students and, in particular, Chinese students have become another familiar theme in NZ-based literature on international students.

Ward and Masgoret (2004) looked into international student experiences in their Ministry of Education study. In this study, the international students feel that the problem lies with domestic students who are often withdrawn or difficult to make social contact with. As this study was largely conducted by questionnaire, the respondents were not given the opportunity to discuss this resistance in-depth. Zhang and Brunton

(2007) also studied a combination of social and educational adaptation for Chinese students. As is common with Chinese students, there was a high level of intercultural avoidance. The respondents, however, suggested that they did experience intercultural tension with the host-country social groups. This work is useful for this project because it investigates Chinese students over a number of PTEs and two universities.

Classroom performance and comfort among Chinese international students at the Waikato Business School is explored in the work of Holmes (2004). A qualitative study into 13 students over 18 months, it found that the students did not cope well with the learning environment in NZ. Discomfort resulted in difficulty with speaking, listening, reading and writing as the students were not comfortable with sharing their feelings and opinions, or understanding Western requirements to do so. This and other problems relating to intercultural difficulties are discussed by Holmes. Research of this nature is important to the delivery of quality education to Chinese students and provides some key points for educationalists to incorporate into future curricula. This research is supported by a study on differing learning styles where the domestic students cite language barriers and lack of participation by Asian students as the cause of the lack of intercultural adaptation (Bird and Holmes, 2005). Bird and Holmes in their University of Waikato study (2005) suggest that the Waikato domestic students found the Asian international students to be withdrawn and, in some cases, unwilling to perform their duties in group work. Furthermore, the domestic students feel that language is a more substantial intercultural barrier than the literature on international students' experiences appears to suggest. This theme persists in international student literature, and a recent study in Australia and NZ shows that intercultural miscommunication inhibits the process of intercultural relationships between international students and host-country groups (Latif, Bhatti, Maitlo, Nazar, and Shaikh, 2012).

Customer service surveys also echo these same themes. For example, Walker (2001) examined the functioning of a range of students from seven PTEs in NZ and noted the specific requirements of these students. Seven important ideals emerge from their study:

- The teacher must be friendly, courteous and knowledgeable.
- The milieu of the school must also be comfortable and welcoming.
- Their homestay arrangements need to be efficient and comfortable.

- There must be systems in place to gain client feedback.
- The service-scope or the ability to service their clients/students must be efficient.
- Communication with the language school must be possible and the school “approachable”.
- The students must be tested and placed in the correct class.

These are ideals, but they are also areas in which the PTE can fail significantly to provide customer satisfaction.

The literature in this section has focused on international student satisfaction. But, beyond the notion of satisfaction, is the deeper concept of intercultural adaptation. Berno and Ward (2003) have studied educational adaptation by East-Asian international students. This is a longitudinal set of surveys measuring the adaptation of Asian students to both the educational environment and the cross-cultural environment in NZ. Within this study, there are a number of NZ universities and they survey students at various stages of their study cycle or sojourn. Berno and Ward present a range of the impressions that Asian students give of New Zealanders and NZ society. Their recommendations include a need for greater institutional support and they remind the reader that 41.2% of Asian students “never feel completely accepted by New Zealanders” (p. 12). These findings provide a platform to begin qualitative explorations of the experiences that the East-Asian students are gaining of New Zealanders.

Newall and Daldy’s (2004) satisfaction survey among international students at AUT University (AUT) provides key industry data. These surveys analyse the satisfaction that international students experience with AUT student support services. Importantly, these reports offer background demographics which allow a profile of ‘typical’ international students to be built up by future researchers. Also, the on-going nature of this research allows for, and monitors, small attitude changes of international students at AUT over time. While this report is centred on AUT students and their satisfaction with AUT specifically, the difficulties encountered by international students may be relevant to other international students in similar university contexts. As an institutional study this work could be biased and non-generalizable to the rest of the international student population.

A more general study that examines the range of international students in NZ is the study by Ward and Masgoret (2004) and also one by Ward (2005). Ward and Masgoret present their nationwide study which was commissioned by the Ministry of Education. Sampling over 2600 students in total, they provide a survey that focuses on eight different sections of international student experience. Of key interest is the section on student impressions of New Zealanders and life in NZ. Lack of NZ friends, and unfriendly attitudes by New Zealanders were reported as key findings. The results from this survey provide a general database of information for all interested parties and future research into the experiences of international students. As this study is broad, the individual sections have had to remain general and the necessity for more detailed studies in all areas of student experience is clear. This study is reflective of the student numbers and the dominance of Chinese students who represent 43% of the sample, followed by substantially smaller numbers from Korea and Japan who represent a combined total of 49%.

But it would be misleading to suggest that this situation appears to be unchanging in the research. A report by the Ministry of Education covering international student experiences noted that there was a rising level of international student satisfaction in the late 2000s (Ministry of Education, 2007a). The report suggests that Chinese students continue to feel conscious of intercultural resistance by New Zealanders and other social groups in NZ. The social experience that respondents have with other international students is also a key feature of this report. Clearly, there is an emerging recognition that for many of the international students, the most important social relationships that they experience during their sojourn is with other international students. Like the earlier study described above (Ward and Masgoret, 2004), this survey is reliant upon questionnaire data. Similarities in method add weight to the hypothesis that there could be some positive changes occurring for international students as the host-country services in NZ have altered and improved.

Throughout this literature pastoral care, or the welfare of international students, has been another prevalent theme. Previously unregulated, the MOE stepped in with the new regulations for international student education providers, outlined in a Code of Practice (Ministry of Education, 2003). The main benefit of the pastoral code was that it set stricter guidelines for education providers for all international students below the

age of 18. Many of the new regulations centred on homestay quality, and demanded the provision of supervision and regular meals which is important for vulnerable and less socially experienced students. Other areas of concerns were related to support and these included such areas as driver education, sex and drug education, and gambling. McFedries (2002) released a research report outlining the ways in which young Asian students required care. By relating the issue of unsupervised Asian youth to unsupervised domestic youth, McFedries was able to suggest that the misbehaviour of Asian youth could originate from lack of adult supervision and care. One specific problem this report addressed was related to poor driving and/or abuse of driving privileges. McFedries shows that this could also be related to the difficulties of using public transport, inexperienced youthful drivers, and access to bulk funds for cheap and powerful cars.

Within the same discourse of pastoral care, Butcher (2002), provides insight into the experiences of grief in East-Asian international students in NZ. East-Asian students, Butcher claims, are changed by the experience of studying abroad in NZ and many become upset on return to their home-country. Butcher describes this experience as a form of grief, as the students no longer feel as if they culturally belong to their home-country and are somehow different through their experience of studying in NZ. Relationships with family and friends must be renegotiated alongside changed world views. Finally, Butcher explores methods and suggestions for the students, their families, and social institutions in East-Asia to assist these students to readjust to life in their home countries. Interestingly, the observations of the students in this sample regarding lack of interaction with their host-country social groups, mirrors the findings in international studies on homestays and in particular those of Schmidt-Rhineheart and Knight (2004) as reviewed in this thesis (see p. 45). Upon leaving, Butcher notes that the students regret their lack of strong intercultural links and lasting relationships with individuals from NZ.

A subsequent study produced on behalf of the MOE by Ward and Masgoret (2003), explores the experiences of very young international students in NZ. Of those aged 13 and under, there were over 4300 students enrolled in 2003 and of these around 90% came from South Korea – the remaining students originated from Taiwan. Pastoral care for very young students is crucial and this study encompasses both Private Training

Establishments (PTEs) and schools. Around 70% of very young students enrolled in PTEs were in homestays. By contrast, approximately 50% of those in schools were living with one of their parents. Students in PTEs, however, were often in NZ for less than a year, while school students tended to stay several years.

In the following year, Butcher and McGrath (2004) continued explorations into pastoral care with a study into the needs of international students. While their work is based on international students generally, they explore the social context of East-Asian students especially. Negative stereotyping of East-Asian students by educational professionals and other New Zealanders is an important theme in this work. Health and safety also figure prominently in this study, and links to depression, anxiety and homesickness are explored. Pastoral care requires yet more policy development, which could have a positive effect on the experience of international students. Greater supervision and more accessible services, it is suggested, are required for international students within educational institutions and communities. A similar publication by McGrath and Butcher (2004), supplements these findings. McGrath and Butcher looked at a range of East-Asian international students in Palmerston North, Wellington and Christchurch (or Massey University, Victoria University and Canterbury University respectively). They were able to compare the campus community links or the key services that helped the students to form intercultural relationships and increase their well-being and pastoral care. Significantly, they found that the students who were able to extend their social interests beyond the campus were the ones most able to create stronger friendships and relationships. Interest groups that took students beyond the campus were the most significant.

While the studies on international students are often dominated by data from East Asians (and especially Chinese), some specific studies on Chinese students have also been produced. Explorations of Chinese students' choice of NZ as a study destination has been documented by Malcolm and Ling (2002). Many had chosen NZ because of the perceived safety and the low cost of living here. Many had originated from busier, more crowded cities, and complained about the lack of nightlife and the resulting boredom from a life of study, eating and sleeping. Although gathered in 2002 when Chinese students were enrolled in larger numbers, the findings are important. The experience of

dissatisfaction with NZ urban life and boredom while studying here could remain a key influence in Chinese students' perceptions.

Specific experiences of Chinese students at AUT are captured in a MA thesis (Qin, 2003). Importantly, this survey is able to incorporate the insights of Qin who has also had experience as a Chinese student in AUT. Chinese students are not always international fee paying students, although it is common for many researchers to assume this. Typically, Chinese students are in NZ for around five years, and during this time reside in an uneasy space where normal protections as tourists and permanent residents elude them. Important problems such as misunderstandings by local home stay providers and/or landlords emerge, as well as the growth of youth gangs to deal with perceived hostility, and the need for support from mentors. Qin relates the prevalence of these issues to an 'indistinct social identity' as a result of not fitting squarely into the jurisdiction of structures for residents or those of tourist structures. However, the 'uneasy space' suggested by Qin provides a key component to address the research topic. East Asian international students do not 'fit in' to existing structures, but remain in a kind of limbo throughout the duration of their study. They are between cultures and this experience is unique to this situation as it is context specific. Vietnamese students have some similar experiences and this is represented by the work of Mack (2003). Undertaken in the same year, Mack interviewed fellow Vietnamese students at the University of Auckland. By using semi-structured interviews in Vietnamese, Mack was able to interrogate their experiences more deeply. For this project, the most important finding by Mack was the disappointment experienced by her respondents in their homestays and with university members of staff. In the cases of both Qin's and Mack's findings, the respondents reported disappointment because their expectations of intercultural relationships were not met.

International students have attracted a considerable amount of research undertaken in NZ, and the students' experiences have been widely studied throughout many tertiary institutions (see for example Berno and Ward, 2003; Butcher, 2002; Butcher and McGrath, 2004; Holmes, 2004; McGrath, Butcher, Pickering, and Smith, 2005; McGrath, Stock, and Butcher, 2007; Ward and Masgoret, 2003, 2004). Chinese students, in particular, have been well represented as these are the dominant group of international students. All of the studies are useful and provided key background



information for this study. International student experience has been well represented to show the ways in which these researchers have conceptualised this topic area. To date, the bulk of the studies have tended to focus on international student experience and the difficulties faced by the international students. These are clearly guided by the immediate requirements of the international education industry such as student safety and educational requirements. For example, this includes a close focus on pastoral care services (Ministry of Education, 2007), marketing requirements, and policy development around these needs (see for example Ministry of Education, 2005a). Increasingly, however, there is a persistent gap in the area of East-Asian international students' experiences of NZ and New Zealanders. East-Asian international students are potentially occupying a similar 'uneasy space' that Qin identified for the Chinese tertiary students (2003). The goal of this study was to examine this 'uneasy space' and establish it as a research site to yield new and innovative data. This thesis was premised on the understanding that ESEA students are not a static group, and their perceptions change and transform as they learn more about their host country. Intercultural adaptation can affect the relationships and experiences of ESEA students while sojourning in NZ, and are an important contribution to acknowledging the transformative aspect of their sojourn.

The background literature that has been essential to understanding and interpreting ESEA student experiences has been reviewed. This literature, while informative, nevertheless lacks a theoretical base that underpins the analysis and can provide the platform from which to interpret the findings within a consistent framework. For this reason, specific theory on intercultural adaptation, emergent adult maturation, and how to analyse and interpret qualitative data follows.

## **THEORY AND METHODS**

For any sociological study, it is necessary to have some conceptual idea that structures how the research problem is addressed. In this study, (as noted earlier in Chapter One pp. 13 – 14) the work of sociologist Mills (1959) provided the platform to conceptualise the everyday lived reality of ESEA students and their experiences in NZ as they sojourn. For both New Zealanders and ESEA students, common everyday perceptual

understanding is clouded by the structure of what Mills (p. 3) describes as “private orbits”, or the narrow context of everyday life. To transcend these constrained perspectives it was necessary to use a theoretical platform that allows the simultaneous understanding of both the historical and present contexts and the individual elements of individuals’ lives. The sociological imagination is a central sociological theory and only part of it was used in this thesis. The initial premise of Mills is that the individual must locate her or himself within their own specific time. As this was a sojourn based study, this was particularly important as the ESEA students in the 2002 – 2004 period occupied an important economic and social period where the international student market boomed and the educational organisations had to lobby the government for the physical safety of their students. A second premise that was equally important for this study was Mills’ idea that the effect of the structure of this particular society must be accounted for. For the ESEA students, their world is largely structured by their primary educational organisations which, over their sojourn period and as their intercultural adaptation expands, to centre more on extra-curricular activities. Finally, I used Mill’s principle of identifying and considering the varieties of individuals that occupy this particular society. More specifically, I looked at the age, the range of ESEA students by nationality, their specific goals and how these affected their intercultural adaptation experiences. But, for a more specific understanding, I turned to the intercultural theory that structures the methodology that I used in this thesis.

### **Intercultural theory**

To undertake this study, it was essential to isolate a theory, or set of theories, which allowed understanding into the site of interaction between East-Asian international students and New Zealanders. Theories centred on intercultural adaptation access this site of interaction and provided a robust platform to explore the themes that emerged as the East Asian international students reflected on New Zealanders and NZ.

Scollon and Scollon (2001) allow a non-specific understanding of both home and host culture when contemplating intercultural communication. At its base, the notion of intercultural communication is the result of the interaction between individuals who have made a number of critical assumptions about each other’s intentions, meanings and world view in order to facilitate the communication. A simpler intra-cultural communication clarifies intercultural communication assumptions more precisely. For

example, a mother talking to a child about an injury assumes that the child's crying may be due to the pain of whatever has caused the impact, but in fact could be incorrect because the child may be upset in response to another stimulus, such as fear or uncertainty. Intercultural communication is full of such assumptions between individuals from different cultures because these are needed in order for any communication to take place. Such assumptions may be based on implied understandings of the communication partner's culture and body of knowledge, as well as basic demographics such as age, gender, ethnicity, and spiritual beliefs. Individuals involved in intercultural communication can be incorrect in their understanding of the other, and misunderstandings can arise from these. Miscommunications are difficult at the interpersonal level, but at the intercultural level they introduce a much broader range of continual misunderstanding. Students wishing to undergo intercultural adaptation in NZ must endure the uncertainty of being incorrect and/or being perceived as incorrect until the host-group individual or group is ready to acknowledge their perspective. Maintaining a functioning and questioning uncertainty until intercultural understanding is established is stressful for both students and/or host-country social groups. Finally, Scollon and Scollon (2001) lend direct insight into intercultural communication between Westerners and East-Asians. This is especially evidenced in the position and experience of Suzanne Scollon as the co-ordinator of the Asian Sociocultural Research Centre at Georgetown University, USA. Ron Scollon also provides academic credentials as a professor of linguistics. One key insight that I was able to gain from this work was the example of the expression of embarrassment. Many East Asian individuals express embarrassment through a strained smile, and this is often confusing for Western individuals or groups who often mis-read this signal as an easing of tension.

Though Scollon and Scollon (2001) provided some very good understanding of the intercultural process at the site of communication between individuals, from the perspective of this study, their theory did not allow for a deeper cognitive understanding of why participants would be driven to undergo intercultural adaptation. Intercultural adaptation involves a significant amount of discomfort, and requires the individual to challenge themselves almost daily. This project involved a range of ESEA students from a varied set of states and backgrounds, and the relationship between participants and their host country was primary. The host country necessarily exerts a powerful influence

over the intercultural adaptation experiences. To address these concerns, I needed a more cognitive and contextual theory.

The second intercultural theorist who was important for this project is Young Yun Kim (2001). Kim focuses on cross-cultural adaptation, and offers three important insights that were used extensively throughout this study.

The first concept is based upon Kim's model (2001) which has the following basic assumptions that underpin her approach and were adopted into this project.

- Humans have an innate self-organizing drive and a capacity to adapt to environmental changes (p.35).
- Adaptation of an individual to a given cultural environment occurs in and through communication (p. 36).
- Adaptation is a complex and dynamic process that brings about a qualitative transformation of the individual (p. 37).

This theory has revealed some important tips for understanding and recognising intercultural adaptation. Rather than assuming that the host-country alters the individual, it shows that the individual changes her or himself because they need to gain supports and to be successful in their new environment. It also shows that intercultural relationships are key to intercultural adaptation. Therefore, the students that are successful in negotiating these relationships will have the greatest levels of intercultural adaptation. Finally, the individual is able to note intercultural changes in him- or herself reliably and will be able to do this accurately in an informal context where they have agreed to talk about their intercultural experiences.

The second primary principle is that Kim's study is based upon a contextual model that accounts for some of the broader social factors of the home-country. Kim has described these as "social communication" (p.36), and this includes a consideration of intercultural relationships, ties with the host-country, and host mass-media usage. These are each significant aspects of the intercultural theory and are used extensively in this project as the conditions of the host-country need to be explained to add depth to this project. An individual undergoing intercultural adaptation, according to Kim, is strongly affected by these factors and they impact upon the level of intercultural adaptation and its quality.

The third critical aspect of Kim's theory is how intercultural adaptation takes place. Kim has developed her approach based upon the Stress Adaptation Growth Dynamic Process Model (SAGD). The SAGD model shows how the tension between home-country beliefs and host-country realities work together to spiral toward a greater intercultural adaptation. It is based upon a notion of unwillingness and greater levels of perception with each personal adaptation. This is an important concept to analyse intercultural adaptation because it allows for analysis and insights into the way that challenges may be met and successfully negotiated by ESEA students.

Specifically, intercultural adaptation takes place in this site of tension between home-country beliefs and host-country realities, and is based on the psychological and linguistic process of adapting to different cultures and languages between a host state and an outside group (Kim, 2005). In this case, the East Asian students are the outside group and they are compelled by social pressures to undergo intercultural adaptation as they gradually accustom themselves to NZ and daily life in a foreign country. Utilising intercultural adaptation allows differences between cultural groups to be mapped, as well as some inevitable commonalities amongst globalising cultures, such as international youth cultures.

For this study, the East Asian international student sample was asked for their personal reflections on New Zealanders and life experience in NZ. In this instance, the sample made observations and meanings from their unique position as East Asian sojourners engaged in daily interactions with New Zealanders. The data they supplied was derived from their participation between their home-world cultures and the cultures in NZ. This space between home and host country contexts is necessarily pliable because it involves a process of perceptual change. However, the pliability of this process also opens up new platforms of how cultures and relationships can be understood, and this thesis aimed to capture some of these. However, to make sense of this it was important to examine work by researchers that have negotiated this path because this epistemological area of study was a foundation for the structure of the study. In this case, Yu (2004) provides an application of Waldenfel on the simultaneous cultural experiences of the essence of Taiwanese cultural experience amidst the greater political dominance of Chinese culture. Yu describes this space as the "intertwining area of homeworld and alienworld"

(Yu, 2004, p. p 10). This is important because there was a Taiwanese student in this study and it is important not to overlook the differences between these students and those from Mainland China. For many Chinese people this notion of separation or more accurately 'seperateness' from Mainland China and to be Chinese in diaspora has a lengthy tradition (Ang, 2001). However, under globalisation this has increased across the entire East-Asian region. In short, to be 'Chinese' is no simpler than being a 'New Zealander' one may be Chinese by nationality, but Taiwanese by cultural background and political aspirations (Yu, 2004).

In a similar vein, the process of maturing and gaining adult status is another strand that contributes to the pliable and ever-changing context for ESEA students. Many would argue that becoming a member of any nationality has many of the same qualities that are inherent in attaining adulthood and a rightful place in society. Certainly, the experiences of the ESEA students cannot be separated from this important process. Furthermore, the Kim's theory (2001) would suggest that as a similarly transformative process, attaining adulthood and maturing into a host-country culture is inherent within intercultural adaptation.

A study by Durham (2004) of South Asian ethnic adolescents in the US is concerned with their establishing of a sense of generational identity that includes their South Asian ethnic background. But, at the same time, this generational identity provides a bridge to participate in the general youth-culture that is characteristic of Iowa and allows them to be part of the non-immigrant social groups. This is clearly an important process for the South Asian participants in Durham's study.

To understand that task and to provide insight into this important period in the students' lives, the work of Arnett (2004) has been included. Arnett shows that the stage between adolescence and adulthood is marked by a separate period of emergent adulthood which covers the ages of 19 – 26, which is the age of most of ESEA students at university in NZ (Education NZ, 2010). In this period, emergent adults in Western (and in many East and South-East Asian) states are characterised by their quest for personal identity, are unstable, frequently uncommitted to their relationships/jobs, characteristically self-focused and aware of being in-between, and having a multitude of possible ways to live their lives in the present and for their future. There are limitations

to the applicability of Arnett's theory without close scrutiny, as his work emerged from the study of domestic university students in the USA. Nonetheless, he included a broad ethnic sampling and this made his work partially relevant to this thesis.

But the context of these social changes is also affected by the host-country's social processes. A significant factor for ESEA students is the process of difference, or other, and this has been found in previous work on Asian students (Bennett, 1998). Further development of this realm of study is then extended by selecting a key intercultural theorist in this area, whose theory is based primarily on practical application. Importantly, this theory must also allow a method to encapsulate the 'social processes' or actions created by the public in NZ. A relevant social process here is that of 'Asianisation', which is explained in the work of Mathews (2000, p. 29).

More particularly, 'Asian' is a catch-all term that not only subsumes cultural, historical, linguistic and national differences, but also disregards the complex heterogeneity of contemporary circumstances of being or becoming 'Asian' in terms of local and global continuities and fractures.

As 'Asian' international students themselves come from a variety of different nations and cultures, there is artificiality to the assigned identity that New Zealanders place upon them. For this reason, it is essential to capture the meanings that the students themselves place upon their experiences and interactions with New Zealanders and NZ. The experiences of the students are based on the premise of difference, or 'other', because they are regarded as a minority group with differences based on appearance, language barriers and culture. For intercultural communication and subsequently positive intercultural adaptation, 'otherisation' operates as a barrier (Holliday, Hyde, and Kullman, 2004). 'Otherisation' forces an identity based upon 'difference' upon the members of the minority groups, and prevents cultural identity to be negotiated. Further social barriers include less developed social networks in NZ and families frequently based overseas. The students will also be experiencing levels of difficulty caused by this 'difference', and to gain an overview of this process it is useful to employ a measurement of the cognitive process that the students are undergoing in their intercultural adaptation and integration to NZ or the host culture.

Intercultural communication is geared toward experiencing some miscommunication, but problems arise when the power-base between participants differ. When this miscommunication is between individuals, then these difficulties remain in the realm of

the interpersonal or the relationship. It was not possible in this thesis to examine this arena too closely, but a small selection of literature has enabled some insight into this area. Prus (1996) examines the importance of agency, or the desire of the individual to construct her or his own life. This is experienced in relationships and between individuals, but it is also an essential aspect for researchers to understand in their representation of their data. For Prus, symbolic interactionism or the interactions experienced by the individual with things, concepts and/or relationships, is the method or building blocks by which s/he attributes meaning to their lives. For this thesis, the aims of the ESEA students are integral to the meanings or the understandings that they form of New Zealanders and other social groups because they are constructed from their social relationship experiences.

This two-way process of adaptation is encapsulated in the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) which is intended to measure the levels of foreign and host-culture interaction (Bennett 1998; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). Generally, this model incorporates a practical guide to researching in the site of intercultural communication, as well as the measures to analyse the reflections of the East-Asian students without having to become a cultural 'expert' in every aspect of the complex heritage of the East Asian nationalities, traditions and regional cultures. By measuring the level of cultural adaptation, there needs to be a method to chart the psycho-social process of the individual participants and to analyse the importance that their experiences of NZ and New Zealanders are having upon them at that specific moment in time. This is an important point of comparison to cross-cultural study that relies on a hybrid experience as the common denominator, rather than just the students' actual country of origin. Furthermore, using a level or stage based model of intercultural adaptation provides a key stand point for the ESEA reflections on New Zealanders, and shows the different understandings that emerge as intercultural adaptation takes place.

According to Bennett (1998), each culture has a predisposition to specific beliefs, and these are crucial in defining and separating cultures from others. In an intercultural site, the process of intercultural adaptation requires that the individual release the centrality of some of these values temporarily, in order to understand and participate in the new cultural context. In his later work however, Bennett (2005) suggested that these changes would not be temporary, instead, becoming permanent. In this situation, many



of the Asian international students may be within a stage in the process that requires that they release some of the 'collectivist' beliefs common to many East Asian states to adapt to, and operate effectively in, the 'individualistic' cultures of the West. Effectively, this may create some sense of unease and a dislike of New Zealanders, as the students may feel some disloyalty to their families and home-countries.

Importantly, this study was based on the notion of intercultural interaction, rather than cultural comparison (Bennett, 1998). Rather than comparing these students to domestic NZ students, the results were intended to be based on intercultural relationships, which may also include many shared cultural beliefs and values as well as differences. Although based on the person-to-person communication model, the flow of intercultural adaptation is a two-way process, and many New Zealanders are involved in it through their relationships with Asian international students and other intercultural groups, such as immigrants. Another important source of intercultural engagement is through the increased relationships between New Zealanders and the political and economic infrastructures that necessitate increased business and media contact (Kim, 2001).

Having established the parameters and assumptions that form the basis of these intercultural theories, it is now important to provide a synopsis of the actual developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS) developed by Bennett and Hammer which was employed in this study (Bennett, 1993; Bennett, 2005; Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). This is a measure of cognitive process which is most often employed by intercultural practitioners and psychologists. However, in this sociological study it was intended to be a useful indication of the experiences that the ESEA students underwent as a result of participating in an educational process far away from their own home-countries. It was anticipated that experiences they have had at earlier levels of intercultural adaptation would be remembered by the students and would have affected their subsequent intercultural adaptation and altered the beliefs about the host-country social groups and could even in some cases have altered the intended study paths of the students, predisposing them toward shortening or lengthening their intercultural sojourn. The DMIS levels, and the way they were applied in this study, are set out as follows:

### **1. Denial level (L1)**

Social differences in this level are down-played and often denied by the minority group. It was expected that students in this level would be unlikely to be participants in this study, as the process of adaptation is continuous and individuals in denial experience relative isolation. However, it was also anticipated that memories of this level may be contributed by students as they reflect on their initial periods of isolation in NZ prior to interacting more freely within their environment and with social group in NZ. At this level, the students may be unable to express or understand social differences.

## **2. Defence Level (L2)**

At this level the students may accept that there are some differences between various individuals in social groups in NZ as well as other national and ethnic groups. However, there is a marked tendency to denigrate these differences and to elevate their own cultural beliefs. Due to the discomfort these individuals experience in cross-cultural environments, it was not expected they would be attending the focus groups.

## **3. Minimisation Level (L3)**

This level could be reflected in an acceptance of social differences by the students but an inability to perceive New Zealanders, or other ethnic and national groups, as having different values and assumptions. This will manifest, for example, in an inability to understand how NZ student groups may have different study goals or methods of undertaking study tasks. There could be some students reflecting this level in the focus groups.

## **4. Acceptance Level (L4)**

In this level the students accept the social differences of New Zealanders and other different ethnic and nationality groups. At this level the ESEA students should have little difficulty in naming the differences and have an awareness of many cultural similarities as well as differences. However, this may not mean that the students will choose to participate at all times in the NZ cultures, but could actively choose to retain their own cultural behaviours and associate frequently with others of the same cultural background.

## **5. Adaptation Level (L5)**

In this level the students should be able to accept cultural differences between themselves and New Zealanders, and other ethnic and national groups.

Additionally, the ESEA students at this level will understand these differences and will be able to move between cultures and empathise upon occasion with the individuals

from the other cultures. There may be some students reflecting this level (at least part of the time), and it is anticipated that these will be among the group who are choosing to stay in NZ or who will move onto working in an international role requiring intercultural fluency.

## **6. Integration Level (L6)**

Finally, at this level students are able to move fluidly between cultures, and to evaluate from more than one cultural frame of reference. These students bring an important and invaluable element to the study as they will be able to critically understand or evaluate the implications of my own intercultural understanding. Few interculturalists reach this level, and the ESEA students in this sample are no exception as they frequently return to their home-country prior to this development. According to Bennett, integration is a process that evolves over many years and is not an inevitable development. Importantly, integration is dependent on many personal factors and potentials which Bennett suggests not all individuals are capable of, or necessarily even wish to achieve.

Having established the different key levels of the intercultural adaptation process that the ESEA students undergo, it is also important to examine some key areas of cultural difference which could inhibit cultural understandings. This is a process that the students may have noticed and reflected on, and it is also a process which was important to the researcher's understanding of the data collection and analysis of the interviews. Primarily, however, this was an exciting opportunity to learn more about the intercultural communication of this specific group of sojourners and the way in which they communicate with New Zealanders and other ethnic and national groups. This data could be useful to other intercultural practitioners, educational providers and researchers. Five key areas for examination are included by Bennett (2005) in the DMIS and these are as follow:

### **1. Linguistic meanings that come from one's own language.**

This was a difficult area for me and will remain unexplored as the interviews were conducted in English, rather than the various ESEA students' own first languages. Gaps in linguistic understandings did present a major challenge to this study and did limit the depth of possible shared understanding. But the consistency of using the same language means that all participants are able to communicate to some degree and make it

possible to see the shared experiences across the various national groups. Effectively, English as a second-language forms a shared linguistic plane of meaning between participants and interviewer.

## **2. Differences in perceptual reality.**

This was useful when considering the students that come from cosmopolitan cities, such as Tokyo or Beijing. For example, some of the participants found it very difficult to grasp the differing pace of life in more rural regions. Also, some consideration as to types of imagery was included when there were recurring cases of metaphor.

## **3. Analogic (non-verbal) language.**

The use of audio tape in the interviews allowed for the making of some comparisons between the different groups based around their commitment to intercultural adaptation. For example, the body language and gestures of those who intend to extend their sojourn may appear more Westernised than those who are either mid-way through their qualifications or planning to leave.

## **4. Communication Styles**

Some of the students have different ways of expressing themselves based on different cultural practices, and these express themselves in their intercultural relationships. There were opportunities to explore different narratives the students employ to get their meaning across to other focus group members and to me as the researcher.

## **5. Values and Assumptions based on World-Views**

Differing values and cultural assumptions are inherent in the content of participants' contribution. These were analysed and detailed as accurately as was practical. This exercise was mostly a descriptive one as the questions were not aimed specifically at assessing the students' ethical, moral or cultural values or world-views.

The DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) is particularly important because it is one of the earlier intercultural adaptation studies. It has also managed to create an overt cognitive scale of self-perception based on a quantitative methodology. This validation is essential because the quantitative aspects have lent it weight in an especially problematic area which concerns evaluation of perception and subsequently, is difficult to measure qualitatively because of small sample sizes. The DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) produces an assessment of the stage or levels of intercultural adaptation to measure the ESEA students. It is an effective structure to measure how the ESEA students adapt to NZ because the types of intercultural relationships and the

context that participants report them in build up a consistent picture that fits the different intercultural adaptation levels or stages as described by Bennett and Hammer. This leads to a separate but related concern over the discretionary aspects of these stages or levels. For Bennett and Hammer, intercultural adaptation is a summary of scores based upon quantitative analysis of self-reported questionnaires. A more qualitative approach raises the question of discrete assessment, because a closer analysis of behaviour and beliefs of an individual may show subtler levels of inconsistency across experiential domains and add detail to what has already been developed with the DMIS.

A critical weakness of the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) is that it is Western-centric. Effectively, the intercultural stages model suggests that any individual undergoing intercultural adaptation is seeking intercultural autonomy, or cultural emancipation, from home-country expectations and values. This is consistent with the types of experiences that Bennett and Hammer (1998) were measuring in their Western based sample in the US where the sample were immigrants in the Washington DC area (Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman, 2003). One concern for this project was that the weight lent to that process is actually skewed toward a Western cultural bias, because Westerners are overtly encouraged to be critical and to question their beliefs and assumptions, especially in an academic environment (Arnett, 2004). Burnett and Gardner (2006) utilised a number of acculturation models in their study on Chinese student experience in the UK (United Kingdom). The DMIS was evaluated, but not chosen as the measure of intercultural adaptation for their study because it has a weakness as a Western-centric model and individualistic cultural values are ranked above collective cultural values. For Burnett and Gardner, notions of individual development and success did not apply to their Chinese student sample. Though Burnett and Gardner's study did not elaborate or show any particular collectivist values of concern, this theme of Western individualism as being inappropriate for ESEA students became increasingly evident throughout the interviews and analysis of my own study that follows.

In actuality, many ESEA groups are associated with collective processes and group centred cultural biases. Therefore, utilising this model through a questionnaire would, in this case, have been flawed because it assumes that the students will be used to

judging their own beliefs and behaviours in a critical manner. In fact, many ESEA groups are noted for their embarrassment at this kind of self-contemplation and are connected with locating their identity within groups that resemble family structures or the Confucian model of filial piety (De Bary, 2000; Hwang, 1999; Scollon and Scollon, 2001; Yue and Ng, 1999). Furthermore, the students in this study were possibly less intent upon emancipation from their family structures and more likely to wished to preserve them because they were already separated from their families of origin by distance and culture. For this sample, the parents were a source of comfort rather than friction.

The DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) has been employed in a variety of PhD theses, and there have been a group of them centred on the experience of international students in international schools. These studies are similar to this study, but tend to be based in the US. Westrick (2002) utilised the DMIS among a sample of secondary school students engaged in service learning, or working for the community, in an international school situated in Hong Kong. Rather like this thesis, the Westrick student sample was visibly foreign within the Hong Kong environment, so sample members were compelled to make regular interactions within the site of intercultural communication. In both studies, the sample was comprised of young individuals who were required to negotiate entry into a strange and potentially hostile host environment. Similarly, the Straffon (2001) thesis also employed a similar sample of secondary school students from an international school based in a South-East-Asian city. This study differed methodologically, however, because it employed a questionnaire which ‘assesses’ intercultural sensitivity among a specialised sample of ‘third culture kids’ who had been schooled away from their home-country environments for the majority of their school years. Unsurprisingly, the results yielded a high level of adaptation, or acceptance of ethno-relativist principles, at 97%. Though this thesis was not directly ‘measuring’ the intercultural adaptation of the East-Asian student sample, it is still important to realise that this sample did not necessarily indicate such a high level of intercultural adaptation, as this experience of international study was probably the first instance that many of these students had stayed away from their families, hometowns, cities, or even their home-countries for an extended period.

Methodologically, the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) was developed through quantitative research but has been shown to work well in qualitative research. Research by Pederson (2001) using the DMIS in both quantitative and qualitative methodology indicates this. Pederson examined the intercultural development of American high school students within a domestic study. These students were not placed in extraordinary environments, so this development is more concentrated on explicating 'typical' levels of intercultural sensitivity. Intercultural sensitivity was assessed through both quantitative and qualitative measures and there was a distinctly greater rate of change in the qualitative assessment. Qualitative data assessment through interviews showed that host country participation and interaction were an important influence on the development of intercultural sensitivity. The dual role of interaction between the students and the host community was able to be explicated through an interview process.

This project was also engaged in a similar dual process of interaction between the perceptions and reflections of the East Asian students on their hosts in NZ. The results from using the Pederson study suggested that the DMIS was ideally suited to this study. The DMIS can be adapted to dual processes of intercultural interaction. East-Asian international students were asked to reflect on New Zealanders and NZ, and these reflections could be adequately gained only by a qualitative or interview method that allowed for full explanations. Furthermore the Pederson research indicates that the attitudes of the host communities are able to be explicated with the DMIS.

The DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) offers a strong platform to examine emerging themes of international education experiences. Medina-Lopez-Portillo (2004), analyses two types of university sponsored study abroad programmes from the USA to Mexico. Although a vastly different subject matter, the application of the DMIS to the concerns of the internationalisation of education is relevant. Intercultural sensitivity is shown within this thesis to be a topic area of core importance to the US college curriculum. Clearly, the role of intercultural sensitivity is a core skill for New Zealanders along the same themes of internationalisation of curricula for NZ universities as well. As suggested by Medina-Lopez-Portilla's work, the DMIS is able to access themes of internationalisation and global context and measure how these change according to intercultural adaptation levels and how the participants' perspectives of these change as

a result. For example, the ESEA students were aware of the need for an international qualification and this is evident throughout the findings presented in Chapter Four.

Within the doctoral theses, the DMIS has been well explained, documented and explored. For those studies it has provided a robust framework to look at a wide range of issues in the site of intercultural communication. Beyond the greater works, the DMIS has also been regularly written about in journal articles. A small cross-section of these journal articles have been summarised below, as they show important themes that have emerged in the deployment of the DMIS.

For some researchers, the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) was not considered to be a robust assessment of intercultural development, and the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) was subsequently developed by Bennett and Hammer in 1998. The IDI was a psychometric tool of analysis designed to actually measure intercultural sensitivity, while the DMIS provided the contextual understanding of the levels of adaptation. Through these two methods, Greenholtz (2000) was able to develop an IDI questionnaire that could be used as a recommended predictor of intercultural sensitivity when hiring new staff in the language industry. International language industries are extremely vulnerable to bad publicity, and many small schools struggle with ways to ensure that their staff-members deliver sensitive intercultural communication.

Larger universities are also concerned with increasing the intercultural sensitivity of their staff. Olsen and Kroeger (2001), indicate that the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) could be extended to work as a self-reflective tool for academic staff in a New Jersey university in the US. Global competencies within a New Jersey university were assessed, and the DMIS formed the basis of the intercultural aspect entailed within this test. For tertiary institutions this is an important quality because universities are engaged in becoming players in the internationalising education market throughout the world. Therefore, the participating New Jersey staff willingly contributed to this study and use of the findings to improve their global competencies in their work capacities. In contrast, Hollinshead (2006), reviews the DMIS as a method to educate teachers of business schools in politically volatile climates such as Serbia and Montenegro. In this study, the DMIS is one of a list of models which are recommended to be put into practice in order to promote ethno-relativism because of the potential this holds for



promoting peaceful relationships between disparate groups of people. Rather than focusing on differences, the DMIS provides a platform to promote acceptance of intercultural differences, and a way to appreciate the values of all cultural groups.

Although the DMIS was originally developed in 1998 by Bennett and Hammer, Bennett has developed his theoretical base in subsequent research and this was incorporated to extend my understanding of intercultural adaptation where applicable throughout this thesis. An instructional DVD, published in 2005, shows that he continues to believe that intercultural sensitivity is based upon successfully negotiating these intercultural adaptation levels. The levels have remained similar and the model continues to be described as a linear progression. In this talk, the empirical basis for Bennett's theory has not been developed in more detail but reinforced so that initial research becomes a seminal theory (Bennett, 2005a). Yet, when working in conjunction with Castiglioni, Bennett's theory on world-views has been extended into a new and important direction – the “feeling” of culture (Bennett and Castiglioni, 2004, p. 250). This adds considerable depth to the perception of intercultural adaptation, and, in particular, to the ethnorelative or latter three levels of the DMIS (L4 – L6), as it is not necessarily a concrete social construct but needs to be understood as tenuous and ethereal. It informs a world-view for an individual, but it does not define the world-view. This additional perspective is important as this project was based upon the students' recognition of their intercultural adaptation and ability to communicate with individuals from the host culture.

This section has included a range of intercultural theories that all contributed in some way to the basis of this thesis. Bennett and Hammer DMIS (1998) provided the necessary structure to meet the aims of conceptualising and following the intercultural adaptation process of the ESEA students. Despite its Western bias, it provided a necessary foundation to measure the ‘uneasy space’, or the state of flux that is characteristic of participants as they negotiate home and host country cultures (Yu, 2004). However, this model could not be accepted unquestioningly because the level based model is highly dependent upon a single end goal of personal autonomy and supplemented with an expanded perception of home and host country cultures (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). The characteristic social processes of those undergoing intercultural adaptation are, in fact, important because intercultural adaptation is just

one process of many other social processes such as education, aging, and so forth (Kim, 2001). In the case of the ESEA students, their development into young adults also needed to be taken into account (Arnett, 2004) alongside the particular challenges offered by a university study path. Finally, the internal or psychological process of the ESEA students is just one starting point for the development of intercultural relationships. Intercultural relationships are equally dependent upon the participation of the host-country social groups and miscommunication, and learning from intercultural mistakes (Scollon and Scollon, 2001).

Finally, this literature review needs to include an overview of the literature that was used to construct the methodology. These frameworks were essential because they provided the practical solutions and approaches.

### **Methodological approaches for the data collection and analysis.**

In general, qualitative projects are premised on the underlying presumption that each research context is unique and as such, needs to be closely examined (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). Marshall and Rossman suggest that one aim of qualitative approaches is that human actions cannot be understood well without looking into the reasons and beliefs that drive them. Qualitative research projects prioritise these reasons and beliefs and systematically order the emergent data to gain insight into a specific situation. Similarly, in this project, the process of intercultural adaptation was a qualitative process that looked at the reasons and beliefs that the ESEA students bring to their sojourn. For some projects a generally qualitative approach like this would be satisfactory because the topic area could be relatively unexamined and the aim of the research could be to simply educate others on that particular experience. But, in fact, both ESEA students and intercultural adaptation have been frequently researched in the past. In the literature review I was able to draw from a broad range of empirical research on both of these topics.

To enable a more detailed and precise approach to the research arena, this project needed to look more closely into qualitative methodologies. Novice researchers are vulnerable to using a generally qualitative approach, rather than drawing from a specific background and applying it to the situation because there are common misconceptions about qualitative methods (Adler and Clark, 2003; Cresswell, 2007). In particular,

Cresswell suggests examining the process that requires investigation to build a more precise picture of what needs to be known. Prioritising the experience of the participants as the site of investigation is often associated strongly with grounded theory, ethnography, participatory action research as well as phenomenology. Cresswell then suggests that the researcher consider the aims of the applicable research methods. Grounded theory is utilised when little is known about a particular topic, ethnography demands close and continual contact with participants, and action-research is utilised in the promotion of altering social conditions for the respondents. Though each of these methods has some applicability, they did not fit the actual aim of this study which is to measure intercultural adaptation among international student sojourners at university. Effectively, this left phenomenology, which is centred on drawing the meanings directly from the students' experiences; but combining this with observation and analysis of the social conditions that make up the individuals' context or conditions.

Phenomenology is a principle that underlies the Interpretative Phenomenological Approach (IPA) which, I explain in more depth in the following paragraph. But to explain this connection it is important to look more closely at phenomenology first. Phenomenology itself has its roots first in philosophy, and then psychology, and is the study of individual experience of the world (Cresswell, Adler and Clark, 2003; 2007). *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* ("Phenomenology," 2008) offers some descriptive entries on this classically established concept. Firstly, the writers suggest that phenomenology is a system of knowing or understanding. They describe it thus: "Phenomenology is the study of our experience – how we experience it" (para 6). Theoretically, phenomenology is set apart from ontology, ethics, epistemology and logic. Classical philosophers have used this approach, and most notably these have included Heidegger and Sartre in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. But it was the work of early theorist, Edmund Husserl, which has been brought into psychology. Phenomenology became the bedrock for some branches of psychology because personal experience is so central to the individual's actions, reactions and meanings that the individual creates. Maurice Merleau-Ponty in 1945 utilised this theory to produce psychological research and helped to establish it into common psychological discourse. Phenomenology has been disputed in psychology because individual experience can be subjective between individuals and, furthermore, individuals often change their perspectives or emphases as they reflect.

For interpretative studies in communication and linguistics, however, phenomenology is central because it allows the experiences of the individual to be prioritised.

To use phenomenology as a core concept, it is best to incorporate it into the methodology of a project. In this project, the Interpretative Phenomenology Approach (IPA) was selected. According to Smith, Jarman and Osborn (1999), IPA has been well utilised and tested in qualitative research projects. IPA offers some methodological boundaries and frameworks. Using IPA demands that meanings drawn from participants be used. But, in this project, the students' experiences and understanding of their own process was prioritised above objective frameworks. Smith et al. have outlined an interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA) which offers some of these boundaries and clear frameworks. Effectively, the philosophies of the IPA were used as an underlying premise that the meanings from the data analysis must emerge from the ESEA students primarily and the use of outside data such as Export Education statistics was to enrich these perspectives, rather than form the basis of my analysis.

A good IPA study, according to Smith, Jarman and Osborn (1999), is less concerned with underlying causes and more focused on the meanings that are important to participants. Furthermore, IPA is a method that demands open-ended and participant-centred data-collection because the realities or lived experiences of participants are difficult to capture in the data collection. Triangulation, or using a variety of techniques to check the validity of this data analysis, is an important aspect to IPA. In this study, formalising the use of these principles was very useful because intercultural communication research is in constant danger of being misinterpreted by different cultural groups. IPA also allows a participant-observation approach where the researcher is able to be viewed as a participant in the overall process, which was important because this project incorporated using me in the role of researcher, interviewer and analyst. Accordingly, it was important to formalise my role as an intercultural communicator, because it was through my cultural perspectives that the analysis took place. IPA has also emerged from a background that is centred on well-being and/or mental health, and this offers an important dimension to intercultural adaptation which is often experienced via the participants' sense of well-being.

Participating in research is a secondary priority to the ESEA students' individual focus upon their studies and daily lives. Furthermore, a publication on data gathering among Asian groups in NZ also suggested that some Asian community members feel that their goodwill and willingness to offer insight has become used up (McGrath, Butcher, Pickering and Smith, 2007). Asian community members feel that the non-Asian researchers are approaching them too often to find participants, and not looking beyond these established points of contact. This may have affected these researchers as they are part of a network of Massey University based research on immigration and inter-ethnic conflict that has been published regularly over a period of years. Gatekeepers are the first level of access to participants, and in the case of the students this means gaining ethical and institutional approval by the universities (Selby, 1999).

As this was a qualitative study, there was little distinction between the data-gathering and the analysis because the data analysis began as data was collected and informed further data collection; and this was especially the open-ended interviews and semi-structured interviews. Neumann (2003) offers insight into many types of methods, and was used extensively throughout the methodology and also in this literature review. But, most importantly, Neumann offers insight into the two different perspectives of quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research prioritises validity, which has a number of meanings, but these concur about using tools that accurately measure what the researcher intends to study. This is often accompanied by reliability that in quantitative research measures the representativeness of the research over time and across different sample groups. These are cornerstones of quantitative research and must be incorporated to some degree in the quantitative measures used in this project. But the accompanying qualitative interpretations of these ideas are also important in this study. In the qualitative framework, validity is associated with truth or authenticity, and this interpretation was important in the data collection and analysis of the project. Similarly, reliability is seen more as applying a consistently analytical process to all aspects of the data collection because each of these situations may involve unique elements that are difficult to reproduce over time, or when another researcher is involved. Intercultural research is highly dependent upon the experience and knowledge of the researcher and how they are able to communicate and work with their sample.

Finally, it was important to examine a small range of literature that examined thematic analysis. This process is often seen as self-evident, and most researchers talk of the general process of making detailed transcription and then looking through that for emergent themes (see for example Cresswell, 2007; McIntyre2003; Neumann, 2003). But as this was the primary method used in two of the data steps, it was necessary to look more closely at this process through the work of Braun and Clark (2006). Braun and Clark's work has the advantage of being tested in research undertaken in NZ, and has also emerged relatively recently. Furthermore, they offer a highly detailed account of how to differentiate initial findings from emergent themes. This is important because it is the step between two levels of the analysis used in this project. In the first instance, transcripts from all 50 participants were minutely examined, and their intercultural adaptation levels assigned by me as the researcher. Effectively, this analysis acted as the initial organisation of the findings and these were represented to reflect the intercultural levels across the sample. A closer thematic analysis emerges in Chapters Four and Five where the students' experiences are categorised more generally into themes in particular areas of their daily life.

## **SUMMARY**

The aim of this chapter was to address the fundamental elements of a literature review for a qualitative research project – background and context, identification of key issues, summaries of what is known and identification of approaches and methods that were useful for the methodology (McIntyre, 2005). Essentially, this was achieved across the three major sections, with each section addressing the four questions. Familiarity with the key issues of international education was shown in the international section. At the same time, both the nationally- and internationally- based literature identified areas that require further research. Finally, the methods and approaches were addressed in the theory section with the explanation and exploration of the implementation of the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) model for understanding and researching intercultural communication.

## **CHAPTER THREE METHODS: SUBJECTIVE STRATEGIES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This thesis examines the qualitative insights that the ESEA students at New Zealand universities gain of social groups in NZ, and their reflections on daily life in their host-country. More specifically, this study focused on the perceptions of these students as they undergo intercultural adaptation and engage in the long process of integration into their host-country environment. Perception, or perceptual understanding, is important because the students' understandings are influenced by intercultural processes during intercultural communication. In this case, I focused on perception from a sociological perspective (Jary and Jary, 2000, p.163), and looked at how the shifting of the students' ideas is affected by their social, cultural and intercultural contexts. This perspective was premised on the approach of Olson and Kroeger (2001, p. 6) who explain perception as "the process we use to take in our world and frame our understanding of others in our world" (p. 6). In essence, I was examining how meaning was explained by the students and interpreted by myself as a researcher in an intercultural relationship domain. As explained in Chapter One, I asked the students to reflect on New Zealanders and life in NZ. But this study extended beyond descriptions of participant experiences and explored how their intercultural adaptation level affected their relationships with each other, fellow international students and other social groups in New Zealand.

This chapter provides a conceptual overview of the research design that explains how qualitative approaches framed this methodology, and how these frameworks were selected for this study. The advantages and strengths of the research design are also outlined in this chapter. A sampling overview is provided, and the methodological procedure for the recruitment is also explained. Descriptions and statistical overviews of the 50 ESEA students sample are then presented. This is followed by an explanation and rationale for the data collection and a procedure that included three different types of interviews and other means of data collection. The specific challenges of access to the

ESEA student sample and the ethical processes are also explained. This study used a qualitative approach with two different levels of analysis of the interview data.

The analysis in this study was premised upon the DMIS developed by Bennett and Hammer (1998). A modified version of this model was utilised to assess and map the intercultural adaptation of all 50 participants. Additionally, as stipulated by Kim (2001), the context or domain of the intercultural analysis must also be considered simultaneously and this was accounted for by identifying common contextual domains, such as educational stage differences and accommodation domains and so forth. Once the intercultural adaptation levels are established, the chapter then explains how the intercultural adaptation levels were assessed and describes the composition or spread of these of these throughout the sample. This is followed by an overview of the thematic analysis and how the themes were found. Finally, there is a brief outline of the limitations of the methodology, and the implications for the development of intercultural relationships research.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

Fundamentally, this study was premised on a qualitative format that utilises qualitative methodology data collection methods and analysis. This approach allowed me to focus on the themes that emerged directly from the participants and to analyse these ideas in more depth. Overall, this study examined two interdependent but differing processes that take place during intercultural communication:

- Intercultural adaptation or the process by which the student participants gradually become more familiar with their domestic student counterparts and other social groups, and their general experiences of daily life in NZ. This familiarity leads to deepening levels of sophistication in comprehension and expression within intercultural communication (Bennett and Hammer, 1998; Kim, 2001; Scollon and Scollon, 2001).
- The deeper analysis of the students' reflections on New Zealanders and on their own lives in NZ, and the specific insights that emerged as a result of this observation.

In each case, the bulk of the data was drawn from the students' own reflections about key experiences and relationships they have formed as they sojourn in NZ.



This study was based on a research design that is largely subjective, and centred about the participants' input. A common method that is used to frame this research was the phenomenological or interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA) (Smith, Jarman and Osborn, 1999). Phenomenological approaches prioritise the experiences of the individual. Smith, Jarman and Osborn explain IPA thus:

The aim of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is to explore in detail the participant's view of the topic under investigation. Thus the approach is phenomenological in that it is concerned with an individual's personal perception or account of an object or event as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself. (p.218)

Although this research design incorporated phenomenological notions, it also used a broader, more general approach taken from a variety of qualitative research methodologies. Within qualitative research, each research context is unique and the researcher needs to adapt her or his methods to the specific needs of that situation. In this study, I used phenomenological principles in prioritising the interpretations of the individual participants as a guide to their experiences. This was an empirical process in that the participants were also observed and interpreted through my perceptions and understanding of their abilities in a research situation. This is consistent with the approach of Mills (1959) in that the sociological imagination research perspective must locate the micro-social processes within the macro-social processes to provide a true understanding of the sociological events or phenomena under study. The decisions and actions of the ESEA students needed to be understood in terms of their decisions and reactions as a group in order to make sense of the ESEA student sojournment (Cheney, 2010; Mills, 1959).

As explained in Chapter One (pp. 1 – 3), this study was based on the notion that the process of living or sojourning as international students in an unfamiliar host-country will have some similar effects on many of the participants. The students are engaged in the pursuit of higher educational qualifications and may well be struggling to create a sense of identity that is characteristic of young adults and older adolescents (Arnett, 2004; Durham, 2004; Mathews, 2000). Many have had to learn English as a foreign language or, at the very least, to improve their formal written and spoken English to conform to the requirements of academic study. Forming intercultural relationships

with New Zealanders is an important part of gaining this language and study competency for ESEA students

In undergoing these processes, participants are also placed in a position that gives them opportunity to reflect on the course of their deepening adaptation to NZ as well as their (possibly) changing perceptions and relationships with New Zealanders (Kim, 2001). Effectively, each student is required to use the skills of a social researcher or interculturalist on a daily basis in order to meet the challenges of their new host-environment (Scollon and Scollon, 2001). In this study, this conscious reflection and insight offered by the students formed the core thematic data that could be mapped onto an ascending scale of intercultural perceptions, competencies and adaptation. By incorporating some of the principles of phenomenological aspects and to prioritise the meanings created by participants, this study was able to extract the “essence of a lived phenomenon” (Cresswell, 2007, p. 78).

Essentially, this study was structured to deliver high quality data and a theoretical contribution to the field of intercultural adaptation using sociological field work. According to Neumann (2003, p. 338), qualitative fieldwork is premised upon the presentation of “true results from social interaction and interpretation”. In order for this to be achieved, the issue of validity needed to be addressed throughout the research design. The over-arching qualitative framework was based on methodological authenticity, which demands adherence to validity. Neumann describes this as:

Qualitative researchers adhere to the core principle of validity, to be truthful (i.e., avoid false or distorted accounts). They try to create a tight fit between their understanding, ideas, and statements about the social world and what is actually occurring in it. (p. 171)

Primarily, it was important to be truthful or accurate in the presentation of this data to maintain the requirement for validity. But, in representing this data, there were many decisions made during the entire process of research from the sampling, data gathering and analysis that could have influenced its interpretation and representation. Intercultural relationships, by their very nature, are at constant risk of being interpreted too conclusively or unrealistically from either the participants’ individual perspective, or by the social groups that have direct influence over the participants (Bennett and Hammer, 1998; Kim, 2001; Scollon and Scollon, 2001). Furthermore, intercultural communication itself is often premised on the certainty of perceptual errors in each

intercultural transaction. For intercultural practitioners, this process of addressing miscommunication is a continual process that is constantly being examined and refined as they experience intercultural communication (Scollon and Scollon, 2001). Although miscommunication is never eliminated, a committed interculturalist can narrow these margins of error if she or he is willing to constantly pay attention to the social cues such as facial expression and/or withdrawal, and is willing to ask the questions about how to reduce. From a research perspective, this study then needed to mirror this approach and accept that intercultural communication is based on narrowing the margin of error, but that eliminating it altogether is impossible. As the researcher, I maintained my commitment to refine and narrow the margins of error – questioning each methodological and intercultural assumption as it arose.

The individual accounts given by each participant were explored through thematic analysis. Validity is increased in this approach through a natural history approach where contextual data is included to investigate possible meanings and interpretations of the data (Neumann, 2003). In practise, this meant that the accuracy of the themes and emergent contextual research were also incorporated throughout the analysis process. In the discussion that follows, and in the subsequent analysis Chapters Four and Five, the findings from the two analyses are used to build an understanding of intercultural adaptation using the DMIS model by Bennett and Hammer (1998) which assigns each participant a category and frames the students' responses within the six key stages of intercultural adaptation. This was further enhanced by utilising throughout the analysis a triangulation of theory which builds upon theoretical notions concerning intercultural adaptation of the East and South-East Asian international student sojourners and their insights into NZ as a host-country alongside this larger cultural context. Scollon and Scollon (2001) provide additional insight into the process of miscommunication and refinement. Miscommunication, and the resulting need for constant refinement in intercultural communication and relationships, is the foundation upon which intercultural adaptation and learning is founded. Then the springboard mechanism of Kim's SAGD model (2001) is used to assess and explain the perceptual leaps between intercultural adaptation levels. Finally, these miscommunications and perceptual leaps are then mapped, or measured, on the DMIS model of intercultural adaptation development (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). By using these different

perspectives, it is possible to gain a multi-layered understanding of intercultural adaptation and the experiences of the ESEA students as they sojourn.

The emphasis of this study, or the site from which the data is gathered, was on the dialogue between the participants and the researcher. Dialogue, or intercultural-communication within the research context, was an essential aspect, both to the process of intercultural relationships as well as to intercultural observations of new or different ethnicities and cultures. Equally importantly, the ESEA students are faced with the prospect of increasing their understanding of social groups within NZ through a series of intercultural interactions and communications as well as through their own observations. By using this same model of dialogue in the research process, I was able as a researcher to deepen my understanding of the issues and interests that are important for the participants. Most researchers acknowledge that it is very difficult for any researcher to fully understand the process, or phenomenon, that the participants face (Neumann, 2003). But a shared dialogue between researcher and participants can overcome some of these barriers to understanding and further deepen the role of participant observer that I undertook in this project (Neumann, 2003; McIntyre, 2005). More succinctly, Marshall and Rossman (1999), describe this process:

...one cannot understand human actions without understanding the meaning that participants attribute to those actions – their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values and assumptive worlds; the researcher therefore, needs to understand the deeper perspective captured through face to face interaction. (p. 57)

In this case, the focus needed to be based on face to face interaction with an emphasis on open-ended interaction that encourages free expression by participants. Past research has suggested that ESEA students frequently feel marginalised by language barriers, lack of relevant cultural knowledge, and exclusion by other social groups in NZ (McGrath, Pickering, and Smith, 2007). Within fieldwork, it is essential that power imbalances for marginalised groups that are imposed by social imbalances be addressed, and the concerns and priorities of participants be incorporated (Tolich and Davidson, 1999).

One of the intercultural communication aims for this project was to overcome the deficits of miscommunication and to enable at least one opportunity for the ESEA students to contribute to social discourse in NZ. This was incorporated by using a subjective approach that increases opportunities for participants to correct intercultural

misunderstandings and assumptions they may have observed among social groups in NZ. The students had an opportunity to do this directly. A face to face collaborative approach to research between participant and researcher can offer an opportunity to open dialogue for both parties (McIntyre, 2005). In practice, the academic researcher and student respondents were offered a context that may have mirrored the dialogue and provided the 'real-world' link that is missing in the application of quantitative questionnaires, or from inferred statistical or Export Education generated questionnaires (see for example, Berno and Ward, 2003; Ward and Masgoret, 2003, 2004). These particular questionnaires were based on tightly structured questions with limited response ranges that resist the open-ended contributions that interviews can offer, but they offer the advantage of being more readily summated.

## **Reflexivity**

To strengthen the research design, I utilised a self-reflective element in the research to mitigate the various misunderstandings and miscommunications that were inevitable within my role as participant observer researcher. This approach is central throughout every aspect of the project. As the constant influence throughout each and every stage of the project from the proposal periods to the choice of literature and theory, the sampling approach and relationships with the sample, the analysis, findings, discussion and conclusion a consistent, nuanced approach to my own actions and understandings was essential. The understanding of this provided by Guba and Lincoln (1981 as cited in Guba & Lincoln, 2008, p. 278) views the researcher as one of the research "instruments" and this paves the way for understanding the unfolding relationship that the qualitative researcher has with the entire study. Guba and Lincoln (2008) further explain that the qualitative research project is in fact a series of texts unfolding to the level of understanding that the researcher has reached at different points in time. A text reflects the formal manifestation of the relationship between researcher and the study at different contextual points and this resonates with the sociological approach of this study. Macro-contextual elements or the greater understanding that I have as the researcher with the educational policy, theoretical approaches to globalisation, international education culture and relationships are considered alongside micro contextual elements or the intercultural relationships that I had with participants and their experiences. It is my contention that the development of reflexivity in this manner

accurately represents the understanding demanded by Mills' sociological imagination (Cheney, 2010; Mills 1959).

Self-reflexivity can seem to be a vague concept, because very few researchers or practitioners can be entirely aware of their own professional limitations or gaps. One key oversight made by many academics and educational researchers alike is that individual practitioners are often unaware of the difference between their espoused beliefs of dialogue and inclusivity with their participants that often do not match their actions, politics and behaviours in professional contexts (Bourdieu as cited in Greenwood & Morten, 2008). Accordingly, as an emergent researcher I examined my own relationship with all elements of the study as closely as possible; questioning my own understanding of theory and application as carefully as my intercultural communication with the students. For me, it wasn't simply a question of accuracy for this thesis, but an essential element of validity for academic rigour within a qualitative project. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) maintain that researchers need to reflect on their data collection and analysis and to address all problems that arise through them in order to achieve a more accurate and truthful account of the situation. In short, it is the gaps in these understandings that provides the greatest platform for solid and original research findings.

Gaps of understanding are inevitable in all types of intercultural communication, and it is important to maintain self-reflexivity and question barriers to understanding (Scollon and Scollon, 2001). In this case, these could have included intercultural adaptation levels, age experiences, daily experiences and any other barriers that may have arisen between me as a Pākehā New Zealander and the ESEA students. Essentially, I was in a similar position to the participants because when misunderstandings within the intercultural relationship of researcher and participant became evident, I understood that it was my own views and instincts that had to be questioned at all key stages of researching, writing and analysing this project. Most importantly, it was not the participants who were most likely to be incorrect in their intercultural understandings, but my own assumptions and limitations as to their perceptions. Accordingly, my implicit ideological and theoretical understandings were examined at each stage of the study.

Opportunities to build on that understanding were incorporated throughout the project. For example, I took the opportunity to attend a Confucian Conference at the University of Beijing in 2006 as a student. This necessitated my understanding first-hand how very different every physical aspect of Beijing is from Auckland and other more familiar Western cities of my own background, and that even familiar processes such as using public transport can be very different in terms of safety and procedures. Furthermore, I have also actively sought feedback from East and South-East Asian professionals, researchers, scholars and students in any role that I have met during my work, studies, and leisure activities. A clear qualitative framework that emphasises interpretation allows this study to overcome the potential imbalance of using a non-East or South-East Asian international student as a researcher and to allow some limited role as a participant observer. McIntyre (2005, p. 212) explains the Weberian concept of *verstehen* transition as one that : “...requires the observer not only to understand the context in which the actions take place, but to project himself or herself both intellectually and emotionally in the place of the actor”. This meant that it was important to undertake a lot of contextual study from available research in order to overcome large gaps of knowledge that are inevitable when faced with such strong regional, cultural, ethnic and even generationally different experiences. It is difficult for a non-East and South-East-Asian international student researcher to fully empathise both intellectually and emotionally with the students, but by using a qualitative approach with self-consciously reflexive practices and techniques, some understanding between a committed researcher and participants does emerge.

A final component that necessitates an overall qualitative research structure is the need for flexibility, and to be open to using different methods of obtaining information in the context of intercultural communication (Neumann, 2003). As explained in the previous paragraph, miscommunications can easily arise because of differing experiences and expectations of each of the parties (Scollon and Scollon, 2001). To overcome these, the research design has incorporated a flexible approach, or *bricolage*, that has allowed changes to be made to the data collection methods during the sampling as well as within the data analysis. Neumann (2003, p. 148), describes this as follows: “A *bricolage* technique means working with one’s hands and being pragmatic at using an assortment of odds and ends in an inventive manner to accomplish a specific task”. This added flexibility proved important in this case because the ESEA students are in temporary

sojourns, and it is difficult to generalise from past international student research because the studies utilise an entirely different set of international students, or draw from established ESEA social networks. Past research within Asian communities may have created fatigue, or used up the enthusiasm and good-will of participants from previous research projects in universities. For example, McGrath, Butcher and Smith (2007) found that many of the Asian ethnic groups that they recruited in their research projects felt that they were approached too often for research purposes, or were developing fatigue. Flexibility assisted my overall aim which was to tailor this research project to suit the needs of my participants while still meeting requirements for academic research quality, rigour and theoretical development.

## **SAMPLING**

The aim of this project was to ask a cross-section of 50 ESEA students to participate in either group or single interviews and to reflect on their intercultural experiences of social groups in NZ and their host-country cultural environment. To achieve this aim it was necessary to obtain a sample that was broad enough to allow for a number of focus group interviews across three institutions. But to meet the study objectives, this ideal sample also had to be narrow enough to provide opportunities for reflection and in depth participation by most (if not all) participants. Their reflection was upon their experiences of learning, living, and forming social relationships alongside domestic students. Typically, the ESEA students experience life as ‘other’, or separate from their domestic student counterparts. Experience often thrusts them into mixed nationality groups with a common language of English – but in each case a shared ESEA regional background and home-country.

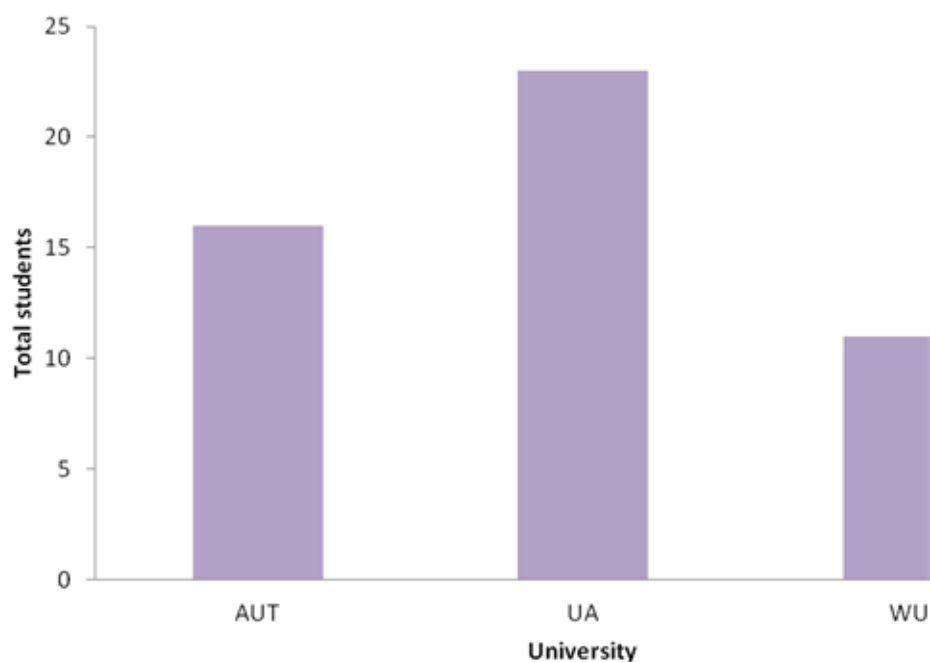
Typical samples for IPA research projects range between 3 – 10 participants (Cresswell, 2007). The achieved sample had 50 participants, which is extremely broad for an IPA project and could be seen to lessen the chances of detailed analysis. But, in essence, the group nature of the most of the interviews narrowed this down because there were only 11 group interviews and 7 individual interviews. Though still large for classical phenomenological projects, it is an appropriate sample for a specialised qualitative project that requires a broad range of participants to represent a region such as East and South-East Asia. According to Creswell (2007, p. 131), the essence of the IPA approach



is to “...describe the meaning of the phenomenon for a small number of individuals who have experienced it”, and one key aspect of this experience is that the students are frequently in mixed peer environments. To authenticate this research, the students were placed into a mixed environment or focus group that highlighted or reinforced the experiences that they share as ‘Asian students’. It offered the advantage of allowing the students a deeper understanding of what the research was about, and invited them to make cross-cultural comparisons with various individuals or social groups in NZ. This environment also allowed the participants another layer of opportunity, and that was to compare cross-cultural comparisons made by their own national groups. This study also had to account for the heterogeneous or mixed nationality nature of the sample. In these cases, it is important to include a larger sample range than would be required for a homogenous population (see for example McIntyre, 2005). By using this approach in this study, I was able to address the larger key aim that participants are given the opportunity to make intercultural observations and to contribute to the analysis and discussion if they would like to.

### **Study parameters.**

When researching international student topics, it can be very easy to centralise nationality as the main key variable for respondents. But type or categorisation of experience in NZ was an equally important variable in this case. This study involved the investigation of a range of experiences of life in New Zealand by incorporating sampling across three universities – two from Auckland and one from Hamilton. Thirty nine students (see Figure 2 below) were from one of the two Auckland universities: AUT University and the University of Auckland. This followed a representative pattern, as 54.2% of all international students in 2006 were based in the Auckland region (Export Education, 2006). Accordingly, 11 students were recruited from the University of Waikato. This was consistent with the 6.1% proportion of international students that were based in the Waikato region in the same year (Export Education, 2006).



**Figure 3: Sample of the ESEA students by university**

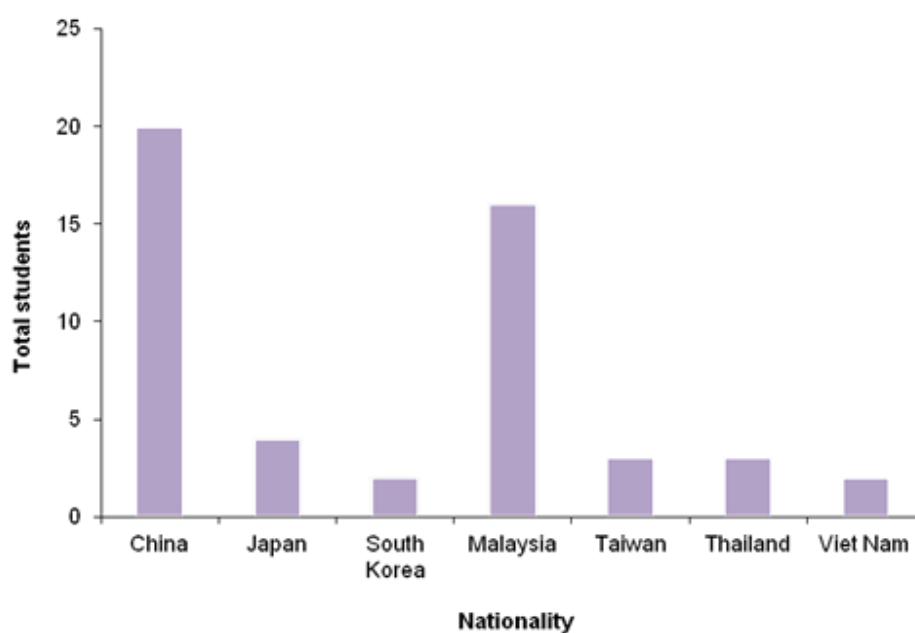
Recruiting the sample was a complex process that required three different sampling methods to recruit a sample of students. At the outset of this project, recruitment had been seen as a seemingly straightforward process where advertising and choosing among a surplus of participants would be the approach. The first time where the practical solutions of the *bricolage* approach was utilised was in the process of recruitment. Recruitment was achieved through a range of advertising, snowball or chain sampling, convenience sampling or recommendation by international student centre staff, or opportunistic sampling through chance encounters (Cresswell, 2007; Marshall and Rossman, 1999). Initially, five participants were attracted by a promotional approach at an AUT University international orientation day. In practice, this meant creating an information table where I waited at the student orientation gathering, and responded to questions from the interested students. Sixteen students responded initially, but the numbers dwindled once subsequent contact was made and the students realised participation was not compulsory for their studies. Much more successfully, however, informal snowballing attracted 26 students. This was undertaken with the help of two research assistants at AUT University and the University of Auckland. This is similar to the experience of many phenomenological researchers who find snowball or chain sampling effective because it offers the advantage of utilising existing social networks (Cresswell, 2007; Neumann, 2003). It was especially appropriate in this study because many ESEA students form strong social bonds that

help them to negotiate their studies at university and overcome the obstacles without the daily support and input of their home-country families. Another major benefit that the snowballing approach provides is that the research assistants were able to offer feedback, and this improved my intercultural understanding of participants. (For a more detailed explanation of the research assistant role see p. 109).

As approaching the students directly did not locate enough students, two additional and more directive methods were used to simplify and streamline the sampling process. Convenience sampling was the third method, and this arose due to access difficulties with contacting students in Hamilton at the University of Waikato. Ten students were sought with the assistance of the International Student Office staff, and approached as the students interacted with the international office. Unlike the previous methods, convenience sampling can result in recruiting participants who are not ideal as they do not self-select freely, unlike other methods. Due to the constraints of working away from my home campus, however, this kind of recruitment was the most efficient. Finally, the remaining nine participants were directly recruited by me as a result of opportunistic encounters during the course of my studies at AUT University. As discussed earlier in the previous section, a key part of the research design was to incorporate *bricolage* (Neumann, 2003) or the continual structuring and re-structuring of the methodology as the circumstances and needs of the study require it. By allowing this dimension, I was able to take up unique opportunities that I had not been able to predict. Like many qualitative researchers, I found that opportunistic sampling can add diversity to a sample by bringing in prospective new participants that are not part of known networks but fit the population description (Cresswell, 2007; Marshall and Rossman, 1999). In particular, it offered occasions to follow up with ESEA students who were also postgraduate peers. For example, I was able to get the help of a peer doctoral student to recruit postgraduate students at AUT University. At a faculty postgraduate support meeting we discussed our difficulties, and the doctoral student suggested that he could assist me to recruit some of his postgraduate East and South-East Asian international student peers. As more experienced, and perhaps also as more mature students, they were able to add an extra level of reflexivity and insight to the interview process. But there were also unintentional deficits to these recruitment processes as well. Though there were postgraduates, there were fewer of these students than would have been

ideal. Furthermore, the national group representation had some similar omissions – particularly among Singaporean, Hong Kong and North Korean student groups.

The actual composition of the sample was from a cross-section of six different East or South-East Asian states. These were: China (including Taiwan), Japan, and South Korea from East Asia; as well as Macau, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam from South-East Asia (see Figure 3 below). In Chapter One, it was suggested that ESEA students could be from as many as 14 different states. But, due to recruitment events, the actual sample as a result of the recruitment/selection process covered a much narrower range. This means that students from Hong Kong (part of China), North Korea, Singapore, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia and the Philippines were not included in the sample. Initially, this omission could seem significant, but a comparison with the Ministry of Education figures in 2006 (Export Education, 2006) showed that students from the eight omitted states comprised only 1,140 students, or just 4% of the entire East and South-East-Asian international student population in NZ.

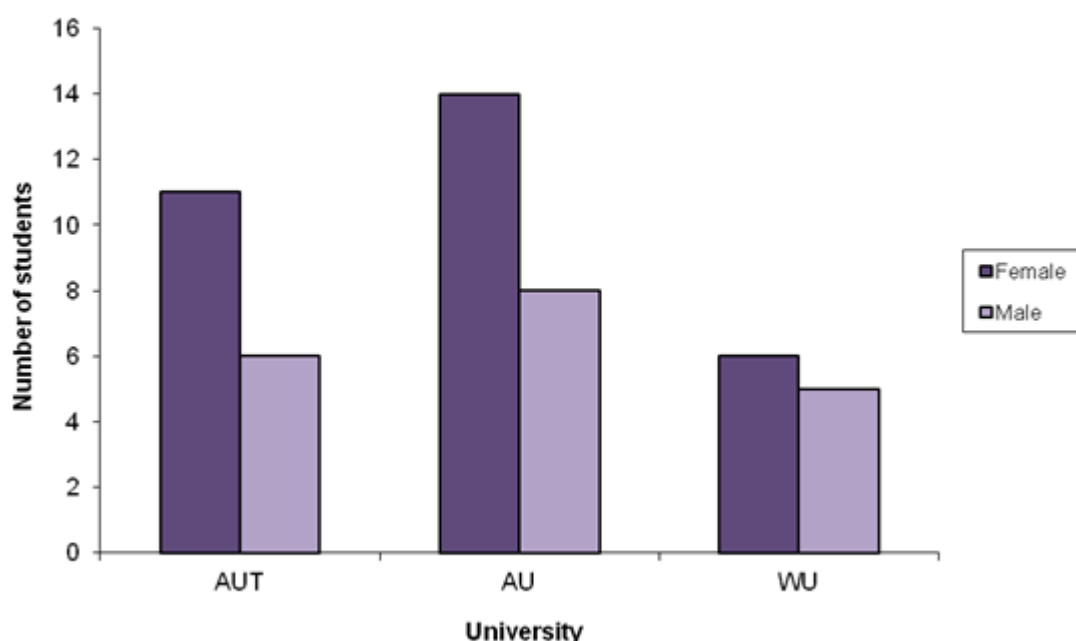


**Figure 4: The ESEA student sample by nationality**

In this case, the sample was comprised of 20 Chinese international students (see Figure 3 above), and this was lower than the national figures for 2006 (Export Education, 2006) that record 71% or 21,048 students. In contrast, Malaysian international students were statistically over-represented with 16 students. This contrasts with the Ministry of

Education statistics that record 1,519 or 5% Malaysian of total international students in 2006. This was due to the Malaysian research assistant who used his Malaysian social networks to recruit for the study. Although Malaysia is a separate state from Singapore, this deficit could be seen to contribute to the gap left by the Singaporean lack in the sample because several of the students from Malaysia had studied and/or worked in Singapore. More about this and the unexpected strengths that this offered the study will be discussed in the following section on instruments and procedures. The qualitative research framework does not necessarily require that the samples have to statistically mirror the population (Cresswell, 2007; Marshall and Rossman, 1999). Instead, qualitative sampling relies on flexible contextual sampling that emphasises the phenomenon or topic rather than statistical representation. This study was able to incorporate the dominance of the Malaysian students as a bonus to shed light on social networks that the students create while they sojourn in NZ. The rest of the sample was spread relatively evenly over the other home-countries.

There was a distinct bias toward women students, with 31 in this sample (see Figure 4 that follows). The Ministry of Education statistics for Asian international students run counter to this because men slightly outnumber women with 52% of the Asian international student population being male (Export Education, 2006). This trend toward women participants was more marked in the Auckland region where most of the students were individually recruited either by me, or through the peer international student research assistant. Several factors contributed to these results. Firstly, as a woman, it is likely that some of the bias may be attributed to my own ability to approach women more easily at AUT University. In a similar vein, one male research assistant explained that it was easier for him to recruit his women friends because they were more active in helping him find more participants to join them in their focus groups than his male friends, who more typically limited their support to their own focus group attendance.



**Figure 5: Gender representation of the ESEA student sample by university**

In contrast, the gender distribution at the University of Waikato was much more even with six female and five male students (see Figure 4 above). For the Auckland section of the study, however, the students who self-selected through their own social networks at the University of Auckland and AUT University offered the increased benefit of providing more data about friendship patterns. So for those students from the Auckland universities, their interest in learning more about life in NZ, or reflecting on New Zealanders, may be more genuine than the Waikato-based participants as they had not been approached by authority figures. But both sets of data fit the IPA research frame (Cresswell, 2007), because all of the students in the sample had experienced being ‘Asian international students’ in NZ.

Age and study level of the sample offered a more typical representation of the East and South-East-Asian international student population with an emphasis on students between the ages of 18 – 25 years (see Figure 5 below). Importantly, this study was based on the assumption that many of the students are negotiating maturation from adolescence into early adulthood simultaneously with the process of intercultural adaptation. Figure 5 shows that the bulk of the sample was situated in the lower two age ranges with 37 of the sample falling in the 20 – 24 year old age range, and with six

participants in the 18- 19 year old age range. Together, these ranges comprised 86% of the sample. Similarly, the Ministry of Education 2006 national statistics show that the same two age ranges make up 84% of the entire Asian international student population. For this sample, the other participants were spread out across the age ranges and these can also be seen in Figure 5. There was, however, a slight deviation from the national statistics because the 25 – 30 year old age range is more heavily represented in the Ministry of Education figures with 24% of the total international student population falling in that group (Export Education, 2006). Nevertheless, this age range was under-represented in this sample, as the recruitment choices were limited. But the sample representation did allow for investigation into the complexities of adolescence and the changing notions of intercultural adaptation or, as expressed by Durham (2004, p. 141), the “cross-cultural dialectics and the socio-political dimensions of Otherness that will mark their adult lives”. As the students were within the age groups of late adolescence and maturation, this study was in a position to map these processes as they unfold. Furthermore, there was enough representation from the more mature students’ age group generally to get some notions of contrast, as well as gain insight into those very different challenges of the mature adults’ intercultural adaptation.

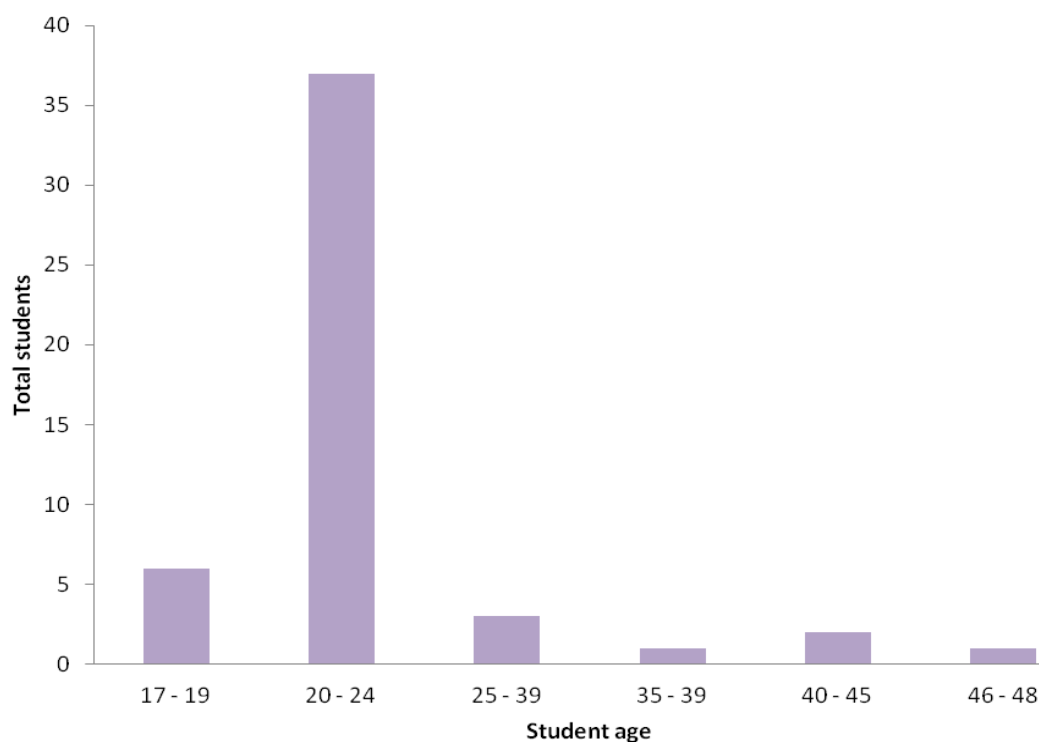
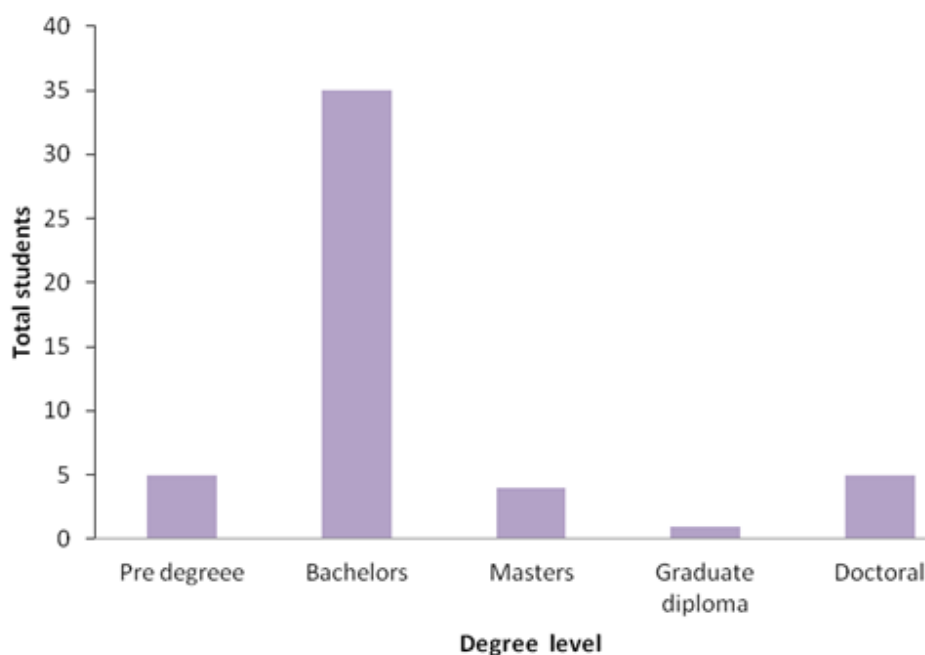


Figure 6: ESEA student sample by age-ranges

In this thesis study level correlates strongly to the age range, and is especially important as it relates to the level of intercultural adaptation that is exhibited by the students. As the start of their study sojourn, students in the first year of a bachelor or diploma programme have a much shorter and narrower range of experience to draw upon than those students in their final year of a bachelors' degree or in postgraduate study. Consequently, in this thesis there needed to be comparisons made between the students' level of intercultural awareness or adaptation and their study levels. To assist in this process, the participant's study level was consistently recorded for each participant. Overwhelmingly, 40 (80%) of the students were engaged in pre-graduate study (see Figure 6 below). Of these, 35 participants were engaged in bachelor degree level study and 5 were enrolled in pre-degree level study at a diploma level. The Ministry of Education records 91% of the Asian students at these pre-graduate levels, and this is consistent with this study (Export Education, 2006).



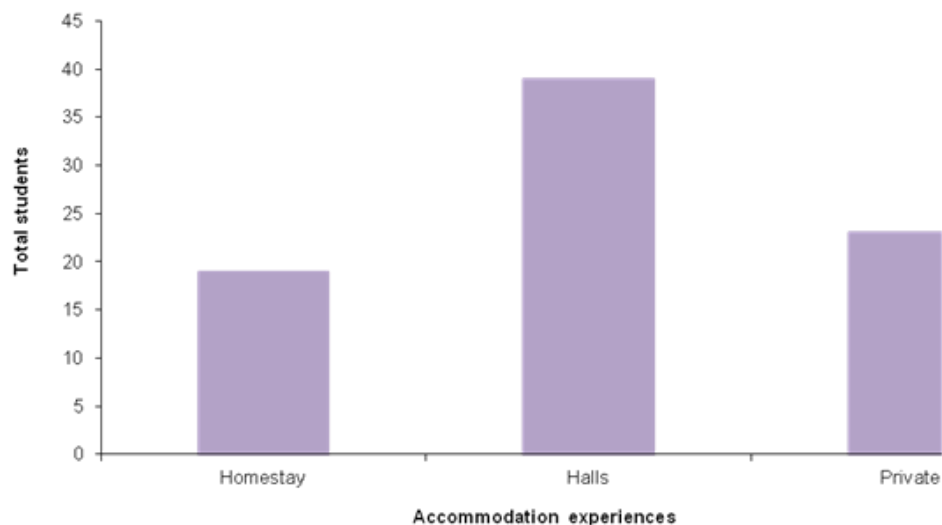
**Figure 7: The ESEA student sample by degree level**

Another important feature of this study was the opportunity to work with more mature students, or more experienced postgraduates. This sample also consisted of 4 (8% of the sample) masters or graduate diploma level participants, and 5 doctoral students making up the final 10% (see Figure 6 above). This differed slightly from the national statistics, because doctoral students in 2006 are recorded at just 1%, and in 2006 (Export Education) there were just 430 Asian international students in doctoral programmes



across all of the universities. Their lower numbers made their input even more important as it also provided insight into new and developing trends in Export Education where postgraduate study is on the increase (Ministry of Education, 2007). Relatively little is known about this small sample currently, but their educational and sojourning experiences in NZ increase the possibility that this current batch of sojourners will soon be in a strong position to reflect on their overseas sojourn in legislative assemblies, public forums such as boardrooms, in small businesses and in overseas academic institutions. As a fellow postgraduate student, I was able to attract the enthusiasm and attention of these peer students and to encourage them to contribute. They brought to the study their academic experience as researchers, along with their experience of the requirements of studying complex ideas and relaying these in a second language, and other challenges that set them outside of their comfort zones. These perspectives added value to their reflections on New Zealanders and their adult lives in NZ.

In the seminal study by Trinh (1968), the type of accommodation and the experiences Chinese and other international students gained as a result was a very important feature of the international student experience. The halls of residence had an enormous impact upon the sense of well-being and belonging of the participants in his study. To look more closely into this aspect of student experience, the accommodation experiences of the sample needed to be recorded (see Figure 7 below). The participants reported a range of accommodation types and many of them had experienced more than one. These accommodation types can be broadly categorised as: home stay with private families, halls of residence at university, and private accommodation. Private accommodation can include a huge range of types, but in this sample it included living with family members, flat-share or rooming with other ESEA students, or mixed flat-share situations with New Zealanders. In the following graph it can be seen that 39 of the sample had experienced one or other university halls of residence. Home-stay and private accommodation were well represented, and this sample contained a lot of different experiences to draw on.



**Figure 8:**The ESEA student sample by accommodation experiences

## RESEARCH INSTRUMENTATION AND PROCEDURES

The students' relative position as outsiders to many social groups and structures in NZ was one of the driving forces that ensured that this study was timely and important within social research. Their experiences place them within NZ as sojourners, but their social status as outsiders or 'other' ensures that they are unable to participate within social discourse or to influence established domestic social groups in a powerful manner (Benson, 2006; Butcher, 2006). This relationship with authority is enacted at an institutional level, as many authority groups and assistance networks are often run by New Zealanders, although the international student centres in the three participating universities in the study do make some attempt to engage the international students, or new immigrants with experience as international students. Problematically, this situation was reflected within the research design and execution of this study, which had a New Zealand Pākehā researcher. For the undergraduate students especially, there were potential language divides that could have been reinforced by my position as primary researcher and facilitator of the focus groups. As alluded to above (see reflexivity p. 87-88), it soon became clear that some of participants may have initially believed that participating in this study would yield them academic advantages. This misunderstanding had not been anticipated because I was an emergent researcher and

at that stage, unaware that this belief could arise. To minimise any harmful effects of this or any other oversight, I then decided to faithfully reproduce any and all instances of communication errors in my field notes. These were cross referenced with the checks and balances of the requirements and guidelines of the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEK) and my supervisors. (see Appendices 1 and 2 p. 292-293).

Field notes were an essential research instrument used in this study. Though I realised that I would not need full notebooks of interrogated and layered experience that would be required for an ethnographic study because that is time consuming and is reliant upon the notion of frequent and regular contact (McIntyre, 2005). It soon became clear that a short set of handwritten notes made in a separate notebook would provide the snap-shot immediacy required for me to use as a reference point in further analysis and to improve any further interviews. Olsen (2008) suggests that using handwritten field notes provides a more accessible and reliant method to record key moments and procedural errors because it is easier to do quickly than having to create files and so forth. One incident of key importance that was recorded first in field notes, then analysed within the findings is the case of P-14. P-14 was a Korean male in the 20 – 24 years age range from UA (UA Group 1, April 19, 2007). Whilst recording the group interview notes I noted that there was discord with my communication with P-14. This led me to writing up a quick separate set of notes on that discord. My initial aim in this study was to have smooth and consistent research with equal representation across the sample. However, the experience of P-14 showed me that some participants were going to provide more opportunities for learning from the miscommunication and their experiences would be interrogated more closely (see for example P-14 on p. 155-156). In particular, the miscommunication with P-14 was the first hint of the difficulty that was to follow between the ideals of IPA and lowering role and hierarchy banners and the in-built resistance provided by the Confucian values that seemed inherent to many of participants. P-14 made it clear in the meal that followed his group interview, that he would be the host and I would be the guest of honour. As the guest of honour, it was my role to eat first and to show satisfaction in the meal and appreciation of that honour (Hwang, 1999). As the field note examples have shown, the quality of communication between researcher and participants is a central requirement in this thesis.

To return to IPA, or to phenomenological studies in general, the ideal is to facilitate free communication by lowering barriers due to role and hierarchy and provide an opportunity for participants to speak freely (Smith et. al., 1999). But this could be something of a generalisation based on research undertaken on disadvantaged populations. In some cases, representing a familiar role can actually improve communication and be a helpful method in gaining the trust and interest of some participant groups. In a recent M.A. study undertaken by Mack (2003), a Vietnamese postgraduate student, Vietnamese international student participants could be divided into two groups. The first group were introverted and shy students who frequently found communication in a foreign language and environment challenging, and would find intercultural communication to be negative and imposing. Such students would be unlikely to volunteer for my project, as prospective participants were informed of my ethnicity, job status as lecturer, and relative age beforehand. In contrast, Mack found the second group of Vietnamese international students to be outgoing and practised at expressing themselves. As busy and organised full-time students, they actively sought solutions to their problems or difficulties. Mack (2003, p. 61) writes of this second group:

They made effective use of available learning services, such as the Student Learning Centre and libraries and did not hesitate to approach the International Student Office, and departmental and university administration offices depending on their needs. Their relatively good language skills also enabled them to approach academic staff and fellow students for assistance and information.

Likewise, the participants in this study were also capable, outgoing individuals with a great capacity to understand their own priorities and needs. Through the process of recruitment, the participants were all informed in advance that they would be participating in a project undertaken by a Pākehā New Zealander, and were more likely to be prepared for any imbalances of authority. Instead, as I explain in more detail in Chapter Five, most showed a keen interest in learning more about New Zealanders and their host-country environment. This is consistent with the observation by Neumann (2003, p. 217) who describes how researchers are commonly accepted and assisted by participants in the field, “...[they] often go out of their way to help researchers by pointing to especially good vantage points”.

As I have explained in the research design section (see pp. 88 – 90), this project was aimed at creating intercultural communication or dialogue between the participants and

myself as a researcher. To offer an opportunity to gain insight into the daily experiences and reflections of the students, it was necessary to use direct methods to gather data that focused on students' experiences. Many of the participants may also have been exposed to the frustrations of intercultural miscommunication (Scollon and Scollon, 2001) between themselves and others within intercultural relationships with other social groups in NZ. To minimise the risks of mis-communication, this study incorporated an interview approach, which allows for a number of different channels of communication. Direct communication between the researcher and participants can minimise these risks because this was a face-to-face situation where uncertainty can be conveyed through body-language, tone and content (Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Scollon and Scollon, 2001). Using direct communication created a format where understandings could be openly corrected, explored and informally defused during the interview. Although researcher bias cannot be fully eliminated, using an interview format offered opportunities for deeper understandings between the researcher and participants (Smith et. al., 1999). Furthermore, the group setting can also assist in this possible power imbalance because many of the students were familiar with each other and were from shared social networks and, thus, may even be in a relatively secure position.

There were three different kinds of interviews used in this study. These were semi-structured focus groups, open-ended individual interviews, and informal expert interviews by support staff and other interested parties (see the following Table 1). At the outset of this project, focus groups were to be the primary source of data. From this, individual interviews would be selected from the participants who offered non-typical reflections or interesting personal experiences. At the outset, I had assumed that the participants would require familiarity to build trust with me as a researcher, and that this would be achieved by participating first in a focus group interview. But, as the students were recruited, a number of difficulties emerged, and this meant that the interview formats had to be adapted.

As recruitment commenced, some of the participants explained that they were uncomfortable with group interview settings and preferred to talk to me individually. To interview these students it was necessary to gain further ethical approval as the original application had only covered focus group interviews (see Appendices 2 and 3, pp. 294 –

295). Despite initial assumptions about familiarity increasing dialogue, students selected from the focus groups for individual interviews displayed reluctance in several cases. One participant told me in an informal moment that she had been uncomfortable with being singled out and also commented that the research project was using up too much of her time. This complaint led me to disregard that extra interview and use data from only the initial focus group or individual interviews for all of the participants because I was concerned that the other students may have felt the same way but were uncomfortable about telling me. From this stage forward, all participants were interviewed once only and the students were invited to keep in touch if they chose. The boundary between expert and participant interviews also became blurred in the course of the interviews. One of the experts in the AUT sample was the president of the Chinese society, and she preferred to be included in the sample as a participant. It was her wish to have her experiences formally analysed because she identified herself as an ordinary Chinese international student first and foremost. Although the data collection plan required extensive changes, these are the kinds of developments that are typical of a flexible, or *bricolage*, research design (Neumann, 2003). By adapting to the needs of the participants, the interviews were executed in an atmosphere of collaboration and warmth.

### **Exploratory pilot interviews**

To embark on this research, three focus group interviews were undertaken from among my East and South-East Asian international student friends. Each interview was conducted as an individual interview, with two conducted in less formal settings, such as my office. The purpose of these interviews was to define some topic areas for the following project interviews, look at the interview location setting, and to ascertain any sensitive or problem topics. The findings from the pilot interviews were also useful from a methodological perspective. From these pilot interviews I learned some important ideas that I was able to incorporate in the methodological structures, as follows:

- As they knew me in an informal capacity, the pilot participants felt some pressure to consent to this interview because it would help me in my studies. This can result in good data, but it carries the risk of having it withdrawn at a later stage by participants who experience discomfort or, in the rare instance, find that our

relationship is strained or disrupted socially. Therefore, my idea that these students remain pilot participants was affirmed.

- All three of the students felt unsure as to their perceptions of New Zealanders. They are often aware of making mistakes in communication through language or cultural difficulties, though each made it clear that they felt confident to check these through with me as their friend in this instance. But one pilot participant, in particular, suggested that in other social situations they would not attempt to correct me because it is exhausting for them to keep correcting New Zealanders. Effectively, to offer corrections indicates a level of involvement and commitment that I had not understood prior to the pilot interview. This insight proved useful in conducting interviews and in interpreting and analysing the data.
- In a similar vein, I learned that the students in the pilot study are selective about which New Zealanders they wish to form intercultural relationships with. On the whole, they find many New Zealanders closed or off-putting and, in many cases, do not wish to put in the effort to make friendships. Realising that the pilot participants were selective about their host-country cultural group friendships led me to investigate the role of social stratifications of ethnicity, age, occupation and/or socio-economic status within their intercultural relationships.
- These three students in the pilot study *were* aware of ethnic differences, and sometimes felt that Māori or Pasifika people could represent a threat to them, and feared abuse or attack. This reluctance to mix with these ethnic groups became a recurring theme for some of the students during the project, but was also counterbalanced by others who enjoyed and sought ethnically diverse intercultural relationships.
- There was a marked reluctance to openly criticise New Zealanders as a group because they felt that I could be offended. As they did not wish to offend their friend, they did not want to engage in being openly critical. But they were willing to talk to me about this reluctance and explain their position. This also led me to investigate Confucian values more closely before I began interviewing, and explore ways that disapproval could be expressed other than through direct statements.
- In these pilot cases the students felt that interviews were an uncomfortable and formal experience. They also expressed concern about who would listen to the tapes. But this was mainly due to anxiety that their English and their conduct

would be judged by authority figures or other peer international students. In short, they were concerned about their reputation and social status. This informed my conduct in other interviews where I made it clear from the beginning that language proficiency would not be judged, and their contributions would remain confidential at every stage from the interview onwards.

- In all pilot cases the students and I fully agreed that it was important to have some type of debrief for both the participant and researcher. In that way, we could re-establish our relationship back into the normal context and relax. They also believed that a meal or drink would be a nice way to bring the interview to a close. During the ethics application AUTECH expressed reluctance to allow for this shared meal, but were convinced by the support from the pilot study.

The overall findings from these pilot interviews then became the guiding principles that were used throughout the following interviews, analysis and write-up of the thesis.

**Table 3:**

***Interview Overview***

<i>Type</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Structure</i>	<i>Duration (Hours)</i>
Focus	11	Topic structured/open-ended	1.5 – 3
Single	6	Topic structured/open-ended	1 – 2
Expert	5	Structured/information based	30 mins – 1

**Focus group interviews**

Eleven focus group interviews were conducted and these typically consisted of a range of 2 – 6 ESEA students. One benefit of a focus group format is to allow the participants to benefit from peer support. According to Marshall and Rossman (1999, p. 114) “People often need to listen to others’ opinions and understandings in order to form their own”. In a supportive peer environment, many of the students could compare their reflections and experiences. But in this study, focus group interviews provided additional benefits for East and South-East Asian students. This format also consistently mirrors Confucian values that place collective group identities and supports above the perceptions and desires of an individual (De Bary, 2000; Hwang, 1999; Simone, 2001). Though some participants did not opt for focus groups, 86% (or 43) of the sample did. Focus group



interviews were especially supportive for the contentious or critical questions that required students to reflect on their relationship with authority figures within education providers, the family roles of home-stay parents, and other key social groups. Finally, focus group contexts also offered an element of social interaction with peers that proved attractive for young, busy people, who were giving up valuable study or social time.

During the focus groups, the students were asked to fill in a participant summary form or information form (see Appendix 4). This asked for a range of demographic information, but also included some important specialist questions on qualifications and year of study. In the preliminary stage of the interviews, the participants were asked one at a time how long they had been studying in NZ, and clarifying questions about their educational background. By talking to each student in turn, these questions provided the dual benefit of ice-breaker and a model to show them how to participate in a focus group (Neumann, 2003). These questions were also very relevant as the previous educational experiences and total years that the students sojourn also have an impact on the level of intercultural adaptation and the relationships that they form with New Zealanders and other groups. Educational background is a particularly suitable indicator because intercultural adaptation is reliant on depth of experience, or exposure to the host country environment (Kim, 2001). Consequently, the participants' information provided reference points when asking them about the formation of close-friendships, and their growing awareness of New Zealanders.

Upon completion of the structured section, the focus groups were then conducted by topic. These were based on the initial research questions that were outlined in Chapter One (see p. 15 ). Focus group interviews do need some structured approaches to topics in order to motivate and inspire a group (Marshall and Rossman, 1999; McIntyre, 2005). To ensure that the focus groups yielded the appropriate data, I worked from a pre-prepared question form that I used as a memory jogger in cases where the participants did not focus on their intercultural adaptation relationships, or where there was a lull in participation. The questions are outlined below:

- What do you like about New Zealand?
- What do you dislike about New Zealand?
- What do you find difficult in New Zealand?

- How do you feel about New Zealanders?
- What different ethnic groups make up New Zealanders?
- And how do you feel about each group?
- How do you feel about other Asian groups in New Zealand?

These topics acted as a guide, but the actual themes that emerged were often much more specific and based on the issues that were most relevant to the particular focus group participants. This was often done by inviting the participants to make comparisons with their home-country experiences of similar activities.

As is traditional for semi-structured focus groups, clear direction or overt facilitation was required. A well-known disadvantage of using focus groups is that they can become side-tracked or disrupted from the topic (Neumann, 2003). More specifically, as focus groups necessarily involve the needs of multiple group members, there can be instances where issues such as interview timing or room layout can dominate the proceedings (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). In this project, retaining a semi-structured format going around the group, and monitoring topics for relevance did help to keep the participants on course. There were also some cases where the students were concerned with time-commitments, or a lack of familiarity with the room. The semi-structured approach made it possible to gauge these anxieties, and to guide the focus group to a newly negotiated finish time and/or to make changes to the room layout.

Once the focus group interviews were completed, the students were then invited to a brief meal. As the majority of the focus groups were held in the evening, it was a relatively simple task to move to a small restaurant and to debrief the students. The meal gave them an opportunity to ask me any questions that they may have had about my life or the study and many took advantage of it. It is unusual to provide a meal after an interview as it is expensive and, in some cases, researchers believe it could be viewed as coercive (McIntyre, 2005; Neumann, 2003). But in this case it was used as one small way to offer the students recompense for their time and input. By consulting with a past Chinese cultural advisor to the New Zealand Government and a director of a local PTE, I was able to choose some appropriate restaurants that offered an atmosphere and menu that appealed to most of the ESEA students. Having Muslim students in three of the focus groups also meant that it was sometimes necessary to be flexible about exactly which restaurant was chosen. Many Muslim people need to maintain a *Halal* diet which

meant a limited range of choices to eat out in Hamilton and, in some cases, Auckland (Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand, n.d.). This debrief also had the dual benefit of allowing me, as the researcher, time for relaxation and to reflect on proceedings before the field notes were written that evening.

In qualitative methodology, it is very difficult to separate the data collection from the data analysis, as this is an on-going process (See for example Cresswell, 2007; McIntyre, 2005). But, for the purposes of this chapter, the final stage of the data collection is concerned with the transcribing of the interviews, as additional feedback was offered by the paid research assistants who transcribed the recorded interviews. Each of the research assistants were postgraduate students with a background in research projects and this contributed to the insights into the participants and the interview process, as they were invited to comment about anything they felt that I as an interviewer had not understood. Though they were unwilling to do this formally, both of the research assistants did comment on some presumptions that I appeared to be making during the interviews. In particular, it was suggested that I used myself as an example too often and that was probably very confusing for the ESEA students in the focus groups. After all, the participants were being asked to focus on their own experiences and placing my experiences as central could be seen as off-topic. This was subsequently noted and my approach altered for the following focus groups. As many of the participants may have felt unable to articulate this critique, inviting the input of the research assistants proved invaluable. Another key contribution that helped me to refine my analysis was some feedback regarding the participants' use of the "we" in the interviews. The research assistant noted that the students often revealed a close bond in the focus groups and that this showed in their use of the word "we" rather than "I". Questioning this, I soon discovered that this extended to agreeing with one another, checking and confirming details. When these markers appeared, it alerted me to established friendships and indicated that some of the reflections emerged from shared perceptions. This was a valuable insight that made a key contribution to the analysis and findings of this project.

### **Individual interviews**

There were also six individual interviews and these typically lasted from 45 minutes to one hour. Unlike the focus group interviews, the individual interviews were able to be unstructured except to ensure topic relevance. It is widely believed by many qualitative

researchers that unstructured individual interviews have the potential to gain depth of perspective and to facilitate more detailed information than most other methods (See for example Cresswell, 2007; Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Neumann, 2003). Despite this important benefit, individual interviews were undertaken sparingly in this project as they were also potentially the most problematic. Successful interviews rely on researcher-participant shared understanding and interpretation (Cresswell, 2007; Selby, 1999). Shared understanding within intercultural relationships is the ideal rather than the norm and miscommunication is an inherent risk (Scollon and Scollon, 2001). Accordingly, the students who participated in individual interviews needed to be confident in their ability to communicate cross-culturally or had been introduced to me through my own social activities and hobbies. These participants were also the most at risk of being misunderstood because they did not have the collective intercultural skills of a group to back them up. But they also provided opportunities for more personal topics to be investigated where appropriate in the same manner that individual conversations can open up opportunity for greater personal exchange. Consequently, these interviews added a profound depth to the sample as these international students often shared activities and interests with me, such as martial arts, studying or working at AUT University. These interviews provided opportunities to check understandings and ideas gained from the focus group interviews as well as allowing a greater depth of communication, as trust had been established between participant and researcher. In particular, one of the pilot interview participants became a research assistant and was committed to the project for over 12 months. Greater involvement led him to ask to be re-interviewed as the final participant from the University of Auckland, and to talk about how his plans had changed as a result of living in Auckland, away from Kuala Lumpur - his home-city. He wanted to explain how his intercultural adaptation had created a greater interest in learning more about other countries first-hand, as well as NZ.

Though the individual interviews were generally unstructured, the procedure remained the same as for the focus group interviews. The participants were asked to complete a participant information sheet, and their responses to the questions and layout were noted. In most cases, the participants needed no further guidance and the interview topics tended to flow without a lot of formal guidance. But in one rare case this was not

possible, and for this I used the memory joggers from the same pre-prepared question form used in the focus group interviews (see pp. 107 - 108).

As the interviews were fluid, some of the topics received more attention than others. The students were willing and keen to talk about their relationships in NZ, and their challenges to adapting to study and life during their study sojourn. In the course of these interviews, the students' ethnic awareness of their East and South-East Asian counterparts was also uncovered. The specific reasons for uneven interview contributions are explained more fully in the following analyses – Chapters Four and Five. Participant comfort was paramount to the qualitative framework that underpinned this project, and was also formally required by the AUT University Ethics Committee. Additionally, participant discomfort can also lead to minimised or even false data, and this could potentially have affected the integrity of the entire project. By using a flexible approach to the interview topics, I was able to steer the participants back into their comfort zones and pick up on any new or interesting topics or themes. Most of the time this was a process that emerged from common courtesy in my role as a researcher (Marshall and Rossman, 1999), and I was not always aware of the changes of topic until listening to the audio tape of the interview later that evening. But being aware of these topic changes brought me to a deeper understanding of the process of the topics that were more readily discussed by the participants.

Unlike the focus group interviews, the individual interviews were often held during the day, or when the participants were between engagements. This meant that it was difficult to offer them a meal logistically, and for a range of other reasons such as being potentially inappropriate in regards to cross-gender interviews, and too time consuming for some of the busier students. But to ensure that they felt recompensed for their considerable time and energy, each of the individual participants was offered a \$10.00 cash voucher, or coupon, at the AUT University bookshop.

Field notes were completed subsequent to each interview, and material from these was used to support the subsequent analysis chapters. Like the transcripts themselves, these will remain confidential to maintain anonymity for the participants. Transcription was completed by the research assistants, and each research assistant was required to read

and sign a confidentiality agreement. There were also opportunities for feedback from all of the research assistants.

### **Expert interviews**

Finally, there were expert interviews or contextual interviews to alert me to central issues about international students generally. At the outset, it was envisaged that these interviews would act as a contextual guide that could facilitate access to the students and relevant data. For many research projects, targeting appropriate officials for these kinds of relationships can be problematic, and in many cases research projects have to operate without this benefit (Tolich and Davidson, 1999). But this was a university project that was aimed at providing more information about international students, so it was anticipated that there would be a full range of expert interviews for all three of the universities selected for the study, with perhaps six interviews in total. Surprisingly, there were just four expert interviews because most access to participant groups and thematic guidance were very accessible. The first two were comprised of the two directors of the international units in AUT University and the University of Auckland. There were also two more from the serving president of the Chinese Association at AUT University, as well as the past president of the Chinese Society in the University of Auckland. It needs to be noted that it was not possible to gain expert interviews from the University of Waikato due to the constraints of time, distance, budget and the cost of researching away from Auckland.

Unlike the other types of interviews, the expert interviews were for contextual purposes, or to gain an overview of the various conditions and patterns observed by international student staff. Expert interviews are often seen as an efficient way to collect official knowledge, but it needs to be recognised that these experts are constrained by their roles in representing their organisations (Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Tolich and Davidson, 1999). It was anticipated that the experts would be able to offer insights into international student issues and have the benefit of a long-term perspective that many of the ESEA students lack due to the sojourning nature of their studies. As their positions require it, both the directors and the Chinese Student Association/Society presidents are also aware of the situation for many of the different student groups. Interviewing them directly helped me to enrich my understandings of some key themes, or even to identify key themes that were missing from the focus group and individual

interviews. Intercultural politeness factors, miscommunication, interpersonal dynamics in the focus groups and language barriers may all have contributed to the avoidance of some topic areas. There is more about these types of inclusions and omissions in Chapters Four and Five. As the main function of the expert interviews was contextual, or secondary, it was not necessary to transcribe these interviews. However, each was recorded and field notes or impressions after each interview also noted. Confidentiality means that field notes have not been included in the appendices, but when the data analysis relied on these discussions, direct reference to the interview, participant position and date are made.

It is difficult to describe the expert interviews in this study without considering access, as the two are linked (Tolich and Davidson, 1999). Access to the international students in all three institutions required clearance by university authorities. At the University of Auckland this role was fulfilled by the office of the Vice Chancellor, and at AUT University and the University of Waikato the international student directors governed these areas. Universities are relatively sheltered institutions, and formal access to vulnerable student populations is carefully monitored by restrictions and ethics committees. All three directors of the international centres granted access to their students. The University of Auckland, in particular, was stringent about checking the ethical permission from AUTECH. Though they were not required to, each of the international student directors offered a high degree of assistance. Support from AUT University was on-going and the director of the international centre offered solutions to sampling problems, met for several interviews, and allowed access to sampling statistics. The University of Auckland offered research space and allowed expert interviews with the director and their receptionist, who was also the past president of the University of Auckland Chinese Association. Institutional privacy, however, meant that they were unable to offer their raw support data and were unwilling to offer me their internal statistics for their international student population, and this also proved to be the case with the University of Waikato. However, strong support for the interviews from the University of Waikato international office directors made it possible to conduct research outside of Auckland and AUT support and amenities. As noted earlier, the international centre staff recruited a sample, and they also provided interview space and amenities, such as the use of the kitchen to make drinks and prepare food for the interviews.

## **Ethical approval**

Ethics approval is required for all research projects at AUT University and other universities in NZ that interview people. As a formal organisation, the AUT Ethics Committee (AUT Knowledge Base, n.d., p. para 4), is responsible to ensure that all projects meet the following criteria:

- Informed and voluntary consent;
- Respect for rights of privacy and confidentiality;
- Minimisation of risk;
- Truthfulness, including limitation of deception;
- Social and cultural sensitivity, including commitment to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi/*Te Tiriti o Waitangi*;
- Research adequacy;
- Avoidance of conflict of interest;
- Respect for vulnerability of some participants; and
- Respect for property (including University property and intellectual property rights).

The phenomenological structure of this project required collaboration between participant and researcher (Cresswell 2007). Ethical principles of informed and voluntary consent and confidentiality, truthfulness and minimisation of risk were mandatory and made it possible to attract the attention of ESEA students to participate in either individual or focus group interviews (Cresswell; Neumann, 2003). In this project, the students needed to be told what would be required of them, and it was equally clear that an interview context would allow the students opportunities to question the research progress and aims. Thus, the research planning process required by AUT University with the standard Ethics Application (EA1), to AUTEK and the Confirmation of Candidature (D9), by the Faculty of Applied Humanities meant these and other issues were explored in the research design. This procedure helped to iron out challenges to do with informed consent, and the academic feedback on the D9, especially, assisted to correct weaknesses that could have compromised the overall quality of the interviews and the analysis of the data. According to Marshall and Rossman (1999, p. 90) “The competent research proposal, then, anticipates issues of negotiating entry, reciprocity, role maintenance, and receptivity and, at the same time



adheres to ethical principles”. By following these standard procedures, as the researcher I was able to plan for access, informed consent, minimisation of risk and research adequacy from the beginning.

By tackling the EA1 first, it allowed me to address my primary concern, which was whether ESEA students would be language-confident and mature enough to give informed consent to be interviewed. In earlier media debates, there had been documented cases of abuse of international students as a result of their situation as unsupervised youth without parental supervision but with an income (Benson, 2006). Research is a fundamentally different process to rent hikes and other examples of extortionist behaviour, such as failure to provide purchased services such as prepared dinners by home-stay families, which is one of the cited forms of possible abuse that the students may encounter (Ministry of Education, 2007a). But if the participants were misled or pressured in any way, then the overall principles of ethical research would have been violated. Furthermore, if the participants were to be violated in those ways, then this research project would have reinforced the larger scale social abuses the students may have been exposed to in their daily routines. This meant that it was critical to consider the ability and position of the ESEA students in relation to consent with full understanding. From a legal perspective, the *Pastoral Care Legislation* (2003) administered by the Ministry of Education stipulates that students under 18 are below the age of consent and that their welfare in NZ is the responsibility of their education provider (Ministry of Education, 2003). An additional consideration was the AUTC classification of persons aged 16 – 20 years as legal minors who can assent to research but that formal consent should be gained (where possible) from legal guardians or parents (AUT Knowledge Base, n.d.). Approval was granted by AUTC and they supplied a comprehensive participant information sheet that explained the purpose of the study to the students (see Appendix 2 and 3, p. 303 - 304). Though some of the participants were under 20 years in age, institutional approval was offered through the international office and thus, the formal consent was gained in those cases.

The students were offered clear directions to allow them to report any damages or problems, but they never did. Furthermore, three follow-up conversations with participants due to chance encounters around AUT University and the University of Auckland campuses did not appear to reveal discomfort or avoidance of casual social

contact. This suggests that the respondents were largely comfortable with their interview participation.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis cannot be seen as a distinct process in this project, as this was a qualitative project that emerged as a result of collaboration between my ideas and goals as a new researcher, and the needs and responses of the participants. This intertwining of analysis with research design and data collection is commonly noted by many methodologists (see for example McIntyre, 2005; Neumann, 2003) and is well expressed by Cresswell (2007, p. 150): “The processes of data collection, data analysis and report writing are not distinct steps in the process – they are interrelated and often go on simultaneously” . In this project, active participation and research with the participants led to developing new insights into intercultural communication as well as new appreciations for the outsider perspective that the students are gaining as they study in a foreign environment. Formal data analysis stemmed from the interviews and initial field notes, but it also incorporated ideas that emerged from discussions with work colleagues and postgraduate student peer responses to various ideas, as well as comments from supervisors and peer review sources. Where and when possible, these secondary sources are cited and dated, and documented evidence placed in the Appendices (pp.300-313).

In this research process it was necessary to analyse the data in view of the two-way process of intercultural exchange and communication. The students are not operating in a vacuum, and their experiences and responses were based on many internal social and psychological processes as a result of their role as international students and young people emerging from adolescence into young adulthood. They are also strongly influenced by their upbringing and family values as well as national and cultural identities and ideals. It was impossible to consider all of these processes in depth, but it was possible to focus on intercultural adaptation.

Intercultural adaptation or the process by which the participants adapt to their host-country cultural context, can be difficult to measure as it is highly subjective and can be

skewed, or at the very least, overly influenced by the aims and beliefs of the specific individual. To deal with this particular challenge, it was useful to employ the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) as a method of measuring and defining levels of intercultural adaptation because it has been developed through employing large samples and re-applied and tested regularly in a range of research projects. As a consequence, it is a well-established and robust theoretical and methodological framework for emergent research projects like this. It needs to be stressed that the DMIS is a result of quantitative research and is usually utilised in quantitative projects. The data collection and analysis in this project was qualitative, and the use of the DMIS could be seen as a methodological and theoretical inconsistency. The choice of the well-established DMIS, however, was a deliberate attempt to address the imbalance and possible ignorance that I could create by my position as a Pākehā researcher in NZ who does not have any ethnic or national links with ESEA students and who has not personally experienced this type of intercultural adaptation. Effectively, the DMIS model provided a necessarily systematic approach to considering the process of intercultural adaptation in this project. Finally, utilising the DMIS within a qualitative setting in a specifically East and South-East Asian international student sojourn group provided a key opportunity to test it for Eurocentricity, both theoretically and methodologically.

Ideally, since intercultural adaptation is a highly individual and subjective process, a qualitative approach to assessing it would involve the active collaboration of the participants. This type of reflection would be recorded in several formats, such as a number of interviews and reflective journals. It would also involve a necessarily relatively small sample and require the investment of the participants' time over a period of months and/or years. That type of longitudinal study is normally used for projects looking at changes over time (Adler and Clark, 2003). It has the advantage of yielding rich data that is created from collaboration between participant and researcher. Data of this type is rich and stage driven, but it is more suitable for a small committed homogenous sample and would not be applicable across a range of ESEA students (Adler and Clark, 2003). The research aim for this project was to test for possible relationships (though not a causal relationship) between a range of ESEA students, and their experiences of intercultural adaptation in NZ as a host-country. These types of study are more often done in a cross-sectional framework, which I used here where the

participants were interviewed once and their various data was compared across the sample (Adler and Clark, 2003). Cross sectional research design also provides the advantage of requiring relatively little of the participants in regards to time and commitment, and thus is less disruptive to the participants' intercultural adaptation than some of the more ethnographic approaches, such as case study, longitudinal, and cohort designs. As Asian community members have complained of fatigue due to being over-researched by interested researchers in the past (McGrath, Pickering and Smith, 2007), it seemed important in this project to support the participants in their study by disturbing them as little as possible. Interviewing all 50 students myself allowed for a clear comparison between them all.

This project amalgamated the aims of the international student experience of participant-based reflections within the framework of the established intercultural theories. Essentially, this amalgamation offered the opportunity to test the theory unobtrusively, but allowed the participants to emphasise key moments in their own sojourn experience. To maintain a clear focus on the intercultural exchange between participant and researcher, the students were encouraged to reflect on their relationships with New Zealanders and their key experiences of living in NZ. This meant that the intercultural adaptation of each individual participant needed to be mapped by me retrospectively from the interview, field notes and my own memory data. As an intercultural observer, this was an ambitious project and is potentially open to critique because of the large scope or possibility of making errors in cross-cultural analysis. But this was mitigated by a more fluid approach centred on the nature of intercultural communication as a shared dialogue as established by Scollon and Scollon (2001). Thus, like all individuals engaged in intercultural communication, signs for misunderstandings and inaccuracies were questioned and re-questioned throughout the research process through the course of transcribing and by consultation with fellow colleagues and international student support staff.

Two key intercultural discourse ideas were foundational to this approach and they rely on understanding that language itself is necessarily ambiguous, and that there is a need to form fixed meanings from this process which can later be questioned, refined and over the course of a conversation, relationship and/or reflective process corrected by mutual and/or personal insight. Firstly, "the meanings we exchange by speaking and by

writing are not given in the words and sentences alone but are also constructed partly out of what our listeners and our readers interpret them to mean” (Scollon and Scollon, 2001, p. 7). This is then compounded by an individual’s need to create fixed conclusions that are based on any previous assumptions, or the conversational-participants’ risk as termed by Scollon and Scollon “complete communicative immobilization [sic]” (p.12). This comes about as a result of a lack of commitment that creates anxiety and inhibits future participation. If these assumptions are not proven wrong, then communication appears to be smooth and those exchanges are full of unmarked communications or our contextual assumptions based on past experience. In practise, Scollon and Scollon show communication to be based on fixed expectations that form the major part of the daily context we inhabit. So, in order to make daily experiences feel ‘normal’ or follow predictable patterns of understanding, individuals need to make fixed assumptions. It is forming these assumptions that are most problematic for the East and South-East Asian intercultural students because their lack of experience of the host-culture can make it difficult for them to know what to expect from communication with host-country social groups. Intercultural communication exchanges are frequently marked by miscommunication and error because the intercultural nature reduces the number of shared inferences or meanings that can be drawn upon (see for example Jandt, 2007; 2001; Kim, 2001; Scollon and Scollon). In the case of this project, my role as an intercultural participant-observer (Tolich and Davidson, 1999) was to maintain a sensitivity to the marked incidents of intercultural communication in the interview context and to highlight those moments that revealed themselves in the interview content either during the interview, through writing up field-notes or throughout the analysis, discussion and concluding process of the write-up. Paying close attention to these incidences revealed the intercultural learning that was experienced by the participants and/or by me – offering opportunities to reflect on personal, methodological and theoretical levels.

### **Measuring intercultural adaptation – the foundation**

As explained in Chapter Two (see pp. 60 – 75), intercultural adaptation in this case is understood as a series of developmental stages of cognitive processing. Cognitive processing is difficult to detect with accuracy externally, but it can be understood through various statements, actions and skills evident within the interview contribution of the individual. In this project the six cognitive stages (see Chapter Two, 67-69) of the

DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) were used as the major methodological framework for the analysis and assessment of each of the 50 participants. These cognitive stages have been summarised in the table below.

**Table 4:**

*Table representation of the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998)*

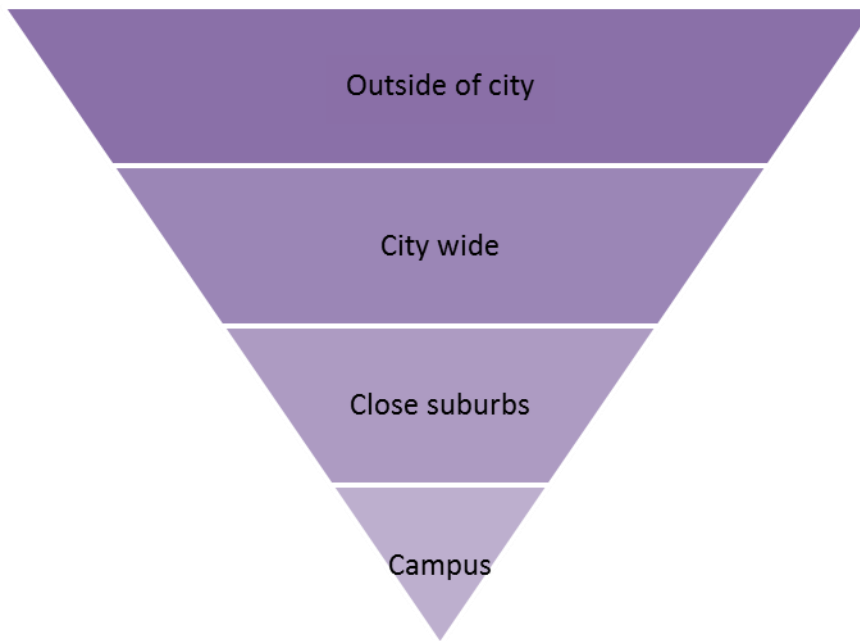
<i>Stages</i>	<i>Cognitive understanding of new culture as expressed by the individual.</i>
1. Denial	Differences downplayed. New host-culture not well understood.
2. Defense	Differences between home culture and host culture are perceived, but there is a marked resistance to perceiving value in the new host country environment.
3. Minimization	Differences in behaviour are understood, but the different values and cultural assumptions of the host-country social groups are not well perceived or understood.
4. Acceptance	Differences between home and host country well understood. Understanding of cultural values and assumption has grown. At this stage, the individual may choose not to participate in many new situations. Instead, retaining a marked tendency to keep within their social groups.
5. Adaptation	This is when the individual achieves a strong level of understanding with the new host-country environment. They are able to move freely between the cultures.
6. Integration	This describes the state when an individual moves fluidly between cultures. The individual is able to independently assess each culture and choose different aspects from each culture to suit their purposes and personal beliefs.

The assessment of each of the 50 participants and their levels of intercultural adaptation was a critical process to the analysis and the findings which follow in the subsequent Chapters Four and Five. For the purposes of this project, intercultural adaptation level was assessed using interview data primarily, backed by field notes and behavioural cues during the interviews and notes were made about whether students participated a lot or withdrew or appeared to accept or require assistance from their fellow participants. Intercultural adaptation is an internal process but there are methods to gain insight into this state. Insight was obtained in the following four domains: intercultural literacy;

infrastructural perception and involvement; part-time work skills and intercultural learning; and leisure activities and intercultural exchanges through and around these. Using these, I was able ascertain an approximate level of intercultural adaptation, or understanding and interaction, with the host-country culture.

Intercultural literacy may seem difficult to define at first glance, but by using a fairly standard sociological perspective I was able to attain some insight into the intercultural abilities and understandings that the participants had regarding host-country social groups. Sociological understanding is often stratified into basic topic categories, such as ethnicity, gender/sexuality and socio-economic status. As relative strangers whose task it is to learn about their new intercultural environment, the ESEA students' sociological awareness can be framed similarly because their task is to understand their new host-country environment and to make sense of it (Bennett, 2005, Kim, 2001). Accordingly, I was able to ascertain if the participants were either able or willing to describe social groups within the host-country social context that they were aware of. This was then followed by a consideration of the opinions and general descriptions that the participants used for the host-country social groups. These included stereotyping (both positive and negative), as well as descriptions of challenges to stereotyping, and new intercultural insights that were either reported or demonstrated through various interactions with domestic peers or other social groups. As concrete 'proof' of these descriptions and beliefs, the most central tool for measuring these intercultural literacies was in intercultural relationships. Most especially, the quality and depth of value that the participant appeared to place upon these intercultural relationships was considered.

A basic requirement of Mills (1959) work is that the structures of the particular group under study must be taken into account. On a practical level, this led to a consideration of the three expanding socio-geographical sites of intercultural interaction. These areas (infrastructure, work and leisure activities) can all be viewed in regard to their geographical proximity to campus.



**Figure 9 Diagram showing the context sites of intercultural adaptation**

Students with lower levels of intercultural adaptation were expected to be more likely to be involved more exclusively with campus activities and maintain relationships more directly university related. This meant that they would report, or engage, with less infrastructure external to campus, and be more likely to reside either on campus or very close. It was presumed that the students who were able to obtain part-time work positions off-campus would be either working in close suburbs and/or be required to commute, and so were also showing greater intercultural networking skills or intercultural communication in order to first obtain this job. These same intercultural adaptation skills were also shown be used in negotiating the challenges of their part-time jobs.

By itself, however, a geographical summation of experiences was not an adequate measure for this study. The participants had a wide range of experiences and these took place in differing arenas or social contexts. The use of the sociological imagination requires that these social contexts are the sites where intercultural relationships take place because they are the first point of contact that the ESEA students have with the social and cultural forces in NZ. Social groups in NZ are affected by broader social issues and they bring this to bear in all of their daily interactions and where there are relationships, and these impacted upon the participants in this study. In order to



encapsulate social contexts and to organise the analysis I developed a list of key domains of experience where intercultural relationships take place. These are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5**

***Summary of domains of experience***

<i>Category</i>	<i>Variable</i>
Educational experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary school or college</li> <li>• Private Tertiary Education</li> <li>• Major or study path</li> <li>• Qualification enrolled in</li> <li>• Type of funding for education</li> </ul>
Accommodation Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homestay</li> <li>• Halls of residence</li> <li>• Private accommodation</li> <li>• Accumulated accommodation types</li> </ul>
Extra-curricular social activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal organisations</li> <li>• Part time or holiday work experiences</li> <li>• Romantic relationships</li> <li>• Travel or domestic tourism</li> </ul>

Each of these participants' intercultural relationships was considered within the differing domains of experience. At the practical level this was an essential element to the analysis process because it became clear that the participants were often reflecting on past experiences and that their perception of their intercultural relationships changed over time. Within the education domain, this was particularly important as many of the participants had a broad range of educational experiences in NZ and their understanding of intercultural relationships with domestic student counterparts frequently changed substantially over-time.

To show how this was applied, the following table (Table 6) represents a range of individually assessed intercultural adaptation levels using the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). However, it must be noted that the stages are now referred to as levels as the sample in this study was measured according to a single experience, rather than over time as those were assessed by Bennett and Hammer (1998). As can be seen, key events that the participants described and overall behavioural characteristics have been included to show how the intercultural adaptation levels were assessed.

Table 6:

*The DMIS suitability across a range of the ESEA students*

DMIS Level	Participant Characteristics	Intercultural adaptation characteristics of DMIS	Intercultural adaptation characteristics not contained in the DMIS model
<b>L1 or Denial Level</b> Example drawn from P-16 (UA Group 1, April 19, 2007)	For P-16 there are some noticeable gaps in ability to penetrate or to understand social groups in NZ. P-16 describes how New Zealanders look, but shows no awareness of making any cultural linkages or ideas with these descriptions. It is also clear that there is little or no understanding of which cultural ideas among the host groups are prevalent or common-place. This participant makes a clear distinction between his study sojourn in the host-country and his home-country where events count. The study sojourn is a moratorium and even study is considered unimportant because P-16 is an exchange student and marks or progress are unimportant. As he feels isolated from this 'real-life', creating sensations that remind him of his home-country take priority and this includes seeking familiar food-types and activities that promote that sensation. For P-16, social groups, cultural understandings and medical treatment in the host-country are not to be trusted. In particular, P-16 confirms any medicines and food-types by web-based searches from trusted Japanese sources. Lecturers and authority figures are perceived as unfriendly and contact with them kept to a minimum.	This lack of understanding of the diversity and interplay between social groups in NZ does reflect denial stage characteristics. The denial stage is frequently typified by an inability to perceive the host culture in any complexity and all perception of difference remains at the surface. Therefore the host cultures remain an unknown to P-16 and seem to be of little interest to him.	Some perception of intercultural complexity is however, shown in the actions of P-16. Rather than mixing solely with individuals from his own background, P-16 has chosen to mix with a diverse group of international students who choose English as a common language and uses this group as a means of learning how to get by and cope whilst sojourning in NZ. This group of diverse internationals is able to function both as a barrier and a conduit to greater intercultural perception.
<b>L2 or Defense Level</b> Example drawn from P-35 (WU Group 1, June 6, 2008)	P-35 is reluctant to provide details, which contrasts with many of her peers. She replies and contributes readily when it is her turn, but tends to agree or assent with bare examples. This behaviour within the interview indicates that P-35 could generalise this minimisation of communication and interaction behaviour within other intercultural contexts. I am also aware that she could be shy or less able with her language, but that is beyond the	P-35 reflects that compartmentalisation that is often associated with the defense stage. She is aware of the host-country cultural behaviours and applies an evaluation of her awareness. This perception is accepted by P-35 and seen as a valid critique of specific individuals and host-country social groups.	In contrast, the behaviour of P-35 would suggest that her intercultural adaptation is on-going and has not reached a plateau in the defense stage. P-35 has successfully managed to obtain a job and work among social groups in NZ. Furthermore, she is confident enough in both her own opinion and English speaking skills to express them fully within a relatively formal social situation of a focus group interview.

scope of the study to establish fully. Her observation of social groups suggests that she is unaware of the existence of Pasifika ethnic and national groups and had assumed all people with darker shades skin and hair are Māori or South Asian. The generalisations that she does put forward about host-country social groups are critical and broad sweeping – such as New Zealanders being seen as 50% lazy and unfocused. P-35 does put forward ideas about New Zealanders based on her part-time work experiences. She does report that New Zealanders are “50% lazy”. When and where possible P-35 forms friendships with other Chinese nationals rather than across intercultural groups.

Example drawn from P-40 (WU Group 1, June 6, 2008)

P-40 shares many of the characteristics experienced by P-15 and P-35. She maintains controlled contact with host-country social groups, and is given to distrust and finding excuses to maintain minimal contact. Like these participants, P-40 also believes that New Zealanders do not make good long-term friends. However, P-40 has found ways to establish some intercultural friendships but prefers to maintain these electronically through text or chat. She admits that this is partly to slow the language down, but also suggests that they are easier to understand on chat or text because these follow established codes. P-40 relies more on fellow ESEA students as friends and is able to have a range of friendships relying on English as a common language. These friendships are used as a filter to attempt to understand the host-country cultural context and she relies on their advice. This is for practical situations and to understand irregular events, such as behaviour of bystanders in a car-crash. It is clear that P-40 does not intend to remain in NZ

The behaviour of P-40 reflects some of the opinions expressed by P-35 and in this way both participants reflect the defense stage. The defense stage allows for differences between the social groups and even to see some benefits in the host-country groups – but these are very minute. P-40 reflects this attitude in her clear delineation between home and host country cultural groups with face to face friendships.

Looking beyond the delineation between having two distinct groups of friends, it is clear that P-40 does have a range of intercultural friendships with social groups in NZ. Maintaining them within electronic boundaries does not mean that they are unimportant or have little influence over her life. This electronic format is a necessary tool in helping P-40 get beyond language and/or cultural difficulties.

L3 or Minimization Level Example drawn from P-4 (AUT Group 2, April 20, 2007)

P-4 has established a set routine for daily living in Auckland, New Zealand. She understands how to negotiate her way to and from home to university, how to study, and to apply herself to most challenges that happen at university. She has a range of friendships and most of these have been made through her studies and consist of predominantly fellow ESEA students with an emphasis on fellow-Chinese nationals. But, for P-4, these friendships are a way of getting to know the East and South-East-Asian nationals better, rather than a forum to meet New Zealanders. For her, making friendships in Auckland has been hard, and this she attributes to the host-country rather than to other factors such as a lack of understanding on her part. She has been the victim of two difficult and/or illegal experiences. As the lesser is more understandable or comprehensible to

This experience embodies the parameters of minimization very clearly. Minimization is frequently characterised by an understanding in the different host and home social groups but attributing little value to the host cultures. P-4 has a range of friends and attributes more value to her fellow Chinese nationals, then her East and South-East-Asian peers. Domestic student counterparts do not appear desirable as friends or are not seen as necessary. Contact with domestic student counterparts and a wider social group appears to be associated with discomfort, and these groups are seen as threatening.

The range, however, of P-4's friendships does suggest a full social existence. There is contact with the host-country social groups (however limited) and she does acknowledge the difficulty of making friendships across host-country social groups. This suggests expedience or necessity in making intercultural contact and/or adaptation when and if it becomes necessary in her daily coping. Furthermore, the ease with which P-4 negotiates the city infrastructure and the university educational system is testimony to this intention in becoming competent within the intercultural context that surrounds her daily life.

her, she is more conscious of outrage in that situation. The more complex and potentially dangerous (sexual harassment or rape attempt) is less a source of outrage. These experiences were dealt with very sympathetically and P-4 was given information about counselling services at the close of this interview.

Example drawn from P-11 (AUT Group 4, March 10, 2008)

P-11 is in the 40 – 45 age range. Like P-4, P-11 has established all of the routines needed for daily living for himself and his family. As a group, they travel outside their host-city undertaking tourist activities in a car. P-11 has considerable experience as an international student because he has done this before in the USA and is well able to transfer those skills that are needed. However, a lack of trust of the host-country culture is typical of this level. P-11 shows this by attempting to generalise the answers of his fellow group-members and to minimise cultural differences that they point out. P-11, however, does have a range of New Zealand friends and is able to communicate with them freely. These are not close friendships, but P-40 is confident enough to relate to domestic student counterparts, providing they are mature aged. As he has a family here, P-11 also has to engage in enrolling his child into a school and negotiate the social infrastructure. P-11 shows ability and understanding of these processes and is able to express them, though P-11 is also private about his family and does not like to discuss them at length.

In many ways the experience and behaviours of P-11 are very similar to the experiences of P-4. He maintains an intercultural insulation about his daily life and continues to socialise within fairly contained peer East and South-East-Asian social groups. Furthermore, he has a family in NZ and this also constrains some of his social experiences within the domestic sphere. These goals match the behaviours and aims represented in the minimisation stage. In the minimization stage there is little contact with outside social groups.

Despite the relatively narrow range of experiences that P-11 reports socially, it clear that some of his behaviour reflects a greater interest and understanding of the host-country social groups. First and foremost, P-11 acts as an intercultural interpreter within the focus group itself and often reflects upon his previous experience as an international student in the USA. Furthermore, though P-11 does not suggest that building a complex range of intercultural contexts, he is content for his child to mix with other domestic student counterparts and is calm and open to gaining competencies in the social infrastructure, such as the process of enrolling his child at school and supporting his wife in obtaining a position as a teacher. This suggests that for P-11, there is value in the host-country culture and intercultural experiences in NZ.

L4 or Acceptance Level.

Example drawn from P-15 (UA Group 1, April 19, 2007)

P-15 is an active youth and engages in a lot of social activity with many East and South-East-Asian social groups but also goes to parties and other social events when asked by domestic student counterparts. He is able to adapt well to a variety of social situations and tries out many activities in an attempt to meet different groups of people. P-15 reflects on his many social experiences and is able to discuss them well in the focus group interview. Furthermore, he shows advanced skills and is able to make and appreciate jokes and more complex intercultural communications. He is also aware that social groups in NZ are complex and often attempts to identify different ethnic and social groups when speaking to and about them. Though he has a high level of intercultural knowledge, it is clear that P-15 is socially reliant upon his family structures and intends to return to them upon completion of his bachelor degree. P-15 can be critical of host-country social groups and is aware of the coolness of host-country social groups at times. He does not excuse this or minimise it, but it does not prevent him from social networking or from seeking positive experiences.

The behaviour, attitude and experience of P-15 do fit the acceptance stage well. The acceptance stage is frequently characterised by a marked understanding of both home and host-country social group cultural values and an ability to mix competently within intercultural group settings. However, this stage is also characterised by a marked preference by the individual to retain a stronger emphasis on their own home-country cultural groups. P-15 embodies this very well because though he does mix readily upon some social occasions, there is a marked tendency to remain in his own intercultural social groups of ESEA students for regular social contact and closer friendships.

Despite the close fit with the acceptance stage, there are some points of difference for P-15. His overall competency reflects intercultural adaptation and knowledge, but his behaviour reflects some discomfort in experiencing this frequently. Furthermore, P-15 intends to return to his home-country and therefore his aims are met by mixing with his own peer East and South-East-Asian international groups. Given that the host-country is NZ this does fall short of either a more complete intercultural adaptation. The acceptance as such, is based on NZ being the context but not the focus of intercultural adaptation or aims.

Example drawn from P-6 (AUT Group 3, April 30, 2007)	P-6 has learned to make friends in NZ and takes each and every opportunity to meet new friends. She is particularly interested in making East and South-East-Asian friends. This was evident not only in what she said, but also during the process of the interview where she befriends a new group member from China. She is able to adjust to the new experiences in the host-country and enjoys driving which is easier than in Viet Nam. Though open, her activities are highly structured and based around formal organisation or amenities such as the heated pools. P-6 is private about her family, though she is willing to describe very much about them beyond their age and travel uncertainty. P-6 goes to many intercultural events and is able to mix. When she gets to these events, despite her shyness she is able to make friends and to draw others out. P-6 is also able to reflect on some of the differences between NZ and Viet Nam and is able to make comparisons.	P-6 reflects a strong understanding of both home and host-country cultural values. She also retains a strong understanding for those who are transitioning with lower levels of intercultural adaptation. This shows a clear fit with the acceptance stage of intercultural adaptation. In this stage the individual understands the cultural values and assumptions of both home and host-country cultural groups. P-6 also operates on a relatively broad social sphere that includes domestic travel and mixing frequently with intercultural groups in both formal and informal settings. Yet she retains strong and intimate linkages with her own Vietnamese community.	The confidence that P-6 shows reflects a higher level of intercultural adaptation than the acceptance stage in some ways. There is a strong ability to mix between formal and informal situations. This adds weight to the idea of greater intercultural adaptation because there is a growing awareness of both public and private intercultural communication and not an assumption of just one type or context which is characteristic of lower levels of intercultural adaptation.
L5 or Adaptation Level  Example drawn from P-45 (AUT Individual 1, August 8, 2007)	P-45 shows a high level of reflection about his experiences in NZ and Japan. Furthermore, he is able to explain the evolution of his intercultural development and it follows the classic patterns shared by the earlier levels. Most importantly, P-45 is able to engage in both structured and unstructured social and extra-curricular activities. He is able to use private and public transport with ease, has lived in homestay situations, halls of residence and private accommodation with friends and flatmates. What is important here in showing the intercultural adaptation level is the breadth of experience. Furthermore, P-45 is intent upon gaining as many new experiences as possible. Despite the high level of intercultural adaptation, P-45 also has frequent contact and experience in his home-country and visits family, friends and girlfriend regularly. P-45 is able to talk in depth about family in his home-country and is able to reveal personal details, thereby showing a high level of intercultural comprehension.	The skills, behaviour and reflection upon his experiences show that P-45 has an extremely high level of intercultural competence. Like P-6 in the previous category, P-45 is able to operate fluidly within both formal and informal situations. But P-45 has a greater depth of intercultural comprehension where he is able to distinguish and to affect a youth group identification that makes a further generational distinction within host-country cultural groups. More informally, it would be accurate to describe P-45 as making a self-identification of himself as a member of the youth-sub-group in NZ. This does match the characteristics of the adaptation level where the individual has a strong level of understanding of both home and host country culture and is able to move with relative freedom within both cultural contexts.	One area which does not fit the adaptation level however, is the intention of P-45 which is to return to Japan upon completion of his education to marry his Japanese fiancée and to live near his family. This means that some of his intercultural adaptation is experienced externally rather than internally. Effectively, it suggests P-45 "acts" as if he was a domestic student but retains a clear link and primary interaction with his family in Japan.

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*Note:* Some DMIS levels are represented by more than one participant so that the full range of intercultural adaptation experiences can be fully explained.

Intercultural adaptation needs to be assessed over a range of factors, and it is possible that within another context, the ESEA students may well have shown very different characteristics. But, in the interests of maintaining internal validity in this project, each of the students was assessed in a very consistent manner, and the same types of intercultural variables were assessed in each case.

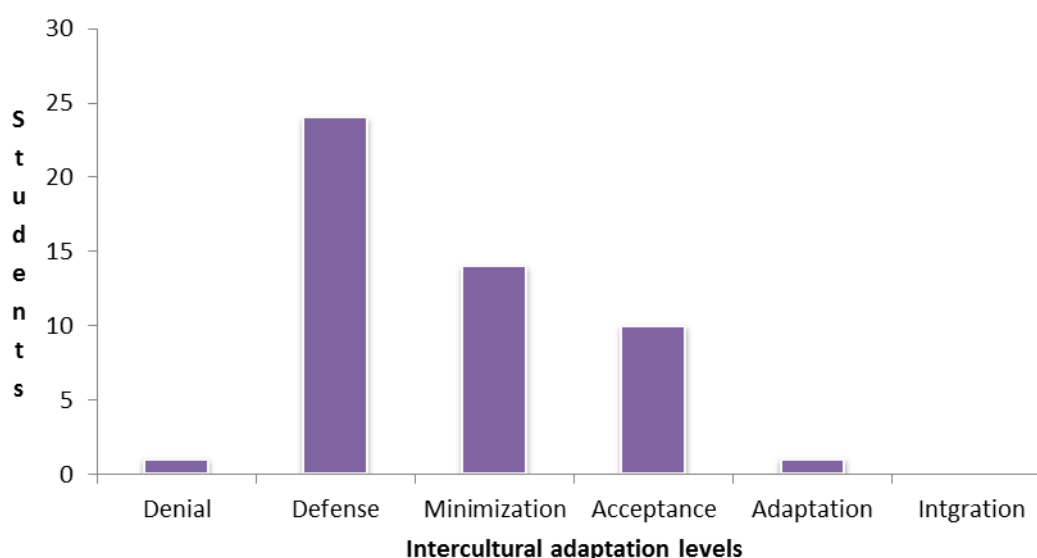
However, internal validity is not enough by itself because the project can still be critiqued for bias (Adler and Clark, 2003). Within intercultural communication like this, it was particularly important to attempt to ensure that there was some reliability, or consistency, to this application of intercultural adaptation levels (Adler and Clark, 2003). To that end, I sought feedback from two important sources. Firstly, I sought the input of Peilin Yang, a researcher and fellow academic originally from China, who also had considerable experience with international students generally in his role as Faculty International Student Advisor. This was then supplemented by one of the participants, P-6, a Vietnamese student who had made herself available for further consultation. Although Peilin Yang had some reservations about the DMIS, he agreed with the levels of intercultural adaptation generally. One reservation was noting a lack of emphasis on the structural importance of the students' families in their home-countries. For the ESEA students, their families provide continual support emotionally, financially, and are easily and cheaply accessible for communication and advice through digital communications such as the internet and mobile phone. This is consistent with international students generally (Sovic, 2008), but, according to Yang, in Confucian-based cultures there seems to be an emphasis on seeking parental approval and guidance for most major decisions. Furthermore, Yang observed that the DMIS levels are very discrete in nature and that the ESEA students are likely to be showing different levels of intercultural adaptation and confidence in different domains such as educational contexts, accommodation contexts and so forth. These two reservations were noted by me, and have been incorporated and interrogated throughout the analyses of this project.

The consultation with P-6 was fundamental to my process as it showed me the different insights that can be gained through researcher perspectives in contrast to participant perspectives. P-6 agreed with my overall assessment of her intercultural adaptation level. She also agreed that I had noted the privacy concern and reluctance to discuss her parents (personal communication, 29 September, 2010). In essence, P-6 was surprised because she had not realised that this would be so clear to an interested observer. But P-6 also felt that I over-estimated her ability to understand complex intercultural references in one instance, and had missed a moment that she remembered but neither of us could find in the transcript, when she had deferred to the group because she did

not know the answer to a question. However, P-6 also conceded that I could not know this, because it was not clear on the transcript and may not have been significant to me as the interviewer. This showed me that my intercultural adaptation assessments could be strengthened in future projects by making an initial intercultural assessment at the time of the interview, as well as relying on the transcript and general field notes in the formal analysis. Overall, it appeared that in regards to the process of utilising the transcripts and field notes, the intercultural adaptation level assessment could be relatively accurate. It was not possible to contact other participants, but this has lent some support to the process of validity of measuring intercultural adaptation in this project.

### **Intercultural adaptation across the sample**

After applying the DMIS across the entire sample, the spread of the intercultural adaptation levels of the sample are shown in Figure 10 below.



**Figure 10: Intercultural adaptation level across the ESEA student sample**

Having presented the overall distribution of the data, I will now explain the ramifications of this. Even an initial representation of the data shows that most of the students (38 or 76%) were clustered between Defense, or L2, and Minimization or L3. Being between the major categories is to be expected because of the dynamic nature of intercultural adaptation, and this is stipulated in the Kim's (2001) SAGD model where the individual may pull back just prior to a new leap in intercultural understanding. In some cases, this interpretation means the students are mainly self-cloistered within

tight routines and rigidly controlled contexts for social interaction but have some areas of social expansion and/or newly acquired interactive activities that bring pleasure and improve their daily routines. For example, a South Korean male, P-14, largely reported experiences within a very narrow range, and stated he usually socialises with fellow South Korean students in their apartments or in his room in the university hall of residence for the University of Auckland. But when asked about travel around New Zealand, he has been to many of the main tourist destinations and reported very positively about those experiences:

P-14                      I been to North and South Island and umm Rotorua, Taupo, Whangarei and in South Island to Dunedin Christchurch and Queenstown. Queenstown was like the best place I been to.

**Interviewer              What did you do down in Queenstown?**

P-14                      I didn't do much, just like walk around the city - the central city. And it was really small but it was really beautiful. I went there with like my family when they came for a trip. It's really nice, I really liked it.

(UA Group 1, April 19, 2007)

In other cases, this means that the students were actually largely showing an adaptation level that was characteristic of the minimization level or L3, but evincing marked levels of pulling back, or self-protection, due to actual or feared experiences of intercultural misunderstandings or miscommunications. A Malaysian national of Chinese ethnicity, P-19 had made a relatively smooth transition into the master's programme at the University of Auckland where she studied in the Engineering Faculty. Despite a high degree of institutional competence and demonstrated ability to communicate fluently in English because she worked as a note-taker, she remained highly suspicious of new situations and was very dismissive of the services in the host country, as recorded in the following transcription:

**Interviewer              O.K. So how do the doctors seem O.K.?**

P-19                      Not really worth the 60 bucks [\$60] because I got flea bites in hostel. And I went to doctor and he just look for one minute. O.K. its flea bite. O.K. good. So for one minute I paid 60 bucks – didn't get much attention.

**Interviewer              So you'd be used to more attention back home?**



P-19                      Not really, at least [the doctor might] check body temperature or something like that. Might be just flea bite but, might be some other causes. Might not be flea bite might be food allergy or something.

(UA Group 2, May 16, 2007).

Out of context this can look like a typical critique of the health system delivery in NZ. But this dismissive expression toward services and groups outside of the University of Auckland was a prevalent theme throughout that interview for P-19. In essence, this participant has made pre-formed judgements of health and other services that could well be based on, or at least confirmed by, the negative experiences of student-peers, rather than her own. This means that despite many positive intercultural skills and sophisticated coping mechanisms, she appeared to be prevented from making further intercultural adaptation by these negative views.

Demonstrated intercultural competency is central to the overall measurement of intercultural adaptation, and is essential for all adaptation levels from denial up to minimization or L1 – L3. But further levels of intercultural adaptation tend to reflect social judgements that the students make of their host-culture as well as themselves. For example, a female South Korean national from AUT University showed a very high level of social understanding, and was thus placed within the acceptance level or L4 on the topic of NZ as a host country. She was able to articulate beyond nationality labels to get to the core of the meaning behind the term ‘Asian’, and to give some insight into the complexities of immigrant grouping, as illustrated in the following transcript excerpt:

**Interviewer                      I’m just wondering. Because some of the students describe themselves as “Asians” and their friends as “Asians” - not just themselves. So I was interested to see how you felt about that?**

P-50                      Well it’s just that ethnically you’d get mixed up like “Asia” is like colour wise. Because it’s easier to talk to them [other non ESEA ethnic or national groups in NZ]. Because it’s all international students who come to New Zealand. They’re all having same skin colours and they’re in same circumstances. Like, they have their own by themselves their parents are back in [home countries], so, they are born in there. And [it’s] easier to get mixed up rather than people who were born in New Zealand society having parents and friends who’ve been knowing them or each other for year. I think that’s why it’s easier to get mixed up with those sorts of people.

(AUT Individual 5, April 13, 2007).

P-50 believed that New Zealanders tend to group ESEA ethnic and national groups on appearance, and that the international students sometimes get mixed up with the young people of East and South-East-Asian descent from earlier immigration waves. Confusion around appearance is consistent with findings from earlier media research that was discussed in Chapter Two, whereby groups of ESEA national and ethnic groups are often unquestioningly conflated by other social and ethnic groups in NZ (see pp. 51 53). This excerpt suggests that P-50 was able to see the results of 'Asianisation' that have been so prevalent in the news media and other public discourses (Benson, 2003, 2006; Munshi, 1998; Spoonley and Trlin, 2004).

The two outliers at both ends of the spectrum are highly reflective of a small sample size. Within the East and South-East Asian student population in NZ it is likely that students with the very low levels of intercultural adaptation in the denial level or L1 are likely to be represented to a larger degree. Their lack of intercultural adaptation makes them less accessible for interviewing and possibly disinclined to participate in an intercultural interview experience conducted in English. In this sample, I was fortunate enough to be able to access one such participant, a male Japanese exchange student, and this was the result of social networking in the University of Auckland halls of residence. Though curious and willing to participate, P-16 was less able to contribute to the more reflective elements of his group interview, and this was shown through short answers and very simplistic contributions:

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>Yeah. You haven't have you not met many New Zealanders then?</b>  |
| P-16               | I just see them.   |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>Is it because you just don't find them very kind?</b>   |
| P-16               | Umm, actually I think I just decided [not to meet them]. And maybe [it's] because I lost my phone twice and someone - maybe it's a New Zealander, pick it up and pretend to be me. And yeah. |

(UA Group 1, April 19, 2007).

Language barriers may be the reason that P-16 was unable to articulate his ideas in a more complex manner, and it is clear that there was a barrier to understanding here.

But the barriers to understanding may not have been created by just language alone, but also by different understandings of 'politeness systems' (Scollon and Scollon, 2001) which has been discussed in Chapter Two (see pp. 60 –62). It is clear that P-16 did feel that his phone should have been either returned to him or, at the least, not used to make calls on his account. Though not fully expressed, there did seem to be disappointment and a sense of criticism toward New Zealanders. It was not openly stated, but there was a tendency to generalise this poor behaviour or dishonesty to all New Zealanders, despite P-16 living in a university hall of residence where there is a wide range of international groups. Generalising the behaviour of one person to an entire cultural group is characteristic of the early stages of intercultural adaptation (Bennett, 2005a; Kim, 2001), and in the longer term this can lead to negative stereotyping that is characteristic of strained intercultural relationships (Scollon and Scollon, 2001).

At the upper end of the results, the highest score was Adaptation, or L5. Like the participants at the lower levels, there are likely to be many more participants that would show this level of intercultural adaptation, but who may be less visible due to their high level of intercultural skills. There are a considerable number of resident Asians in NZ, and in 2006 the usually resident Asian groups had reached an estimated 9.2% of the general population, or 354,552 people (Statistics New Zealand, 2007). With a high level of intercultural adaptation, a student sojourner is able to pass relatively unnoticed in the larger group of immigrant Asian young people and may be even less visible when socialising among non-Asian youth groups. With higher levels of intercultural adaptation, the students are able to take advantage of a wider range of possible friendships and inter-ethnic social groups. Finding a student with such a high level of intercultural adaptation is a non-typical experience when searching among international students, but these students clearly do exist in other social spheres. In this study, P-45 was distinguishable from other Asian youths by accent, but showed a high level of intercultural adaptation and participated in a range of youth interest groups in NZ that spanned both Auckland and Wellington. As a young Japanese male, he became aware of the relatively high respect that many of his domestic counterparts held for his native knowledge of Japanese language and customs, and was able to use that as an entry point for forming long-term and robust friendships while in secondary or high-school with students of many nationalities, as shown in the following transcript excerpt:

P-45

But, I think that: one; there weren't that many Japanese guys at the school; and two; at Scots College they were teaching. Well they had a class for teaching Japanese and it seems like quite a few of the guys were interested in the culture of Japan. I think that's why they were quite friendly to me. And from memory, I think it was quite easy to [mix]. I couldn't have spoken much English. Still, but being young, you could still made friends with heaps of people. So I had a quite a few friends since I started there. It's always been people from New Zealand, so, what I notice is ('cause I have heaps of Chinese friends over here too) is that they tend to hang around with other Chinese guys and girls and stuff. And I think that's where they (pause) learn (pause) confidence.

(AUT Individual 1, June 10, 2007)

This participant (P-45) showed that his social options were not limited to university based social groups and closely-knit nationality or international student experience based groups. Rather, like the other wider Asian ethnic group, he is able to maintain friendships and contact with other social groups. For example, P-45 is very interested in cars and has met a wide range of friends through this hobby.

### **Thematic analysis of the students' reflections.**

Although the primary analysis assessed intercultural development, this was just the first step in establishing the pattern of intercultural communication between ESEA students and New Zealanders. It tells us something about the base of intercultural knowledge that the students have gained during their sojourn, but it does not express the concerns and reflections that the students may wish to communicate to New Zealanders. In this relationship, the primary focus was between the students and other social groups in greater NZ. Having established our base of understanding, it is now essential to look more closely at the content of their observations. To achieve the next step in negotiating this intercultural relationship, this project needed to systematically note and attempt to understand the observations that the students made of New Zealanders or other social groups in NZ. One method that has proven effective in IPA, or phenomenological research, is thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Neumann, 2003; Selby, 1999).

Thematic analysis is a core methodology of many kinds of qualitative research as it provides a structure to organise and make sense of the data or communications gathered directly from participants (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Cresswell, 2007). Although associated with discourse and narrative analyses, thematic analysis can be

used as a methodology in its own right and combines well with other types of analyses. This flexibility made it an appropriate choice for this project because it is built on the adapted model of intercultural skill sets for the ESEA students. Data from the primary analysis provided insight into the process that the students are undergoing as their observations are organised into themes. Furthermore, the thematic analysis benefited from the primary analysis because it allowed us to posit this thesis into a framework of shifting and changing perceptions. The students are in a dynamic process that alters their perceptions on a regular basis, and this is consistent with the diasporic aspect of international student sojourn. In her research on South Asian adolescent girls, Durham (2004, p. 141) describes a similar, ever-changing social transition:

The psychological transition of adolescence, already charged in terms of gender and sexuality, is then imbricated with the conundrums of the other transition – the Diaspora identity that demands delicate negotiations of race/ethnicity, nation, class, language, culture and history.

By using these two types of analyses, these complex variables that cannot always be described separately can be portrayed holistically within the transitional process that it represents.

This project called for a structured approach to thematic analysis because barriers to intercultural understanding in research contexts can lead to inaccuracies based on attention levels, mood, and the degree to which topics appear relevant or are understandable to the researcher. As a new researcher, I understood that there was potential for mistakes of this kind. To combat this possibility, I selected the Braun and Clarke (2006) six phase model to ensure consistency and rigour throughout the analysis. Their approach requires that the approach to themes be clarified, and then the researcher applies each of the six phases to the data. These are:

- 1 Gaining familiarity with the data
- 2 Generating initial field codes
- 3 Searching for themes
- 4 Reviewing of themes
- 5 Defining and naming themes
- 6 Producing the report or write up.

In this project, the first two processes were undertaken during the analysis of the intercultural adaptation levels across the sample. In the third process, relationship testing, there had also been some preliminary searching for themes. But these have been more explicitly explored in the following data analysis chapters (Chapter Four and Chapter Five).

For this project, it was important to adopt an inductive approach that allowed themes to emerge as a result of researcher–participant understanding. Consequently, the main technique to isolate themes was based on their centrality to the stages of intercultural adaptation, and how each participant related to their emergent intercultural awareness’s and explained or understood key experiences. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 82) explain thus: “A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the data set”. The participants were not explicitly asked about their intercultural adaptation process, but their discoveries and interpretations could be interpreted and expressed as patterned responses that clearly alter throughout their reflection on their sojourn.

To express these themes, the students frequently made comparisons with their home-country experiences. But for the purposes of this study, the main themes or aspects that were focused on centred on the participants’ sojourning period and their interpretation of common-place events. In some types of qualitative research it can be useful to produce a broad overview of all of the emergent themes (Cresswell, Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2007). A broad representation of an entire data set is useful in circumstances where little is known about the phenomenon (Braun and Clarke, 2006). As indicated in Chapter Three, there have been a number of previous studies undertaken on Asian international student experiences in NZ (see for example Berno and Ward, 2003; Butcher, 2002; Butcher and McGrath, 2004; Holmes, 2004; McGrath, Butcher, Pickering, and Smith, 2005; McGrath, Stock, and Butcher, 2007; Ward and Masgoret, 2003, 2004). For this study, it was not necessary to represent the entire spectrum of the students’ experience, but was more important to isolate the events that appeared to have significance in their lives and the impression that they form of New Zealanders and life in NZ as a result. This thesis focused more on underlying, or deeper, themes that shape the way that the students appeared to understand and conceptualise their experiences.

The main themes found in this project were based around interpersonal relationships and the role that these played in the lives of the participants. There was a continual tension between the reliance upon home-country relationships and the necessary host-country relationships. Thematic analysis revealed that the success of host-country relationships had a significant impact upon the participants' desire to form intercultural relationships and thus, increase their intercultural adaptation levels. Sub-themes that were related to this site of tension were the types of relationships that the participants reflected upon, such as their parents, friendships with fellow nationals, peer ESEA student relationships, romance/marriages and intercultural relationships from homestay parents, teachers and/or domestic student friendships. A lesser, but nonetheless main theme that emerged in this thesis was the life-stage, or the age, of the participants because younger, emergent adult participants were more likely to take up new social experiences, whereas the older participants were more concerned with their families and the vocational requirements of their study.

In more detail, personal relationships are integral to the process of intercultural adaptation in this thesis, and it is how these are experienced, perceived and created that provide tangible insights into intercultural adaptation and communication. For the purposes of this analysis, personal relationships were more generally defined as those that are "a relation between persons" (Becker, as cited in Free Dictionary, n.d., p. 82) and included friendships, professional involvement, educational and family based interactions. This was extended to include the contextual infrastructure of the environment like the public transport system. However, the focus of the analysis remained on the interpersonal communication aspects or the interactions that the students experience with individuals or institutional representation. For emergent adults, in particular, personal relationships provide the primary building blocks for developing adult work identities (Arnett, 2004; Kim, 2001).

In this study, relationships are assumed to be fundamental to the participants' psychological well-being, and a powerful resource to help them maintain their daily functions in a foreign host-country environment. International students of all ages were found to be strongly reliant upon their interpersonal relationships, and this was a consistent theme in this study as it has been in many others (Leder and Forgasz, 2004; Ramsay et al., 2007). Unpleasant social experiences, such as home-sickness, loneliness

and social fragmentation or feeling at odds with social peer groups, were viewed as crucial underlying conditions in this project. The participant, upon experiencing such core conditions, attempted to alleviate them or negotiate changes by forming host-country relationships and establishing some effective support networks to draw upon for support and additional knowledge outside of their particular experiences (Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

However, the success of these newly formed relationships is heavily reliant upon the process of intercultural adaptation. Intercultural adaptation is achieved through the successful negotiation of various social challenges and working toward deeper levels of intercultural understanding as a result of information discovered in intercultural misunderstandings (Kim, 2001; Scollon and Scollon, 2001). In contrast, many past researchers have tended to congregate at a much more superficial level around the difficulties experienced by international students and the barriers to their success as students and sojourners (see for example Frey and Roysircar, 2006; Hsieh, 2007; Ramsay et al., 2007; Yeh, Ching, Obuko, and Luthar, 2007). Frustrations and challenges in these studies are viewed from the perspective that they are negative conditions that should be alleviated in order to assist the international students in their studies and to achieve their study goals. The problems faced by many ESEA students do create barriers to success and can endanger their sense of well-being, and mental and physical health. In extreme cases, these exclusions can even lead to endangerment and loss of personal safety (Baker and Benson, 2008; McFedries, 2002). Despite this, the terrain of intercultural adaptation is often associated with a necessary tension. These tensions result from the changes in perception and identity formation that the student sojourners must undergo to take on the new cultural concepts needed for success as international students in NZ (Kim, 2001; Scollon and Scollon, 2001). For most international students, gaining an international qualification or education is the primary goal or formal marker of success. But, as I explained in Chapter One, the acquisition of formal qualifications is accompanied by the experiences and negotiation of intercultural challenges. Though international students do require support and aids to meet their formal educational goal, these must be carefully balanced by allowing enough freedom and autonomy to gain the necessary informal intercultural adaptation and to gain the most from their intercultural immersion sojourn. Meeting these challenges will allow the students to make their intercultural adaptation and develop the necessary self-reliance needed for a



globalising work-force where there is great value cultural capital placed on intercultural communication skills and intercultural relationships (Bourdieu, 1986; Latham, 2001; Mok and Currie, 2002; Mok and Welch, 2002).

Intercultural adaptation is a very distinct process of adaptation between cultural groups. Unlike assimilation or marginalisation, the process is entirely voluntary and is not forced upon the individual and there is an element of choice throughout all stages experienced by the individuals (Jandt, 2007). Discomfort and distress experienced within intercultural adaptation needs to be distinguished from involuntary processes, because at any stage the individual is able to return to their home-country or, in circumstances where that is not possible, at least to reduce intercultural contact to some extent. But it must also be noted that intercultural adaptation is premised upon experiencing some discomfort and distress, and re-forming the internal understandings, behaviours and expectations in response to these uncomfortable stimuli (Kim, 2001).

These ideas are encapsulated in the following theoretical premises developed by Kim (2001):

- Individuals have an innate self-organizing drive that responds to environmental requirements.

“Humans have an innate self-organizing drive and a capacity to adapt to environmental challenges.” (p. 35).

- Intercultural adaptation is centred upon communication.

“Adaptation of an individual to a given cultural environment occurs in and through communication.” (p. 36).
- Adaptation results in qualitative transformative changes for the individual.

“Adaptation is a complex and dynamic process that brings about a qualitative transformation of the individual.” (pp. 37 – 38).

The individual’s struggle to maintain and/or adapt their self-perception or identity is inherent to intercultural identity. I will show in the analysis Chapters Four and Five how the participants are compelled to understand the cultural and social requirements of their host-country in order to meet their educational objective. But, in meeting these

demands, the participants are engaged in a constant battle of personal resistance to maintain control and understanding of their own relationships and experiences. This process is not limited to individuals undergoing intercultural adaptation, but is required to successfully negotiate any changes in the cultural context or environment. For the participants, however, the intercultural nature of these changes requires a constant re-evaluation and increased attention to self-organisation or adaptation. However difficult the participants find these changes, the constant need for communication and to form relationships with peer groups and/or proximate social groups, such as creating social drinking groups or finding others to study with, does require that the participants engage in intercultural communication from time to time. Many of their intercultural discoveries will be made through the process of intercultural communication. Proponents of formal intercultural communication education may offer sign-posting, but the real learning can only take place through communication experiences. Inevitably, increased intercultural learning leads to transformative experiences for the participants because intercultural learning is premised on new ideas, norms and/or understandings that overlay home-country cultural ideas, norms and understandings. Transformative experiences are not limited to positive interpretations. Instead, transformative experiences, can sometimes lead to critical intercultural understandings of the host-country culture.

Finally, this methodology was premised on the notion of intercultural adaptation occurring continually during the students' sojourn and the tensions between home and host-country cultures to be continually unfolding (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett, 2005; Bennett and Hammer, 1998; Kim, 2001). Effectively, the participant is constantly updating their understanding, and adjusting their own communication through each and every communication. New understandings or insights are gained, then as the context becomes more deeply understood, are frequently re-challenged in subsequent experiences. This leads to a development of intercultural levels, or areas of understanding that can be mapped according to the level of intercultural relationships, or stimuli, that the individual is able to tolerate (Bennett, 2005). This chapter has been focused on these differing levels of intercultural adaptation and how these manifest in the participants' intercultural relationships and understandings of daily life in NZ. This methodology was chosen to best fit this particular project but inevitably there are limitations to this approach.

## **LIMITATIONS TO THIS METHODOLOGY**

This methodology was created to provide a worthwhile and original approach to research that would yield quality data and provide a rigorous analysis. As such, it is difficult to conceptualise weaknesses, but there were some difficult decisions or eliminations to create this structure. Originally, this project was conceptualised as using a qualitative structure, but with some quantitative methodology which is often described as triangulated as it involves more than one method of data analysis. Some researchers suggest that this can make a project more able to be generalised from, and can add credibility to the findings (Marshall and Rossman, 1999; McIntyre, 2005; Neumann, 2003). But, as the data collection commenced, it soon became clear that the interpretative aspects of this project needed to be enhanced and the quantitative methods were downgraded. Adapting the DMIS model that has been constructed for quantitative research is open to critique. But because the DMIS has been so thoroughly utilised by a number of quantitative research projects, it has become a foundational theory for intercultural communication research (see for example Kido, 1993; Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004; Pederson, 1998; Straffon, 2001; Westrick, 2002; Wilkinson, 2001). By adhering to the basic principles of the DMIS, I was able to enhance its subjective application. Furthermore, the expansion of the various stages helped in establishing transitional phases which are more readily identified and refined through qualitative frameworks.

Assigning a specific intercultural adaptation level meant risking misunderstandings and inaccuracy by me due to the participants' language and cultural barriers, and misrepresenting the students' relation to the wider cultural context of NZ. Mistakes in interpreting the participants' intercultural adaptation level could have weakened this project, as the assigning of these levels was fundamental to analyses. But, as I have maintained throughout this chapter, my understanding was framed around the concept of expecting there to be some degree of misunderstanding (Scollon and Scollon, 2001). In fact, these misunderstandings and the discovery of them was my task as an intercultural participant/observer and researcher (Cresswell, 2007; Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Scollon and Scollon, 2001). In this project, I utilised any moments of uncertainty to re-examine my findings at all levels, and this always began with the

original interpretation of the intercultural adaptation level (Cresswell, 2007). Furthermore, any adjustments made through this re-checking were then balanced by checking for any disturbance in the overall pattern. Requirements for refinement, re-checking and testing of emergent themes was tested in the second analysis and re-tested throughout the discussion (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Cresswell, 2007).

For some proponents of qualitative methodologies, assigning an intercultural adaptation level to evidence based on a single semi-structured formal interview could be seen as risky as it relies on an intercultural exchange in just one context (Cresswell, 2007; McIntyre, 2005; Neumann, 2003). Ideally, a qualitative study on intercultural adaptation would employ a longitudinal approach with the data being collected over-time, and perhaps a series of interviews. This would enhance the quality of the development of intercultural adaptation and provide insight into how the participants' viewpoints and perspectives changed as they underwent key intercultural adaptations (Cresswell, 2007). But a longitudinal approach does not fit well with the ESEA students as they are frequently pressured to focus upon their immediate academic tasks (Li, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2007a; Ministry of Education and Department of Labour, 2007; Sovic, 2008). The students are also highly mobile as they return to their home-countries, and change their courses of studies and institutions (Sovic, 2008). In defence of the single interview format used in this study, the ESEA students in this sample were capable and reflective intercultural practitioners. The students showed that they give both time and focus to their own development of personal and formal relationships during their educational sojourn. Most, if not all, of the participants in this sample were aware that they have required intercultural adaptation and skill development to negotiate and meet their goals as students in a foreign host-country. Within the interviews, there was significant scope for the students to reflect on their own challenges and successes within many of their relationships within their own national groups, the East and South-East Asian regional networks, as well as with domestic social groups in NZ and this is shown throughout the following qualitative analysis in Chapters Four and Five.

Another potential methodological weakness was in the sample size. As explained earlier, IPA generally uses small samples (Cresswell, 2007). By choosing 50 participants, it meant that this project was rather large and the participants could not be interviewed

more than once or the data analysed to a great depth. Proponents of phenomenological research as a method of understanding the effect of the phenomenon on the individual may feel that this size element weakened the research. But this was an intercultural project, and the focus group approach was more organic to the kind of social networks that the ESEA students form while they sojourn in NZ (See for example, Benson and Rahman, 2007; Butcher, 2002; Trinh, 1968). The students socialise in mixed nationality social groups and form understandings within the supports of these same groups. To interview the students in a similar group was to mirror their behaviour. Although there may have been some depth lost by this process, there was more to gain through maintaining the comfort and established social structures of the students. It allowed for a deeper understanding of the challenges and realities faced by the students every day.

Some critics may argue that the findings cannot apply to future cohorts of ESEA students, effectively rendering this study unreliable or un-replicable (McIntyre, 2005). As explained at the outset, these were, however, transient cohort groups of ESEA students. This particular project was reliant upon the intercultural communication negotiated by these specific students and by me as a researcher. The findings and outcome were specific to these intercultural relationships and this cohort group of participants. Yet, the patterns and overall insight gained into the complex terrain of intercultural adaptation are also useful for other intercultural communication studies and the generation of intercultural theory.

Similarly, the intended sampling techniques were designed around self-selection by the participants in response to poster advertisements. This was to ensure that the ethical standards were upheld to a very high level and that the participants would be more typically representative of their population (Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Tolich and Davidson, 1999). In the field it became apparent that the students would not be motivated by a written advertisement or poster. The self-selection principle was compromised, and this could have resulted in participants feeling pressured to attend because they were contacted via their friends and asked to participate. ESEA students are a vulnerable social group because they are frequently marginalised in the press and among New Zealand social groups. Direct social pressure onto the students through their positive relationships with New Zealanders and/or their newly established friends

could be seen as unethical. But without some compromise, there would not have been a sample for this research project, and as emergent adults and/or mature adults the students must also be credited with the ability to make their own decisions. To some extent there was an attempt to mitigate these effects by informing the students beforehand and providing them opportunity to withdraw their data from the sample if they felt uncomfortable in any way.

Finally, a theoretical weakness of the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) showed itself at the outset within pilot interviews. Like the researchers I noted in Chapter Two (see p.71) Burnett and Gardner (2006), I soon realised that the DMIS is based upon Western notions of individualism and personal development and it is clear that ESEA students have collectivist values and work together in teams and social networks. Students were referring to their own development in terms of “we” or “us” rather than “I”. As the pilot interviews were individual interviews, it was clear that this tendency would become exacerbated within the focus group contexts that followed. This left me with two choices for this study. One was to choose a new theory of intercultural adaptation or to note these weaknesses and develop them into a systematic adjustment of the DMIS within the analysis. I chose the latter and this approach has structured the following two chapters. Consequently this weakness has lent itself to the theoretical development of this study.

## **SUMMARY**

The purpose of this chapter has been to provide an overview of the research project and to explain the methods and theories that underpinned this methodology. This was a complex task because there were many overlaps between the different processes that came together to form this research project. Within qualitative research, this is a common feature because each task has a contextual effect on subsequent tasks (Cresswell, 2007). As explained, the sampling approaches were varied according to participant response and this had a direct impact on the kind of interviews and type of analyses that followed. It has been essential that these contextual elements were presented in this chapter and made explicit.

The primary analysis of the intercultural adaptation levels of each of the 50 participant ESEA students has been undertaken and presented in this chapter. In doing so, I have

addressed the first research question or task which is to allocate an intercultural adaptation level to each participant. With the structure of methodology set, it is now possible to move into the analysis and representation of the findings. In the following Chapters Four and Five, the data from the interview transcripts and field notes are analysed within the five levels of the DMIS that have been found in this sample.

## **CHAPTER FOUR ASSESSING STUDENTS IN THE ETHNOCENTRIC SECTION OF THE DMIS**

### **INTRODUCTION TO QUALITATIVE ANALYSES CHAPTERS FOUR and FIVE**

This chapter addresses four of the five basic research questions as laid out in Chapter One. The first of these was tackled in the previous chapter as the basis of the analysis and dealt with assessing the intercultural adaptation of each of the 50 participants from interviews and field notes. Chapters Four and Five now uses these analyses to thematically analyse the sample across the levels of the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). The applicable research questions (Research Questions 2 – 5) follow:

- 2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) for measuring intercultural adaptation among a specific ESEA student sample undergoing an educational sojourn, rather than immigration?
- 3) What types of social relationships do the ESEA students report with New Zealanders during their sojourn, and what impact do these have on their opinions of New Zealanders as a social group?
- 4) What types of social relationships do the ESEA students report with other social groups and what impact do these have?
- 5) To what extent and in which observable patterns have the ESEA students' observations and opinions of all types of social groups in NZ changed as a result of their intercultural adaptation? It is essential to note that this is based upon the participants' own perceptions and memories around their intercultural adaptation experiences.

To answer these research questions, the features of the respondents at each intercultural adaptation level (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) were addressed in turn. A special emphasis was placed on the participants' reported intercultural relationships which were summarised and applied to the main characteristics and concerns of the DMIS as prescribed by Bennett and Hammer (1998). To make sense of these relationships and



intercultural adaptation levels, it was important to look at the domains of experience for each of the participants. As I explained in Chapter Three (p. 123), the participants tended to limit their experiences around campus when and where possible at the lower levels of intercultural adaptation and gradually increase these through to city-wide. Following this, the account of each of these levels contained a secondary interrogation into how well these themes were encapsulated by the elements of the DMIS, and to what extent they showed up theoretical gaps that became apparent with close analysis. The description of this systematic analysis is spread across two chapters. It begins with denial, or L1, and goes on until adaptation, or L5, which was the range of intercultural adaptation represented across this sample.

Each of these experiences is then looked at systematically through the domain of experiences that showed up for the ESEA students. The domains were in three major categories of experience: educational, accommodation, and extra-curricular social activities and each of these are systematically employed throughout this analysis (See Table 5, p. 123). This is a systematic approach, and as a consequence the findings and the discussion are inextricably linked in this thesis. The discussion sections are tackled at the end of each of the levels as the extents to which the findings match the frameworks of the DMIS are considered.

The first three levels of the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) are analysed systematically in Chapter Four (this chapter). These are the ethnocentric levels, and 39 of the participants were concentrated in this section overall with 38 of them at Defense (L2), and at Minimization (L3). Chapter Four focuses on the ethnocentric levels, and these were characterised by an emphasis on home-country relationships and reliance upon supports from fellow ESEA student peers. These supports were prioritised by the ESEA students before allowing the creation of intercultural relationships and their intercultural communication competency could be relatively low. Chapter Five covers the ethnorelative stages. In the ethnorelative stages the participants were characterised by deeper intercultural relationships and higher intercultural communication competency across all of the domains of their experience.

## **L1 – DENIAL**

L1 is a very early level of intercultural adaptation, and ESEA students at the this level were isolated both physically and culturally through their lack of understanding and contact with the host-country (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). The ESEA students' sojourns required some social interactions within the university, so physical isolation was rare for them. It was more common to create cultural distance through national, ethnic, age-based and other social strata, and to maintain internal ethnocentric perceptions (Bennett, 1993; Bennett, 1998). Lack of intercultural relationships and even avoidance of public spaces within the university, and other spaces within the host-country, made these students potentially elusive and difficult to recruit (Bennett, 1993). Nevertheless, this sample did include one student assessed at L1 because university social networks are socially dynamic and include a broad range of ESEA students.

### **Education domains of intercultural relationships**

The educational domains were very narrow for this participant, because P-16, who was a male exchange student from Japan (in 21 – 24 years age range), had a narrow range of experiences in NZ and almost all of them were limited within the campus confines of the University of Auckland (UA). P-16 had been encouraged to attend a focus group interview through the invitation of his fellow East and South-East Asian international student counterparts at a student hall at the UA. Intercultural adaptations for the ESEA students were heavily reliant upon organisational networks as they provided the only platform leading to social contact and/or additional intercultural development. This case showed that students in their early stages of educational sojourn were particularly reliant upon organisations where they study to provide a bridge between home and host-country experiences.

Despite reliance upon his ties to the UA, P-16's isolation was clearly displayed in a lack of investment toward his study in NZ:

**Interviewer**                      **So you won't be here long?**

P-16                                      Yeah – not too long.

**Interviewer**                      **You are here just to study?**



<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Yes? How did it go?</b>
<b>P-16</b>	Yeah student health
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>How was it?</b>
<b>P-16</b>	It was quite..., the doctor was nice guy and I think he want to help.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Did they [he or she] understand you?</b>
<b>P-16</b>	Yeah they [he or she] understand me.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>You don't look sure. Was there a problem?</b>
<b>P-16</b>	Yeah I think so.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Did the medicine work?</b>
<b>P-16</b>	[The] medicine? umm not yet
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Not yet?</b>
<b>P-16</b>	Actually I tried searching the name of the medicine and symptoms it's like not the same so I don't think its proper medicine.

(UA Group 1, April 19, 2007)

P-16's distrust for the medical system in NZ was apparent because he checked to ensure that the medicine was accurately prescribed. Furthermore, P-16 did not actually use the prescribed medicine and, this depending on his condition, could potentially have been problematic. From the outside, P-16's actions may initially seem to be confusing and result in a health risk. But in light of research by the Asian Public Health Project Team (2001), the actions of P-16 were symptomatic of a desire to maintain his own health and safety, but from within the structures of his home-country cultural understanding. Maintaining health can be a major concern in an environment where the medical system is largely unknown, family support systems are far away, and where the language and cultural barriers mean that some conditions could be misdiagnosed or missed altogether (Asian Public Health Project Team, 2001).

### **Accommodation domains of intercultural relationships.**

Once ESEA students went beyond the direct structures of the university, experiences that could challenge their intercultural adaptation levels and promote intercultural development become more likely. For this reason, those students that chose to remain within the campus environment sometimes utilised the halls of residence as a barrier to prolonged contact with host-country services and groups. Placed on or near campus, halls of residence offer a physical barrier to the host-country social groups with limited

public access and university security. Additionally, the halls of residence also offer financial security through pre-set fees, as well as home-country structural support by offering the students relative social autonomy within a structured organisational environment (Zhang and Dixon, Education Counts, 2007; Ward, 2005; 2003). P-16's experience showed that the halls of residence also provide additional cultural barriers with the provision of a ready-made social group that allowed him to negotiate beyond the campus and to eat out in local restaurants in the Auckland City area:

<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>OK you like just having a personal experience with your friends you don't like to go out? Drink coffee have meals</b>
<b>P-16</b>	Sometimes I might
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>OK</b>
<b>P-16</b>	I need to eat out
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>yeah I understand that</b>
<b>P-16</b>	Its very important to me (laughter)
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>It's important to eat out?</b>
<b>P-16</b>	Yeah to go out to eat.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Because the food is horrible in [the hall]?</b> (laughter)
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Or just to get outside?</b>
<b>P-16</b>	Its yeah I just miss my Japanese food – don't like the sushi. Yeah. It's not like Japanese sushi.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Oh so you get out to get Japanese food?</b>
<b>P-16</b>	Or like I like Korean food as well.

(UA Group 1, April 19, 2007)

P-16 found these kinds of social experiences “very important” and this is consistent with Arnett's (2004) theory on emergent adult priorities. Arnett (2004) found the careful choice of friends helped to establish personal identity as much as the need for company, and this influences the choice of friends and the type of social interactions that the emergent adult has. For P-16, his choice of friends helped him to establish a social

barrier whereby he did not need to engage directly with host-country infrastructure and/or services. Barriers to intercultural relationships and experiences are multi-layered, and there were occasions when P-16 was interested in locally available cuisine. P-16 did not like to eat local ethnic Japanese food because it was “not like Japanese sushi”. Rather than engage with the different flavour/texture of the Japanese dishes, P-16 chose ethnic Korean food types that acted as a method to maintain the social barrier between him and unfamiliar experiences. Choosing familiar fare was another example by P-16 of maintaining a relatively narrow sphere of intercultural adaptation. Ethnic Korean food is widely available in Japan and is likely to be familiar, but is not necessarily a regular part of the Japanese home-country diet (De Vos and Kim, 2004). P-16’s chosen friends at the hall of residence were from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, and notably, he was the only Japanese national within the group. Therefore, much of his social discourse was conducted in English on a day to day basis, but this did not extend to intercultural relationships.

### **Extra-curricular domains of intercultural relationships**

P-16 had few host-country experiences beyond campus and any contact with the social groups in NZ was met with conscious resistance. Though P-16 did not have a wide range of friends (or indeed any) among his domestic student counterparts, he had some concrete views on negative behaviours and undesirable social elements in NZ:

<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Oh so you’ve had some bad experiences?</b>
<b>P-16</b>	Yeah it’s not just one it is two – so twice.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>You mentioned earlier that you’ve had your phone stolen or misplaced and someone else used it up?</b>
<b>P-16</b>	Yes
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Was it very expensive?</b>
<b>P-16</b>	One of them but the other phone was not so expensive
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Still upsetting?</b>
<b>P-16</b>	Yeah but still maybe [it was] just found
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Yeah so did you get the phones back?</b>
<b>P-16</b>	no just gone.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Just gone?</b>

**P-16**

Yeah just gone. I haven't 'cause I only spent two months here so I don't have anything to the Māori guys but yeah when I went to Malaysia maybe in travel its one big Māori guy and yeah he force me to give him money.

(UA Group 1, April 19, 2007)

Though P-16 did not know the location of his two missing phones, there was little doubt that he felt that "New Zealanders" were responsible. To reinforce this assumption, P-16 drew from previous experience in Malaysia. The phrasing P-16 used, suggested that the perpetrator of the phone theft could be of Māori ethnicity.

**L1 analysis overall.**

This section has shown that P-16 had an extremely narrow sphere of social domain experience during his sojourn, and this is consistent with the DMIS expectations of L1 (Bennett, 1993; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). The university and surrounding campus area did function as both social and cultural barriers. Yet equally, the university also functioned as an intercultural bridge bringing P-16 into contact with other ESEA students whose intercultural adaptation levels were higher and who come from a range of regional nationalities. These ESEA student friends also had higher levels of intercultural adaptation and were competent with the local Auckland City infrastructure, and thus helped P-16 to be exposed to more services, such as restaurants and trips off-campus. As these indications showed, P-16's intercultural adaptation was not static, and this is also consistent with the expectation of the DMIS, which is based on the concept of a continually growing sphere of intercultural awareness and development over time in the host-country and through intercultural contact (Bennett, 1993; 1998 ). P-16 chose to remain tightly within the structures of the campus, and seldom ventured beyond his own immediate circle of friends in the halls of residence.

**Beyond the DMIS (L1)**

At L1, the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) is based on the notion of a relatively strongly expressed intercultural insensitivity, and avoidance of host-country experiences and intercultural relationships. P-16's case showed this trend. This led the analysis to an important query. The DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) does not explain what motivates the individual to increase their intercultural adaptation, and P-16's behaviour and lack of curiosity about New Zealanders suggested that he will not develop this awareness willingly. For the 49 other participants, what types of experiences motivated

or encouraged them to discontinue putting up cultural and social barriers and to become more interculturally adapted?

There were clear indications that P-16's level of intercultural adaptation was dynamic and moving upwards in spite of intercultural mistrust and/or robust social barriers. Firstly, P-16 consented to take part in the focus group interview and did not require administrative pressure from the university international office staff. P-16 chose to take part alongside his friends and was comfortable contributing to the interview in English. He responded to questions fully, even in cases where he might not understand the significance of them. There was evidence in this case that P-16 showed the typical L1 characteristics of intercultural resistances and stereotyping in regards to the domestic group 'other' (Bennett, 1993; 1998), but his choice of friends with higher levels of intercultural adaptation to the host-country suggested that, in time, his intercultural adaptation would also have developed.

One weakness of the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) is that intercultural adaptation is thought to evolve as part of the individual's personal goal. However, P-16's case showed that there was very little need or requirement for intercultural adaptation, and that much of his behaviour was about creating avoidance of it. To understand this notion of lack of choice better, I now turn to two alternate theorists. According to intercultural adaptation theorists (Kim, 2001; Scollon and Scollon, 2001), intercultural adaptation development is necessitated by meeting required challenges that push the individual to new levels of intercultural understanding through the need to gain the support of host-country social relationships. P-16's relatively narrow intercultural context was structured primarily by the university, and the demand for intercultural adaptation was set by his study needs. As these study topics did not appear to hold an immediate significance for P-16's future study career, he was not compelled to utilise these particular educational experiences as springboards into future intercultural relationships.

## **L2 – DEFENSE**

At L2, the ESEA students were beginning to be aware of home and host country differences. For Bennett (2005), L2 is the middle of the ethnocentric stages and the



intercultural understanding of the students remains rudimentary and very much centred about their home-country culture. The denial level consists of: denigration of the host-country culture; championing of the superiority of the home-country and perhaps idealising it; and in rare cases, reacting completely against the values of the home-country, becoming completely immersed in the host-culture and denying the value of the home-country culture (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Castiglioni, 2004; Bennett, 1998). In this study, all of the students (n=24) assessed at this level showed instances of denigration and superiority within the interviews, but not reversal or denial of home-country values. The participants reflected on their earlier and current intercultural relationships and experiences.

### **Educational domains of intercultural relationships**

In L2, the educational domain presented by the students expanded because many of them had been in NZ over a period ranging from one to five years. A common sojourn path for ESEA students includes a final year at secondary school, and six of the students in this sample assessed at L2 had begun their sojourn at a NZ secondary school. Secondary school experiences were brought up in the general discussion of each of the focus group interviews because it was a common experience for most of the ESEA student participants. The secondary school experiences were rich and meaningful for the participants, containing key experiences and memories that had transformed their intercultural relationships and subsequent intercultural adaptation.

The participants who had undergone NZ secondary school experiences showed very little awareness of any intercultural relationships unless they represented a key experience at L2. Teaching staff provided an initial point of intercultural contact for the students, and in one case this had been a very formative experience that may also have inhibited future intercultural development for some students. P-14, a Korean male (in 18 – 20 years age range), showed how negative experiences are often misunderstood by international students, who in the first instance may assume the fault is their own. The [Pākehā] or “Kiwi” sports teacher was also male:

P-14

Uh yes actually I do (laughs). It's my secondary school teacher. [He] was extremely racist and he goes out and finds “Asian” people - making trouble always. And teachers are not actually allowed to insult badly like the students badly or swear to them or do fingers like middle fingers to them. But he did that to me. Like several times in his office so no one knows.

<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Show me what he did?</b>
P-14	Like that. [Shows an insulting finger gesture] Like several times he hated me actually that's the most memorable. I told my "Kiwi" friends, like does he actually do that to you guys when you get into trouble? They all say "oh no" that was like most memorable.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>That's pretty rude isn't it?</b>
P-14	Yes I was quite upset.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Did you do anything about it?</b>
P-14	I thought it was usual actually. I thought if any student make troubles he would act like that to any other student. But I found out later that he did it only to me.

(UA Group 1, April 19, 2007)

In this example, the teacher made rude gestures (the finger insult), and used swear words in reference to the student, and this had the effect of isolating his victim. Despite a five year sojourn, P-14's intercultural adaptation has remained at L2. P-14 remembers being selected out and made to feel different, and this had clearly shaped his reflections and added pressure for continued reticence from intercultural relationships (Bennett and Castiglioni, 2004; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). Furthermore, P-14 was aware that this classroom experience was indicative of a broader racism beyond the classroom. This strengthened P-14's early perception that many "Kiwis" are racist and that racism appears to be common in wider society in NZ. Bennett and Hammer (1998), as well as a classical intercultural theorist (Jandt, 2007), suggest that negative intercultural stereotyping can emerge from these experiences and these will deter the individual from creating more positive intercultural relationships at a later date.

But it was not only negative intercultural relationship experiences with authority figures at secondary school that characterized the participants at L2. L2 participant experiences were also characterized within positive frameworks. For example, P-27, a female Chinese national, explained how one teacher helped her in a problem-area:

P-27	My English teacher [was] very nice. If [there was] something I did not understand, she show me after class. With just her and me. My work is better now.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>You found this helpful?</b>
P-27	Yeah.

(UA Group 4, May 19, 2007)

P-27 received help and this was a satisfying experience. Although educational relationships were primary and important to the participants, they were less likely to be key intercultural adaptation experiences and this could possibly be due to the home-country context being perceived as somewhat familiar and perhaps similar to their home-country educational experiences. However, P-27 did not utilize this 'positive' opportunity to create more contact with the teacher and to extend the intercultural relationship. Maintaining tight roles and boundaries is characteristic for L2 individuals because it limits intercultural misunderstandings and tensions (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

Close friendships with fellow nationals characterised the lower levels of intercultural adaptation and appeared to be more socially comfortable for the participants. P-33, a Chinese national, found her year at an Auckland secondary school relaxing:

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| P-33               | No I finished one and a half years in China because we had three year in total for high school in China so I came here and stayed about one and three quarter because we have four semester in high school here I came in the second semester of form six so I stayed one and three quarter here.   |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>That's quite a long time.</b>  |
| P-33               | Yeah.   |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>How did you find it after China?</b>   |
| P-33               | Yeah. Pretty much the same as them quite relaxing and then you can choose the paper you like because like in China everybody doing the same thing so you can't really choose what you like what you really want to learn and then here you can choose papers like if you like accounting you can do accounting or if you like science paper you can do Chemistry. And yeah. |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>So what were your favourites?</b>  |
| P-33               | I liked science rather than English and accounting or economics and I took chemistry  |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>O.K.. Had you been studying that in China?</b>   |
| P-33               | Yeah. Actually I was studying that in China it's much more difficult than here than NZ high school at least the high school here like math and chemistry is quite easy. Yeah much easier than in China. So yeah probably that's why I like science paper  |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>Yeah. So did you feel for your year and three quarters that you were learning much more in your science than in maths?</b>   |



2004b, 2007b). This was the case for P-3, who had been in NZ for less than one year. A Thai female (in 25 – 30 years age range), P-3 had maintained contact with her language school friends:

P-3                      Most of my friends is old friends from language school and we all keep and touch and talk together. But we study in different subjects, course and faculty and most of them are Asian people China Hong Kong Japan, [South] Korea and Thailand. But I don't have much Thai friend and hardly have 'Kiwi' friend. Especially in the university I don't know why maybe they don't want to talk with me or I'm a little bit too shy to talk with them. But the person who sits around me and talks to me is 'Asian' people or the people from somewhere like India or something like that but is not a New Zealander.

(AUT Group 1, April 12, 2007)

As P-3 had only been sojourning for a brief period of time at the focus group interview, she had a limited number of relationships in the PTE and her new relationships in AUT, up to week four in semester 1 (April), to draw upon. This reflection at P-3's early part of her sojourn was important because it provided a snap-shot insight into how her relationship formation was greatly affected by proximity to those around her. During her time at language school, P-3 felt that the other students were willing to make friendships and so she continued to draw upon these relationships during her early experiences at AUT. Although P-3 had attended university study for just four weeks at the time of interview, she had already become conscious that many of the domestic students are unwilling to become friends with her. This perceived rejection by the host-country social groups is a common feature of L2 (Bennett, 2005a), and is consistent with the experience of P-14 during his secondary school experience. In this case, P-3's language school friends are acting as initial supports, as a comparison for her to draw upon and judge the quality of new relationships, and they are largely fellow ESEA students.

PTE friendships were often very close, and their peer bonding did create barriers to complex intercultural relationships. One interesting example of this bonding was provided by P-22 and P-23. They had met during the PTE period of their sojourn and became close friends. Both of them were Chinese males in the 21 to 24 years age range:

P-23                      When I come to Auckland, I find [P-22] and we make friends again.

P-22 Yes now we friends in Auckland too.

**Interviewer That's very interesting. Were you friends in Wellington at this language school?**

P-23 Not good friends. Now good friends.  
(UA Group 3, May 24, 2007)

As emergent adults, P-22 and P-23 were engaged in key identity formation tasks. Forming relationships with individuals who share their experiences is a characteristic experience for most emergent adults (Arnett, 2004). Like P-33 and P-32, these two participants formed a closer relationship within their own national group. These same nationality bonds appeared to be strong and reliable for the participants and may have contributed to slower intercultural adaptations because they have fewer requirements to fulfil their social needs outside of their national groups. Deeper bonding can inhibit intercultural adaptation, as their shared values can reinforce home-country values and ethnocentrism (Bennett and Castiglioni, 2004; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). Intercultural adaptation was commonly reduced by the participants' actions in focusing on the barriers to intercultural relationships and maintaining the focus on the familiar home-country cultural context (Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

To ESEA students at L2, problems and mishaps that inconvenience and/or confuse them were usually seen to be caused by faulty host-country structures and/or values (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). Yet international student dissatisfaction with faulty services was a significant finding by Ward and Masgoret (2001). This led me to look more closely at the dissatisfaction expressed by these two participants. P-23 clearly reflected L2 dissatisfaction with the services and he focused his difficulties upon that incident:

**Interviewer So I asked you about your foundation course and you said you're a [name of PTE] student and it went bankrupt. How did you feel about that?**

P-23 At that time I was very happy because I did not need to go to the school every day. And they had no classes. So about two months and I found out I could do nothing because there was no future for [name of PTE] at that time so umm me and [P-22] transferred to foundation in [name of another Foundation PTE].

**Interviewer Were you unhappy about doing it again?**

P-23 Not very happy

<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Not very happy.</b>
P-23	Yeah. It cost one more year and about umm 30,000 New Zealand dollars
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Mm that's quite a lot of money. And time.</b>
P-23	Yes! Waste!

(UA Group 3, May 24, 2007)

P-23 showed the expected frustration over the extra money spent and lack of service. But perhaps the larger problem that emerged here was much more than the money itself. P-23 was unable to study or to prepare himself for university for a period, and this set him behind his expected study schedule. For P-23, delays in his study schedule were very costly, and this one cost him an extra \$30,000. This could have been expensive for his family and its unexpectedness may have made it even more difficult for them to accommodate. Walker (2001) and other researchers have shown (Ministry of Education, 2007a) that international students generally (and Chinese international students in particular) are very conscious of themselves as consumers. The Chinese students in those studies feared being the recipients of purposeful misinformation about price and services. For P-23 and P-22, this fear seemed to be realized and this, in turn, reinforces their L2 barrier creating behaviour.

Home-country expectations provided a strong influence over the L2 period and this was evident at university level study. Study sojourns are often planned with rigid barriers to intercultural uncertainty from the outset. A study of South-East Asian students in Australia has shown that they are less likely to be enjoying their studies than their domestic counterparts because of the pressure placed upon them by parental expectations and their need for success in an expensive foreign environment (Ramsay, Barker and Jones, 2007). Whether this attitude originated with their parents or was generated internally by the students, it underpinned their requirements for learning outcomes and high course expectations. L2 intercultural adaptation for the ESEA students was a period where these rigid intercultural barriers were either enforced or maintained when- and where ever possible (Bennett and Castiglioni, 2004; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

At the outset, as well as during the L2 period, the participants were not expecting to either deviate from their intended study course or to challenge their level of

intercultural adaptation. P-8, a Malaysian national in his first few months of study, explained his choice of studying in NZ:

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| P-8                | It's not too cold [or] not too warm in Malaysia, it's really hot – it's around the thirties.   |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>So you find it very hot?</b>  |
| P-8                | Yes very hot. And umm, not many Universities offer the course I'm studying podiatry.   |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>So New Zealand (or in particular), AUT offered this course and it was the right one for you?</b>  |
| P-8                | They offered the course in Australia too. But I had to spend four years there whereas it's only 3 years here   |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>O.K. so it's a short course and it offered podiatry and the weather?</b>  |
| P-8                | Yeah.  |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>Did you feel you should do your degree in an English speaking country? Or like did you think no, I could go to China PR I could go to Japan or?</b> |
| P-8                | English is the main language sort of. And my first language is English actually.   |

(AUT Group 3, April 30, 2007)

For P-8, the podiatry course was vocational, and he was intending to be able to work immediately upon completion. Even more importantly, it was shorter than similar Australian courses and he was intending to complete it a year ahead of schedule. Accordingly, P-8 was intolerant of anything that would extend his sojourn investment in either the time spent or the financial cost.

Many of the ESEA students actively insulated themselves from intercultural relationships, but there were some participants that were acutely aware that they should be forming these. These participants expressed a desire for intercultural relationships, but the scope of these was limited by language barriers and lack of cultural understanding. P-44, a Malaysian national PhD student in the 25 plus age-range, was concerned about the barriers to her academic success. In particular, communication in English was viewed as a specific problem because it interfered with her academic development. P-44 explained:

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <b>P-44</b> | I have to take my prerequisite paper before I enrol for my PhD. And I took this research method course in qualitative paper. So |
|-------------|---|



yeah I pass but I find it I have to, you know, we have six students in the class, six or seven and so it's very hard for me to understand what they speak and they speak very fast. 'Kiwi's' speak very fast [and] only I'm the only international student so. But my supervisor also teach in that class so she understand me. When asked to present in the class I say to my friend that you have to ask me slowly so I can pick up what you ask me. So yeah. I find English is quite hard but it become harder when you have to write academic writing. Academic writing, [like my] PhD so I find it even to write one paragraph it takes me ages it takes ages. But my friends are very nice my 'Kiwi' friends. So umm. But luckily we don't have exams so it's O.K. If I have to take exams I think I can't really have a good grade. So that's for English and communicating in English. Also, like umm, like yeah, I think I find it hard to communicate in English with 'Kiwi' guys. "Kiwi" people and sometime because people Malaysians speak English but they speak different so it's a bit harder. But my friend I don't know maybe because of different background I mean she has like two in Malaysia so it find very easy to talk.

(WU Group 2, August 13, 2007)

P-44 was concerned about making herself fully understood by both classmates and her supervisor. At doctoral levels, there is a need for accurate expression of complex ideas (Mgqwashu, 2005). This is a common-place frustration for international postgraduate students because universities are frequently under-resourced at these levels, and offer generic language support that caters more toward the requirements of undergraduate international students. Mgqwashu explained that, in his own experience of study support as a second language student, English was offered in his South African university for undergraduate computing students, but not for those majoring in arts or sciences. P-44's concern (or even distress) with her own lack of language comprehension may have been related to her relatively lower level of intercultural adaptation which was L2. Typically, individuals at this level experienced a feeling of difference or separateness, and were less likely to see the elements of common experience between themselves and others (Bennett, 2005; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

### **Accommodation domains of intercultural relationships**

Despite the closed nature of L2 participants, though, it was clear that they did encompass a broader range of domain experiences than had been evident at L1. Some of this was due to the much larger sample sub-set, but many of the participants had been in NZ for a period of up to five years, and many had actively sought to reduce their domains of intercultural experience. In the accommodation domain, there was a full range of different types of experience and the earliest of these began with the homestay.

Homestays are often assigned for secondary school students and at some PTEs (Ministry of Education, 2002, 2003, 2004a).

Participants that had experienced homestay accommodation in the early stage of their sojourn offered some primary insights into L2 intercultural adaptation. Nine of the participants assessed at L2 had stayed at homestays at the beginning of their educational sojourn. Homestay experiences provided an opportunity for reflection and comparison with more recent accommodation types. For ESEA students, having a range of accommodation domain experiences to reflect upon was one of the catalysts for intercultural adaptation because it is another host-country context (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Castiglioni, 2004; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

Like many of the early experiences in the educational domain, homestay experiences at L2 were described as a backdrop to the more primary relationships with fellow nationals and peer relationships with fellow internationals. This was illustrated by P-37, a Malaysian national of Chinese ethnicity:

P- 37                      Just back to your question to [P-38], I think it does, it makes a big difference. I've found that 'Kiwi' friends, if they are alone, they will come talk to you, very friendly. But if they are with other Kiwis as a group, they tend to ignore you. When you walk past. Yeah. My best friend, he's from England as well, but he moved to New Zealand at the same time as me and we still keep in touch now. He's working, so I'll just drop off to say hello, or sometimes when I'm in the stressful time. I'm not that good at keeping in touch but when I go over, whenever I ask him, he's always available, or want to hang out and stuff, so that's pretty good.

**Interviewer              That's pretty good. And what kind of things do you do together? Do you just hang round, or do you go to the movies, or what?**

P-37                      We, he normally cooks, like so we go to past my house, and he normally cooks some hot English dish, or when I drive up to the homestay, we go out for a coffee, chat, 'cause I think we share a lot of the same feelings of particular problems. Whenever I need solutions, I always go and ask him. Yeah.

(WU Group 1, June 6, 2008)

The central feature in this vignette was the relationship between P-37 and her English friend. P-37 retained some relationship with her homestay family because she was talking about visiting them (retrospectively). But the homestay family was a side-topic and not the main topic. The lack of deep bonds with P-37's homestay family may have

been due a lower level of intercultural adaptation during that period of her sojourn. But, P-37 was reflecting upon these in her subsequent L2 period. The focus on the friend, rather than the homestay family, was slightly less interculturally challenging for P-37. Typically, L2 students overlook relationships that are less central to their lives and focus upon establishing those relationships that allow them to cope and maintain their resistance to transformative experiences that challenge foundational beliefs (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). The close contact with homestay family members offered the potential of deeper intercultural immersion for the participants and, as such, they are necessarily resisted.

Absence by homestay parents and/or resistance to forming a strong intercultural relationship with the student is a related theme that emerged in this section. P-49, a male Chinese national (18 – 20), described his experience:

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| P-49               | My homestay family is always busy. When home just watch TV. I go [to] my room.                                  |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>Do you talk to them? Were they friendly?</b>   |
| P-49               | The mother is always out. The father angry. Just watch TV with lots of talking. Always talking. No action.      |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>So what did you do?</b>  |
| P-49               | Go out with my friends. Watch [Chinese] movie in the Imax [cinema chain outlet in the centre of Auckland city]. |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>So where do you live now?</b>  |
| P-49               | At university flat.   |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>Is it better or worse?</b>   |
| P-49               | Cheaper and no buses taking to uni.   |

(AUT Individual 4, June 9, 2007)

Most notably in this case, P-49 could not see the homestay family making allowances or taking an interest in his social requirements. The homestay “mother” was absent, and P-49 seemed unaware of the reason for this. This suggested a lack of intercultural communication between both participant and homestay “mother”. Furthermore, this was compounded by a physically present, but uncommunicative, homestay “father”. The homestay family environment could have had unseen social factors, such as couple-stress, or other factors resulting in less communication with P-49. To P-49, however, it

became an impenetrable barrier to intercultural communication. P-49 did not know how, or is unable, to resolve this situation. Thus, it supported a belief that intercultural relationships and adaptation were to be avoided, which is a typical L2 defence mechanism (Bennett, 2005a ; Bennett and Castiglioni, 2004; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

Current accommodation reflections were also a common topic for the ESEA students. For the L1 participant (P-16), the halls of residence were useful to maintain the narrow focus of his intercultural context or domain. L2 students frequently utilised the halls of residence in the same manner, but their increased intercultural adaptation abilities offered a wider scope for the development of intercultural relationships. For these students, the proximity to the university and the relative personal autonomy afforded by the halls of residence provided opportunities for intercultural relationships (Sovic, 2008). P-7, a female Chinese (in the 21 – 24 years age range) desired contact but was unable to participate freely in social situations, which was characterised by her self-recruitment for this study:

<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Yes so what do you like to do?</b>
P-7	Last year when I arrived here I lived in apartment and that apartment is belong to AUT and they organized one day to visit around Auckland. And I went to the Mission Bay and saw some places that I don't know the name and that's the first time I visit Auckland. It's so nice and so clean and I like here and I feel it's so relax and I've seen its quite nice that I feel.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>But when you want to have fun what do you do? Where do you go?</b>
P-7	Actually nothing (laughs)
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Nothing?</b>
P-7	Yeah every day. No entertainment. Go to school and after class I go to apartment and only entertainment is with my friend go to the supermarket.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>O.K. so just so far you haven't been here long for entertainment you go to the supermarket?</b>
P-7	No (laughs) I with my friend sometimes go swim and sometimes go to the Chinese people what you call Karaoke.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Oh O.K. yeah.</b>
P-7	That's popular in China we all like it.

(AUT Group 3, April 30, 2007)

P-7 appeared to be unaware of domestic students in the university apartments, and had confined her social experiences to one other Chinese national. This was a typical description of the personal relationships experienced by L2 participants who frequently utilised their social networks to explore the narrow and immediate host-country environment. By itself, it indicated that P-7's intercultural adaptation would be more accurately described in L1. Yet this lack of impression of intercultural interaction was mitigated by the self-recruitment that was rare in this project. P-7 appeared to enjoy the opportunity to describe her life to a mixed focus group where the only person that she had met previously was me (the interviewer). Reaching out for intercultural relationships that will improve the daily life and challenge intercultural barriers is a behaviour that is evident in L2 intercultural adaptation (Bennett, 2005a).

Despite the tight structures of the halls of residence creating barriers to intercultural relationships, there were occasions where the close proximity of various national groups elicited intercultural miscommunication and friction. If the situation cannot be resolved, then the international students can be forced into leaving the structured campus environment. In an example of this, P-38, a Chinese female (in the 18 – 20 years age range), felt pressured to take up private accommodation. She explained:

P-38

When I was in the halls and there was a fight, the problem was that we were put together. And there was an Arabian student, and his lifestyle was a little bit different and he didn't want to change it when he stayed with other people. So, we have a manager for the hall; and he umm, was just annoying, and we all, he started a fight, and I went up to see my manager and asked if he had to leave, and then, after that, me and another flatmate had to leave. But I think it was a bit bad because I wasn't sure about the law, I really wanted to get out of the halls, but because of the tenancy agreement or something like that, it wasn't clear, between the university and normal rental company, so, yeah, it was a big time of stress.

(WU, Group 1, June 6, 2008)

One of the most challenging situations for international students is the stress created by having little experience or knowledge of their host-country, whilst maintaining their studies (Bodycott, 2009; Schmidt-Rinehart and Knight, 2004; Sovic, 2008). For all students, domestic and international alike, stress can interfere with the students' ability to function and to perform to the scholastic levels appropriate (Arnett, 2004; Ramsay et al., 2007). In the case of international students, this situation is compounded by their

lack of understanding of the protocols and nuances required to fully understand how situations around them are being handled or considered by authorities. P-38 found the manager “annoying” because she was not certain of her legal situation, or even her rights as a customer of the Waikato halls of residence. This lack of clarity about the regulations and uncertainty about questioning authority is a characteristic of intercultural adaptation levels of levels one and two (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). Authorities were mistrusted because they can be difficult to understand fully. For the ESEA students there may also be uncertainty about her/his ability to communicate confidently and effectively in turn. But the stress created by this type of uncertainty can lead to a big leap in intercultural adaptation (Kim, 2001). In this case, P-38’s reflections showed that her experience had the effect of springing her forward into private accommodation options. This, in turn, brought her increased autonomy and undoubtedly will be a part of her intercultural adaptation or development in future intercultural relationships. At the time of the interview it seemed that this key moment could have been one of the intercultural experiences that enabled her to develop from L1 to L2.

Private accommodation experiences seemed to lead to greater intercultural relationships, but this next vignette demonstrates that they too could function as an intercultural barrier. P-5, a Chinese female (in the 18 – 20 years age range) lived with an uncle and her siblings:

P-5	I live with my uncle.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Oh O.K. So you’re not on your own here you have family?</b>
P-5	I have one brother and one sister they’re all here.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Do you all live with your uncle?</b>
P-5 (AUT Group 3, April 30, 2007)	Yes. My father happy to let uncle look after us.

By staying with the uncle, P-5 and her siblings were able to remain in a single family unit. This was a non-typical experience for international students in this sample, who more frequently appeared to live independently of their families. As expected, P-5 had a relatively low level of intercultural adaptation, given that she had been here since

secondary school. Like many of the participants at this level, she limits her intercultural relationships to fellow peer Chinese ESEA students and, in her case, her family (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). By living with her family, P-5 was shielded from having to form new and challenging relationships with host-country people (Gill, 2007; Schmidt-Rinehart and Knight, 2004).

### **Extra-curricular domains of intercultural relationships.**

L2 was a dynamic and complex stage of intercultural adaptation because the ESEA students were often engaged in intercultural domains that by their nature have the potential to increase intercultural relationships. At the same time, the students were doing their best to limit these intercultural relationships, but sometimes needed to get beyond the confines of campus. Unlike the L1 student, some of the L2 students were engaged in seeking and managing part-time jobs. Many of the participants were keen to work in part-time jobs during their study sojourn for financial necessity, intercultural adaptation, and also to gain experience working in a foreign host-country context (Zhang and Brunton, 2007).

When the L2 participants did find work, they often relied upon familiar social networks to achieve this. Reliance upon home-country networks is a characteristic of ethnocentrism and is particularly pronounced at L2 (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). Many ESEA students were also informed by the principles of *guanxshi*, because Chinese ethnic tradition dictates that social opportunities are gained through personal networks that obligate various family members and friends through a system of information exchange and favours (Bodycott, 2009; King, 1994). Although the direct family and friends may be absent from NZ, informal networks of friendship and/or educational organisations acted as a substitute. By relying on the familiar principles, the students created barriers against host-country social networks, and thus ‘proved’ the superiority of the home-country cultural wisdom (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

P-19, a Malaysian female (21 – 24), who had both Chinese and Japanese ethnicity explained:

<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Do you have a job?</b>
--------------------	---------------------------

P-19 Two part time jobs.

**Interviewer Oh O.K. and what are they?**

P-19 One is a research technician and helping the professor do some research. I assist him and the others. I'm note taking

**Interviewer O.K. So about how many hours?**

P-19 About 15 hours a week. So we only do about three hours a day

**Interviewer O.K. was it hard finding that work?**

P-19: No. easy. Just hear about right person and go ask them.  
(UA Group 2, May 16, 2007)

P-19 found work by using her existing relationships in the university. Research technician and note-taking positions are typical part-time jobs at universities for domestic students. P-19 was reliant upon the informal social networks within the university networks because she explained that she "hears about the right person". At L2 it was possible to make some intercultural relationships and P-9 has achieved enough of these to get this position. The apparent lack of interest in this relationship beyond the employment opportunity suggests it was viewed as a functional relationship, rather than a developed friendship. L2 relationships are sometimes short-lived because of the nature of the changing intercultural environment, and social bonds are quickly formed and broken (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

One way to get greater access to intercultural communication and experience was to work in the community. These experiences were often of short-duration, but do have the potential to lead to meeting some very different people/social groups in the host-country communities. This was illustrated in the experience of P-33, a Chinese female (21 – 24):

**Interviewer O.K. I understand. But when you have 'Kiwi' friends you only know them for a short while?**

P-32 Yeah.

**Interviewer Is that what you mean? I just want to be quite careful because when I type this up I want to be quite accurate. Just short term friends?**

P-32 Yeah. And probably I have some 'Kiwi friends' like very close like for a short period of time, Not for like keeping for long period of time like certain period we will be quite close to each other but then after that we just not close as before. Like if when I went to



Fonterra company for my work experience I will have some friends there for like during office or we will go out for a drink or go out for a movie. But just for that period of time. But then after that we probably just keep in touch through email like one or two [twice] a month. But I think that's not very close friend any more but yeah probably we have some friends that are quite close just certain period of time but not for the whole life.

**Interviewer**                    **Oh yeah of course. So can you think of a NZ friend that you have known quite well for a period of time and can you tell me about how you met and just tell me something about this friend?**

P-32                                    Yep. Um I remember I have 'Kiwi' friends. An old lady just live by herself and then we met when I had the job for painting. She hire us for painting the house and then she was quite [friendly]. She like our painting so she very friendly to us and she make Christmas cake for probably two years - like this year's Christmas and next year's Christmas. And calls us when she ready [has prepared the] like Christmas cake. So we went out for Chinese Yum Cha, Chinese lunch together but yeah just for that about two years' time and after this we yeah.

**Interviewer**                    **O.K. and you say she was an old lady what do you mean by old?**

P-32                                    About probably about she's about 70 years old.

**Interviewer**                    **O.K. and is she 'Kiwi' [Pākehā]?**

P-32                                    Yeah she's 'Kiwi' [Pākehā]

**Interviewer**                    **And O.K. so did you meet any of her family or just her**

P-32                                    I think just her because she live by her own usually she live with her partner her husband. But her husband passed away a few years ago so she live by herself.

(UA Group 5, May 12, 2007)

P-32 was able to strike up a new friendship with an older Pākehā woman, and this led to exchanges of hospitality and intercultural communication for both parties. The part-time work was less significant for P-32 than the intercultural relationship that ensued. This relationship took on an important intercultural function for both parties because it was unlikely that they would have met in other circumstances. Both international students and emergent adult friendships were often characterised by short-term encounters that serve a social purpose (Arnett, 2004; Schmidt-Rinehart and Knight, 2004). Constrained by language and cultural barriers, the ESEA students were often limited to the social groups offered by educational organisations. Although it was maintained in a limited manner, this relationship was not central to the lives of either P-32 or the older woman friend. This is characteristic of L2 intercultural relationships

where there is intercultural resistance created by the lack of understanding of the host-country cultural structures and values (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

For L2 participants it was necessary to have a full range of social experiences to lead comfortable and rewarding lives (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). Romantic relationships are a key element of experience and support for adolescents and emergent adults, and this can be an on-going interest for mature adults (Arnett, 2004). More particularly for emergent adults, however, this entire period of their lives may be dominated by the task of locating and negotiating a suitable life-partner. Arnett (2004, p. 8) describes this: “It [emergent adulthood] is the age of *identity explorations*, of trying out various possibilities, especially in love and work”.

For the participants in this study, the anticipation of potential romantic relationships during their student sojourn appeared to be as attractive as other private leisure activities. Though highly personal, some rare opportunities were provided through giggles and pointed references made during various interviews, and a good example of this follows. P-17 and P-18, Malaysian nationals of Malay ethnic descent, and devout Muslim women (in the 21 – 24 years age range), explained:

P-17            Yep. So when I was talking about my ‘Kiwi’ friends they actually grew up here in New Zealand that does include some Pacific Island friends like Tongan and Samoans. But I don’t have Māori friends. I really want to make friends with Māori but they are out of the perimeter (laughs). But yeah. Some are from the Philippines and some of them are white.

P-18            Yeah. She would like Māori boyfriend.

P-17            Maybe.

P-17 and P-18: [Laughs]

(UA, Group 2, May 16, 2007).

P17 and P-18 were friends who enjoyed teasing each other, and this type of teasing recurred throughout the interview. This vignette shows that there had been at least some discussion between them on the topic of P-17 experiencing romantic attraction to Māori men. From the information given, it was impossible to establish the likelihood of this type of romantic outcome. More importantly, they identified an attraction to Māori social groups, which is a clear desire to create intercultural relationships. This attraction suggested a very small amount of idealisation which was also a rare trait, but is

characteristic for participants at L2 (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). They were interested in forming the intercultural relationship, but the giggling suggested it was more an idea than a potential reality.

In this sample, intercultural romantic relationships seemed relatively uncommon for L2 participants. Love relationships, cohabitation and marriage between fellow nationals, however, were not. P-32 met her husband, a fellow Chinese national, during their secondary school period in Hamilton and they had subsequently married. At the time of the interview they had been married for four years, and were in the 21 – 24 years age range. P-32, with the assistance of her partner (P-34), described their relationship:

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>O.K. that's great and so when you told your parents that you met someone how long did it take you?</b>                |
| P-32               | I think.   |
| P-34               | One years?   |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | No you told your parents in end of year did you  |
| P-34               | really?  |
| P-32               | Yes you did, you did so for me. I think it took about a year.  |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>A year O.K. and how about for you [P-34]?</b>   |
| P-34               | Less than that. Probably half a year.  |
| P-32               | Half a year  |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>O.K. and were your parents pleased [P-32]?</b>  |
| P-32               | Yeah my mum my parents doesn't really keen on just choosing someone for me. So they quite pleased for our own decisions. |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>Oh O.K. that's good were your parents pleased?</b>  |
| P-34               | My parents they just oh is she good I said yes, that's cool (laughs).  |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>So they didn't ask you a lot of questions?</b>  |
| P-34               | No they don't care about that. They trust me and they want me to make that decision.                                     |

(UA Group 5, May 20, 2007).

This trend has been mirrored by domestic students, and Arnett (2004) observed that love-relationships among emergent adults in the USA and in other Western states also

appeared to be more frequently based within national and/or ethnic groups. According to Arnett (2004), this is due more to the notion of perceived common interests rather than inter-ethnic tensions and/or parental disapproval. Interest in relationship commonality extends beyond various demographic factors and incorporates social experiences, such as shared workplaces, neighbourhoods and friends. P-32 and P-34 were able to bypass the challenges of parental disapproval because their relationship conformed to the norms for emergent adult Chinese nationals. For P-32, this familial approval indicated a strong retention of home-country values and norms which was the dominant theme for the L2 students (Bennett, 2005a).

As I have shown throughout this analysis, L2 ESEA students had some interest in taking part in the host-country extra-curricular activities. However, in this study the L2 participants showed a strong preference for accessible activities that did not require a lot of intercultural relationships, such as walking in community parks and shopping in the surrounding host-city, as well as for broader travel experiences beyond. One interesting example of these activities was shopping. P-28 and P-31, two Malaysian female participants (in the 21 – 23 years age range), described their shopping experience:

<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>You were talking about returning to Malaysia to shop. Do you have many holidays back home?</b>
P-31	Yes I like to go back home to shop. Everything so expensive here and not my size. My size is small.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>So you need clothes from home?</b>
P-28	We all need clothes from home. Not enough style here.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>People in New Zealand don't have as much fashion ideas?</b>
P-27	Can't live here long. Too hard to find right fashion. Need to go home.
P-31 and P-28 (UA Group 4, May 29, 2007)	Yeah (together).

As L2 participants, both P-31 and P-28 were focused on the difficulties of shopping in NZ and were vocal in their disappointment. For these women, shopping had been a pleasant activity that they had participated in as a leisure-time activity, and it had been easy and fun in Malaysia. But in NZ, shopping was seen to be less rewarding because

they could not find their correct sizes, resulting in frustration. In turn, this frustration reminded the two participants that they were separate from New Zealanders because their size and preferences were not catered to. Though shopping can be viewed as an optional and less important pastime, this study showed that it can be missed. Shopping was a valued activity for the participants in their home-country and ceased to be appealing in the host-country environment. Consequently, P-28 and P-31 viewed shopping as an activity to endure or even denigrate in NZ, rather than to enjoy (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

Regular participation in leisure tourism activities was characteristic of the L2 ESEA students. These activities were often educationally structured or offered undemanding social experiences that required little intercultural interaction. P-18, a Malaysian national of Malay ethnicity, described her aversion to leisure-tourist activities:

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>Well that's fair enough O.K. so [P-18]</b>  |
| P-18               | Yes I'm thinking, where did I go?<br><br>(laughter)  |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>Have you been to the airport?</b>   |
| P-18               | (laughs) yeah  |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>That's a good start</b>   |
| P-18               | I think the nearest is Mission Bay yeah Mission Bay [local waterfront in Auckland.   |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>Did you like it?</b>  |
| P-18               | Yeah Mission Bay but both of us are planning to go to Christchurch.  |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>Oh that'll be interesting but just tell me something. Did you like Mission Bay?</b>   |
| P-18               | I liked the ice cream.   |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>You like the ice cream but not the beach?</b>   |
| P-18               | Because I live in an island in Malaysia so I don't really like no it's not that I don't like it it's just I don't appreciate that because I have been in an island before. |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>Oh O.K. so it's too ordinary O.K. so you're both planning to go to Christchurch why Christchurch?</b>   |

P-18                      We're going to go for a sports tournament.

**Interviewer            O.K. so you're going to go down there to play volleyball or netball?**

P-18                      Both.

(UA, Group 2, May 16, 2007)

P-18 showed little interest in the Mission Bay waterfront area of Auckland. Mission Bay, a waterfront suburb in Auckland, appeared to be consistent with P-18's earlier beachfront experiences in her home-country. This was an extension of the L2 perceptions where differences between home and host-countries were downplayed and, in this case, the host-country appeared to have little to offer of geographical note (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). The various geographical features of the Hauraki Gulf or natural harbour landscape of that area did not appear to be unique. More importantly, P-18 was not seeking transformational experiences and was focused more on creating social networks with her peer Malaysian international student group. Structured approaches to leisure tourism were potentially more attractive to the ESEA student sample and for the Muslim female students. In contrast to their Chinese and other Malay national counterparts, Malay female students face the added challenge of looking different in regards to wearing a *mini-tele-kung*, or head-dress, that is worn to preserve their modesty, or *avra*, which can be required of Islamic women when in the company of men and/or strangers, though there is a wide variation of that in practise (Kolig and Shepard, 2006).

For those L2 participants who do engage in unstructured leisure tourism, their relative lack of intercultural knowledge sometimes created tension (Bennett, 2005a). P-3, a Thai female (25 – 30), explained how a short vacation exploring the Bay of Islands in the North Island created anxiety:

P-3                      I went with my friend to Bay of Islands for Waitangi Day. But when there, we hid in car. Maybe because I didn't look at their child because we all hide in car because I went to Bay of Island. And it has the traditional is the Waitangi day [national day of remembrance for the signing of the Founding document to the New Zealand constitution February 6, 1840] and so the all the people in that event is the Māori

**Interviewer            Why did you hide in the car?**

P-3                      My friend she live with her roommate and from Asia and we don't know. I'm not sure that because in Asian country we can touch

children even if they walk with their parents. But I am not sure about here. And one of my friends that stay in he stay in his room and he saw children outside his window. So he calls them and give them a snack because he thought the child is quite cute. And that night the parents the children's father come to his room and knock his door and shout and told him that "open the door" but he feel very scared. And he didn't do anything just keep very quiet in his room. And when in the morning when he open the door is blood on the door and that room. And he talked to the manager and the manager moved all of them to the upstairs.

**Interviewer**

**Oh that's scary!**

P-3

And when we went to Bay of Island for travelling we saw this family and just hid in the car because she told me that is the father that her friend gave snack to his children

P-3

**oh O.K. yeah. And the question I have to ask is umm those children were they "Kiwi" children like me or from somewhere else do you think?**

P-3

They is a Māori. Very pretty and interesting. We want to play with them.

**Interviewer**

**Māori?**

P-3

Yes Māori.

(AUT Group 1, April 12, 2008)

For L2 individuals, host-country social groups can seem unwelcoming and offer few social opportunities (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Castiglioni, 2004; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). Typically, intercultural communication is characterised by miscommunication and errors on both sides (Scollon and Scollon, 2001). However, for P-3 at L2, these simple misunderstandings appeared to have led to social offence, and the fear of this posed potentially greater threats for her and her friends as strangers in a foreign host-country environment.

But not all ESEA students at L2 were initially resistant to transformational experiences through outdoor leisure pursuits. P-5, a Chinese national in the 18 – 20 years age group, described her vacation with a group of friends on New Year's Eve in Gisborne:

**Interviewer**

**Like you went to different places and some seemed better than others but where did you have the worst experience?**

P-5

Oh umm not the worst but feel a little bit disappointed in Gisborne. We planned to stay there on the last day of 2006 because it's the first point of New Zealand and we're supposed to see the first sunshine of 2007, which is really romantic and

memorable. But unfortunately at 12 o'clock of the New Year's Eve the Gisborne people all get together in the ground [on their own properties] and there's only one pub open which is totally different from Auckland. And then people just celebrate and say hello to everyone. Which I think was well I didn't expect that. I thought there would be lots of fireworks and lots of activities but there is nothing there. And then the next day we get up at 3 o'clock in the morning to see the sunshine but it's raining so we were like "oh my gosh" and then we wait for a little while. And after three hours at 6 o'clock we just leave the city

**Interviewer; O.K. so you'd had enough at 6am?**

P-5 Also a little bit disappointed

**Interviewer Yeah that would be disappointing.**  
(AUT Group 2, April 20, 2007)

For P-5, the experience of being among the first people in the world to view sun-rise in 2006 was intended to be a transformational experience. Such a desire is common for many tourists and these hopes are summarised by Archer and Wearing (2003): "...the act of travel has been constructed as a means of self-development and a way to experience the new, broaden the mind, and to return in some way enriched by the experience" (p. 10). However, as was consistently noted with L2 participants, P-5 felt that their lack of comfort and enjoyment was due to the perceived in-hospitality of the host-country culture and under-developed host-country city. This was a cultural denigration of Gisborne as a tourist destination (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). P-5 perceived this as reinforcement that the host-country and (consequently the cultural groups therein) were not worth any extra intercultural adaptation investment.

### **L2 analysis overall.**

This section on L2 intercultural adaptation has shown that most of the participants were actively engaged in resisting intercultural relationships and contact with the social infrastructure when and where possible. For the students, however, it was about assessing the host-country culture through the lens of their own ethnocentrism or home-country culture. This is consistent with the work of Bennett and Hammer (1998). Host-country relationships and experiences were evaluated by the students at this level, and often rendered unimportant, intimidating or simply non-applicable to their lives. Early experiences were reflected upon in the educational and accommodation domains, and the students were often critical of the host-country groups, rather than attributing the responsibility to their own lack of cultural understanding. In this way, the students were necessarily caught up in their own pre-set aims and goals to achieve a foreign



education and improve their formal cultural capital in a globalising workforce (Bourdieu, 1986; Tsolidis, 2002).

Although international students are often portrayed (Raciti, 2012) as solitary and sometimes isolated individuals, in this study at L2 it became clear that they were actually connected with many social networks. This behaviour continued far beyond the activities they were describing and also extended into the interviews where there were a number of instances of paired contributions in this section. For example, P-22 and P-23 had shared their PTE experience and jointly contributed in discussing it in the interview. P-17 and P-18 also contributed together and, finally, P-32 and P-34. With the exception of P-34, what was noticeable was that they generally shared the same level of intercultural adaptation and this may be due to shared values, solutions and experiences in both home and host-country cultural understandings and beliefs. There were more participants rated at L2 than other levels, and this may have been partially reflective of the East and South-East Asian international student groups with their extensive social networks that allow them to collectively and individually create intercultural barriers and reduce instances of intercultural relationships.

### **Beyond the DMIS (L2).**

The DMIS model (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) is based on the notion of intercultural resistance and this was a trend which was visible within intercultural relationships in this study. But there are four key weaknesses of the DMIS theory of intercultural resistance at L2 that emerged during this analysis of ESEA students, and these are identified and described in the following sections:

*Firstly, the descriptive element of the DMIS does not explain exactly what motivated the individual to increase their intercultural adaptation level.*

From this study, it appeared that the answer for increased intercultural adaptation for L2 students relied upon the strength and proximity of host-country cultures and, in particular, on intercultural relationships. It was clear that some of the participants at L2 had some expectation and interest in creating intercultural relationships and propelling their intercultural adaptation forward. P-44 and P-37 both showed that they had begun intercultural relationships, but were sometimes daunted by the difficulty of maintaining

communication. P-17 and P-18 had also managed to create friendships with their domestic student counterparts. P-5 had sought a transformative natural experience outside Auckland, which can be nerve-wracking for the L2 students. Overall, the actions of the participants demonstrated that they were often working to increase their intercultural relationships despite their internal resistance or ambivalence to extended intercultural exposure.

To explain this, it is important to look beyond the work of Bennett and Hammer (1998) and toward the theory of Kim (2001). According to Kim's SAGD model, intercultural transformations are achieved through intercultural contact leading to transformative learning that can only be experienced through direct intercultural relationships. This is important as intercultural communication which underpins intercultural relationships is a dynamic process that requires constant adjustment, re-adjustment and takes place at the time and site of communication as well as within the subsequent reflections of the individual.

*Secondly, it was not always clear how the individual was to gain a higher level of intercultural adaptation because L2 is based on intercultural resistance which should lead to an absence of intercultural relationships.*

Although the L2 students were frequently resistant to intercultural relationships, there was evidence that intercultural learning takes place despite intercultural barriers. Interestingly, the host-culture was not absorbed evenly, but through a system of assumptions and grouping of characteristics, traits and behaviours. This is partially explained through a discourse approach where intercultural communication is based upon learning cultural references and assumptions (Scollon and Scollon, 2001). These home-cultural references and assumptions are likely to reveal the negative stereotyping of the host-country social group that the participant has been influenced by. As relative newcomers to NZ, the students do not have the same filters and historical understanding of inter-ethnic tensions. When intercultural tensions arise, the participants then apply these ideas and often reinforce negative stereotyping. For example, the case of P-38 showed that she had chosen the word "Arab" to describe the nationality of the student that she experienced intercultural miscommunication and friction with in the halls of residence at the University of Auckland. Like much

stereotypical language this was also regionalist and unspecific (Jandt, 2007; Mathews, 2000; Munshi, 1998; Scollon and Scollon, 2001). It also reflects the dominant attitude of colonialism that has been seen to be damaging because it creates a perception of 'other'. This simultaneously subverts the actual nationality or culture of the individual under discussion, and is common when those from Western states are speaking of many other regions (Bray, 2000; Howe, 1995; Said, 1991; Steven, 1989).

This same lack of filtering of host-country values and beliefs could also have meant that the ESEA students were more open to intercultural relationships. P-17 and P-18 reflected this in their interest in forming romantic relationships with Māori men. Given that both of these participants were of Malay descent, it is possible that there could have been a sense of regional kinship due to the ethnic position of the Bumiputera in Malaysia as the indigenous ethnic group (Nagata, 2004). It is even possible that there may have been a natural sympathy for the Māori and Pasifika groups because of their own recently remembered historical status of colonisation in South-East-Asia (Jacobsen, 2004).

P-32's inter-generational friendship with an older Pākehā woman also reflected a similar receptivity to minority group friendship, which was an uncommon type of intercultural relationship in this sample. P-32 was given the opportunity to learn more about Christmas and the holiday season of remembrance because she received the cakes for several years. It is likely that by taking this opportunity, P-32 was learning to appreciate some of the benefits of the host-country culture. By this exchange of seasonal greetings, both the older Pākehā woman and P-32 were able to extend their intercultural relationship over several years.

*Thirdly, the DMIS does not examine the role that the host-country cultural actions and beliefs played in either encouraging or discouraging intercultural relationships.*

It became clear within the interviews at L2 that the actions and beliefs of the home-country social groups and individuals that the participants had encountered had impacted significantly upon their desire for intercultural relationships. In the early stages of intercultural adaptation, unexpected challenges can be experienced as traumatic and they create a steep learning curve that has yet to be incorporated into the

intercultural adaptation cognitive framework (Hsieh, 2007; Kim, 2001; Scollon and Scollon, 2001).

Sometimes fairly 'ordinary' cases of bullying were experienced as an extra-ordinary event that became isolating and discouraged the participants from making further intercultural adaptations. To illustrate this, I return to the case of P-14 in his secondary school vignette. Like many victims of various forms of teacher-on-student abuse, P-14 went through a stage of blaming himself (Khoury-Kassabri, Astor, and Benbenishty, 2008). He blamed this on his own lack of skills and, in this case, the barriers created by limited language and intercultural understanding. This, in turn, like the student victims in other studies, led to intercultural relationship insecurities and slow progress in creating peer relationships. This comparison was vital for P-14 because during the period of the abuse he believed that he was unable to cope with regular host-country behaviour, and therefore failed to recognize or gain intercultural support (Beaty and Alexeyev, 2008; Mouttapa, Valente, Gallaher, Rohrbach, and Unger, 2004; Zygmunt-Fillwalk and Clark, 2007).

Shared intercultural difficulties can also lead to an increased bonding with fellow nationals. It was not just the proximity and the shared nationality that bonded P-22 and P-23, but also an important experience where they were each affected by the closure of their Wellington based PTE during the course of their foundational studies. Hsieh (2007) found that for Taiwanese international students, failure to be a reliable friend or to offer the promised service results in a breakdown of a relationship. These qualities are highly regarded in the Chinese and East and South-East-Asian practice of *guanxshi* (Hwang, 1999; Lew and Wong, 2004). P-22 and P-23 were likely to have their beliefs that social groups in NZ lack *guanxi* or social reliability. In practice, this shared negative perception or understanding is likely to have reinforced their ethnocentrism and to inhibit intercultural relationships that expand and deepen intercultural adaptation (Bennett, 2005a; Jandt, 2007; Scollon and Scollon, 2001).

In this study, homestay families at L2 were sometimes experienced as daunting rather than supportive. The case of P-49 shows intercultural adaptation research could have underestimated how daunting these effects can be upon the ESEA students. Poor homestay experiences could negatively impact upon the rate and depth of intercultural

adaptation. This is consistent with the work of Zhang and Brunton (2007), who reported that attempting to conform to differing home and host-country telephone etiquettes were remembered as significant stressors for Chinese international students in homestays in NZ. International literature suggests that international students prior to their arrival in the host-country often expect the homestay family to be an intercultural bridge between themselves and the, as yet unknown, host-country context (Mack, 2003; Schmidt-Rinehart and Knight, 2004; Sovic, 2008). This bridge is expected to embody the anticipated elements of the Confucian family model where the homestay parents are bound by duty and affection to the welfare and well-being of the ESEA students, and the students often expect to feel a reciprocal affection and duty (Simone, 2001; Yue and Ng, 1999). Failure to achieve the expected bonds can lead to disillusionment, and may have discouraged the students from exploring further intercultural relationships and experiences during that relatively protected period.

*Finally, the DMIS at L2 had a tendency to ascribe the responsibility of the intercultural resistance to the individual, rather than taking into account the pervasiveness of the home-country values and structures that were necessarily integral to the continued emotional and financial support of each participant.*

Home-country family beliefs were a consistent sub-theme throughout all of the interviews, and it was clear that most of the participants were in constant contact with their parents/families. This influence was reflected in the students' actions and behaviours within their personal lives, and was also evident in their attitudes and beliefs around study. P-3, P22 and P23 were accurate in their decisions to withdraw some trust from their intercultural relationships as there were times when they were vulnerable as strangers and newcomers to NZ. P-49 and P-37 were also socially accurate in their decision to maintain a social boundary between themselves and their previous homestay families. It is the participants' home-country families that will maintain their ties and support during the students sojourn, and are emotionally bound to all aspects and domains of the participants' lives.

Parental approval was definitely favoured by the participants, and this was consistent with Confucian models of familial piety where the expectations and wishes of the parents are critical to their off-spring (Hwang, 1999; Yue and Ng, 1999). P-32 had

conformed to some of the expectations and values of her home-country family in choosing to marry P-34 – a fellow Chinese national. P-32 enjoyed the responsibility for making this choice, and was satisfied with the parental approval that has ensued. Deference to family approval and expectations in the arena of love relationships is deemed critical to many ESEA youths. Confucian values suggest that the older generations model experience and authority in the area of family composition, and that emergent adult females are much more susceptible to this than their male counterparts (Higgins et al., 2002).

Home-culture supports were sometimes reinforced through the presence of ESEA family members already present in NZ. Some participants, however, had not needed to rely upon the host-country supports to form interpersonal relationships. To illustrate this, I return to the cases of P-19 and P-5. For P-19, her part-time job suggested good English competencies in both listening and writing, which are essential components for study at all levels. Though equipped to deal with intercultural relationship challenges, P-19 chose (or perhaps simply accepted) a more narrow existence in her study sojourn. A note-taking position does not require a high level of inter-personal communication, as the task is simply to note down the main points of the lectures. P-19 was able to maintain a lower level of intercultural adaptation, and this may have been due to having a sister and brother also currently studying in NZ to socialise with. This was supported further by the case of P-5, who lived with her uncle and aunt in Auckland during her sojourn. Both P-19 and P-5 had a low interest in forming intercultural relationships with domestic students.

### **L3 – MINIMIZATION**

At L3, or minimisation, the ESEA students were characterised by the acceptance of some differences between home and host-country cultures (Bennett, 2005; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). This understanding was readily accessible and easily expressed within the interviews. The students were also regularly engaged with the host-country culture, but in a controlled and limiting manner. The L2 participants attempted to avoid intercultural relationships and exposure to the host-country culture when- and wherever possible. In comparison, this section showed that L3 participants did not avoid intercultural relationships and exposure to the host-country culture but instead

maintained tight controls over the intensity and duration. Accordingly, intercultural relationships also tended to be a more regular occurrence at this level. L3 student understanding remained characteristically ethnocentric, emphasising the dominance of home-cultural beliefs and values (Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

### **Educational domains of intercultural relationships**

The educational domain at L3 encompassed the same broad range of experiences from secondary school through to university across the participants, as was described in the preceding L2. L3 students had memories of secondary school also containing the same theme of ease and relaxation. But, as the following example shows, L3 participants had a more layered and complex methods of reflecting these similarities. Themes from different time periods and domains of experience were incorporated within the participants' vignettes. For example, P-34, a Chinese male, (in the 21 – 24 years age range), explained:

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| P-34:                      | Yeah very strange and I think in China high school there's lots of stuff to do too much assignments and things. But in New Zealand the first year I went to [a secondary school near Hamilton] high school I felt very comfortable. Nothing to do.               |
| <b>Interviewer</b><br>p-34 | <b>O.K. nice. So was it very easy?</b><br>Very easy. Not too much work to do. That made me very comfortable and then after that year in 2003. Yeah that made the problem so I had to go to university. Yeah. That's tricky one so then I was working hard again. |

(UA Group 5, May 20, 2007)

P-34 was able to converse easily about both secondary school and university at one time. It would too be narrow to assign this increased complexity to improved language abilities alone, because P-34 showed a greater conceptual understanding of what was required by the question. In effect, P-34 showed an ability to generalize experiences and reflected on the effort that he remembered outlaying at two different organizations and time periods. This layering of reflections was typical of the ascending understanding of intercultural adaptation, which is a conscious process of adapting a learned behaviour to suit the host-country environment (Bennett, 2005a).

It was at L3 that frustrations with language abilities could be expressed fully because these participants were more aware of the dangers that these difficulties posed to their academic development. L3 participants had a more sophisticated understanding of the

value that host-country intercultural relationships could potentially bring to their lives (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

Frustrations with language were prevalent, but L3 intercultural adaptation lent it specificity. The following participant, P-10 a Malaysian female (aged 25+ years) was specific about her language frustrations, and was thus able to describe her particular concerns:

<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>What annoys you about people in New Zealand?</b>
P-10	They annoys me. My accent.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Do they annoy you by not understanding you?</b>
P-10	Yes, right. I talk to them – “If you don’t understand me, please ask again, and if I can’t explain, I try to write on a paper”.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>It must have been very difficult, especially because, I’m guessing, you spoke English before you got here. So you’re thinking, why don’t you understand my English? (laughter)</b>
P-10	Yes, right. My accent.

(AUT Group 4, March 10, 2008)

P-10 *did* feel that there was resistance from domestic students and that some of those domestic students *did not* attempt to aid in the task of intercultural communication. With a more layered understanding of the domestic students and staff, P-10 was aware of intercultural resistance, but could also see that there would be advantages to being able to share her point of view. This was a balanced perspective that showed an understanding of the value of both home and host-country cultures as being necessary for her own (P-10’s) academic needs. This was an emergent appreciation of host-country values that had previously appeared unnecessary to the participants at L2 (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

P-9, a Thai national and mature student, felt the lack of understanding in intercultural communication in class situations even more keenly:

P-9	And that’s the same problem I face. Because the fluency level is very different, between me and, you know, the European people, they can talk, or they can debate, or they can argue fluently, using the right terminology, using the right word, at the right time. Sometime we need to think, I’ve got that idea, I want to argue but,
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you know... whether the structure or whether the word that we are using is really, you know, suitable for that particular point of time. Our arguments seem not really as strong as the others, but the idea is still there. Sometimes I think it is also a problem, and you really need someone that can understand right?

P-10 Yes, I agree with you. I would like to say more when I have an idea but we can't talk fluently.

P-9 And maybe too much time to think, "Oh, what's the right word?" and that moment is gone already.

(AUT Group 4, March 10, 2008).

For P-9 it was not her accent that she was most concerned with, but her ability to participate in academic debates. As an academic staff-member in Thailand engaged in a doctorate to up-skill and develop her career, she was aware of the status of contributing to these discussions and how they could develop into new ideas and enhance existing research projects (Mycock, 2007). To be unable to participate in these debates was understood to be a barrier to professional as well as personal success. For P-9, this awareness of an intercultural barrier was based more upon her own personal needs, rather than an appreciation of host-country cultural structures and values (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). However, like P-10, P-9 was more focused upon enhancing her success than focusing on her challenges. It was apparent that P-9 would have liked to share her complex ideas, and to have been able to make deeper comparisons and evaluations within her studies.

But it must also be noted that academic development was not always the articulated goal or basis that the ESEA students were concerned with. In the following example, P-24 a Malaysian female (20 – 24), explained:

**Interviewer** O.K. so umm a variety, you're all here for different reasons umm so umm I, are any of you three on the government grant from Malaysia? Nope so all funded from the family, O.K. ... I've met a few who are sent by the government but not you guys, O.K. so umm [P-24], when you finish, what do you intend to do, when you finish your degree?

P-24 I will go back

**Interviewer** Go back to Malaysia?

P-24 to Malaysia

**Interviewer** Yeah.

- P-24                      Maybe start my work
- Interviewer            Optometry?**
- P-24                      yeah, definitely much better to be there
- Interviewer            No fair enough. But sometimes I ask and people do a complete change**
- P-24                      No I don't think so
- Interviewer            Mmm, O.K. .**
- P-24                      Umm in Malaysia it's not so popular in actually New Zealand because the rules there still need sometimes to set up more strict.

(UA Group 3, May 24, 2007)

P-24 was able to express herself very clearly because she was multi-lingual, and working and studying in English had not proven difficult for her. The aim of her study was clear to her – she intended to complete her qualification and return to Malaysia to work in her own optometry business. In this case, intercultural adaptation was a secondary gain because it did not seem necessary for P-24's professional development. Accordingly P-24, like many other L3 participants, was satisfied with her level of intercultural relationships and did not view them as problematic (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). Therefore, P-24 was critical of the optometry regulations in NZ and maintained some intercultural resistance (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

The need to create and/or to maintain tight controls over intercultural relationships can have affected the university that the ESEA students choose to attend. P-34, a Chinese male (21 – 24), explained:

- Interviewer            That's ok. That's great thank you. Alright [P-34], tell me**
- P-34                      In university that's, uh, it's not [that] I don't want to make friends with "Kiwi" student. I Lots of my friends from high school went to Waikato [WU] [and] so we study together and make friends easy. And when I talk to "Kiwi" student you know the big problem is the language problem, and the other thing is, maybe we got different background. They know something I don't understand. I know something they don't understand. For example make some joke and they laugh and I think: What's so funny? What's that mean? Just something like that.
- Interviewer            So not being able to share jokes is a problem?**

- P-34                      Yeah, yeah we don't have [a common] topic. Just like yeah that's our problem I think. And I got an old friend from high school [and] I went to same university. So we just sit together [and it] makes it easier – yeah.
- Interviewer            So you're old friend is he Chinese?**
- P-34                      Yeah Chinese and Korean. Yeah Korean but Chinese mother.
- Interviewer            Oh so he's from Korea?**
- P-34                      Yeah
- Interviewer            But a Chinese person in Korea?**
- P-34                      No, no he is Korean. But lots of Chinese friends [here]. So Chinese now.
- Interviewer            Oh ok I understand now. So you didn't feel that you made a lot of NZ friends in Waikato [UW]?**
- P-34                      No.
- Interviewer            Waikato's a pretty small university compared to Auckland [UA] isn't it?**
- P-34                      Yeah I think so.
- Interviewer            Do you think if you'd gone to University in Auckland you would've had more NZ friends?**
- P-34                      Yeah I think so because if I went to the Auckland University maybe I would just be on my own [and] so I need new friends there.

(UA Group 5, May 12, 2007)

P-34 was not averse to making intercultural relationships among his regional cohorts and this was clear in the preceding interview vignette. But P-34 was clearly reluctant to create intercultural friendships with his domestic student counterparts. Both L2 and L3 are often periods of intercultural resistance, and it was typical of the ESEA students to avoid intercultural relationships in an effort to maintain their home-country cultural structures and values (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). P-34's reflection on his decision to select a university based on his social priorities showed that intercultural relationships between international and domestic student counterparts could be daunting for L3 participants, despite their increased intercultural perception or understanding of the host-country culture.

### **Accommodation domains of intercultural relationships.**

Some of the participants at L3 reported a more socially complex and sometimes helpful homestay family experience. Participant 25, a Chinese female (21 – 24), explained:

**Interviewer**                      **O.K. that's interesting so have you actually been to any doctors here?**

P-25                                      When we were in Hamilton we actually have a friend he's a doctor. And oh he's homestay father is a doctor so he actually look after me when I first got sick. I got a really bad cold and he was come see me but we don't get like we don't pay money.

**Interviewer**                      **Did your other friends go to your homestay father?**

P-25                                      My friend she go to clinic and wait there. Six hours later still waiting.

**Interviewer**                      **O.K. that's interesting. Tell me more about your homestay father?**

P-25                                      They were nice. The mother worked. One son. He go to my school. Not talk much there [at school].

**Interviewer**                      **Not talk at school?**

P-25                                      No.

(UA, Group 3, May 24, 2007)

P-25 showed that a good homestay family helped her to understand the healthcare system. As shown earlier in L1 with P-16's experience, not understanding or being able to utilise the healthcare system could be a considerable disadvantage for new sojourners. P-25's vignette showed a complex understanding about the various homestay family members. She was able to explain the differing levels of ease and comfort that she felt with the parents and the son. P-25 noted the less welcoming son who does not speak to her outside of the house. Importantly, P-25 did not blame the parents for the behaviour and attitude of the son because all of the family are perceived as individuals with their own personalities. This showed the differentiation and evaluation that P-25 was able to reflect upon at her current intercultural adaptation level. This complexity with P-25 contrasted with P-49, who had described his homestay experiences and had made little differentiation between each of the homestay parents and their attitudes (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

In previous sections, the experiences of P-16 at L1 and P-7 and P-38 at L2 tended to reflect that the halls of residence were restrictive and narrow, and this reduced their experiences of intercultural adaptation. This trend continued at L3, but there was a noticeably greater range of casual contact with domestic student social groups. This account showed that there was recognition of the shared space of different national groups within the university campus. P-12, a Chinese male (18 – 20), explained:

**Interviewer**                      **O.K. so [P-12] do you have any New Zealand friends?**

P-12                                      Yeah I know some of the New Zealand people but I like from my class. Like people doing the same paper or some guys from the same hostel or like doing the same accommodation. But they are not close people like not kind of on a regular contact with them. But not very close friends because probably different cultures. But yeah. I know some of those people but not very close friend.

**Interviewer**                      **Yes but you know them and say hello to them?**

P-12                                      Yeah usually like those people from the class we like to discuss some problem together like people from same hostel maybe see each other so we talk to each other usually.

(UA Group 1, April 19, 2007)

P-12 showed some recognition and acceptance of a shared intercultural space within the classroom and within the halls of residence. At L3, intercultural relationships were not automatically formed with increased contact, but intercultural acknowledgement was (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). P-12 was aware that many domestic students may not wish to extend the relationship and had no wish to create a friendship with unwilling participants. P-12 appeared satisfied with and accepted this level of intercultural relationship with domestic counterparts. For P-12, his own intercultural resistance was integral to the process of maintaining balance within intercultural relationships (Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

This following extract illustrated how P-12 experienced close relationships with some East and South-East Asian international student cohorts in his hall of residence:

P-12	I think also people from uni like you go study in uni you also meet a lot of people.
P-15	I would say the [university hall] would be a starting point for us like that's how we can know more people from other places but the closest would be [name of university hall].
P-16	Yeah we are all friends from there.
P-12	We go to other [their friends' rooms] rooms to talk.

(UA Group 1, April 19, 2007).

This theme of close intercultural relationships with fellow nationals was consistent at L3 with P-12, and earlier with P-34, in the educational domain. P-12 had a number of intercultural relationships with fellow international students in their hall of residence and this was demonstrated by the friendship shared among the participants in the UA Group 1 interview (April 19, 2007). This particular social group consisted of: P-12, a Chinese national; two Malaysian siblings of mixed Chinese and Japanese ethnicity (P-13 and P-15); a South Korean national (P-14); and a Japanese national (P-16). Intercultural relationships at L3 were often very important to the participants. But, in most cases, these were tempered by some type of social boundary (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

### **Extra-curricular domains of intercultural relationships**

Increased intercultural competency did open more social potential for ESEA students. It allowed more time for wider activities because daily self-care tasks were less challenging for them. (Bennett and Hammer, 2005; Bennett, 2005a). At L3, extra-curricular activities and greater social networking became more apparent. Formal organisations offered the structures needed to enable the ESEA students the opportunity to develop their social networks outside of the educational and accommodation domains.

In the previous L2 section of extra-curricular activities, P-32 was able to get some local work experience by working voluntarily in the community. In a similar vein, P-46, a Chinese female (in the 21 – 25 years age range), worked voluntarily for the Chinese Society at AUT and gained both valuable host-country work experience and intercultural insight:

<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>No I'm just asking do you feel that a lot of the students are disappointed that it's so hard to study here?</b>
P-46	Some of them are but not everyone.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Not everyone so some actually think this is though.</b>
<b>P-46</b>	Not hard. But I think most of the time it's their problem. Like they say "oh my English is not very good" but they don't take the opportunity to practice, so they can't understand what the other people say. Especially the lecturers and they can't understand the teaching materials. So obviously they cannot do their assignments properly and because of their speaking problem they are they have a fear to ask questions, so that makes it worse and worse. At last they give up. I know a friend he was studying communication

studies he's done exchange students from Harbin Technology or something like that.

**Interviewer**                      **I understand. The students from the Chinese Society. Yeah.**

P-46                                      Yeah. And he's not good at English at in fact his English is very poor. But he I don't know why he can insist in studying communication. If he transfer to other business will be easier because I heard communication studies is more difficult than the other like more difficult than business I think. But then he sticking the major and copies someone else's assignments to achieve and then he was caught by the program leader once. It's for two assignments and after that he just give up. Now he cannot complete the degree and it's really the degree has already taken his four years. But now he's in China and he didn't finish I think it's really...umm?

**Interviewer**                      **Heartbreaking!**

P-46                                      Yeah it's really sad. But he's not as sad as I suppose I mean he spent so much time and so much money here but get nothing. I think it's not worth but I would say it's his own problem.

(AUT Individual 2, May 7, 2008)

At L3, P-46 was able to effectively communicate the difficulties faced by the student whom she was discussing, but could also see that this student needs to be more focused on improving his/her English, which would therefore reduce the stress of his misunderstanding. This was a clear insight from a L3 perspective where language and communication competence are considered important (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). Furthermore P-46, from her own L3 comprehension, was also able to see that the student in question has become misinformed by other ESEA students or the peer network information and could have attempted to resolve the situation by changing study course. This new course focused upon more practical skills that limit intercultural relationships, whilst prioritizing the values and structures of his or her home-country (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998) .

Another feature offered by L3 participants was that they were able to see some values offered by the host-country cultural context. P-46 reflected on a key relationship that she has formed working for the Chinese Society:

**Interviewer**                      **Yeah I was just wondering what you will miss. What do you think you will miss anyway?**

P-46                                      My friends. I met lots of good friends here. Probably just my friends and the experience

**Interviewer****The experience?**

P-46:

Yeah I was like a really little girl my friend – oh you know [the Manager of the Chinese Association] had said to me I looked like a high school student and looks very young really innocent and know nothing. But now I am really grown up and experienced myself and I practice some skills. At least English get improved a lot so yeah even though I had been through a tough time. But it worked so I will miss the experience that I got here. I become really independent through study here.

**Interviewer**

**So yeah you've really appreciated the opportunity to grow up do you think that this would've happened if you had stayed in China?**

P-46:

No (laughs) my mum's like paying all the attention on me. So they will prepare everything for me if I live with them I will not have the opportunity to grow. And yeah. My mum like say that too when I told her.

(AUT Individual 2, May 7, 2007).

Through her role as an advisor and mentor, P-46 received positive feedback about her work. Verbal appreciation from her Chinese Centre manager indicated that maturation was discernible and noteworthy – although the manager of the Chinese centre shared a Chinese ethnic background. Rigid controls over host-country relationships is integral to L3 intercultural relationships (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). Yet, this relationship was central to P-46's host-country experience and provided a key platform for the intercultural adaptation reflection that P-46 has had opportunity to develop within her role. This type of reflexivity on intercultural adaptation is characteristic of L3 (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

For some of the participants at L3, gaining paid work was a priority. Though at L3 they often had considerable intercultural competency and could successfully negotiate formal situations, job-seeking could be challenging. P-11, a Malaysian (mature aged or 40 plus), described his frustration:

**Interviewer**

**You say, you find discrimination for job hunting hard. Tell me more about that?**

P-11

You can feel it. Although maybe it's not really true, you can feel it, when you go and ask for a job, they look at you, or even when you call on the phone, you have this accent. So they just, you can feel, they are trying to escape from you, and when you go and see them face to face, you know from the body language that they are not comfortable having you around. This is the feeling that I get, from our understanding of body language, that they don't really



welcome you into society. So you just stay there, stay quiet, and don't really get into the society. This is what I think.

(AUT Group 4, March 10, 2008).

For P-11, a failure to achieve a job through an interview signified a greater rejection. He felt that if he is not welcome to work in his host-country, then he is not valued. This sense of rejection was a greater feature of L2 participants, but did continue to characterise L3 participants in parts. For L3 participants, however, this challenge did not precipitate reactive stereotyping and defensive withdrawal as it might for those in L2 (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). Instead, P-11 evaluated his own position and considered the effect that this has on his own intercultural adaptation.

Some of the L3 participants, however, were able to gain part-time work. P-2, a Taiwanese male (in the 18 – 20 years age range), described the job interview:

<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>What about you guys I'm sure you've done a couple of job interviews by now what are they like?</b>
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P-2	Say [supermarket outlet]? Because I'm doing checkouts basically it's not a hard job you just need to learn how to operate stuff like the operator machine this is my first job. I've been working here for six months but this is my first job and earning money the job interview. It wasn't really much of an interview just go and meet the manager he just tell you to fill in the details and show him the visa and he'll go and make a photocopy and he'll give you a uniform and introduce you to the company and show you around the store and introduce you to a few people and that's pretty much it so yeah he's quite friendly too I quite like my manager he is a "Kiwi"
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P-3	Did you have a C.V. [curriculum vitae]?
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P-2:	No because this was my first job I didn't have one
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<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>But now you will be able to make one?</b>
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P-2	Yeah.
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(AUT Group 1, April 12, 2007)

Responding to the formal process of a job application is a tough process for any young person. But for the ESEA students it can be even more difficult because of language and cultural barriers. At L3, P-2 had the language competency to apply for the job with the more complex comprehension that this particular job would not require his curriculum vitae because these types of positions are awarded more casually. At L3, the participants were able to understand the cultural context to some extent and this is

helpful in meeting their financial and study goals (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

But once the participants were appointed, there could be intercultural challenges as the following example with P-2 showed:

P-2                      One guy came in and he didn't buy anything he just came straight in and went through the checkouts. I was serving a customer and when that guy went I was on my keypad and this guy came up. I was about to turn around and say "how can I help you?" – and I was punched in the face. He ran away. So after that we looked at video footage he just came in straight through the entrance. He didn't buy anything he gave me a bash in the face and ran away from the entrance. Yeah so after that I think he was probably the younger guy's friend [that I served earlier]. Even though I sold them the stuff they mustn't have been very happy about my behaviour [or having to show me their ID] so maybe he said you can go give him a hit in the face. I didn't care much about it – I caught him [found out he was probably too young to be purchasing alcohol] by mistake. When my manager saw it, he said: next time if this kind of thing happens – and if you talk for more than 30 seconds call me or call the manager. This conversation went on for too long.

**Interviewer              Yeah?**

P-2                      No. But yeah. The police just came in asked me some questions descriptions what happened the time and blah blah blah

**Interviewer              Did they treat you politely?**

P-2                      Mmm yeah.

**Interviewer              They were nice?**

P-2                      Really nice people yeah so that was I always say that was a "Kiwi experience" (laughter). Like people come here to experience "Kiwi's" – so that was it. I didn't care so much about it actually I've never been punched in the face before.

**Interviewer              Its very uncomfortable isn't it? (laughter)**

P-2                      It's a very special experience like you know when you see in the cartoons when people get hit in the face people see stars.

**Interviewer              Oh you saw stars?**

P-2                      I didn't see stars but didn't see anything like black out for a few seconds

**Interviewer              Oh that doesn't sound very good at all!**

P-2                      I take it as a good experience.

**Interviewer**                      **You learned something?**

P-2                                      Yeah.

(AUT Group 1, April 12, 2007)

That this encounter was directly violent, or aggressive, could be attributed to resentment and racist attitudes by a specific customer. P-2 understood this and felt that he could learn something important from the encounter, and this was evident in that he felt he gained value from the experience. This ability to understand how useful an intercultural miscommunication can be is more prevalent in L3 and higher levels (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). The manager also gave prevention instructions. In this case, the intercultural miscommunication was addressed by the manager, and P-2 received formal feedback with specific host-country cultural workplace advice. By engaging in an intercultural relationship with the manager, albeit on a formal level, P-2 had the opportunity for intercultural support and insight from his manager. The ability to gain support from host-country structures outside the university is consistent with L3 because the student was able to communicate fluently and accept some responsibility for their own actions and lack of understanding of the host-country culture (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). Participants at L3 were beginning to establish what they need to experience, and to make discernments based on a new knowledge about the host-culture (Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

However, there were times when the risks that the ESEA students are exposed to were not supported by their formal work environment. For example, P-4, a Chinese female (21 – 24), endured a sexual assault on her way home from her job:

P-4                                      I have a one experience before I [when I was] working in [a] bar. And after that I just want to go home [so] I walked because bar is close to my home. I walked to Queen Street. And you know I have [meet] some very young person [people] and they are drunk. And they just want, there [are] about four or five guys. They want to hug me. And I was very scared – yeah! I just feel very strange [and] I just want to cry sometimes [now]. I just feel very strange! But yeah, just young people a little bit – you know...

**Interviewer**                      **Scary**

P-4                                      Yes very scary! It's very scary!

**Interviewer**                      **I know this is hard. But I just need to ask. So you thought they were going to attack you?**

P-4 I don't know. But I just feel very scared yeah.

**Interviewer I understand. Thank you for telling me. I will give you some help after the interview.**

(AUT Group 3, April 30, 2007)

In this case, there was little (if any) formal protection for P-4. A subsequent private conversation with P-4 revealed that she was unsure if a crime had actually taken place and so she did not report this incident to the police. P-4 took the responsibility for the incident upon herself and this was a similar response to that of P-14 in L2. P-4's reluctance to turn to the host-country social services and infrastructure for support was noticeable. L3 students continued to place the emphasis of their understanding upon home-country structures (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). In the absence of visible structural protection, P-4 showed insulating behaviour that was so characteristic in all three of the ethnocentric stages.

The influence of family and romantic relationships on L3 participants also reflected this growing intercultural complexity. P-11, a Malaysian national of Malay ethnic heritage (40 + years age range), explained:

**Interviewer How many [children do you have]?**

P-11: I have five, all girls.

**Interviewer Five children. But you look so young (laughter)!**

P-11: I have five, and bring three with me here.

P-9 : How about the other two?

P-11: I bring three of them here, with me, the smaller..?

**Interviewer The little ones?**

P-11 The little ones. Yeah. So another two, one is now in Japan, doing his undergraduate study, and the second one is in Malaysia in high school.

**Interviewer So they are a little like you? One is at university?**

P- 11: Oh yeah, because I did my master's in Japan, I took my eldest with me, and he like Japan so much she wanted to go there again.

(AUT Group 4, March 10, 2008)

The ESEA students were often concerned with the intercultural adaptation requirements of their social network and, in particular, their immediate families or loved ones. Unlike the younger students, P-11 was also engaged in supporting his

daughters as they studied, and was necessarily less focused on his own sojourn experience as an individual. At L3, P-11 was able to convey this complexity and was also able to show how his previous experiences have changed his intercultural adaptation levels (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). P-11 had studied previously as a foreign student in both Japan and the US. Furthermore, his daughters were in Japan and Malaysia as well as NZ, and this was completely accepted in their family as an educational norm. In this way, P-11 had become competent at his intercultural adaptation, but remained strongly biased toward his home-country culture, and this is consistent with L3 characteristics (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

A reconsideration of the marriage between P-32 and P-34 at L3 revealed more insight into the influencing functions of social networks of ESEA students on intercultural adaptation. P-34 explained:

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>O.K. and were your parents pleased [P-32]?</b>  |
| P-32               | Yeah my mum my parents doesn't really keen on just choosing someone for me. So they quite pleased for our own decisions. |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>Oh O.K. that's good were your parents pleased?</b>  |
| P-34               | My parents they just oh is she good I said yes, that's cool (laughs).  |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>So they didn't ask you a lot of questions?</b>  |
| P-34               | No they don't care about that. They trust me and they want me to make that decision.                                     |

(UA Group 5, May 20, 2007).

P-34 visibly had more confidence and intercultural communication competence than his partner, P-32, who was female and assessed at L2. Though P-32 had taken greater responsibility for explaining it within the interview, it was clear that she required the support of her husband (P-34) to do so. At key points she would look at him and he would nod slightly. It seems likely that this protectiveness and responsibility provided by P-34's extra competency was also an impetus for greater intercultural adaptation. It is also possible that the intercultural adaptation levels of both P-32 and P-34 might actually have seemed very different if they had been interviewed separately. This research was structured to take a core sample across a specific time and the intercultural adaptation context of the interview. But it was a common feature for L3 participants to take some responsibility for those fellow ESEA students with lower intercultural

adaptation levels - such as P-46 in her role as an advisor (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

### **L3 analysis overall.**

Participants at L3 intercultural adaptation showed some marked similarities to participants at L2 in that the host-country culture and intercultural relationships were often actively resisted. This meant that there was a continued assessment of the host-country culture through the lens of the home-country social structures and expectations. But at L3 there was a marked difference in how the participants perceived their own need for intercultural relationships. In L2, intercultural relationships were considered unimportant and perhaps even superfluous in some instances. At L3, however, the participants' relationships with social groups in NZ were seen as increasingly important. This was especially true in formal situations where the students were more concerned with their management and control, rather than simple avoidance. The students tended to reflect more on their early intercultural experiences with the host-country social groups and these appeared to provide key data for their daily intercultural relationship concerns. There was a tendency for past intercultural miscommunications to be more self-critically analysed. For the participants at L3, however, the bulk of the responsibilities for these intercultural difficulties remained with the host-country because the home-country values and aims continued to prevail.

Social networks with fellow ESEA students at L3 continued to feature strongly and there was evidence of many friendships and uses of shared resources overall. Yet, for some participants, such as P-34, P-13 and P-15, there was a continued reliance upon fellow nationals, and these networks were supported through shared leisure and extra-curricular activities. Workplace and formal organisation experiences with accompanying professional and intercultural development also increased. This showed that it is at L3 that the participants begin to leave the narrowly constructed social domain of the campus and go out into the wider host-country community. However, as the experiences of P-2 and P-4 showed, this period can also be fraught with tensions and intercultural miscommunication because the participants are engaging more regularly with the host-country social groups. While the participants were not necessarily at fault, they were vulnerable to the stereotypes, resistances and pressures that wider community may have. Leisure tourism continued at this level, but had become more

focused around domestic travel to visit their friends and did not offer any particular insights to this section.

Participants at L3 were characterised by a new sense of intercultural competency which reflected that they were able to access satisfactory social supports and understand which aspects of the host-country cultural structures were important for them. It is at L3 that the layered development of intercultural competency began to show within intercultural relationships and seemed to be more evident to the participants as well (Bennett, 2005a). As the DMIS is characterised by intercultural growth and dynamic development, this was consistent with principles noted in past research (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). The fixed retention of home-country values and cultural structures, such as that shown by P-24 and P-34, suggests that for some of the participants at this level that there could be anxiety about assimilation into the stronger currents of the host-country culture (Jandt, 2007; Yu, 2004). Nevertheless, these increased intercultural relationships showed that the students were learning to manage this fear among host-country social groups and to operate within them, albeit in a socially limited manner.

### **Beyond the DMIS (L3).**

It is at L3 that the participants' actual divergence from the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) started to become very clear. The DMIS was established as a dynamic model of intercultural adaptation, and it is based upon an ideal which traces a path where the individual ascends from ethnocentric, narrow perceptions of intercultural differences towards a broader ethnorelative perspective that incorporates and accepts intercultural differences (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Castiglioni, 2004; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). However, the participants at L3 were beginning to show a resistance to further intercultural development that had become fixed rather than permeable. Their perceptions were often characterised by a visible satisfaction with their intercultural adaptation skills. Becoming much more competent at managing the intercultural relationships required by them, the participants utilised fellow national networks and/or intercultural networks with other ESEA students. The DMIS model (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) at L3 is based on the notion of an increasing intercultural awareness and a growth in intercultural development as a result, with careful controls over the intensity and exposure to intercultural relationships. But, like the previous section at

L2, four similar key weaknesses of the DMIS were identified by this analysis of the ESEA students at L3:

*Firstly, the descriptive element of the DMIS does not explain exactly what motivated the individual to increase their intercultural adaptation level at L3.*

One way that intercultural adaptation appeared to be increased or challenged at L3 was through assisting other, less experienced ESEA students. Most of the L3 students regularly did this on an informal basis. Intercultural-friendship between the ESEA students was a persistent trend throughout this analysis. Halls of residence can provide a context that brings many national groups together and provide opportunities for the students to form intercultural relationships (Sovic, 2008). P-12 explained in his UA group interview how the halls of residence are a “starting point” for his intercultural relationships, and how he has bonded together with P-15 and P-16 (from Malaysia and Japan respectively) to share intercultural knowledge.

But some of the participants actively created more formal opportunities. Intercultural adaptation is a process that can be enhanced by conscious reflection (Kim, 2001; Scollon and Scollon, 2001). Although the ESEA students get many opportunities to reflect upon this process, at L3 some participants were clearly incorporating this type of reflection into their daily lives and activities. According to Kim (2001, p. 37), “[Intercultural]...adaptation is a complex and dynamic process that brings about a qualitative transformation of the individual”. In some instances the participants were sharing these reflections with one another on a regular basis. For P-46, this became evident in her duties as the president of the AUT Chinese Society.

Mentoring by more experienced ESEA students can offer the security of an established support network, and provide more culturally targeted aids beyond the standard educational services. A study by Wang, Sing, Bird and Ives (2008) suggests that international students in general are able to perform better if they are mentored by semi-structured organisations that provide social supports, but are not directly attached to the university. P-46 was able to offer assistance to others undergoing the similar experiences and, in doing so, had further opportunity to reflect upon her own intercultural adaptation. For international students, courses that provide opportunities



to take leadership, mentoring and informative roles have proven to be very valuable and greatly enhance intercultural adaptation (Wang et al, 2008).

*Secondly, it was not always clear how the individual was to gain a higher level of intercultural adaptation, because L3 is based on intercultural mistrust which limits intercultural receptivity and, thus, should create shallow intercultural relationships.*

Though the characteristics of mistrust have lessened from L2, or denial, the DMIS (1998) is premised on the notion that some intercultural barriers remain apparent at L3. Intercultural barriers provided platforms for L3 participants to create comfortable intercultural relationships. As experienced intercultural communicators, the participants were aware that there would be moments of confusion and miscommunication and this showed in their reflections on host-country experiences in the educational and accommodation domains (Scollon and Scollon, 2001). P-10 and P-9 were very concerned about being misunderstood at university, and were highly sensitized to the events when they occurred during their studies.

The participants were aware of their own intercultural barriers, but equally aware of the intercultural barriers placed upon them by host-country groups (Scollon and Scollon, 2001). Therefore, the participants' wariness in creating intercultural relationships at this level appeared to be based more upon a sound understanding of their host-country social groups. Both P-12 and P-25 displayed a high level of host-country contextual understanding of their educational and homestay experiences, noting that domestic students show different behaviour in different group settings. P-12 and P-25 were able to discriminate within these social contexts, and thus, they were able to have appropriate types of intercultural relationships according to the context that they were in.

This was a point that was further demonstrated by P-34 and his understanding of the interview context. P-34 understood that, as the interviewer, I may have been considering the oft-emphasized problems of challenges and difficulties faced by international students in a foreign environment (Holmes, 2004; Wang et al., 2008). P-34 was able to answer the questions put to him in a reflective and comparative manner that reflected a conceptual understanding of the types of information that are required in academic research and for intercultural relationships in NZ. He explained how he

processed his parents' attitude to his marriage to P-33 which he sensed that I found very important. This was a development of communication, where the participant understood the politeness system, or the level of response that was required by me as the researcher (Scollon and Scollon, 2001).

This suggested empathy, rather than an antipathy, on the part of the participants and the host-country social groups. The participants at L3 were aware that the host country social groups could be the victims of miscommunication and discomfort caused by intercultural challenges. This was a more tolerant perspective than the participants at L2 who had often been forced to allocate blame to either themselves, their cohort groups, or to the host-country cultural groups. As experienced intercultural communicators, the students understood that there will be many moments of miscommunication for both host-country social group members and themselves (Scollon and Scollon, 2001).

*Thirdly, the DMIS does not examine the role that the host-country cultural actions and beliefs played in either encouraging or discouraging intercultural relationships.*

As in L2, the participants at L3 were able to identify the relationships and actions with individuals from host-country groups that influenced their intercultural adaptation. As these participants had a higher level of intercultural understanding, their reflections on the actions and influence of the host-country social group's behaviour was richer and more balanced.

There has been an implicit assumption within the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998), and by many other researchers in intercultural theory, that proximity with host-country groups is commensurate with greater intercultural adaptation (Holmes, 2004; Ward and Masgoret, 2004). It is assumed that increased contact and opportunity between home and host-country social groups will inevitably yield deeper intercultural relationships and possibly friendships (Bennett, 2005a, Bird and Holmes, 2005; Holmes, 2004; Scollon and Scollon, 2001). Rather than accepting this central assumption, this thesis interrogated this idea more closely. This was illustrated in the case of P-12 who explained that it would be inappropriate to attempt to a deeper relationship with her domestic student counterparts at her halls of residence at the UA.

Due to her higher level of intercultural adaptation, P-12 was conscious that the domestic student counterparts would not really welcome P-12's greater interest beyond a casual exchange of greetings. This idea has been explained in more depth by Scollon and Scollon (2001), who suggest that a significant portion of intercultural adaptation is about utilising the politeness systems of the host-country. The individual undergoing adaptation must decide when and where to apply these rules within intercultural relationships. Politeness systems can differ significantly and one of the most difficult aspects to judge can be the level of involvement and friendship within intercultural relationships (Scollon and Scollon, 2001). This was demonstrated in P-12's decision *not* to attempt to extend those relationships with the domestic student counterparts, and to rely instead upon her regular relationships with fellow ESEA students for closer friendships.

Other participants' reactions to the subtler intercultural messages were shown by the case of P-2's assault. Rather than reacting simply to the violence, P-2 looked beyond the assault and saw that the type of interaction was an experience that could only be gained because he had a part-time job, and he was actually pleased to have an opportunity for a "Kiwi experience". As the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) is rather narrow in its focus on intercultural experiences, an explanation for this pride in P-2's intercultural adaptation must be found in another theoretical perspective. Although some intercultural experiences can be very uncomfortable, many individuals undergoing intercultural adaptation are more open to new experiences because they are looking to gain transformational experiences that will test their characters. Furthermore, as was the case with P-2, some individuals are frequently undergoing simultaneous transformations such as the natural process of maturation from adolescence to emergent adulthood (Arnett, 2004; Kim, 2001). P-2 appeared to appreciate this opportunity and regarded the assault as a rite of passage and a testing of his courage and resources.

At L3, barriers to intercultural adaptation erected by the host-country were recognised as complex and can seem impenetrable. While the DMIS recognises that L3 participants continued with their own intercultural defences, it does explain how impenetrable basic tasks for social advancement can seem to individuals undergoing intercultural adaptation. Through their informal social networks, many international students are

previously aware of employer resistance and are justifiably nervous about formal job-seeking interviews (Tilbury and Colic-Peisker, 2006). Intercultural adaptation operates by utilising a certain amount of tension and discomfort in order to gain new intercultural perspectives (Kim, 2003; Kim, 2001; Scollon and Scollon, 2001). Yet, as shown here with P-11, as well as in the previous section with P-14 in L2, there are intercultural experiences that tend to inhibit and perhaps arrest future intercultural relationships because they operate to lower the confidence and esteem of the student.

But, as in the case of P-2, some of the host-country experiences can seem very aggressive when intercultural contact extends beyond the structure of the university campus. The sexual assault experienced by P-4 was difficult to categorise or to describe to me. Like P-14 in the previous L2 section, P-4's sexual assault was isolating, and this prevented her from seeking assistance. P-4 appeared to view herself as alone in an environment that does not supply infrastructural support and protection. Intercultural miscommunication and traumatic experiences alike can be very isolating and reinforce distrust (Nyland and Forbes-Mewett, 2008). Daunting experiences of this nature could mean that ESEA students like P-4 choose to maintain their intercultural barriers, rather than to risk intercultural relationships to discover possible similarities between herself and social groups in NZ.

*Finally, the DMIS at L3 had a tendency to ascribe the responsibility of the intercultural resistance to the individual, rather than taking into account the pervasiveness of the home-country values and structures that were necessarily integral to the continued emotional and financial support of each participant.*

Like L2 participants, many of the L3 participants were focused upon home-country expectations. In contrast to the L2 participants, however, the L3 participants' concerns cantered around future careers and prospects. In general, international education qualifications are critical to ESEA students and remain a central goal throughout their sojourn (Malcolm and Ling, 2002). Effectively, the qualification was very likely to be the primary goal of the participants, rather than successful and intercultural adaptation, because the qualification is tangible and directly related to obtaining future employment opportunities (Arnett, 2004).

In the case of P-24, her career was primary and the opportunities in NZ were less attractive than those in her home-country. It is worth remembering that East and South-East-Asian globalisation is often overlooked, and that many of these nationals are seeking success in their own cultural terms, rather than within Western contexts (Huang, 2003; Yu, 2004). P-24 explained that her business (and therefore she as an optometrist) would be better respected in Singapore. This is the level at which many of the returning students appeared to discontinue their intercultural adaptation. Able to cope well on a daily basis, P-24 maintained her specific aim, and maintained a clear separation of her, and her career goals, from the dynamics and experiences of the host-country culture.

Another instance where the fundamental host-country goal was primary was the case of P-46. P-46 was praised by her manager, and her development as a woman and emergent adult was acknowledged. This may directly have affected the intercultural development for P-46 because her intercultural adaptation level was L3. P-46 had diminished her intercultural relationships by focusing her work on Chinese students, and had enclosed herself within the University Study and extra-curricular activities. This set a limit upon her entry into the host-country culture outside of campus, but had not prevented her from developing new domains of intercultural relationships as an ambassador for fellow Chinese international students.

This analysis clearly reflected that ethnocentric reference points were evident for the majority of the ESEA students in this sample. Although the ESEA students could and did form intercultural relationships, L1 – L3 participants were more characteristically focused upon their own home-country relationships and supports. Beyond these levels, however, the participants did become more involved in their host-country relationships and had higher levels of intercultural communication. These higher levels (L4 and L5) will be covered in the following chapter (Chapter Five), which addresses the ethnorelative section of the DMIS.

## **CHAPTER FIVE TESTING THE ETHNORELATIVE SECTION OF THE DMIS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is a continuance of the previous analysis from Chapter Four and consists of the final two DMIS levels of acceptance (L4) and adaptation (L5). These are the first two levels of ethnorelativism, or the period when intercultural adaptation is characterised by an understanding of the host-country culture (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). The final level of the DMIS is not represented because this sample did not contain any participants at integration, or L6. Participants at L6 are characterised by intercultural fluidity and can choose to operate within either the host or home-country culture simultaneously, and are able to fit in comfortably with both cultures (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). This advanced level may take many years for ESEA students to achieve, and it is possible that they are rarely represented among the sojourning students and have since become NZ citizens or permanent residents instead. However, there were 11 participants in the following two levels of the ethnorelative levels L4 and L5, and these are analysed below.

### **L4 – ACCEPTANCE**

It was at L4 of the DMIS that ESEA students were able to understand some of the many differences between home and host country cultures (Bennett, 2005; Bennett and Castiglioni, 2004; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). The participants at this level were aware of intercultural similarities and differences (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). At L3, the participants were aware of intercultural differences but these tended to be moderated or tightly controlled within their lives by narrow routines and tight schedules. At L4, behavioural differences were observed and understood, and it was also the level where the value differences between home and host-country social groups were beginning to be perceived and understood.

## Education domains of intercultural relationships

The growing intercultural awareness of the L3 students' perceptions of intercultural difference during their secondary school period gave way to a concrete understanding of how those differences are created, which is illustrated by L4 students' reflections. One example showing how powerful this information can be was expressed by P-41, a male Chinese student in the 18-20 years age range:

**Interviewer**                      **You mean not talking to too many “Kiwi” people because they might be unfriendly?**

P-41                                      I would like to talk to “Kiwi” mates, classmates. Yeah. But they [are] sometimes not happy. With a [domestic] group if you are alone on the street, you will most likely get the fingers from your friends [domestic student acquaintances and classmates. I would like to talk to “Kiwi” mates, classmates.

**Interviewer**                      **That must have been very difficult. Did this happen to you?**

P-41                                      Yeah. To me.  
**Interviewer**                      **You still remember?**

P-41                                      Yeah. That is “Kiwis”.

(WU Group 2, August 13, 2007)

P-41 was aware of his “Kiwi” classmate’s attitude, but had begun some limited interaction with the classmate within the classroom setting. Once they were both outside of that supervised context however, the resentment and aggression that underpinned this interaction toward P-41 over-rode any social progress made through their classroom interaction. This experience caused some disturbance, or pain, for P-41 and he remembered this as alienating, though he did not decide to withdraw from intercultural relationships as the students at the ethnocentric levels often did. But it was the social code that P-41 had learned from this that has troubling implications for intercultural communication between international and domestic students. The stereotype that P-41 generalised was that “Kiwis” were inherently hostile and/or racist. The DMIS is based on the concept, or idea, of increasing social awareness, and as this example clearly showed, this includes an understanding of the social place or position that the sojourner occupies within the new host-country environment (Bennett, 1998; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

Many of the social codes that the participants learned in secondary school were from subtle social cues, and at L4 they were able to articulate this within the interviews. By reflecting on the behaviour around him, P-39, a Chinese male in the 18 – 20 years age range, noted specific attitudes and behaviour towards himself and other ESEA students by domestic student groups:

**Interviewer**                    **When you were talking before, you mentioned that you realised that it's hard to get to know "Kiwi" people. I believe you said that it's hard to fit in and this has made your life hard. Is there some particular memory or moment in your mind?**

P-39:                                It's quite simple, they [the "Kiwi" students] just don't talk to you.

**Interviewer**                    **Yeah. Tell me more?**

P-39                                So even if you try to talk to them, the conversation won't go along, 'cause there's no common interests.

**Interviewer**                    **Yeah.**

P-39                                So, yeah. It's really hard to fit in.

**Interviewer**                    **So, do you think that their interests are different to yours? What do you think their interests are?**

P-39                                Depends, 'cause I've been trying to fit in with different kinds of people and they all seem to have different interests. The people I know who like to play rugby, and, there are also people who are sort of down-side (underground people); who goes around, and well, not in particularly bad. And there's a class in the school and that's where they belong [talking about specific streams in the secondary schools where the less able students are sometimes concentrated]. And I went to this group where they [were] criticising, the typical "Asian" student who gather round and speak "Asian" all the time.

**Interviewer**                    **Speak "Asian"?**

P-39:                                All the time.

**Interviewer**                    **I see. That's interesting, 'cause that's how they say it to you exactly – "speak Asian"?**

P-39:                                Yeah. Pretty much.

**Interviewer**                    **There are quite a few different languages. Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Thai aren't there?**

P-39 Yeah.                        But I've never really been part to that top, popular class so that's a different story.

(WU Group 1, June 6, 2008).



At L4, the participants that attended secondary school in NZ were aware of learning about the behavioural differences between their own international student groups and their domestic student counterparts (Bennett, 1998; Bennett, 2005; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). The students learned about domestic student expectations and attitudes, and these lessons formed the base of social knowledge that the participants drew upon (and possibly will continue to draw upon) to understand social groups in NZ.

L4 participants also formed non-critical views of their secondary school experience. For some participants, secondary school was remembered as a time and place that facilitated friendships with domestic student counterparts and actively promoted subsequent intercultural adaptation. One male Chinese student (P-36, in the 21-24 years age range) explained:

**Interviewer**                      **Just talking to you about friends – is that what you mean?**

P- 36:                                      Friends from high school or friends from uni?

**Interviewer**                      **Yeah. I meant all of them.**

P-36:                                      During my years at high school most of my friends are “integrated Asians”. They are not “typical Asians” who “speak Asian” all the time, so they actually speak decent English. Most of them actually went overseas so, right now, I don’t actually have many “Kiwi” friends at all. And so I would say that 80% of my friends right now are “typical Asians”, including myself now, so anyway...But I am flating with “Kiwi” friends, so that kind of helps me a bit.

(WU Group 1, June 6, 2008)

P-36 expressed confidence and security in his domestic student counterpart friends, and through these relationships he improved his English and made lasting friendships. The relative ease of entry into the group of “Kiwi Asians” by P-36 led to his increased confidence and intercultural skills to deal with “Kiwi” or Pākehā flatmates. This reflects one key concept of the DMIS which is that intercultural adaptation is built upon increasing platforms of understanding and these, in turn, lead to a conscious increase in depth of intercultural perceptions (Bennett, 1998, Bennett and Hammer, 1998). P-36 was able to isolate his own stepping stones and to explain these in depth in his second language to a Pākehā researcher, and this revealed a strong confidence and ability to communicate across cultures. This was a rare ability, and it needs to be noted that P-36 showed the beginnings of understanding the different values as well as the behaviours of the home and host-country social groups (Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

There were cases earlier in the educational domain where enduring friendships were created. P-41, a male from UW (in the 21 – 24 years age range), who had studied in a joint venture between the Shanghai International Studies University and the UW, observed that friendships made in that environment were more likely to last:

P-41                      Me? Umm yeah language is difficult. It's quite different from what we did in Shanghai. Yeah. Although the first year when I was in the university 2001. Yeah we did some language study but it's different and also honestly I was not very hard working at that time after high school. Yeah. I skipped through quite a lot English classes and I didn't pass all the English papers at that time. Although actually, in the next two years, umm yeah, we've got the New Zealand lecturers in the Shanghai international studies university papers. But because all the students are Chinese we can also communicate with each other in Chinese and we can do study together with group discussion. Some still friends but lose [some friends] because of different study.

(WU Group 2, August 13, 2007)

From this, three key and consistent characteristics of ESEA student experiences emerged. Firstly, P-41 did not consider foundation school to be a difficult period in his life. This corresponds with the earlier findings about secondary school in the preceding section. Secondly, the study of the English language was not P-41's primary interest. Finally, the friendships were based on their similar study timetables, and this is a characteristic of courses in China and other ESEA studies where the students tend to study the same courses/programme (Mack, 2003; Qin, 2003). The relationships themselves appeared to be based on their shared experience and regular social involvement. Once these experiences are no longer shared, these peer student relationships became less necessary and/or gave way to new relationships with students sharing similar timetables and study paths. Greater understanding of intercultural differences also meant that the participants often chose to abstain from intercultural relationships at times to reduce stress or to increase the depth of their peer ESEA relationships. L4 intercultural adaptation, like the other ethnorelative levels, provided new opportunities of friendships, but did not put pressure on the participants to form intercultural relationships (Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

For many of the undergraduate students reflecting on their everyday experiences at L4, language barriers continued to present considerable educational and social challenges. In the following case, P-50 (a South Korean national in the 21 – 24 years age range)

explained the technical difficulties of learning the new language-based concepts and terms presented by her nursing course:

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>Oh so now you're here and what are you studying?</b>   |
| P-50               | I'm doing nursing.  |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>Oh O.K.</b>  |
| P-50               | First year.   |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>First year, nursing. Was it easy to get into the course or hard?</b>   |
| P-50               | It was hard. I don't know about New Zealand students but as International student to do nursing, is that some of the help I had to go from a Foundation course. Because I didn't have any science background, so I did that. Then they required some certain points to get into nursing and it's not just that, you have to go through that as well as the medical report and all that kind of stuff. So it was a bit complicated. I heard that they only offer about like six to eight international students total of nursing course and I [also] heard that a lot of people drop out after first year. And I heard that not a lot of "Asians" go through nursing because it's pretty hard and because of personal and difficulties. I heard there has been some kind of feedback about the English and stuff because we have to get in reading and writing. But because we got to do practical work and maybe in a year time I am hoping to do some part time job as career [care-giver] until I finish Uni. And then I can work as nurse but then again we have to deal with people the patient and we don't know what kind of people we going to have to deal with and we have to be able to converse with those people we have to make sure that they feel comfortable and that kind of stuff and as an International student. It is hard to go through that so they require a lot of English work and I as a matter of fact I do know some few international student who just went into Health Science just because get enough ESOL mark so other than that it is O.K. |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>Yeah that must be really hard and it's hard for everyone I think.</b>  |
| P-50               | It is. But I don't know I just feel like I got another barrier like they think it's hard for them. But then I have another language barrier all they have to do is get used to the terms but I have to get used to the terms, pronunciation and the meaning and then the spelling and all that.   |

(AUT Individual 5, April 13, 2007)

The barrier created by language was keenly felt by P50, who believed that it took her longer to do the basic tasks required by her course because of language difficulties. She resolved this by completing extra courses to enhance her science background and the additional time and money added frustration. As I explained in the previous

ethnocentric chapter, frustrations with intercultural barriers sometimes led to intercultural defensiveness that reinforced intercultural resistance and resulted in decisions to have fewer intercultural relationships. But P-50's experience showed that intercultural frustration was also a common experience for those at L4. The difference in the frustration at L4 though, is that the increased intercultural adaptation level also meant increased sensitivity to intercultural differences and more subtle host-country frustrations (Bennett, 1998; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). P-50's frustrations were not limited to the extra time and money itself, but also to a sense of injustice at the greater investment of effort, time and money that she had to make in order to achieve the same qualification as her domestic student counterparts.

To expand on this, to be able to function efficiently as a would-be care-giver in a foreign host-country, P-50 needed to be able to engage at a deeper level with her domestic student counterparts as well as the lecturing and tutoring staff on her nursing course. P-50's commitment to resolving those problems also represented an investment in dealing with future workplace challenges with patients. This reflection was multi-levelled and showed P-50's deeper reflection of the difficulties posed by the demands of working in a foreign host-country environment. This level of self-awareness or reflexivity is only possible because P-50 had an interest in self-awareness, as well as being due to her relatively high level of intercultural adaptation that included an appreciation and understanding of value differences (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). Bennett (2005) suggests that self-awareness is a common attribute for individuals with greater intercultural adaptation levels. P-50 expressed her frustration succinctly and was able to adapt the knowledge she gained while sojourning in an Australian environment to her new host-country environment in NZ.

### **Accommodation domains of intercultural relationships**

In contrast to the educational domain, the accommodation domain was a topic that arose less frequently or held little interest for the L4 ESEA students. When they did discuss accommodation, however, it was with more complexity. P1, a Thai national who was in the 18-20 years age range, described his earlier homestay experiences:

P-1

I came here at about 11 or 10 I'm not quite sure. But it was one of those it's like holidays and you go into one of those tours. But they separate you from your friends, family and they put you in home stay for a month or something and I was put in one family with twins. And they were really annoying and yeah that was in

Ashburton. It was a great place lot of skaters and roller blades. And yeah, all I can say back then is yes and no. It was really difficult like communicating I mostly just point this hand and stuff and that was for a month. Then after a month I got moved to the new school like a boarding school so I have some boarding experiences and stuff like shower and you know yeah that was a great year I suppose.

**Interviewer**                      **Oh O.K., so that was like your first year?**

P-1                                      Yeah.  
(AUT, Group 1, April 12, 2007)

This experience was early in P-1's five year sojourn, and this meant that there was little detail in these recollections. However, what is important to note here is that P-1 was reflecting on previous intercultural relationships from the more advanced L4. The early stresses of interacting with homestay twins were now recalled with the same lack of interest that the vague memory of rollerblading was explained. At L4, the participants were much more concerned with current life issues and felt that they had resolved most of their intercultural relationship difficulties that had been prevalent in their earlier sojourn experiences (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). At the time of the interview, P-1 was more interested in meeting the intercultural challenges of daily life at university and was unconcerned with difficult host-country relationships. Intercultural adaptation in the DMIS is built upon layered understanding and once an intercultural question is resolved, it gives way to the new challenges of daily life in an expanded host-country context (Bennett, 2005; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). This excerpt showed just how transformative P-1's intercultural adaptation and perceptions were as he had moved from a much lower ethnocentric level to the ethnorelative L4.

In the previous levels, student halls of residence often functioned as barriers to intercultural adaptation. However, by the time the ESEA students reached L4, the student halls began to operate as bridges to relationships with domestic or fellow East and South-East Asian international groups alike. P-43, a male Japanese student in the 18 – 20 years old age range described how the halls of residence have acted as a centre for some of his social networks:

**Interviewer**                      **Yeah what about you? [P-43]**

P-43                                      I can't count  
P-42                                      Oh many friends (laughs).  
P-43                                      No, no, no six, or seven.

**Interviewer**                      **Each day?**

P-43                      Yeah, because oh my flat mates of course and we have other flats that we are really close so we go over there and they come over here you know to my flat and stuff we got to know each other last year went to umm halls of residents here so yeah quite close.

**Interviewer              So you're all from the halls of residents?**

P-43                      Yeah.

**Interviewer              O.K. and so your flatmates, how many do you live with?**

P-43                      Umm, four.

**Interviewer              Four, and umm what kind uh what sort of ethnicity what sort of people are they?**

P-43                      Uh, they're "Kiwi".

**Interviewer              All "Kiwis"?**

P-43                      Yeah.  
(WU Group 2, August 13, 2007)

Although he was not a resident at the UW student halls, P-43 utilised the social networks built around them. This intercultural resourcefulness was common to L4 students and made possible only due to the heightened intercultural relationships that provided access to host-country social resources. P-43 adopted the host-country structures and altered his behaviour to match his domestic student counterparts. This was the first case of actual emulation of host-country behaviours that emerged in this thesis. At L4, the participants have enough intercultural adaptation to participate in, and utilise, existing host-country social structures (Bennett, 2005a). P-43 demonstrated an understanding of both the behaviour and value differences of his domestic student counterparts, and this showed in both his actions and words within the interview (Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

Private accommodation also provided more complex insights at L4. P-43 lived in a private flat-share:

**Interviewer              You mentioned that you are living in a mixed flat. Can you tell me something that you have learned from doing that?**

P-43                      I'm like oh my God you don't know anything. Yeah because I have some mean people that I didn't want to deal with like now as well like when I go to party because I've got quite a few "Kiwi" friends and go to party with so many like Pākehā "Kiwi" there. And my

friends always saying is there any problem I don't know. I walk in without problem but I feel like I'm being looked at you know, who, because you know impressions like who's that with even those Pākehā "Kiwi" don't know. My mates they wouldn't go like that but to me you know. I did do a lot bit of shyness as well but it's always confidence you know. I have you know thought about that sort of discrimination stuff I can have realise though when I came the first two years. I blame it on "Kiwi" because you know some "Kiwi" are racist people, because you know, I was just. Yeah, I did nothing but when I came to university I realised that quite a lot of "Asian" people as well they stay in their own social group. And they don't talk to you know like you know Japanese, Chinese or Korean people they have their own social group and they don't talk to "Kiwi". So you know when I talk to actually "Kiwi" who was quite racist towards Asians you know. I got to know him really well and he said, well I don't know them you know they're like just them not here. You know like they don't talk to us they kind of alienate "Kiwi". Whereas this country is actually you know in a "Kiwi"s country so you know that actually got me thinking. You know it's not their fault only in itself as well and you know I can handle it better.

(WU, Group 2, August 13, 2007)

Unlike many of the other students in this project, P-43 was able to see that there could be some rationale for this behaviour and explored it further with a Pākehā individual who openly resented "Asians". Challenging behaviour through conversation was brave, and indicative of a high degree of intercultural communication abilities. But P-43 went further than that and actually adjusted his perceptions of ESEA student behaviours. To be able to accept home-country criticism, yet simultaneously be aware of, and to acknowledge that the host-country culture has faults, is a developing L4 characteristic (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

L4 also offered opportunities for the participants to develop more complex barriers to intercultural relationships. P-48, a Malaysian of Chinese ethnicity in the 21 to 24 year age range, described his flat-share experiences:

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>I see you at training [Aikido training] and walking to the bus-stop afterwards. But I'm not sure where you live. Is it at university accommodation?</b> |
| P-48               | Uh no no. I used to live at [university hall name] but now I have two flatmates. We share place but not food.  |
| <b>Interviewer</b> | <b>That's an interesting change. What is it like living with two strangers?</b>  |
| P-48               | Uh they just sleep and eat. They make mess in the kitchen and I don't like cooking there. Bad smells from their food.                                      |

<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Bad smells?</b>
P-48	Yeah. I hate smell of pizza. And coffee. Coffee is bad for you.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>What type of flatmates are they? I mean are they from another country or from Malaysia like you?</b>
P-48	One is “Kiwi”. The other is from India. Both lazy. Never clean. Always at away.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Older? Younger? Where do they work?</b>
P-48	Not sure. I never talk to them. I have seen the Indian guy at uni sometimes.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>So you haven’t got to know them very well?</b>
P-48	No. But like living on my own. These guys alright. Not need to talk to them. Just pay rent. No problem. Better than university. Cheaper. Nobody knows my life. Just me.

(UA Individual 1, August 8, 2007)

The opportunity to participate in a mixed flat-share allowed P-48 greater privacy. He was aware that the flatmates were uninterested in forming closer friendships, and appeared to be comfortable adapting to that environment. Furthermore, it offered him the benefit of greater privacy and allowed him to utilise his flat as a place to eat and sleep, but offered full autonomy outside of that with few social obligations. At L3 the participants characteristically regulated intercultural relationships. In contrast, P-48 utilised existing home-country social structures (which in this case was domestic students’ resistance to making intercultural relationships) to achieve control over the depth and intensity of his intercultural relationships. Increased sophistication of intercultural barriers and a corresponding utilisation of host-country social networks, infrastructure and services is a key principle of the DMIS and its ascending scale (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

### **Extra-curricular domains of intercultural relationships**

For the ESEA students at L4, it was difficult to separate the different domains of experience because their contributions to the interview were often more multi-layered and contained a number of domains or sub-domains. This reflected a greater language competency, but also higher levels of intercultural adaptation or understanding and this meant that the communication in all intercultural relationships, including the interviews, became more complex (Scollon and Scollon, 2001). The participants at L4



tended to move through a number of social and domain contexts making more sophisticated comparisons. There were also examples of the participants using the interviews as an opportunity for intercultural learning.

Being in a foreign host-country is an opportunity to experience new activities and ideas, but not all of them will be suitable for longer-term participation. One example of this was described by P-15, a male Malaysian student in the 21 -24 years age range and of Chinese and Japanese ethnic descent:

**Interviewer**                      **Can you tell me any experiences that you do to remind yourself (of your home city) going to a familiar restaurant or a movie or something?**

P-15                                      Well not really home. 'Cause I am from Malaysia. But its Japanese. Good place to meet my friends. But not do it anymore. Too busy.

**Interviewer**                      **What is this?**

P-15                                      Uh. I go to learn martial arts for two weeks. It's a Japanese martial sport – Aikido. I think you know it? [Research assistant's name] say you are a teacher or something like in that?

**Interviewer**                      **Yes I am a teacher of children in Aikido.**  
(UA Group 1, April 19, 2007)

Locating and sampling new social and skills opportunities were important activities for L4 participants. This accurately reflects the theoretical structures of the DMIS where the ethnorelative levels are premised upon a developing perspective of understanding new social and cultural opportunities in the host-country culture (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). P-15 sampled various martial arts in the Auckland region that he would not choose or be exposed to in his home-country. This showed an increased understanding of cultural opportunities and also utilized existing intercultural adaptation skills with social networking as a bridge to intercultural relationships. P-15 attempted to find out more about my activities and hobbies, and this revealed his attempt at understanding host-country cultural values even within an interview context (Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

For some of the L4 participants, social activities and opportunities were carefully chosen. P-2, a male Thai national in the 18 – 20 years age range, explained:

**Interviewer**                      **Yeah. A lot of Kiwis do go to church.**

P-2                                      Every Sunday and Friday nights?

**Interviewer**                      **Well usually it depends which religion but largely people go on Sundays as this country's largely Christian in regards to religion.**

P-2                                      I usually go on Friday nights  
P-3                                      ...yeah when you got nothing to do ay.

**Interviewer**                      **So you actually go to some youth groups as well?**

P-2                                      yeah I'm Christian.  
(AUT Group 1, April 12, 2007)

P-1 became involved within a Christian organisation and this initially offered structure to his life. Like most L4 participants, P-1 was aware of this and emphasised this himself (see above: "yeah when you got nothing to do ay"). This awareness showed a behavioural understanding of intercultural differences where a formal organization was required in order to make intercultural relationships and offered a weekly routine in a potentially confusing host-country (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). A Christian organization was a solution to host-country loneliness and provided a structured and safe context for intercultural adaptation.

But the Christian organization also offered insight into value differences and encouraged participation with host-country group shared beliefs and values:

**Interviewer**                      **O.K. So my question is that do you think you will stay in New Zealand or stay somewhere else when you finish?**

P-1                                      Yeah I just been through that like I skipped it but I have to go back and do it when I turn 20.

**Interviewer**                      **Oh O.K.**

P-1                                      How old are you now?  
P-2                                      I am 20.  
P-1                                      Better stay here then with me in New Zealand [to P-1]. I am going to live here as a Christian.

**Interviewer**                      **Why don't you want to do military service?**

P-1                                      It's hard.  
(AUT Group 1, April 12, 2007)

Understanding and participating in host-country values is characteristic of intercultural adaptation at L4, and P-1's Christian church group reflected this (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). During the interview, it was clear that P-1 intended this change to follow him throughout his life, and Christianity had facilitated an interest in changing his goal from an educational sojourn to residency in NZ.

Part time work experience was important for the L4 participants and their reflections on their jobs were more complex than had been characteristic of the ethnocentric stages. P-50 (a Korean national in the 21 – 24 years age range) described her part-time job experience in a suburban gaming lounge:

P-50: I was a waitress but it was interesting because I worked at the [game lounge] in [a local suburb] but they have a gaming lounge, coffee, bar and the restaurant area so you can imagine it's pretty much local kind of pub. Actually it was like a really big restaurant you could get about twelve tables in the restaurant so it was quite a big restaurant. And then again it was local [serving the nearby neighbourhood] and had a pub with the restaurant. So there was a lot of people who just come for a drink after work and a lot of regulars who are there every single day.

My boss wasn't really fussy. He was really relaxing and suggest we just go and play relax and he will still pay for it. So I just sit and play with all those regular customers and just talk. If we were not busy or my friends come around. Or if I get to see my favourite customer I just sit there and talk to them while they eating and just talk and just have fun. Because [in that] those area are I rarely see any Asian customer at all. I got that job because my friend who used to work there and is Russian or Ukrainian and she was living around there and her boyfriend used to go there and her neighbour is one of the regulars so she got that job. But then she quit because she just didn't want to work anymore and then she just passed the job to me. So that was how I got the job.

But there were NO 'Asians'. I think there were a lot of regulars and a lot of people who came there had a lot of images of Asians because they are not like me and they are not a university student. They don't get to see many Asians they're all like grownups and some of them are like around fifties and mid-forties and stuff so it was quite interesting they were really quite open to me and but then again I had to speak first but I was working and I had to make them feel comfortable so I didn't mind speaking to them was just like going hey, hello and blah blah blah and just make a few comments. They will talk to me back and get to know each other that kind of stuff and they were really really good. I ended up getting really attached to all those like senior customers because they were really interested in how International students live because they had never met any international students so it was quite interesting they were really kind and they did a lot of stuff for me as well.

(AUT Individual 5, April 13, 2007)

To achieve this part-time work, P-50 showed competency with intercultural relationships both on and off-campus. P-50 perceived and operated the intercultural social networks of both home and host-country social groups, and these actions reflected competency and understanding of the behaviours and structures of both types

of social groups (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). Yet L4 participants were frequently interested in understanding the differences between home and host country more thoroughly by becoming familiar with value differences (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). As a future nurse, P-50 was deeply interested in the generational differences, and learning more about the cultural context of her host-country community. In turn, P-50's awareness extended well beyond these differences and this was broadened to include an appreciation of kindness, interest and intercultural curiosity that she observed among social groups in NZ.

P-41, a Chinese male in the 21 – 24 age range, provided some indication of the daily challenges at his part-time job and he also made some complex observations about intercultural differences in his workplace:

P-41                      Yeah I also find it is hard to communicate on the phone when I was doing the part time in the Waikato SPCA [Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals] do the receptionist do the data entry and answer the phone 'Kiwi' can tell your accent very easily when I answer the phone uh good morning Waikato SPCA Eric speaking I think most of them can recognize my voice is 'Asian' and they will ask: "umm may I speak to someone else?" you know it upsets me or "may I speak to somebody in charge?", Yeah. Some female quite nice, they speak very slowly, "umm may I speak to one of your manager?" they even tell me the full name. Yes it's hard.

**Interviewer            Yeah. That would be very hard, to try to do your job and to know that they want to speak to your manager.**

P-41                      And also you are nervous being 'Asian' on the phone.

**Interviewer            Yeah, yeah so that is actually an interesting point. So you feel that umm some 'Kiwi' people don't want to speak to you on the phone in your job?**

P-41                      Yeah on the phone.

**Interviewer            Yeah**

-41                        Face to face it's O.K.

**Interviewer            Face to face it's O.K., less problems?**

P-41                      Yeah.

(WU Group 2, August 13, 2007)

One of the key features of L4 is to be able to make correct interpretations of regular intercultural exchanges and respond appropriately (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). Since customer service representatives are encouraged not to respond aggressively to customer stress, P-41 had to find other ways to deal with this negative experience. P-41 accomplished this by adjusting the type of work that he did and by increasing the face to face aspect of his customer service role. In those situations he believed that the intercultural communication is easier, and he met less intercultural resistance from other social groups. Intercultural adaptation can be facilitated by formal organisations as well as intercultural relationships and P-41's workplace environment appears to have contributed to this (Bennett, 2005a). P-41 showed the characteristic flexibility of L4 of the values of social groups in NZ, and understood that there is intercultural resistance toward 'Asians' and accepted this rather than challenging it (Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

The size or structure of the workplace is less important than the opportunities provided by the context of working among host-country groups. Taking on odd or one-off jobs can turn into a longer term friendship, and introduce the students to new levels of intercultural contact by extending their informal networks (Bodycott, 2009). P-1, a male Thai national in the 18 – 20 years age range, explained:

<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>What about you? Have you had any jobs yet?</b>
P-1	I didn't have any job but I did work for myself for a bit like this won't go anywhere will it?
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>No no no I promise you (laughter).</b>
P-1	I mean you won't put my name next to this.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>No of course not. I may mention what you say, but I won't put your name next to it.</b>
P1:	Because apparently most people think I'm the wizz [very good at working] with the computer. So what I did was made my own little business card and shuffled them around and got some phone calls go over there and fix the computer. I either fix the computer or bring it home buy the stuff for them and charge it. So I made about 40 bucks [\$40] an hour which is pretty good for 16 [age] and I did that for about a year. And got some good money and I kind of stopped because I'm in that time. I was crazy about computers, but now, I don't really care about them. I don't I mean if I don't like the job I'm doing even though I get good money. I just don't want to do them. And yeah I just stopped and moved. So whoever called me I just said "sorry I'm not here anymore".

(AUT Group 1, April 12, 2007)

P-1 showed insight in that he was able to successfully market his small business in Ashburton by locating appropriate places to leave his business cards. This indicated that P-1 was quick to gain behavioural understanding of host-country cultural groups. This ability to function within a small town such as Ashburton showed that P-1 took an active role in increasing his own intercultural adaptation level and found new opportunities to extend himself during his sojourn (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). Intercultural adaptation and responsibility to host-country culture and communities develops over time and it was clear that P-1 had been less responsible about maintaining intercultural relationships during the time-period of his sojourn in Ashburton (Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

Awareness of previous intercultural adaptation level was a common characteristic for L4 participants (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). Like P-1, P-48 sought greater autonomy in his life and like most of the ESEA students at L4 he was reliant upon and interested in deepening his connection to his new social networks. He explained:

<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>The first time we talked in the pilot interviews, you told me you were glad you were returning to Malaysia. But do you still believe that today?</b>
P-48	Yes. I changed my mind. Now I would like to stay in New Zealand for longer. Work here. Maybe ten years. I can go home for rest of my life. But here, only for now.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Why did you change your mind?</b>
P-48	I get to know people. I make friends. It's all different. Far from family and can have fun. More fun.

(UA Individual 1, August 8, 2007)

In the pilot interviews, P-48 expressed his intention to return to Malaysia as quickly as possible. But when I re-interviewed him individually, P-48 had changed this goal and was looking for opportunities to extend his study sojourn and was tentatively investigating a postgraduate extension to his scholarship. Like many domestic student counterparts, P-48 appeared to experience pleasure in the autonomy offered by student life, and, was interested in deepening his intercultural relationships in NZ. P-48's request for a further interview showed an active interest in reflecting on his own changes of intention within the interview context. Additionally, P-48 had also established a number of new intercultural relationships and these had become more important to him. This appreciation suggests a deepening appreciation of host-country values (Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

Intercultural love-relationships were viewed as contributing factors to greater intercultural adaptation by the participants. Through these love-relationships, there was potential for the ESEA sojourners to be exposed to the skills required for intercultural communication and experiences. P-50 explained:

**Interviewer**                      **No, no just maybe. Yes. So that's interesting. So you mentioned a boyfriend in Australia was he an Aussie [Australian]?**

P-50                                      No, his dad was originally from Britain. He immigrated to Australia after University and his mum was half Italian and half "Kiwi".

**Interviewer**                      **O.K. so clearly you're not together anymore?**

P-50                                      No.

**Interviewer**                      **O.K. Did you feel (obviously you're not still with him so there are some problems), but do you feel he treated you well?**

P-50                                      He did he did. We were together for just over a year which means he obviously was good to me for those times it's just that he wasn't actual the problem was not because I was international students. Not because of my skin colour. It was sort of just like the woman and the man have other problems just general problems.

**Interviewer**                      **Yeah, no I understand. So imagining yourself forward in time if you were to get married would you feel comfortable marrying a 'Kiwi' boy?**

P-50                                      As a matter of fact I don't actually mind might date and get to know them. I haven't thought about getting married not just because not with just a 'Kiwi' not even Koreans or Asians I haven't thought about getting married seriously but I don't think it would be a problem if I really loved the guy and he really loved me

**Interviewer**                      **So you'd consider it if there was a lot of love?**

P-50                                      Yeah. No I don't mind because one of the reasons I had a lot of Australian friends was because of my boyfriend

**Interviewer**                      **So he brought a lot of Australian friends into your life?**

P-50                                      Yeah and the reason I speak English or better English is because [of that]. And the reason I get to mix up with all those white people was because of him a big reason. He was a really big reason and yeah I was always grateful for that. And I don't mind going out with a white guy.

(AUT Individual 5, April 13, 2007)

P-50's love relationship provided her with intercultural adaptation experiences. It had improved her English abilities and new opportunities to get to know Australian social groups. P-50 was also able to evaluate the idea of comparing marriage with other South Korean nationals, to Australasian and/or nationals from NZ. As a L4 participant, P-50 had been able to see that differing perspectives on gender roles may have been more problematic than inter-ethnic resistance or tension. This rich intercultural understanding of the differences between her Korean home-country values and Australian host-country values is characteristic of L4 and showed an appreciation of host-country values (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). P-50 also applied her intercultural adaptation perceptions to her continued educational sojourn beyond Australia and regarded that her intercultural values learned in Australia were equally applicable to NZ.

At L4, more complex insights into both home and host-country cultural values were observed. In an alternate account of an intra-cultural family relationship, P-6, a Vietnamese student in her early 20s explained:

<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>You talked earlier about staying in New Zealand permanently. Can you tell me more about this?</b>
P-6	This is life for me. My boyfriend here. He come with me.
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>New family?</b>
<b>P-6</b>	It's the same actually because of my parents age so they are kind of old as well so they don't want to travel long distance but anyway I try to convince them to travel to New Zealand one day but maybe they say even some parts in New Zealand they don't want to go they only travel half of the country but not going overseas they are just afraid that in long distance umm long distance
<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>It seems dangerous to them?</b>
P-6	Yeah.

(AUT Group 3, April 30, 2007)

In comparison to P-50, the experience of P-6 showed that some of the participants at L4 continued to face some of the same home-country pressures to return to their home-country. P-6 was able to understand the needs of her parents but retained her focus on her educational sojourn in NZ. L4 intercultural adaptation is characterised by an ability



to understand the cultural needs and values of both home and host-country cultures and retain that balance (Bennett and Hammer, 1998, Bennett, 2005).

Despite the grief and loss of choosing to live away from her home-country without her parents, P-6 had extended her higher levels of intercultural adaptation into other domains within her life. P-6 described how leisure experiences had enhanced her social integration:

- P-6 For fun when I first come here just go to school in morning then go back home and nothing fun nothing else because I don't know many people here at that time. Then I when I start doing the Aikido maybe I think all of that Aikido became the first activity do during here and because I missed go to Mount Eden. So I started going just shopping in the morning but then I feels I kept doing that and then I went new market to go swimming they got a really good place for swimming over there. And first year nothing much but it kind of starting and I kept doing that because it's interesting to do exercise in the morning and also kind of surprised as well because there are lots of other people they do exercise in the morning and you just go and "good morning" and say hi to all the people you feel something that make you happy and also New Zealand got really nice beach around the City around this area as well so I start doing that and spend most time in summer at the beach it's really nice and so I really enjoy it because I am at the beginning I don't have anything to do but later on I found out there are lots of activities I can do and I just want more time to do that yeah
- Interviewer O.K. so you like to do things outside and out in Auckland?**
- P-6 Yes outdoors I go camping sometimes too and I go looking in the camping shop Kathmandu and then it's like I saw some gears and stuff for camping and so I start doing camping as well it's fun.
- Interviewer That's interesting?**
- P-6 Yeah I like 'Kiwi'. They go a lot camping in summer'
- Interviewer Not me but maybe other 'Kiwi's' (laughs).**
- P-6 I like go special places – secret. Sometimes go to places everyone knows. Last year I did Milford Track. But best ones are special places – like Coromandel.

(AUT Group 3, April 30, 2007)

P-6's intercultural adaptation skills had extended beyond relationships and into activities. For P-6, her involvement with a formal organisation led her to becoming more exposed to host-country social groups that originated from her activities in martial arts and swimming. These friendships, had in turn, led P-6 to camping in remote areas such as the Milford Track in the South Island. P-6 described these experiences from the perspective of a domestic tourist, which contrasts with the ethnorelative tourism experiences. At these higher levels of ethnorelative stages of intercultural adaptation, there is an ability to reflect upon various adaptation levels or stages, and evaluate which intercultural experiences have provided more skills and/or insights into their intercultural adaptation levels (Bennett, 2005; Bennett, 2005a). Furthermore, P-6 had increased her social agency and was able to seek positive experiences and interactions due to her increased intercultural knowledge and understanding. Finally, P-6 utilised the localised knowledge or intercultural networks to inform her experiences and thus was able to enrich them by using less well-known camping sites. As suggested throughout this section, L4 participants were able to utilise the host-country structural and cultural infrastructure to enhance their daily lives (Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

Reflections at L4 showed that the most mundane experiences could be heightened with new dimensions of significance. In this case, P-43 (a Japanese male in the 18 – 20 years age range) imbued his early airport arrival experiences with significance:

P-43

Yeah umm. Well when I first came here I went to Christchurch first and went down to umm Wanaka. For a month to a Japanese tour that was organised so I didn't get real 'Kiwi' experience. So I don't count that as my experience really because it's all set in my contact with 'Kiwi' was minimal. So yeah, so yeah. When I flew from Christchurch to Auckland it will be the first experience for me it's like having contact with 'Kiwi' and I remember I had to wait three hours at the airport. Like I was told to wait there until 10 o'clock and the taxi will come and pick me up. And I had to wait till 1 o'clock. And I was like yeah. My first expression was quite, you know 'Kiwi' is laid back but in a negative way. In a good way as well because in Japan like we on time which I didn't really like anyway. So 'Kiwi' had more life but at the same time it was really, really losing time. You know still annoys me when you mention it. It's like "oh gosh" You know it's my first experience.

(WU Group 2, August 13, 2007)

For P-43, his flight from Christchurch to Auckland was his "first Kiwi experience" because it was his first opportunity for unstructured travel and his first contact with NZ. Although airport lounges are very similar in most commercial airports,

P43 viewed this as an opportunity to observe culture in NZ. Despite delays, P-43 did not react as an indignant customer, but as a participant observer and this is consistent with the inherent approach of Scollon and Scollon (2001) and Bennett and Hammer (1998) who maintain that successful intercultural adaptation is a joint process of observation and experience. Like all the ESEA students, P-43 had been continually challenged by new situations that had required interpretation and/or understanding.

### **L4 analysis overall**

L4 was a turning point for the participants' intercultural adaptation to daily life in NZ. Each participant had more sophisticated levels of intercultural understanding than those at the previous levels and this meant they were able participate to a greater degree in both the social infrastructure and relationships with members of host-country social groups. There were fewer participants at L4 (10) as compared to L3 (14). However, the multifaceted and developing interests across most of the domains meant that L4 participants had more experiences to reflect on in their interviews, which could be analysed effectively and to a greater depth. Less conscious of themselves as outsiders of social groups in NZ, L4 participants showed more interest in making longer-term plans for holidays and other activities outside of their immediate study needs and this meant more complex reactions and/or roles across the domain experiences.

As noted in the previous levels, the social networks that the participants created continued to be primary to their daily functioning in NZ. There were some significant changes to these networks, however, and this meant that 'Kiwis' or host-country social group members began to feature in the participants' accounts. Established host-country social networks were still seen as resistant by the L4 participants, but they were able to challenge this resistance and to explore intercultural differences rather than becoming discouraged (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). P-43, in particular, was aware of his change of perspective and had consciously worked to get to know his 'Kiwi' friends. P-50 had learned through her work and intercultural love relationship that host-country social groups were not just resistant to ESEA students, but also resistant to other types of social groups such as European immigrant groups and Pasifika ethnic groups (Jandt, 2007).

Education and work experience domains at L4 continued to be important to the participants, but they were better able to discern the differences between those experiences that were necessary for their own career development and those which were there to enhance the quality of their daily lives. P-41, for example, was aware that many domestic phone clients in his SPCA customer service role experienced intercultural resistance. Rather than discouraging P-41 from having intercultural relationships, these

experiences left him less idealistic, but he continued to have contact with host-country social groups and to look for work in this area. In this study, the participants were typically interested in meeting the challenges of intercultural communication, and taking on part-time roles reflects this. Customer service positions are fairly common options for emerging adults, and these positions are heavily dependent on good communication skills (Smith, Bond and Kagitcibasi, 2006). Work experience itself became a more complex domain within L4, as the participants were aware that some positions were more important to their longer term careers, while others were a way to gain some income in the short-term. P-50, for example, was much more concerned with the intercultural barriers she felt she faced as a trainee nurse than those that she experienced working in a suburban gaming lounge. This lower level of concern led to more opportunities for intercultural relationships, and some of the regular customers became social opportunities for P-50.

At L4, the differences in intercultural values were thought through, and the participants tended to partition their lives accordingly. P-1 turned to a Christian belief system and showed he was willing to alter his sojourn plans in order to be able to continue with these values despite the personal costs to his family. In contrast, P-6 chose to remain in NZ, but married a fellow Vietnamese international student and continued to work toward the retention of home-country linkages despite resistance from her parents. In spite of greater intercultural competency and pragmatic intercultural relationships, L4 participants continued to exercise control over their intercultural immersion.

### **Beyond the DMIS (L4)**

The DMIS model (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) is based on the notion of intercultural resistance and this is a trend which was visible within intercultural relationships for participants in this study. But there are four key weaknesses of the DMIS theory of intercultural resistance at L4 that emerged during this analysis of ESEA students:

*Firstly, the descriptive element of the DMIS does not explain exactly what motivated the individual to increase their intercultural adaptation level at L4.*

At L4, the participants were conscious of their early intercultural experiences and overcoming and reflecting upon these appeared to have had a formative and motivating effect upon their intercultural adaptation. In contrast to the previous L3 participants, the L4 participants were able to articulate and reflect upon some of their transformative experiences of intercultural adaptation (Kim, 2001).

P-1 was able to reflect upon his previous lack of English competency and the frustrations of not being able to communicate. P-1 removed the responsibility for these frustrations from the homestay family. P-1 saw the situation more holistically within a framework of intercultural miscommunication difficulties. This increased his perception of his own skills and is a development of greater intercultural adaptation and maturation (Bennett and Hammer, 1998; Kim, 2001; Scollon and Scollon, 2001).

A closer contextual analysis of this experience revealed that there may also have been other forces at work. The SAGD model by Kim (2001) suggests that pressured situations, where participants are exposed to intercultural challenges, tend to create a need for the individual to adapt to the new demands of the intercultural host-country. After a period of frustration, the individual is spring-boarded into a new level of intercultural adaptation which is transformative in that it adds a new perspective to all past and any subsequent intercultural relationships. In effect, P-1 had been required to learn more English and to form intercultural relationships in order to meet his own educational goals.

A less obvious but equally important consideration was the relative age of P-1 (12 years old) and the emotional vulnerability undergone by children and adolescents who struggle to meet the demands of absent parents. Children and adolescents often feel a duty to support their parents by coping in difficult circumstances when they are away from home (Newnham, 2007). This is a situation that was likely to be reinforced by Confucian values where the student was aware of the financial and social sacrifice that their parents were making in order for them to receive an international education that was both difficult and expensive (Hwang, 1999). In short, P-1 felt that he had little choice but to adapt to his new home-country environment in order to conform to the values and expectations of that environment.

*Secondly, it was not always clear how the individual was motivated to gain higher levels of intercultural adaptation, as L4 means that the individual is competent and will often have a range of intercultural relationships that function satisfactorily.*

At L4, it became clear that the participants were becoming more reflexive intercultural practitioners and this was consistent with the DMIS as well as other types of intercultural theory (Bennett and Hammer, 1998; Scollon and Scollon, 2001). But the DMIS is level oriented and does not explain how L4 individuals increase their intercultural awareness – only that they do. After analysing the example of P-39 in more depth, it seemed clear that his intercultural insights, which were flagged by intercultural misunderstandings, were significant for him. Intercultural misunderstandings became

clues to greater intercultural insight and the participants themselves became accustomed to following these clues. According to Scollon and Scollon (2001), intercultural misunderstandings are the “only thing certain” in intercultural conversations (p. 23).

P-39 developed a familiarity with his host-country because he was expressing both the sentiments and the language of the domestic students – what interpretive theorists describe as labelling. P-39 correctly understood the process of labelling or the process of being listed as ‘other’. To consider the impact and significance of labelling, I return to the classical work of Becker (1963, p. 32 as cited in Prus, 1996, p. 82):

One of the most crucial steps in the process of building a stable pattern of deviant behaviour is likely to be the experience of being caught and publicly labelled a deviant... Being caught and branded as a deviant has important consequences for one’s further social participation and self-image. The most important consequence is a drastic change in the individual’s public identity.

In this case, P-39 was aware that the domestic student groups had labelled him and his international student counterparts and was also aware of the impact that this had on his own self-perception. This resulted in him using the ‘correct’ slang of the domestic students to describe himself, because he perceived that is how social groups in NZ will perceive him. Expressing this indicated a high level of intercultural communication and understanding of the host-country culture. The term “speak Asian” was unspecific and the negative affect was clear. Its use expresses a lack of knowledge or interest in the different East and South-East-Asian languages and cultures on the part of the domestic students. Its usage also suggests that the diversity of the Asian region, and its many different cultures, can be summarised into one overall regional category. This closely mirrors the stereotyping and lack of interest that is implied through the dominant social discourse of the press and radio news delivery on the topic of ESEA students (Benson, 2006; Butcher, 2006; Spoonley and Trlin, 2004).

But the experience of intercultural exchange also meant that the participants had the opportunity to examine and critique their own home-country values and identity simultaneously. For ESEA participants, whole-heartedly accepting the host-country values and opinions would lead to intercultural assimilation, rather than adaptation (Jandt, 2007). In contrast, the participants were more conscious of the worth of their own home-country culture and their own personal intercultural insights.

P-39 critically analysed the culture of his own international student groups as well as that of the host-culture. He drew attention to the way that some of his peer ESEA students did not make enough progress in mixing with domestic students, thereby inferring that he had accomplished this more efficiently himself. According to Kim (2001), intercultural adaptation is “a complex and dynamic process that brings about a qualitative transformation of the individual” (p. 37), which is a similar change to other personal types of transformational changes such as maturation or learning. This increases personal reflexivity for those undergoing transformational change. P-39 was able to be reflective about his own intercultural progress and that of his international student peers and domestic student groups simultaneously.

P-43 stepped outside his own perceptions and to accept a different perspective of the host-country culture. By realising this, P-43 did not have to blame himself or to question or adjust his own behaviour. Effectively, this was a shift in perception (Kim, 2001), and for P-43 this appeared to add to his confidence in intercultural communication and developing intercultural relationships.

*Thirdly the DMIS does not examine the role that host country cultural actions and beliefs played in either encouraging or discouraging intercultural relationships.*

At L4, the participants seldom reported their intercultural relationships with host-country social groups as being traumatic, or seemed rarely disturbed by them. But the increased intercultural penetration made possible by their higher levels of intercultural adaptation meant that this participant group had a relatively sophisticated understanding of the anti-Asian sentiments and intercultural resistances of the host-country social groups. Resistances were viewed as situations that required negotiation. A negotiation reaction to these types of experiences was consistent with expatriate relationships described by other researchers on East and South-East-Asian groups' intercultural adaptation to the US (Kim, 2001; Kim, Lujan and Dixon, 1998). Typically, these individuals experienced a range of intercultural relationships both on campus and beyond into the wider community. Their findings showed that the participants also retained their ties and preferences with their home-country cultures and tended to have many relationships with fellow-nationals. Participants moved regularly between both home and host country cultures but did not necessarily make these intercultural transitions easily or without the criticism by the social groups around them (Scollon and Scollon, 2001).

One of the difficulties that L4 participants had to face was an acceptance of intercultural resistance that is innate in many contexts of social groups in NZ. P-41 found it very difficult to do his job working on the telephone services for the SPCA, and he perceived

that many of his callers reacted to his voice and accent, which were identifiably “Asian”. Beyond the bounds of the relatively sheltered university, P-41 was conscious of the general resistance that many host-country social groups have to “Asians” (Jandt, 2007; Spoonley, Gendall, and Trlin, 2007). This was indicated to him by the callers asking to speak to other telephone operators who would presumably be of a non-‘Asian’ ethnic or national background. P-41 had advanced language skills and this was substantiated by his position with the SPCA as a customer services representative. With good language skills and a L4 intercultural adaptation level, P-41 was able to understand both the requirements of the clientele and the communication sub-text implied by tone, hesitations and choice of words; and correctly gauged intercultural resistances. Yet such a clear perception of intercultural resistance by P-41 could have led to intercultural resistance and increased negativity toward social groups in NZ. In contrast, P-41 was compartmentalised about his work difficulties, and this reaction differed from the previous levels where many of the participants were focused upon allocating fault to either themselves or host-country social groups. This indicated that P-41 was adapting to the host-country culture and accepted intercultural resistance to ‘Asian’ ethnic groups as a part of this.

P-41 compartmentalised his work-based experiences of intercultural resistance, while P-50 developed an outgoing social persona and engaged her customers at the suburban gaming lounge. In this work environment, P-50 noted that there were few, if any, other ESEA nationals or ethnic groups. This made P-50 highly visible to the gaming lounge customers and she was aware of this difference. Rather than accepting her position as a marginalised ‘other’ (Jandt, 2007), P-50 instead displayed curiosity and accepted that the regulars were probably less educated than her. Of key importance here was that P-50 was able to make intercultural explorations and felt secure enough in her own difference and identity to make her own discoveries. P-50 assessed the host-country social group’s intercultural adaptation level to some extent, and this was due to her own intercultural adaptation which had been experienced as transformative (Kim, 2001).

*Finally, the DMIS at L4 does not explain what process in particular motivated the individual to create new intercultural interests.*

The process of intercultural adaptation by itself could not explain all of the L4 participants’ experiences. One theme that began to emerge very visibly among the 18–24 year old participants was a competing transformative process – emergent adulthood. There was a lot of evidence of identity explorations at L4. As Arnett (2004) explains, emergent adulthood is “...the age of *identity explorations*, of trying out various possibilities, especially in love and work” (p. 8). This finding had been noticeable



throughout the earlier stages, but the increased intercultural adaptation meant that it was fully articulated and able to be expressed confidently in a formal intercultural interview context.

For P-15, this was expressed by attempting a number of extra-curricular activities that were short-lived but enthusiastic. The most notable of these was Aikido - a Japanese martial art that is relatively modern and flourishes across many Western states such as the US, Australia, and the UK and in NZ. This foray was particularly significant because P-15 was from Malaysia, but had a Japanese parent. This nationally/ethnically significant exploration reflected some support for the developing theme that the participants in the 21 – 24 years age range were also engaged in a twin process of establishing their personal identities as adults (Arnett, 2004). P-15 began Aikido in the company of his friend P-48, a fellow Malaysian of Chinese ethnic heritage in the same age-range. P-48 had gone on to study Tai Chi, a martial art of Chinese origin, and P-15 had soon given up martial arts altogether. Clearly, for both P-48 and P-15, there had been a shared interest in exploring their own ethnic heritages, however briefly. But, like all difficult exploratory tasks that had taken place for the participants in this study, these explorations had also been undertaken with the support of the shared national and/or East and South-East-Asian student networks that supported the participants at all stages of their educational sojourn.

But the types of identity exploration undertaken by the participants extended beyond their own ethnic heritages into intercultural explorations. For example, P-48 moved into private accommodation with a group of “Kiwi” male flatmates and experienced living away from structured accommodation. It had not yielded P-48 new intercultural friendships, but there had been a shared solidarity in the lack of social interest among the emergent male flatmates. Intentionally or completely coincidentally, P-48 was engaged in a similar cultural process with his domestic emergent adult male counterparts – that of experiencing autonomy as young adults. All of them were sharing a living space but were not creating lasting friendships based on this experience (Arnett, 2004). P-1 had also reflected on a rare but interesting experiment with a small business in Ashburton. Like the individuals in domestic student groups, P-1 was experimenting with an identity exploration as well as a method to make money (Arnett, 2004). When P-1 felt that he had satisfied his curiosity, or had found alternate ways to create a new emergent adult identity, the business had been discontinued.

## **L5 – ADAPTATION**

At L5, the ESEA students were able to truly understand both home and host-country cultures with a reasonable degree of flexibility. This intercultural fluidity between both home and host country frames of cultural reference is the most notable characteristic of L5 of the DMIS (Bennett, 1993; Bennett and Hammer, 1998; Bennett, 2005a). Like the initial L1 section, this section has focused on the experiences of one participant because of the sampling limitations. P-45, a Japanese male in the 21 – 24 years age range, was able to create sophisticated networks and receive support across the domains. Unlike the participants in previous stages, P-45 did not have to keep the domains entirely separated and was able to mix confidently in mixed nationality groups as well as to communicate easily about home and host-country experiences and reflections without hesitation. In the previous L4, the participants understood intercultural differences. At L5 however, P-45 was not bound by intercultural differences because these were well understood. Instead, P-45 was focused upon opportunities to create relationships with individuals that he liked, and intercultural differences had largely ceased to be important. This intercultural freedom brought a host of integrated intercultural experiences, but P-45 retained his conscious understanding of the divide between home and host country cultures, and this is what Bennett and Hammer (1998) suggest in the DMIS is the division between advanced states of intercultural adaptation and intercultural assimilation (Bennett, 2005a).

### **Education domains of intercultural relationships**

With over five years in NZ, P-45 had a full spectrum of educational services and experiences to reflect upon. He was able to select from a broad variety of social themes, and to merge those across institutions and often over-time to explain their intercultural relationships and adaptation:

P-45	Umm, first when I came here, for six months I went to a language school, down in Wellington. I made a few friends there, but they were all Japanese guys.
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<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>MH-hmm?</b>
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P-45:	So I actually had some Japanese friends at language school. But once I finished language school and started going to the secondary school, I had no friends over there.
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(AUT Individual 1, June 10, 2007)

It can be seen that for P-45 these early friendships were remembered as fleeting, and he moved on to developing a rich array of international and intercultural friendships in NZ.

This shows that P-45 had followed a similar pattern of intercultural adaptation and described experiences similar to the early ethnocentric stages where national friendships form the primary supports (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). But, unlike the participants at the lower levels of intercultural adaptation, P-45 did not compartmentalize his educational experiences. In the same interview 23 minutes later, P-45 returned to this early interview theme. He repeated information, but it became a base for building on intercultural relationships that had developed within a number of educational domains:

P-45                      Umm, first when I came here, for six months I went to a language school, down in Wellington. I made a few friends there, but they were all Japanese guys...

**Interviewer:**        **MH-hmm?**

P-45                      So I actually had a some Japanese friends at language school. But once I finished language school and started going to the secondary school, I had no friends over there. But, I think that, one there weren't that many Japanese guys at the school, and two, at [name of boys college in Wellington] they were teaching, well they, had a class for teaching Japanese, and it seems like quite a few of the guys were interested in the culture of Japan and I think that's why they were quite friendly to me. And....from memory I think it was quite easy to, I couldn't have spoken much English still, but being young, you could still made friends with heaps of people. So I had a quite a few friends, since I started there, it's always been people from New Zealand, so, what I notice is, 'cause I have heaps of Chinese friends over here too, is that they tend to hang around with other Chinese, guys and girls and stuff, and I think that's where they, (pause) learn, (pause) confidence.

(AUT Individual 1, June 10, 2007)

P-45 observed that intercultural relationships were integral to his educational sojourn. P-45 identified the networking that had been so prevalent throughout the previous intercultural adaptation levels. Furthermore, P-45 generalised his own intercultural sensitivity to that of other Chinese national groups, recognised their intercultural adaptation behaviours and reflected upon these in the intercultural communication interview setting. Increased intercultural sensitivity and the ability to observe this in others is a key characteristic of the L5 framework (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). P-45 was more than an observer, however; he actively modelled intercultural confidence for his Chinese peers in an effort to assist their intercultural adaptation and confidence with intercultural relationships. Bennett (1993; 2005a) has identified this similar willingness to assist with the intercultural adaptation of others at L5.

Unlike the participants in the previous levels, P-45 showed that he had been pro-active in maintaining his intercultural relationships with domestic student counterparts. P-45 explained:

**Interviewer:** **Definitely. So you having been here from such a young age, and probably mainly been in that one school, have you made any lasting friends that you still keep in touch with?**

P-45                      Yep, heaps of my friends from [name of boys college in Wellington] I'm still friends with, and whenever I go down to Wellington, which is probably about twice a month, oh sorry, once in two months, I always see them, we just have dinner and catch up.

(AUT Individual 1, June 10, 2007)

Regular maintenance of his long-term intercultural relationships with domestic student counterparts showed that P-45 placed value upon these. At L4, the participants were able to recognise the importance of intercultural supports and resources. But at L5, P-45 accepted these intercultural relationships as cornerstones of his life in NZ and was committed to his maintenance of these friendships, despite the travel involved between Auckland and Wellington to achieve this. Fluid travel between home-country cities reflected the intercultural confidence of L5 (Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

Throughout the previous intercultural levels, intercultural resistance on the part of the host-country was a common awareness. P-45 however was unconcerned about this resistance among host-country social groups. As intercultural adaptation was so confidently expressed, it was necessary to directly ask him how he had negotiated intercultural resistance in the interview:

**Interviewer:** **Ok, well, that's told me heaps of things. Now you seem like, because you're very fluent, I'm talking to you in slightly different way than I normally talk to people when I'm interviewing. I'm not simplifying anything down, or, but let me know if the ideas are too academic sounding and you need to unpack them a bit. Bu you must have been aware of some idea, in all the time you've been here, you must have been aware of the idea of racism?**

P-45                      Yeah.

**Interviewer**           **What I'm trying to get is, do you feel that you suffer from racism? Or have suffered it? Just in all your general experiences in the New Zealand public.**

- P-45 Umm. The racism I got before was, probably (pause), about my first year or so at [name of boys college in Wellington]. I used to get quite a few racist jokes, and that time I kind of got angry and stuff a little bit, and, probably after about a year, I started getting used to it, and not enjoying it, but finding it funny. Since then, my friends sometimes make racist jokes but I just laugh with them. Sometimes I just get some random people when they're drunk, they, usually when they're drunk, they shout out, saying, umm.
- Interviewer:** **Like when you're walking on the street, something like that?**
- P-45 Yeah, yeah, but it doesn't really (pause) bother me so much, I just see it as people being drunk. 'Cause other times I don't get any racist comments or anything like that.
- Interviewer:** **So not personally. What about tutors, lecturers, teachers?**
- P-45 No. Most of the lecturers who are from Asia are Indian people and not Kiwis.

(AUT Individual 1, June 10, 2007)

Although P-45's insight had required investigation within the interview, his insight into intercultural resistance revealed some of the complex intercultural awareness that is inherent at L5. P-45 showed how participating in home-culture humour had been a key to his social acceptance at earlier levels of intercultural adaptation. This was true even though some of these moments had been experienced as uncomfortable. P-45 learned that laughing with his domestic student counterparts meant that over time he could gain entry into these groups. P-45 was also able to differentiate between the casual intercultural resistance and racism from bystanders, from those of his own intercultural relationships. These rich intercultural observations reflect the sophistication of L5. But this complexity also showed how P-45's understanding had evolved over his educational sojourn (Bennett, 1993; Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

### **Accommodation domains of intercultural relationships**

For P-45, his accommodation domains were inextricably linked with his educational domains. Initially P-45 had stayed with his own family while attending the language school. When this period of his educational sojourn was complete, P-45 had then gone on to a boarding college and this had given way to his private accommodation experiences that consisted of flat-sharing with other students. P-45 relied on his accommodation domain to provide some social structure:

**Interviewer:**            **Where are you living?**

P-45:                            When I first moved up here, I knew probably around three or four guys and that was it. And one guy, he's probably my best friend in Auckland and he goes to AUT. He's my flatmate, I didn't have anywhere to stay, and there was a room in his flat. so I moved in there. He's a Chinese guy, he's from Hong Kong, but he was born here, so he's pretty much, he's a Kiwi.

**Interviewer:**            **OK, so it's been pretty smooth. When you were at [name of boys college in Wellington], where did you live? Did you live in the college?**

P-45                            Um, from when my parents were here, I was with my parents, but when they left, I lived in boarding school. That could be another reason for the English as well, as I was always there [residing].

(AUT Individual 1, June 10, 2007)

At L5, the overlaps between the domains had become even more marked. P-45 had a high intercultural adaptation across most areas of his life and saw little differentiation between them, and had intercultural relationships in all of the domains (Bennett, 2005a; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). As noted in the educational domain section, P-45 did not locate his reflections to early accommodation experiences but moved fluidly between them. P-45 considered his early boarding college experiences alongside the (then) current flat share experiences with his "Kiwi-Asian" flatmate. For P-45, the development of English literacy and the development of his intercultural adaptation were directly credited to complete immersion at secondary school which had provided extra pressure to communicate with fellow domestic student peers.

### **Extra-curricular domains of intercultural relationships**

In the previous L4, extra-curricular domains of intercultural relationships had become more pronounced. However, for P-45 at L5, extra-curricular domains were the focus of his intercultural relationships. Through these relationships, P-45 was able to enjoy his interests and to create a strong personal identity that included an interest in host-country leisure activities and cultural values. A pivotal organization in P-45's life was his car club:

P-45                            It's modified. It's not new, the car's over 10 years old.

**Interviewer**            **Because you built it yourself?**

P-45                            Yeah, it goes O.K.

**Interviewer**                    **Well I'm asking partly because it's a passion my brother shares. O.K.? So, I also believe that an interest like that, you tend to meet a lot of people?**

P-45                                Yeah, you do.

**Interviewer**                    **You mentioned your flatmate shares your interests. The guy from Hong Kong – the “Kiwi-Asian”-Asian?**

P-45                                Yeah. And from there, there's quite a few friends from unit as well, but most of the other friends I have in Auckland is through cars. (laughs). And I'm kind of glad of that, I've met some nice people, cool guys, so. In the beginning I belonged to car club. Now I just have friends. So many.

(AUT Individual 1, June 10, 2007)

At L5, the DMIS structure is based on individuals being able to understand the commonalities between various cultures and to build relationships on these shared understandings (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). P-45 understood the social function of various social infrastructures and used them to meet his own ends or to further his own goals (Bennett, 2005; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). In this case P-45 began his quest for friendship within a formal organisation and used it to develop his social network in Wellington first and latterly in Auckland. P-45 located others with a similar interest in making friends based on their shared interest, but was able to outgrow the Wellington location once these objectives were met:

**Interviewer:**                    **Tell me about your friends?**

P-45                                Ok. I got, there's a group of guys, probably about five people, they're all down in Wellington, they, I have, probably from around fifth form, about six or seven people, we'd always just hang around, so that's who I see whenever I go down, I always keep in touch, talk on cell phones and stuff, and umm, the other group of people I'm good friends with down in Wellington is the Chinese guys.

**Interviewer:**                    **Mm. Did you meet them at school?**

P-45                                No, I met one guy at work, I was working at a restaurant down there, and I met him there, he was interested, well he likes his cars, and I like my cars, so I got to know him better, and from there, I just, I actually got to know quite a few people through that interest. Then I come to Auckland with my car mates.

**Interviewer:**                    **Yeah, so that was quite a...Right, when you say cars, are you talking from the point of view of**

**taking them apart and putting them together, or are you talking about cars that go very fast?**

P-45

Both. Usually it's the modifying cars.

(AUT Individual 1, June 10, 2007)

The extra-curricular domain was dominated by P-45's intercultural relationships and these relationships structured all of the other domains to an extent. Throughout levels one to three the participants described their host-country experiences as being structured by the various domains and/or activities therein. Although this emphasis had shifted at L4, the activities were viewed more as ends in themselves by the L4 participants rather than as conduits to meet and enjoy more intercultural relationships. However, by L5, P-45 was focused on intercultural relationships and describes the quality and enjoyment of those alongside his interest in cars, and this is more consistent with host-country values (Bennett and Castiglioni, 2004; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). Individuals from host-country social groups frequently use leisure activities (or what is described in this thesis as extracurricular) as a method to increase their social relationships and improve the quality of their daily work, family and other routine activities (McLennan, Ryan, and Spoonley, 2004).

Intercultural adaptation, though, is not based solely on host-country activities and values. P-45 retained his host-country interests as well as cultural values and this also influenced his attitude and participation in extra-curricular activities:

**Interviewer**

**Yeah, well fair enough. OK, so that's interesting. So this girlfriend that you've had for a while, do you believe, do you envision that you may marry her?**

P-45

I...did a while ago. 'cause before, I was thinking about going back to Japan to work, but lately I've been thinking about staying here and finding a job here. I talked to my Dad, 'cause he's been a businessman for a while, my Dad, and he reckons that if I want a job in Japan later on, it might be better to get some experience here as well as, and get some experience here and go back, or I could just stay here. I want to stay here more, I think, yeah.

**Interviewer:**

**So you'd like to stay here for a few years at least.**

P-45

Oh, well, I'm not sure how long, could be forever (laughs). It's just that life in Japan is very (pause) very busy, just that everything's on-going. Once you find a job over there, your life becomes working, and nothing else, and I look at it over here, and the people, they still work, and they live fine, and they can still enjoy their lives, and that doesn't



happen in Japan. And I thought if I can still do here, what's the point of going back over there and working...

**Interviewer:** **Working all your life perhaps?**

P-45 Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer:** **Oh, I completely understand that. My sensei has always been known to enjoy life in New Zealand, perhaps a little too much. (laughs) So um...that kind of thing. Yes, Ok, alright.**

P – 45 So, the other thing, I think it was first question, maybe, about Kiwi friends and stuff? My dad, is very, I think, one, maybe because he used to live in Mexico when he was a bit younger, four, five years. His English is very solid. We lived in America for a year when I was in five, 'cause of his jobs, so he does have all his friends from the States, from New Zealand and I might be used to, 'cause I was around, 'cause of my Dad, I was around heaps of European people, could be a reason why I got along more with people from New Zealand.

(AUT Individual 1, June 10, 2007)

L5 intercultural adaptation was a fluid experience for P-45, and the differences between home and host-country cultural values had ceased to require specific attention. P-45 focused on both home and host-country extra-curricular domains simultaneously and retained a romantic relationship in Japan as well as active ties to his Japanese parents. Unlike the participants at earlier levels, P-45 at L5 was able to focus on both home and host-country experiences simultaneously. Straddling both home and host-country cultural contexts is the central trait of L5 adaptation (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). There was also evidence that P-45's experiences were underscored by an intercultural fluidity around cultural values as well as behaviour. This is advanced intercultural adaptation because it is more common for most individuals to retain solid ties in either home or host-country as required by social or professional networks (Bennett and Hammer, 1998).

Yet, as the interview progressed, it became clear that P-45, like the other participants in the sample, felt that someday he will need to make some type of cultural decision to expand on either home or host-country ties:

**Interviewer:** **...OK, so, you've been here such a long time, and are, I feel you're very fluent with language and very fluent with talking to Kiwis and so on, so, would you consider yourself more New Zealand, more Kiwi, than Japanese now or [what is most important here]?**

P-45 Umm. [Long pause]. Some parts, I think, are more, what I think is, some parts, like relaxed? I think that's probably a bit more Kiwi-ised now but, but I think I still have heaps of Japanese in me, the way I think of things, and probably the way I feel about things, that's still very there.

**Interviewer:** **Definitely. Do you still go home once a year?**

P-45: Yup, I go home once a year, maybe twice a year sometimes.

**Interviewer:** **When is that, what time of the year is that?**

P-45 Usually the end of the year.

**Interviewer:** **Why is that?**

P-45 One is because it's a long holiday, and two, there's usually you know, like, New Years and Christmas, and that's when we catch up with all the family friends as well, so that's probably why I go back then.

**Interviewer:** **So you go to Japan - how, do your family celebrate Christmas – presents, church?**

P-45 No, in Japan, Christmas is, [pause] Christmas is not going to church, Christmas is – it's just, people buying presents and, people going out to fancy restaurants.

**Interviewer:** **Fancy restaurants.**

P-45 Yeah, that's Christmas in Japan.

**Interviewer:** **OK, so obviously you go home each year, or most years. And you get together with your family. I guess I'm just trying to get an idea of a typical Christmas?**

P-45 Actually, on Christmas day itself...?

P-45 I've got a girlfriend in Japan, so I'm out with her usually, at a restaurant. [laughs]

**Interviewer:** **Of course.**

P-45 We usually have dinner at home, just me, my mum, my dad and my sister, and we have another Xmas dinner with my mum's side of the family, so my uncles. My mum's got three, two sisters and two brothers. So it's quite a big get-together.

(AUT Individual 1, June 10, 2007)

P-45 was keenly aware of his home-country ties and the importance of gathering with his family each Christmas. Though this ritual was based upon presents and eating out, P-45 took the opportunity to catch up with his extended family members as well.

### **L5 analysis overall**

The experiences of P-45 indicated that the difficulties of intercultural communication and the challenges of intercultural adaptation became less important at L5. Instead, P-45 was able to focus on the challenges of his longer term goals as well as enjoying freedom to enjoy extra-curricular social opportunities beyond the university and the accommodation domains. He was reflective on his own intercultural literacy and he showed evidence of using that insight to help others with their intercultural challenges and goals. With just one participant at L5, it was difficult to establish if this would be a characterizing trend, but Bennett and Hammer (1998) consider this integral to this level. As he had a high level of intercultural literacy, intercultural relationships could be experienced easily. This meant that P-45 was able to take part in extra-curricular activities with confidence, and become more involved with various social groups within it. It was these skills that P-45 felt were giving him the relaxation to consider his longer term goals and subsequent place in the global work-force.

The experience of P-45 showed that L5 intercultural adaptation delivers potential for a much richer intercultural experience than those with lower levels of intercultural adaptation. Certainly, it is clear from a variety of studies that many international students feel in retrospect that they would have liked to participate more in various formal groups and intercultural opportunities, but felt prevented by various personal and social barriers (Freed, 2008; Sovic, 2008; Wang, Singh and Bird, 2008). The international students in these studies tend to feel that greater participation would have delivered higher levels of intercultural learning and interesting new experiences.

More particularly, the interest in cars and car-clubs was a hobby that P-45 had developed in his home-country and continued to develop during his study sojourn. By utilizing this common experience, P-45 was able to build a fairly complex set of social relationships around this interest. Intercultural communication is much simpler in these formats because language itself is contextual/relational (Scollon and Scollon, 2001) Therefore, when shared interests from different cultural spheres can be highlighted, then both parties are able to build their communication on a shared reference or habitus (Scollon and Scollon, 2001). Effectively, the shared interest in cars

by P-45 and the domestic youths acted as a cultural bridge for P-45 to build opportunities for further intercultural communication. In time these opportunities could lead to tacit friendships in the short term and even solid friendships over time. Furthermore, P-45's friendships spanned peer national groups, regional-based international ethnic groups and also intercultural experiences with Pākehā and other ethnic groups.

### **Beyond the DMIS (L5)**

The DMIS model (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) at L5 is based on the notion of intercultural adaptation and this is a trend which was visible within the intercultural relationships in this study. But there are two key weaknesses of the DMIS theory of intercultural resistance at L5 that emerged during this analysis of ESEA students:

*Firstly the process of intercultural adaptation does not take into account the intercultural background and encouragement that the participant may have experienced from his or her home-country family.*

The DMIS is centred on the experiences of the individual undergoing intercultural adaptation (Bennett and Hammer, 1998). The individual is seen as a discrete entity and the influences of their home-country families are not taken into account. In this case, it was clear that P-45 had an important family context that may have promoted intercultural adaptation. P-45 was the second generation international sojourner of his family of origin. His father had lived in both the US and Mexico, as well as NZ. For P-45, his educational sojourn had the advantage of familiarity and acceptance within the sphere of his home-country. P-45 referred several times to his father's advice throughout the interview. This contrasted with the parental consultation experiences of most of the participants at the lower levels of intercultural adaptation, and was viewed by P-45 as being both appropriate and applicable. Furthermore, this is a similar pattern in South Korea where these fathers are described as "Wild Geese" fathers – so named for their sojourns working in foreign host-countries and returning to the family at the end of contracts and in holiday periods (Lee and Koo, 2006, p. 533). Typically, their children are educated internationally as well.

*Secondly the process of intercultural adaptation is just one transformative social process of several that may have taken place in the lives of the participants.*

For P-45, intercultural adaptation was just one aspect of his social development. It had provided the necessary skills to create relationships to pursue his leisure interests and negotiate an education that will provide him a career in a globalizing economy. This expansion of interests was consistent with the DMIS at L5. However, the case of P-45 indicated that these other goals had been there from the beginning of his educational sojourn and had actually underlain his intercultural transformation. Effectively, P-45 had been undergoing more than one transformative social process, and this type of dual transformative process was necessary because intercultural transformation was seldom the primary goal for the participants (Kim, 2001). P-45 was focused on his transition from adolescence to emergent adult with its focus on identity, career, relationships and a chance to develop spiritual/ideological beliefs (Arnett, 2004). The relationships and friendships that P-45 chose, reflected the concerns of his two transformative processes.

## **SUMMARY OF QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS IN CHAPTERS FOUR and FIVE**

These two chapters have extensively analysed the experiences of ESEA students. Relationships were core to the intercultural adaptation of all of the participants and had a strong influence over their continued adaptation and activities in NZ. However, the type of these relationships and the importance that they held for the participants differed markedly according to their intercultural adaptation levels. For those participants at the early intercultural adaptation levels (1–3), relationships with home-country families, fellow nationals, and to some extent those with ESEA students, played a strong role in supporting them; shaping the type of activities they took part in and assisting them in their daily challenges. These tight supports had a follow-on effect of shaping the participants' values and beliefs at these levels, and this continued to be applied to the host-country social groups. In contrast, the participants in the higher levels (4–5) were much more open to intercultural relationships and felt more able to participate in a wider range of activities beyond campus and accommodation domains. A broader range of relationships did result in a greater acceptance of intercultural values and beliefs of the host-country social groups. However, these understandings were not rigid and did not over-ride the beliefs, values and expectations required of them by their home-country values.

Ascending levels of intercultural adaptation understandings, however, did not account for parallel interpersonal processes. Throughout the interviews it became clear that the interpersonal goals for the younger students engaged in negotiating emergent adult transitions from adolescence to young adults were qualitatively different from mature students in their early thirties and upwards. The younger participants were more open to extra-curricular activities in general because they were more actively involved in setting up their careers, finding life partners and establishing their spiritual or life-values. By contrast, the mature participants were less concerned with their own identity and more aware of intercultural adaptation as a process that would help them continue their own lives in conjunction with their previously established values and beliefs. Both sets of participants, however, were aware that intercultural misunderstandings were the site of interpersonal transformation that would help them further their own life goals.

## **CHAPTER SIX WHERE WEST MEETS EAST: THE FINAL INSIGHTS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

ESEA students sojourn in NZ for a limited period of time, but as explained at the outset of my thesis (see Chapter One pp. 1- 3 ), the experiences that they gain during this sojourn last throughout their lives. It is not just the memories of NZ and any intercultural relationships therein that the ESEA students gain, but also the tangible cultural capital of an internationally recognised degree and an intercultural education that may include long-term international linkages forged as a result of intercultural relationships (Bourdieu, 1986). Therefore, the level and type of intercultural adaptation that the students make is of critical importance to their longer term careers, and is of similar importance to the development and maintenance of Export Education in NZ with its capacity to generate income across the service industries and throughout educational organisations (Ministry of Education, 2007b).

By using Mills' (1959) work, and framework of the sociological imagination, I examined the intercultural adaptation of the ESEA students from a context-driven approach. I formed the basic premise that the ESEA students are guided by their necessarily narrow and subjective perspective during their daily lives, but retain throughout their educational sojourn the broader context of their longer-term goals and need to participate in globalising workplaces (Malcolm and Ling, 2002). Thus, the ESEA student challenges are best understood through their realisation of their vocational goals and the challenges that impede their progress. Intercultural relationships are primary, for everyday enjoyment and progress within their foreign host-country environment because increased host-country understanding leads to a greater variety of experiences and this was evidenced in the greater range of extra-curricular activities and intercultural relationships at L4 and L5. In fact, the students are unable to make steady intercultural adaptation increases without these intercultural relationships. But, like

many student groups, the ESEA students in this study expressed more concern for their longer term vocational goals in the interviews and were less obviously concerned with intercultural adaptation as a central aim. Their individual challenges needed to be conceptualised within a perspective of host-country impacts that were sometimes visible to the ESEA students. But, more often, these challenges were concealed from the ESEA students themselves by the overall pressure of coping with daily stresses such as negotiating public transport and gaining study assistance. Though the students were focused on their personal or private difficulties, it was my task to look beyond these and into the wider social issues affecting them and this included difficulties posed by being misunderstood by host-country social groups. The sociological imagination (1959) requires that the researcher take a contextual overview of the *whole* situation, and in this thesis that included a consideration of me in the role of researcher and the impact that this might have on the information that I was able to gather in an interview context.

This broad approach to context has been taken throughout the thesis, but was represented most clearly in Chapter Two with the consideration of four of the seven institutions of government, family, education and economy that affect international educational sojournment (Mills, 1959). I gathered contextually relevant material in these areas so that the analysis in Chapters Four and Five could consistently place the individual testimony of the participants within the contextual overview required by the sociological imagination approach (Cheney and Hammond, 2010; Mills, 1959). In Chapter Three I maintained the overview of the sociological imagination and showed that it was not only the ESEA students under examination, but also me as the researcher and primary interculturalist within the interview and analytical contexts. I had learned from close reading of key interculturalists Bennett and Hammer (1998), as well as Scollon and Scollon (2001), that researchers must always view themselves as participant observers and within the intercultural frameworks, and that no individual is entirely free of their own cultural values, beliefs and behaviours. Therefore, it was essential to treat the interviews as a site of intercultural communication, and the relationship between me and the ESEA student participants is an intercultural one.

Practical considerations of the ethics of this project at the outset showed me that it would need a *bricolage* approach, or the altering of the methodology, to obtain results that valued the time of the ESEA student participants and maintained the



integrity of the educational sojourn (Neumann, 2003). Past uses of the DMIS tended to centre on research-administered questionnaires, but my interview approach provided a snap-shot of the participants' intercultural adaptation, and had the advantage of being relatively un-self-censored because participation was limited to one interview, without the opportunity for self-censorship and over-emphasis of themes that may emerge in consultation with a researcher, rather than spontaneously in their own lives. Many of the ESEA students were extremely busy, and although they were curious and willing participants in the interviews, were primarily anxious to meet the demands of their own study. I applied this insight from my own previous teaching experience in several PTEs in Auckland, as well as tutoring and lecturing first year students at AUT. It would be counterproductive to waste their time with potentially poorly understood self-rating scales, and resented and/or hastily written journals would jeopardise the research adequacy required by AUTECH and by social scientists generally (McIntyre, 2005). Furthermore, the IPA approach that structured my methodology in this study aimed to minimise any upheavals, so as not to interfere with the phenomenon at hand, which was the intercultural adaptation of the ESEA students in NZ (Smith, Jarman and Osborn, 1999). For the participants, it was the opportunity to tell their stories and have them carefully recorded and understood by what I describe as a Pākehā and the participants generally describe as a "Kiwi" researcher, and to be in the company of fellow ESEA students, who were the primary attractions because the participants had all donated their time willingly despite heavy study workloads and personal stresses. The categorisation and analysis of these experiences and relationships that the ESEA students experienced has been understood by me to be my role and responsibility as the researcher.

Finally, to investigate this overall question I will summatively address the research questions stated at the beginning of the thesis:

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

- 1) Can the intercultural adaptation levels of the ESEA students be assessed with the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998), and can this be accurately observed through their social relationships and activities?

- 2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) for measuring intercultural adaptation among a specific ESEA student sample undergoing an educational sojourn, rather than immigration?
- 3) What types of social relationships do the ESEA students report with New Zealanders during their sojourn, and what impact do these have on their opinions of New Zealanders as a social group?
- 4) What types of social relationships do the ESEA students report with other social groups and what impact do these have?
- 5) To what extent and in which observable patterns have the ESEA students' observations and opinions of all types of social groups in NZ changed as a result of their intercultural adaptation? It is essential to note that this is based upon the participants' own perceptions and memories around their intercultural adaptation experiences.

At the outset of this thesis I began with five separate research questions, but as the thesis was undertaken they became interlinked. Complex interlinking or a layering of increased understanding of the social project holistically is an inevitable result of original research generally and is especially pronounced in qualitative research projects (Cresswell, 2007). Rather than attempting to extrapolate each of these questions I have summarized the main themes found during the research projects and I discuss their implications throughout the rest of this chapter.

First and foremost I mapped the social relationships of the ESEA students with New Zealanders and noted the opinions that they formed of New Zealanders as a result of these interactions. This was supplemented by mapping the social relationships that the ESEA students had made with other social groups such as peer ESEA students or immigrant groups and any observations that they had about these groups. I also examined the effect that intercultural adaptation level had on the type of relationships of the ESEA student groups. Finally, I examined how the ESEA students' observation and opinions about others had changed as a result of their intercultural adaptation level, drawing from their own experiences, reflections and memories that they offered within the interviews.

## **THE FINDINGS ACROSS ALL FIVE LEVELS OF THE DMIS (BENNETT and HAMMER, 1998)**

The primary findings that emerged by applying the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) systematically showed a changing tapestry of concerns about intercultural relationships and an unfurling pattern over the domains of experience by the ESEA students. Despite small fluctuations, it was possible to see the reliance upon university at the lower L1 and L2 levels as a structural and social centre to their lives. For the participant at L1, forays outside of the university were exclusively for the purpose of eating and drinking with the group of immediate ESEA student friends. In the beginning, educational organisations provided basic educational needs, pastoral care in the form of various international student organisations and in many cases accommodation. As they reached L3, the participants were becoming more regularly involved with extra-curricular activities such as work and formal organisations and intercultural relationships became more common. However, these relationships were necessarily shallow and typically compartmentalised, such as a rare exchange of seasonal cards with an elderly neighbour. At L4, however, these intercultural relationships had become more common-place. They were experienced in many more of the extra-curricular domains, such as the work-place and during youth gatherings, but were often characterised by tension and intercultural misunderstandings (Scollon and Scollon, 2001). Finally, at L5, intercultural relationships had become a regular part of P-41's highly developed extra-curricular activities. Many of these Kiwis, Kiwi-Asians, and people from other NZ social groups were definitely viewed as close friends that were maintained over distances between Wellington and Auckland.

Some of the processes of the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) also showed internal shifts that illustrated the intercultural adaptation levels and how these manifested in the lives of the ESEA students. At the ethnorelative levels (L1 – L3), the participants were focused upon their personal challenges that emerge from negotiating a foreign host-country. At L1 there was little overt consideration of NZ culture, or indeed much of NZ as a host-country outside the university. Participants at L2 and L3 utilised their social networks to create intercultural barriers to host-country relationships and services because some of these were considered either

dangerous or sources of anxiety. For example, many intercultural sojourns began with homestay accommodation and secondary schools. Intercultural accommodation was recounted as if these memories were a blur, unless the students had formed unpleasant memories that created or reinforced intercultural resentment. To insulate themselves from these sorts of anxieties and uncertainties, the ESEA students utilised their social networks as intercultural barriers. These intercultural barriers and misunderstandings at these levels contributed to some practical difficulties for the ESEA students, and the most significant among these was misinformation about the quality of health-care and a lack of capability by the police and legal system to protect them. The ESEA student participants had a tendency to deal with their problems internally from their own support networks. Advice was sought from fellow ESEA students first, and if this did not work, they talked the situation over with their parents still residing in their home-country. Some of the participants had even failed to get help or advice for very real difficulties, such as institutional racism and sexual assault.

At the ethnorelative stages, intercultural relationships for the ESEA students were more commonplace, and social services and groups more often utilised as supports. On the occasions that there were intercultural clashes and miscommunication, the ethnorelative participants were able to access, and received, host-country supports through friends, services and their workplace networks. The ESEA student networks continued to be important to the L4 students, but they also began to observe value in host-country services and experiences. Their reliance upon home-country ideals for daily decision-making became less urgent. The ESEA students at L4 had transitioned from ethnocentric values where home-country structures, ideals and beliefs were felt to be the most useful, and had begun to consider occasions where host-country structures, ideals and beliefs could have equal status. Intercultural miscommunication within peer relationships became a signal for closer examination, rather than being rendered as traumatic encounters that required elimination at L1 and L2 and rigid controls at L3. For example, P-50 began to think about how insular some New Zealanders are and underexposed to people from ESEA generally. From insights such as these, an appreciation of ethnic social tensions in NZ began to emerge. Although L4 participants did not condone this type of intercultural resistance by NZ social groups, they were better able to

appreciate the complexities of inter-ethnic group tensions in NZ.

The use of the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) did help in addressing the research questions, and I was able to apply it across all of the levels and each of the ESEA students. The types of relationships that the ESEA students formed with New Zealanders ('Kiwis'), Kiwi-Asian groups, as well as their own ESEA student networks have been documented at each of the five levels from L1 (Denial) through to L5 (Adaptation). As there were no participants at L6, it was not possible to see if these students would report similar patterns. Changing perspectives on intercultural relationships and challenges by the ESEA students have also been documented as they were reflecting on their own personal transformations as well as willing to comment, expand and upon occasion critique the interview contributions of fellow participants during the group interviews. Despite this, the gaps in the DMIS that I identified extensively in the findings described in Chapters Four and Five showed that the present theoretical underpinnings of the DMIS do not yet fully contain the appropriate structures and approaches to explain the specific ESEA perspectives that were unique to the ESEA students in this study.

### **BEYOND THE DMIS (BENNETT and HAMMER, 1998)**

Application of the structures of the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) to the interview material however also revealed some gaps or uneasy spaces that could not be explained. For the ethnocentric participants, there did not seem to be any impetus to compel the ESEA students to adapt to higher intercultural levels. They built their social networks around fellow ESEA students and found solutions for most (if not all) of their problems within these groups. Scholastic achievement remained an ongoing challenge in some cases, but support for that could be gained from their fellow ESEA students, and they selectively accepted help from authority figures rather than their peer domestic students. The greater representation of participants at the ethnocentric levels indicated that many of the ESEA students either did not choose to adapt or to seek the difficulties of challenging intercultural miscommunications that would lead to the springboard adaptation of the SAGD model explained by Kim (2001). In fact, if they could maintain their primary supports through the ESEA student networks, many appeared to be planning to leave without ascending

beyond L3, despite attending educational organisations in NZ for a number of years. These participants may also have attended secondary school in NZ, as well as university. This emphasises choice, or personal agency, of the ESEA students as being a significant factor in the level and a speed of intercultural adaptation.

Personal choice or agency in intercultural adaptation was more emphasised at L1 and L2 than might be expected given the key characteristics of the ethnorelative stages which is/are to resist intercultural adaptation. Although these participants did not necessarily have the skills or exposure to gain access to host-country intercultural relationships, they were open to creating intercultural relationships with fellow ESEA students, in particular, and, to a lesser extent, international students from other regions. Regional relationships appear to be important as a specific goal to the ESEA students, and the rich peer ESEA student network that emerges across NZ is evidence of the pan-Asian relationships that they develop. As the friendships form, they create an intercultural barrier against NZ social groups and thus increase the choices to maintain home-country values and resist intercultural adaptation to NZ and, by association, the West. These barriers are more likely to be a secondary gain rather than an intended effect. Yet, across the sample, it was clear that they operated as an intercultural barrier for the most part.

This agency was most accentuated in the area of sojourn priority. The participants from L1 through to L5 were all acutely conscious of their sojourn priorities. These priorities appeared to change over the course of their sojourn, and each of the levels tended to have their own sojourn priorities. The L1 participant had few academic responsibilities, and this meant that his major concerns were focused upon creating intercultural and national relationships with fellow ESEA students. With a broader sample, the concerns for the L2 participants were more varied, and were more defensive, creating barriers to intercultural relationships with domestic New Zealanders and simultaneously creating intercultural and national relationships with fellow ESEA students. In contrast, the L3 participants were more focused upon the success of their studies and daily routines, and their social life consisted of a developed ESEA student network. L4 participants had developed beyond the educational domain, and were reporting difficulties and challenges in the extra-curricular domains. The L5 participant had negotiated all of these challenges and his

attention was engaged in assessing whether NZ or Japan would make a better base for him to develop his longer-term career. Though it manifested differently through the levels, the ESEA students tended to be extremely vocational, and intercultural relationships with New Zealanders were often seen as secondary priorities. For the ESEA students, their longer term goals were firmly fixed upon career development and family priorities. This finding at L4 and L5 was surprising, because at the beginning of this thesis I had envisioned that at these levels the participants would be focused upon their burgeoning social possibilities. But, in fact, at the higher levels of intercultural adaptation, the process of emergent adulthood (Arnett, 2004) and the primary push factors for a successful international career that had created some of the desire for sojournment in NZ (Wang, 2008) became more evident in the interview context, rather than less.

The emphasis on retaining family ties and reflecting family values was consistent at each of the intercultural levels. The ESEA students were necessarily involved with their families for financial and parental support, but the emphasis on family consultation and reflecting family tradition was very pronounced throughout all levels. As many of the participants had completed their late adolescence and were in emergent adulthood at the time of the interview, these family links seemed stronger than those reported by Arnett (2004) in his study of American youth undergoing similar transitions as they negotiated their path toward adulthood. However, the emphasis on family values in my study was consistent with the emphasis on tradition found by the Asian-American researchers Zhou and Lee (2004), who had studied the formation of ethnic identity amongst Asian youth. This increased emphasis on parental approval did seem to be consistent with Confucian values and, in particular, filial piety (Hwang, 1999). Although the parents and home-country family were seldom the focus of the interviews, there were many references to seeking support from their families and some even consulted their parents in their choice of romantic partners. Another participant withheld that information from her parents because she believed that her family would be upset by her Kiwi partner choice. Continual consultation with parents in their home-countries was very important. This resulted in the renegotiation of home-country values and solutions which were then applied to their host-country challenges. If the participants found it difficult to cope, they turned to their parents as a first priority. Rather than

appearing to seek differentiation from their parents' identities as might be common for Western emergent adults (Arnett, 2004), the ESEA students showed a desire throughout all levels to maintain relationships and often to emulate the lives of their parents, when and where possible. This much voiced trend closely matches a model of filial piety, which is thought to be prevalent among Chinese families. In this model the children of a family unit view their lives as extensions of their parents' lives, which is reinforced in turn by the parents undertaking and understanding that sacrifice to improve the lives of their children is paramount (Hwang, 1999).

The principles structuring the DMIS model are that individuals essentially have independent cultural experiences which are outside the sphere of home-country experiences and require learning the behaviours and beliefs that prevail in a host-country (Bennett, 1993; Bennett and Castiglioni, 2004; Bennett and Hammer, 1998). This was certainly true for the ESEA students in this study overall. Yet, as I have explained in Chapter Three, the specifics of their intercultural adaptations showed that there were carefully maintained ties at all levels of the sample with their parents and their fellow ESEA student networks, which were often focused upon home-country behaviours, experiences, beliefs and values. The ESEA students' continued ties with their parents appear to be consistent with the principles of filial piety, where it is seen as a duty to show gratitude for parental sacrifices because it is understood that the parents have prioritised the lives of their children, which in this case was the tangible provision of an international education (Hwang, 1999). Reciprocally, ESEA appreciated this and their contribution was tangibly displayed by their continued endeavours to retain home-country values, and to succeed as an extension of their family goals, which often incorporate the desire to keep pace or to mobilise upwards in a globalising world. The ESEA participants remained active members of their families and host-country communities. Their inter-regional ESEA intercultural relationships were the first point of intercultural relationships and site of intercultural adaptation, while their secondary site of intercultural relationships and site of intercultural adaptation was with host-country communities. This impression was reinforced by discussion with Peilin Yang in 2008, and it became clear that for an accurate measure of the ESEA students this emphasis would need to be accounted for.



To find a way to address these concerns, it became clear that the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) itself was limited. Some adjustments could be made that would render it more applicable to sociological frameworks, and to apply to the ESEA students in particular. The DMIS is usually explained and cited as a cognitive framework, and the different levels were originally labelled denial, defense, minimisation, acceptance and adaptation because these related to the psychological terms of individual development that are often used to understand intercultural relationships (see, for example, Bennett and Hammer, 1998; Kim, 2001; Verkuyten, 2005). Those approaches have been based on the individuals' psychological decision making, and have been imposed over the process of the intercultural learning or adaptation. But this project was sociological in nature and the emphasis was on the personal, yet partly shared interpretation of the phenomenon (Smith, Jarman and Osborne, 1999) of intercultural adaptation among the ESEA students. For sociological analysis, these processes needed to be understood through their outward manifestation, as the basic premise in my study was that internal values and beliefs cannot be effectively understood by research from an outsiders' perspective. In this case, my own intercultural perspective of a Pākehā NZ researcher could have acted as a barrier to intercultural communication. However, as this project demonstrated, the behaviours of the ESEA students can be effectively observed, and the different themes and concerns that they show can be effectively mapped, and these different perspectives carefully deconstructed and systematically expressed. As the analysis took place, it became clear that behavioural terms and ideas would improve the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) for use in these particular circumstances because they refer to observable characteristics that can be readily identified by the researcher and, if required, verified by the ESEA students reflecting upon their own behaviour.

## **THE FOUNDATION FOR A NEW MODEL OF INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION**

To this end, I now propose the following changes to the DMIS which would make it a more effective methodological tool, incorporating the observable behaviour perspective that will interpret different adaptation levels. The following table shows

the proposed changes to the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) stage descriptors.

Table 7:

*Intercultural Adaptation Stages of the DMIS and the Proposed Changes to the Description of the Model Stages*

<i>Stage</i>	<i>Current terms for DMIS levels</i>	<i>Proposed terms for the levels</i>
Stage 1	Denial	Indifference
Stage 2	Defense	Isolation
Stage 3	Minimisation	Endurance
Stage 4	Acceptance	Tolerance
Stage 5	Adaptation	Comprehension
Stage 6	Integration	Participation

*Note:* As based on the DMIS model (Bennett and Hammer, 1998)

This change to the terms of the model that described ESEA student behaviours, rather than their psychologically assumed states, also necessitated some changes to the way that the intercultural adaptation stages are understood in order to capture the unique perspectives and values of the ESEA students within a Westernised host-country context. The DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) is a developmental model, that attempts to ascribe internal developments as paradigmatic shifts. This is a weakness of the DMIS (1998) because there may be considerable discrepancies between a researcher's observations of behaviour and the participants' internal experiences. To address this problem, I propose to adjust the model toward more observable skill-sets rather than a rough and perhaps inaccurate interpretation of the participants' intercultural adaptation. It is my premise that within intercultural research internal shifts are more accurately described as skill-sets or observable patterns of competency.

These skill-sets are laid out below in the AMISS model (Table 8):

Table 8:

*Adapted model of intercultural skill-sets for East and South-East-Asian international students (AMISS).*

<i>Skill-set</i>	<i>Behaviour and intercultural communication as expressed in East and South-East Asian international students</i>
Indifference (Denial)	Differences downplayed. New host-culture is viewed as impenetrable. Tendency for students to describe themselves as observers not participants. Interaction for official aid and regulations with host-country groups takes place as required but the student does not seek further social interactions. Social interactions are reserved for peer international student groups and emotional identification with home-country remains intact. Clothing, specialty foods, and where possible, medical supplies are obtained from familiar environments.
Isolation (Defense)	Differences between home culture and host culture are perceived. At this stage, the student observes differences such as code of manners and customs but cannot understand reasons for them. There is some engagement with host-country groups, but these interactions are largely uncomfortable and kept to a minimum. Informal social interactions are reserved for peer international student groups or in reduced community organisations such as church groups. Professed identification and loyalty remains tight with their home-country, and family loyalty and nationalism may be idealised during intercultural encounters. There may be some frustration as they recognise that their parents do not fully understand the students' host-country environment. These observations will not be shared within intercultural communications.
Endurance (Minimisation)	Differences in behaviour are understood and may be overly emphasised as a means to dismiss them or continue to see the host-country environment as impenetrable. Like the preceding stage, there is some level of engagement that remains minimal. But a routine is also developing around the minimal interactions and the student may begin to notice events that follow the routine and those that differ. In intercultural communication, New Zealand is seen as a very short part of their life and that 'real life' will continue when they graduate or return to their home-countries. Students appear to be focused on their return to their parents, home-country and the attainment of their educational goals.
Tolerance (Acceptance)	Differences between home and host country are beginning to be well understood. Individual understanding of cultural values and assumptions, have grown and the students begin to adapt to new codes of politeness and understand what is required of them. They also acknowledge that they need to use the services and supports of their host-country environment. Parents and other social supports are too far away and they do not have the resources or knowledge to understand this new environment. Within intercultural conversation

they are able to respond to questions regarding difference between their home-country experiences and cultural experiences. They continue to explain that their sojourn in New Zealand is temporary. Family relationships however, and other personal aspects begin to be kept more private and these are not discussed freely within intercultural settings.

Comprehension (Adaptation)	Individual achieves a strong level of understanding with the new host-country environment. For the student, this means that they are able to understand the value events and culture in New Zealand. In intercultural situations, the student may admit to enjoying the freedoms of living independently and new experiences in the host-country environment. This may lead to internal conflicts of loyalty or identification, but the student continues to retain privacy in intercultural communications. Many students begin to make casual social friendships with domestic student counterparts and go to cross-cultural events, such as parties or outings. In some cases, the students are willing to share more personal ideas within intercultural friendships.
Participation (Integration)	This describes the state when an individual moves fluidly between cultures. The students understand not just the different politeness codes of their host-country environment, but also many of the values behind them. They are able to exert conscious control over intercultural communication, so feel comfortable with speaking about more private emotions. This means that they are more willing to discuss their families and to compare cultural values between their home and host country environments. This skill-set level is likely to evolve only after a long period of time or very intense exposure to intercultural adaptation, such as attending primary or junior school. There may be some expression of fears of losing home-country cultural identity, or, alternatively, they may begin to resist their own home-culture identity.

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The AMISS model more accurately represents the intercultural adaptation behaviour and patterns observed in this sample of ESEA students. Rather than attempting to guide the participants to examine their own internal paradigms within a host-country framework, it allows the researcher to examine the different behaviours of the participants and to ask questions about their motivations rather than to assume that these are readily understood. Effectively, the AMISS provides a robust opportunity to record new paradigmatic shifts among ESEA students or similar samples and to incorporate more developmental platforms of intercultural adaptation.

Two key elements that the more general DMIS was not able to incorporate were also added to each level. These were the age ranges of the ESEA students and the Westernised assumptions of individualist approaches to

intercultural adaptation.

The AMISS specifically allows the developmental age-range of the ESEA students to be incorporated and the considerations of emergent adulthood to be incorporated. The ESEA students need economic and emotional support from home-country parents and the influence of these ties should be incorporated when researching student sojourners. Furthermore the Confucian values of filial piety are also incorporated through this emphasis as the continued input of the parents means that ESEA emergent adults continue with these same reciprocal beliefs within a host-country environment where parental, educational and sometimes economic structures are more consistently challenged by domestic counterparts (see pp. 36-39). Some researchers could critique the AMISS on this emergent adult focus but for the international education studies this is a considerable strength. The literature review section of this project has shown that there are many research projects done in Western and/or English speaking states such as New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the UK and the USA that could benefit from such a specific approach (see pp. 32 - 39).

The second key limitation of the DMIS (Bennett & Hammer, 1998) for the ESEA students was the inherent assumptions of Westernised goals within intercultural adaptation. The DMIS prioritises individual development and suggests that the individuals undergoing intercultural adaptation welcome intercultural adaptation. Ideally within the DMIS structures, internalised conflict with intercultural adaptation is resolved prior to level four or acceptance. In this study though, internalized conflicts around home and host-country values, expectations and behaviours were observed throughout the ESEA sample. Some explanation for this continual process of negotiating and re-negotiating intercultural tensions could be more readily seen in Kim's (2001) SAGD model where the resolving of tension by the individual springboards her or him into a greater level of intercultural adaptation. By itself however, the SAGD model (Kim, 2001) could only account for the continued tension, it does not encapsulate or explain the levels of intercultural development and perceptual understanding of the host-country values that the DMIS (Bennett & Hammer, 1998) does. To that effect, I created the level descriptors within the

AMISS to include these tensions (see table 8). With intercultural tension being so prevalent at each stage, it then became necessary to look at the nature of these tensions.

The solution to understanding these intercultural tensions was closer analysis of the different intercultural levels and this led to the addition of sub-stages to the AMISS. As I noted in Chapters Four and Five the DMIS had been too broad and does not adequately account for the many developmental stages that the 50 individual ESEA students experienced. To increase accuracy and to allow a fuller expression of the intercultural adaptation that participants reflected in their interviews, I then expanded the AMISS. The following table shows the actual sub-stages as applied to each of the participants. It is a six stage model which, in the interests of practical application, was assessed at half increments resulting in eleven possible levels of intercultural adaptation (see Table 9 below).

**Table 9:**

<i>Intercultural adaptation level of AMISS</i>	
<i>Level number</i>	<i>Level descriptor</i>
Level 1	Indifference
Sub-level 1.5	Indifference/Isolation
Level 2	Isolation
Sub-level 2.5	Isolation/Endurance
Level 3	Endurance
Sub-level 3.5	Endurance/Tolerance
Level 4	Tolerance
Sub-level 4.5	Tolerance/Comprehension
Level 5	Comprehension
Sub-level 5.5	Comprehension/Participation
Level 6	Participation
<i>Note: As based on the Adapted Model of Intercultural skill-sets for East and South-East Asian international students.</i>	

By including the sub-stages and accounting for this intercultural tension, I have effectively also incorporated the Confucian values of the ESEA students, and their continued dependence upon their parents. Furthermore, it has also provided an improved platform to examine the ESEA student support and friendship networks. The sub-stages show that the participant is transitioning between two stages, and that this reluctance to go smoothly through to the next level is created by the tensions inherent in Confucian values where the values of the parent are to be embraced or at least externally modelled.

## **FUTURE APPLICATIONS OF THE AMISS MODEL**

Having developed, and partially tested, the AMISS model, it was important for me to consider the application of this model as well as the type of research that should evolve from it in the future. On an immediate level, the AMISS is especially applicable to ESEA students sample in this project. Utilising the principles of the AMISS model and framing question topics around relationships of home and host country ties, current social networks, as well as intercultural relationships in the host-country could yield insight into the process of intercultural development beyond the perception of Western individualism. This broad picture of intercultural adaptation through networked relationships is consistent with the major theoretical developments in the field of intercultural communication research. Furthermore, it is consistent with the theoretical perspective of the sociological imagination and provides a platform for detailed mapping within a holistic and broader scale understanding of social context where economic relationships and international education trends prevail. Effectively, the AMISS offers information that is useful for policy makers, researchers and classroom practitioners simultaneously. Closer examination of ESEA student relationships is important for international education policy makers and researchers because they provide an insight into the network of relationships that will be remembered long after the educational sojourn is completed.

On a practical level for research methods, the AMISS has broad appeal. Like its fore-runner the DMIS (Bennett and Hammer, 1998), the AMISS model is also applicable to both qualitative and quantitative applications. The AMISS has emerged from a qualitative framework, so the application of it to smaller samples and with focus groups as well as individual interviews is self-evident within this study. Despite the snap-shot approach of this study, the AMISS could be applied to many types of qualitative study and, in particular ethnographic study. Ethnographic study is reliant upon flexibility (Marshall and Rossman, 2011) and this extends to interviews as well as observation. As the AMISS model is based upon sub-levels, carefully observed details that fall

outside of the typical levels can be incorporated into the analysis.

However, with the adaptation of carefully constructed questions and accurate scales of intercultural tension, the AMISS could be applied to a quantitative format. Quantitative research has the potential to reach a much broader sample and this means that the AMISS could be used within national based research projects by policy researchers. Furthermore the application of the AMISS across larger samples provides the advantages of continued refinement and adjustment depending upon the sample used. One such proposed application of refinement on a larger sample would be to look at a broader set of age-ranges. The relatively high concentration of emergent adults in this particular sample meant that the focus was upon younger people with active ties to their home-country parents. For a broader sample, these active ties might be less prominent and ties to employers or careers could be stronger.

The AMISS model also contains a theoretical benefit that is important for sociologists and intercultural theorist alike. Global forces need to be understood within a context as these forces have the power to change individuals at a very personal level. In this case, intercultural adaptation is a result of those globalized forces and the AMISS is conducive to maintaining a context driven approach that considers some interplay between home-country parents and host country culture and how this affects and impacts upon the individuals under study. The sociological imagination premises that understanding a process for an individual can only be effective if the macro forces that direct their life are accounted for (Mills, 1959). But crucially underlying the shift between the two models was the shift from the DMIS's (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) basis in psychology to the AMISS's basis in sociology. In effect the phenomenological framework takes a stronger emphasis over the empirical approach of Bennett and Hammer. In short, the structures of the phenomena that create the ESEA student experience becomes more dominant than the psychological state of the participants which, I feel cannot be as effectively ascertained in intercultural research.

Having explained how the new proposed AMISS model could replace DMIS for ESEA student research in NZ, it is now time to return to the



contributions made by the DMIS on the ESEA students and their experiences in New Zealand.

## **A FINAL NOTE ON ESEA STUDENTS**

The aim of this thesis was to examine the experience of the ESEA students primarily and map their intercultural development from a snap-shot approach as they sojourn in New Zealand. Effectively, this thesis analyses the site of intercultural adaptation very closely and I have found that personal agency is a key ingredient of intercultural adaptation. Despite their exposure to host-country cultural groups and opportunities, it is the intention of the student that defines the level of intercultural adaptation s/he develops. It is positive to note that, despite the many students who choose to maintain a lower level of intercultural adaptation, this is the result of their choice for the most part, rather than a reaction against particular negative experiences or encounters of host-country resistance or racism.

This agency however, also creates some inherent threats to the safety of the ESEA students during their sojourn. For the students who do not wish to increase their intercultural adaptation and form social barriers to intercultural adaptation, their relatively closed approach to intercultural relationships can leave them without the benefits of host-country support. In the educational domain, this had the immediate effect of inhibiting learning opportunities in university classes, but it has a longer term implication of lowered opportunities to enter the work-force and to gain valuable host-country work experience. Furthermore, the supportive networks created by the ESEA students also meant that they were often exposed to very real dangers on a day to day basis. Police and health-care workers were treated with suspicion and used only as a last resort. Membership of these groups of ESEA students is continually turning over every few years because of the short durations of the study sojourns. Thus, it is also possible that the supports may well have improved from when these observations were first made, but the critical views of the earlier sojourners were still being passed onto new ESEA students as they entered the networks.

This study has added to the disciplinary application of sociology in NZ and shown through attention to this topic how the sociological imagination (Mills, 1959) continues to be relevant to research in the 2000s. In doing so, this project links the understandings of Asianisation, globalisation and the nature of international education within a sociological context. There are also directly practical applications of the findings of this project to international education in NZ because it is relevant to the changing face of tertiary study in NZ, which is important to Export Education, as well as to the production of world-class qualifications. This project also closely examined the site of ethnic relationships in NZ between 'Asian' groups and other ethnicities such as Pākehā, Māori and Pasifika groups. Rather than simply reporting intercultural resistance, this project showed that the ESEA students have made some interesting and accurate observations of the complexity of these relationships, and seen that New Zealanders are sometimes misinformed. The ESEA students have been aware of some of the tensions between Māori and Pākehā and that the tensions between these bicultural partner groups is observable (Durie, 2005; Hayward, 2012). It is these intercultural tensions that will form the fabric of the ESEA students' memories and reports on ethnic relations in NZ.

This study has also contributed substantially to the development of the field of intercultural communication in general and intercultural relationships more specifically which is an increasingly important research topic as a result of increased globalisation. In particular this thesis examined the requirement for demonstrated cultural capital of an international education that some of the ESEA states feel is necessary for the education of their youth (Bourdieu, 1986). It worked closely with the work of Bennett and Hammer (1998), and also incorporated and utilised elements of Kim (2001) and Scollon and Scollon (2001). The DMIS in particular (Bennett and Hammer, 1998) was tried and tested, and enhanced with closer examination of the other two intercultural theories. Consequently, the development of the AMISS adds to the existing knowledge in the field of intercultural communication and lends it an element of applied sociology in NZ that is created by the intercultural challenges of Western and Eastern regional relationships. More accurately, the ESEA students have provided insight into the groups of

New Zealanders that they describe as “Kiwi” with its Pākehā dominated values, and how these have affected their intercultural adaptation. The ESEA students’ perceptions and understandings were often limited by their own intercultural adaptation level. Despite this however, this thesis was also able to reveal some of the ways in which intercultural relationships affected the intercultural adaptation experiences of the students.

Though future generations of ESEA students in NZ may face different sojourning challenges, the insights that this thesis has generated into their intercultural relationships and their social networks provide an invaluable starting point for new researchers. Furthermore, it provides a clear map of how important peer relationships are to the ESEA students and how these both support and inhibit intercultural adaptation.

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## APPENDICES



## APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

# Participant Information Sheet

**Date Information Sheet Produced:** 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, 2006.

**Project Title** East-Asian tertiary students' experience in New Zealand and their reflections on New Zealand/Aotearoa and New Zealanders.

### Invitation

You are invited to take part in our study by contributing to a small informal discussion that includes you and five other international students from a variety of East and South-East-Asian countries studying in a New Zealand university.

### What is the purpose of the study?

This study forms the basis of a doctoral thesis by Jeanie Benson. It is a three stage study which looks at groups of international students from a variety of universities throughout New Zealand at different stages of your study in New Zealand. Stage one includes students in their first stage of study at a university in New Zealand. In this stage the focus is on current experiences and comparisons between student expectations and actual experiences of New Zealand and New Zealanders. Both stages two and three include students near to completion or who are in their final year and this is focused on memories or reflections. Stage two includes students who are intending to return to their country of origin permanently, while stage three is made up of students that are intending to stay in New Zealand and gain residency.

### How are people chosen to be asked to be part of the study?

In this study, participants come from a variety of sources. Many of you have been contacted through a friend or family member that is employed to obtain participants. Some of you may have answered an advertisement placed in the student publication or magazine of your tertiary institution. A very small percentage of students may have been recommended via your lecturers. All participation is entirely voluntary and you are encouraged to voice any concerns you may have and withdraw at any time you wish to prior to the final write-up and publication of this thesis.

### What happens in the study?

This study is made up of two types of interviews – individual interviews with Jeanie Benson or discussion groups of 4-6 participants which are intended to run on an informal basis. You will be invited to discuss a number of topics based on how you feel about New Zealand and New Zealanders.

- a. What you like about New Zealand
- b. What you don't enjoy about New Zealand
- c. What you find difficult about New Zealand
- d. How you feel about New Zealanders
- e. How you feel about other "Asian" groups.

### Possible discomforts and risks and how they will be alleviated.

This is a discussion based study that will require you to talk with students from different backgrounds and countries of origins. It is possible that you may feel uncomfortable in this situation – although every effort will be made on the part of myself to make you feel welcome and included in all parts of the discussion. All participants are regarded as equally important and your views an important part of this study. Confidentiality within the room and between participants will be agreed upon before the group topics are introduced.

Recording these discussions on both audio and video is an essential part of the interview process and it is hoped that this will not contribute to you feeling self-conscious. The only individuals who will actually watch the video tape or listen to the audio tape will be myself – Jeanie Benson, my supervisors Dr. Charles Crothers and Dr. Jane Verbitsky and potentially research staff who transcribe data. Remember, your identity will remain confidential with me at all times and any staff member or members that may help with the transcribing will not be made aware of your personal identity.

#### **What are the benefits ?**

These discussions are intended to be fun and interesting as well as a way to gather information. You may make new friends and learn how students feel about studying in New Zealand. You may also enjoy knowing that your opinions will be taken seriously and in time made available in general to a wide number of groups and organisations in New Zealand and internationally.

#### **How will my privacy be protected?**

Your identity will be protected at each stage of the process. Firstly your personal details will be kept in a separate space from the transcriptions at all times. To show you which details, I have attached an example of a participant information summary sheet. Both the summary information sheets and transcriptions will be kept in locked filing cabinets at Auckland University of Technology and the keys will be held by Jeanie Benson or with the project supervisor – Dr. Charles Crothers – at all times. During the writing up process, only the results of the discussions will be used, not the material on the video or audio tapes. Any direct quotes will be presented in text and your own name will be kept entirely confidential.

#### **What are the costs of participating in the project? (including time)**

This process will take from one to three hours. Time variations may be necessary as some topics may take more or less time than anticipated. It is important to know that the discussions will not extend beyond this time unless with the consensus of the entire group. There are no other anticipated costs or inconveniences related to this project.

#### **Opportunity for further involvement.**

Further involvement in this project is actively encouraged. As a focus group participant you are invited to continue contributing your experiences and opinions via a discussion board at (a website address will be provided in the final version when it is fully established). Confidentiality of yourself and other participants will be strictly maintained with password control.

#### **Opportunity to receive feedback on results of research**

Feedback on this study or interest in this project is warmly welcomed. Participants are invited to check its progress on my research page (**a website address will be provided in final version when website is established**). Various report summaries will be available, as well as comments on the overall progress of the study is available. A forum is provided for discussion or for confidential comments there will be an email feedback form. You may also contact me directly on my AUT email [jeanie.benson@aut.ac.nz](mailto:jeanie.benson@aut.ac.nz).

#### **Participant Concerns**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTECH, Madeline Banda, [madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz](mailto:madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz), 921 9999 ext. 8044.

**Researcher Contact Details:** You may contact me directly on my AUT email [jeanie.benson@aut.ac.nz](mailto:jeanie.benson@aut.ac.nz) or by telephone on my cellphone which is 021 335 020.

**Project Supervisor Contact Details:** Dr. Charles Crothers, School of Social Sciences [charles.crothers@aut.ac.nz](mailto:charles.crothers@aut.ac.nz), telephone 921 9999 ext. 8468.

## APPENDIX 2: MEMORANDUM OF ETHICS APPLICATION



# MEMORANDUM

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To: Charles Crothers  
From: **Madeline Banda** Executive Secretary, ATEC  
Date: 27 March 2006  
Subject: Ethics Application Number 05/10 **East-Asian tertiary students' experience in New Zealand and their reflections on New Zealand/Aotearoa and New Zealanders.**

---

Dear Charles

Thank you for providing written evidence as requested. I am pleased to advise that it satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (ATEC) at their meeting on 17 January 2005. Your ethics application is now approved for a period of three years until 27 March 2009. I advise that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit to ATEC the following:

- A brief annual progress report indicating compliance with the ethical approval given using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/ethics>, including a request for extension of the approval if the project will not be completed by the above expiry date;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/ethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 27 March 2009 or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner;

You are reminded that, as applicant, you are responsible for ensuring that any research undertaken under this approval is carried out within the parameters approved for your application. Any change to the research outside the parameters of this approval must be submitted to ATEC for approval before that change is implemented.

Please note that ATEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to make the arrangements necessary to obtain this. Also, should your research be undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply within that jurisdiction.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, we ask that you use the application number and study title in all written and verbal correspondence with us. Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, you are welcome to contact Charles Grinter, Ethics Coordinator, by email at [charles.grinter@aut.ac.nz](mailto:charles.grinter@aut.ac.nz) or by telephone on 921 9999 at extension 8860.

On behalf of the Committee and myself, I wish you success with your research and look forward to reading about it in your reports.

Yours sincerely

Madeline Banda

**Executive Secretary**

**Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee**

Cc: S Jeanie Benson [jeanie.benson@aut.ac.nz](mailto:jeanie.benson@aut.ac.nz)

## APPENDIX 3: MEMORANDUM OF ETHICS APPLICATION ADJUSTMENT



# MEMORANDUM

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To: Charles Crothers  
From: **Madeline Banda** Executive Secretary, AUTEC  
Date: 13 October 2006  
Subject: Ethics Application Number 05/10 **East-Asian tertiary students' experience in New Zealand and their reflections on New Zealand/Aotearoa and New Zealanders.**

---

Dear Charles

I am pleased to advise that as the Executive Secretary of the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) I have approved minor amendments to your ethics application to allow interviews, a slight alteration to the recruitment process and provision of a koha to participants in the form of a voucher. This delegated approval is made in accordance with section 5.3.2 of AUTEC's *Applying for Ethics Approval: Guidelines and Procedures* and is subject to endorsement at AUTEC's meeting on 13 November 2006.

I remind you that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit to AUTEC the following:

- A brief annual progress report indicating compliance with the ethical approval given using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/ethics>, including when necessary a request for extension of the approval one month prior to its expiry on 27 March 2009;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/ethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 27 March 2009 or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner;

It is also a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence and that AUTEC approval is sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to the participant documents involved.

You are also reminded that, as applicant, you are responsible for ensuring that any research undertaken under this approval is carried out within the parameters approved for your application. Any change to the research outside the parameters of this approval must be submitted to AUTEC for approval before that change is implemented.

Please note that AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to make the arrangements necessary to obtain this.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, we ask that you use the application number and study title in all written and verbal correspondence with us. Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, you are welcome to contact Charles Grinter, Ethics Coordinator, by email at [charles.grinter@aut.ac.nz](mailto:charles.grinter@aut.ac.nz) or by telephone on 921 9999 at extension 8860.

On behalf of the Committee and myself, I wish you success with your research and look forward to reading about it in your reports.

Yours sincerely

Madeline Banda  
Executive Secretary  
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

## APPENDIX 4: PARTICIPANT SUMMARY FORM

### East-Asian and Selected South-East-Asian Tertiary students experience in New Zealand and their reflections on New Zealand/Aotearoa and New Zealanders

### Participant Summary Form

Please fill out the following sheet.

Note: **All** personal information will be kept strictly confidential and will be used **only** for research purposes.

1. Name you wish to be known by: \_\_\_\_\_  
(First Name) (Family Name)
2. Your Age: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Your Gender: (Please Select ☒)  
Female ☐  
Male ☐
4. Your Country of Origin: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Your Home town/City \_\_\_\_\_
6. Current Course of Study in New Zealand: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Previously Completed Courses in New Zealand. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Total number of Years of Study at any/all Universities in New Zealand:  
(Please Circle the Correct Number ① ) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

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Please **do not** write in this section.

University	
Town/City	
Date of Interview	
Time of Interview	
Intention of sojourn	

**APPENDIX 5: RAW DATA RESULTS TABLES**

**Table 9:***Results table for participant interview code and date*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Interview code</b>	<b>Date</b>
P-1	AUT Group 1	April 12 2007
P-2	AUT Group 1	April 12 2007
P-3	AUT Group 1	April 12 2007
P-4	AUT Group 2	April 20 2007
P-5	AUT Group 2	April 20 2007
P-6	AUT Group 3	April 30 2007
P-7	AUT Group 3	April 30 2007
P-8	AUT Group 3	April 30 2007
P-9	AUT Group 4	March 10, 2008
P-10	AUT Group 4	March 10, 2008
P-11	AUT Group 4	March 10, 2008
P-12	UA Group 1	April 19 2007
P-13	UA Group 1	April 19 2007
P-14	UA Group 1	April 19 2007
P-15	UA Group 1	April 19 2007
P-16	UA Group 1	April 19 2007
P-17	UA Group 2	May 16 2007
P-18	UA Group 2	May 16 2007
P-19	UA Group 2	May 16 2007
P-20	UA Group 2	May 16 2007
P-21	UA Group 3	May 24 2007
P-22	UA Group 3	May 24 2007
P-23	UA Group 3	May 24 2007
P-24	UA Group 3	May 24 2007
P-25	UA Group 3	May 24 2007
P-26	UA Group 4	May 29 2007
P-27	UA Group 4	May 29 2007
P-28	UA Group 4	May 29 2007
P-29	UA Group 4	May 29 2007
P-30	UA Group 4	May 29 2007
P-31	UA Group 4	May 29 2007
P-32	UA Group 5	May 20 2007
P-33	UA Group 5	May 20 2007
P-34	UA Group 5	May 20 2007
P-35	WU Group 1	June 6 2008
P-36	WU Group 1	June 6 2008
P-37	WU Group 1	June 6 2008
P-38	WU Group 1	June 6 2008
P-39	WU Group 1	June 6 2008
P-40	WU Group 1	June 6 2008
P-41	WU Group 2	August 13 2007
P-42	WU Group 2	August 13 2007
P-43	WU Group 2	August 13 2007
P-44	WU Group 2	August 13 2007
P-45	AUT Individual 1	June 10 2007
P-46	AUT Individual 2	May 7, 2007
P-47	AUT Individual 3	May 8 2007
P-48	UA Individual 1	August 8, 2007
P-49	AUT Individual 4	June 9 2007
P-50	AUT Individual 5	April 13, 2007

**Table 10:***Results table for sampling variables*

Code	Age range	Nationality range	Gender	University	Sojourn year
P-1	18 to 20	Other	male	AUT	7
P-2	18 to 20	Other	male	AUT	4
P-3	25 plus	Other	female	AUT	1
P-4	21 to 24	China	female	AUT	4
P-5	18 to 20	China	female	AUT	4
P-6	21 to 24	Other	female	AUT	4
P-7	21 to 24	China	female	AUT	1
P-8	18 to 20	Malaysia	male	AUT	1
P-9	25 plus	Malaysia	female	AUT	2
P-10	25 plus	Other	female	AUT	3
P-11	25 plus	Malaysia	male	AUT	1
P-12	18 to 20	China	male	UA	3
P-13	25 plus	Malaysia	female	UA	7
P-14	18 to 20	Other	male	UA	2
P-15	21 to 24	Malaysia	male	UA	3
P-16	21 to 24	Other	male	UA	1
P-17	21 to 24	Malaysia	female	UA	1
P-18	21 to 24	Malaysia	female	UA	1
P-19	21 to 24	Malaysia	female	UA	4
P-20	21 to 24	Other	male	UA	3
P-21	18 to 20	Malaysia	female	UA	4
P-22	21 to 24	China	male	UA	3
P-23	21 to 24	China	male	UA	2
P-24	25 plus	Malaysia	female	UA	3
P-25	21 to 24	China	female	UA	4
P-26	21 to 24	Malaysia	female	UA	3
P-27	21 to 24	Malaysia	female	UA	3
P-28	21 to 24	Malaysia	female	UA	3
P-29	21 to 24	Malaysia	female	UA	3
P-30	21 to 24	Malaysia	female	UA	2
P-31	21 to 24	Malaysia	female	UA	3
P-32	21 to 24	China	female	UA	4
P-33	21 to 24	China	female	UA	5
P-34	21 to 24	China	male	WU	6
P-35	21 to 24	China	female	WU	5
P-36	21 to 24	China	male	WU	5
P-37	18 to 20	Other	female	WU	7
P-38	18 to 20	China	female	WU	5
P-39	18 to 20	China	male	WU	7
P-40	18 to 20	Other	female	WU	8
P-41	21 to 24	China	male	WU	5
P-42	21 to 24	China	female	WU	4
P-43	18 to 20	Other	male	WU	3
P-44	25 plus	Malaysia	female	WU	2
P-45	21 to 24	Other	male	AUT	6
P-46	21 to 24	Chinese	female	AUT	4
P-47	18 to 20	Other	male	AUT	2
P-48	21 to 24	Malaysia	male	UA	3
P-49	18 to 20	Chinese	male	AUT	1
P-50	21 to 24	Other	female	AUT	1

Note: Sojourn year code translates to year that student is in. For example p-1= is in 7<sup>th</sup> year of sojourn.



**Table 11:****Results table for educational variables**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Secondary School</b>	<b>PTE</b>	<b>Study Level</b>	<b>Study area</b>
P-1	4	0	Bachelors	Business
P-2	6	0	Pre-degree	Business
P-3	0	1	Graduate Dip	Business
P-4	2	0	Pre-degree	Business
P-5	2	0	Pre-degree	Business
P-6	0	0	Bachelors	Health
P-7	0	0	Bachelors	Communication
P-8	0	0	Bachelors	Health
P-9	0	0	Doctoral	Humanities
P-10	0	0	Doctoral	Humanities
P-11	0	0	Doctoral	Education
P-12	0	0	Bachelors	Science
P-13	0	0	Doctoral	Science
P-14	2	0	Bachelors	Science
P-15	0	0	Bachelors	Science
P-16	0	0	Bachelors	Language
P-17	0	0	Bachelors	Education
P-18	0	0	Bachelors	Science
P-19	0	0	Masters	Engineering
P-20	2	0	Bachelors	Science
P-21	0	0	Bachelors	Humanities
P-22	0	2	Bachelors	Science
P-23	0	2	Bachelors	Engineering
P-24	0	0	Bachelors	Health
P-25	0	0	Masters	Education
P-26	0	0	Bachelors	Science
P-27	0	0	Bachelors	Science
P-28	0	0	Bachelors	Business
P-29	0	0	Bachelors	Science
P-30	0	0	Masters	Health
P-31	0	0	Bachelors	Science
P-32	3	0	Bachelors	Engineering
P-33	2	0	Bachelors	Engineering
P-34	4	0	Bachelors	Mathematics
P-35	0	1	Bachelors	Science
P-36	5	0	Bachelors	Science
P-37	4	0	Bachelors	Science
P-38	3	0	Bachelors	Engineering
P-39	5	0	Bachelors	Science
P-40	5	0	Bachelors	Science
P-41	1	0	Bachelors	Science
P-42	0	0	Bachelors	Science
P-43	2	0	Bachelors	Language
P-44	0	0	Doctoral	Education
P-45	4	0	Bachelors	Engineering
P-46	0	0	Bachelors	Business
P-47	0	1	Bachelors	Language
P-48	0	0	Bachelors	Science
P-49	0	0	Pre-degree	Business
P-50	0	0	Bachelors	Health

Note: The number in Secondary school and PTE corresponds to number of enrolment years attended at that institution.

**Table 12:***Results table for accommodation variables*

<b>Code</b>	<b>Homestay</b>	<b>Accommodation type experience</b>
P-1	Yes	1and3
P-2	Yes	1and3
P-3	No	1
P-4	Yes	2
P-5	Yes	2
P-6	No	2
P-7	Yes	1
P-8	Yes	1and2
P-9	No	2
P-10	No	2
P-11	No	2
P-12	No	1
P-13	No	1
P-14	No	1
P-15	No	1
P-16	No	1
P-17	No	1
P-18	No	1
P-19	No	1
P-20	No	1
P-21	No	1
P-22	No	1
P-23	No	1
P-24	No	1
P-25	No	1
P-26	No	1
P-27	No	1
P-28	No	1
P-29	No	1
P-30	No	1
P-31	Yes	1
P-32	No	2
P-33	No	2
P-34	Yes	2
P-35	Yes	1
P-36	No	1
P-37	Yes	1
P-38	Yes	1
P-39	No	1
P-40	Yes	1
P-41	Yes	1
P-42	Yes	1
P-43	Yes	1
P-44	Yes	1
P-45	No	1and3
P-46	No	1and2
P-47	Yes	1
P-48	No	1and3
P-49	No	1and2
P-50	Yes	1and2

Note: Accommodation types are coded: 1= hall of residence, 2=flatshare, 3=mixed ethnic flatshare

**Table 13:*****Results table for social organisations and work experience***

<b>Code</b>	<b>Other organisations</b>	<b>Work Exper (Part-time)</b>
P-1	Yes	Yes
P-2	No	Yes
P-3	No	No
P-4	No	Yes
P-5	No	Yes
P-6	Yes	Yes
P-7	No	No
P-8	No	No
P-9	No	No
P-10	Yes	No
P-11	No	No
P-12	No	No
P-13	No	Yes
P-14	Yes	Yes
P-15	Yes	No
P-16	No	No
P-17	No	No
P-18	No	No
P-19	No	No
P-20	No	No
P-21	No	No
P-22	No	No
P-23	No	No
P-24	No	No
P-25	No	No
P-26	No	No
P-27	No	No
P-28	No	No
P-29	No	No
P-30	No	No
P-31	No	No
P-32	No	Yes
P-33	No	Yes
P-34	No	Yes
P-35	No	Yes
P-36	Yes	Yes
P-37	No	Yes
P-38	No	Yes
P-39	No	No
P-40	No	No
P-41	No	No
P-42	No	Yes
P-43	No	Yes
P-44	No	No
P-45	Yes	Yes
P-46	Yes	No
P-47	No	No
P-48	No	Yes
P-49	No	Yes
P-50	No	No

Note: Other organisations refers to civic duties, hobbies, clubs or volunteer activities

**Table 14:****Results table for leisure tourism travel type and romantic relationships**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Travel type</b>	<b>Romantic Relationships</b>
P-1	4	No
P-2	3	No
P-3	1	No
P-4	3	No
P-5	3	No
P-6	4	Same nationality
P-7	1	No
P-8	1	No
P-9	3	No
P-10	4	No
P-11	3	Same nationality
P-12	3	No
P-13	3	No
P-14	3	No
P-15	3	No
P-16	1	No
P-17	2	No
P-18	2	No
P-19	3	No
P-20	1	No
P-21	1	No
P-22	1	No
P-23	3	No
P-24	3	No
P-25	3	No
P-26	3	No
P-27	3	No
P-28	1	No
P-29	1	No
P-30	1	No
P-31	3	No
P-32	4	Same nationality
P-33	3	No
P-34	4	Same nationality
P-35	3	No
P-36	4	No
P-37	3	With Pākehā
P-38	3	No
P-39	3	No
P-40	3	No
P-41	3	No
P-42	3	No
P-43	4	No
P-44	1	No
P-45	4	Same nationality
P-46	3	No
P-47	3	No
P-48	4	No
P-49	3	No
P-50	3	With Pākehā

Note: Travel type refers to leisure experiences undertaken. 1=city, 2=organised trips, 3=package tours, 4= independent travel

**Table 15:*****Results table for internal motivation and intercultural adaptation levels***

<b>Code</b>	<b>Sojourn intention</b>	<b>Adaptation level</b>
P-1	Stay	Tolerance/Acceptance
P-2	Stay	Endurance/Tolerance
P-3	Leave	Isolation
P-4	Leave	Endurance
P-5	Leave	Isolation
P-6	Stay	Tolerance/Acceptance
P-7	Brief stay	Isolation/Endurance
P-8	Leave	Isolation
P-9	Leave	Endurance/Tolerance
P-10	Leave	Endurance
P-11	Leave	Endurance/Tolerance
P-12	Leave	Endurance
P-13	Leave	Tolerance
P-14	Brief stay	Isolation/Endurance
P-15	Brief stay	Tolerance
P-16	Leave	Indifference/Isolation
P-17	Leave	Isolation/Endurance
P-18	Leave	Isolation
P-19	Leave	Isolation/Endurance
P-20	Leave	Isolation/Endurance
P-21	Leave	Endurance
P-22	Leave	Isolation/Endurance
P-23	Leave	Isolation/Endurance
P-24	Leave	Endurance
P-25	Leave	Endurance
P-26	Leave	Isolation
P-27	Leave	Isolation/Endurance
P-28	Leave	Isolation/Endurance
P-29	Leave	Endurance
P-30	Leave	Isolation/Endurance
P-31	Leave	Isolation/Endurance
P-32	Brief stay	Endurance
P-33	Brief stay	Isolation/Endurance
P-34	Brief stay	Endurance
P-35	Leave	Isolation
P-36	Stay	Tolerance/Acceptance
P-37	Brief stay	Isolation/Endurance
P-38	Leave	Isolation/Endurance
P-39	Leave	Tolerance
P-40	Leave	Isolation/Endurance
P-41	Leave	Tolerance
P-42	Leave	Endurance
P-43	Brief stay	Tolerance
P-44	Leave	Isolation
P-45	Brief stay	Acceptance
P-46	Leave	Endurance
P-47	Leave	Isolation/Endurance
P-48	Brief stay	Tolerance/Acceptance
P-49	Leave	Isolation
P-50	Stay	Tolerance/Acceptance