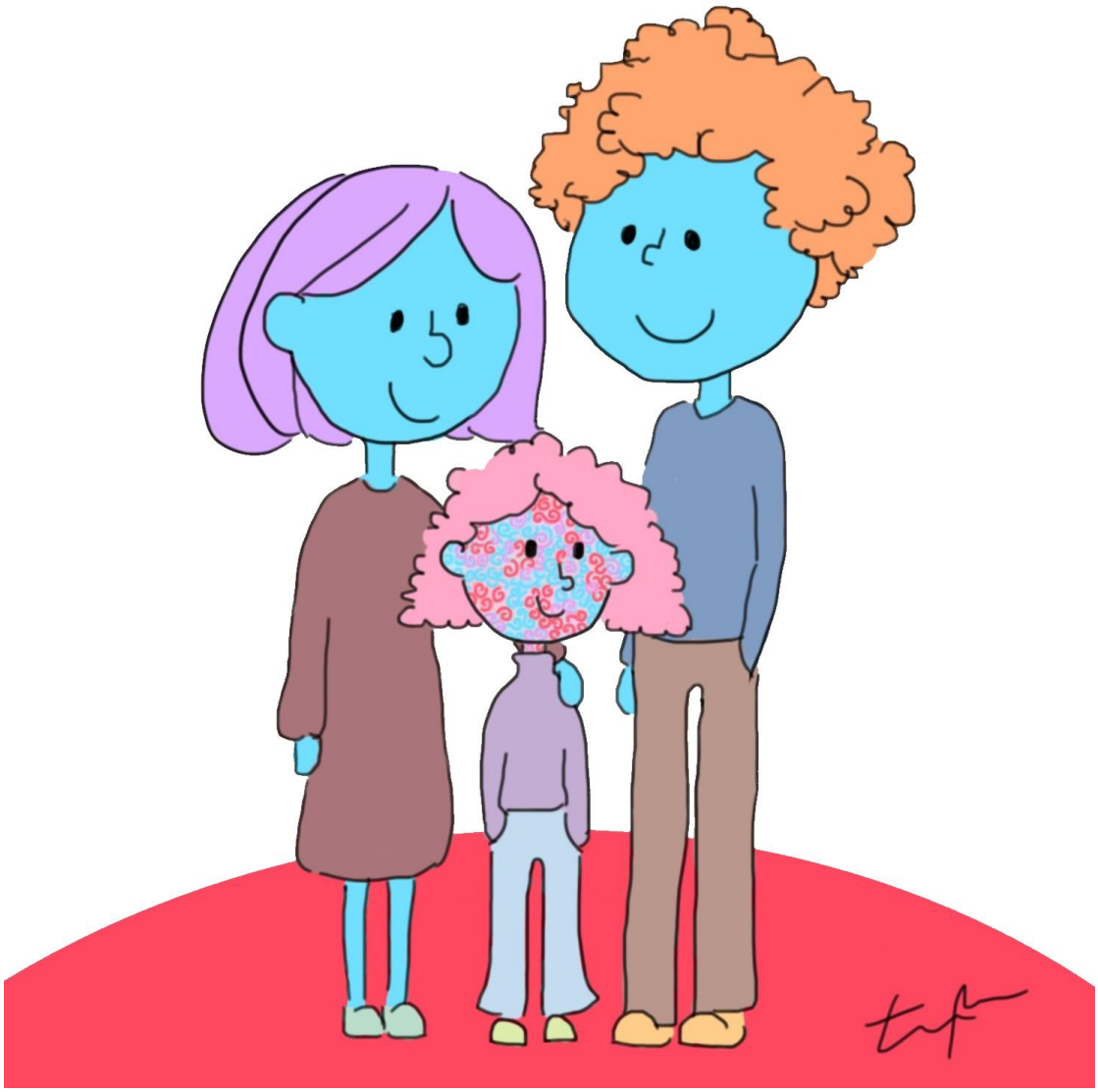
Home and Belonging in Third Culture Kids:

Where to go for University?



Rapportens samlede antal tegn
(med mellemrum & fodnoter): 111.293

Svarende til antal normalsider: 46,4

Esther Sofie Fanøe

Studienummer: 20134290

Vejleder: Paula Cavada-Hrepich

10. Semester, Psykologi

Speciale

Aalborg Universitet

2. november 2020

Abstract

The focus of this Mixed Methods study is on young adult Third Culture Kids: individuals who have spent a significant part of their developmental years in a culture or country that is not their parents' home culture. With global mobility on the rise, a consistent larger number of individuals choose to travel and work abroad, often bringing their families along with them. For those children who grow up outside of their country of origin, it is common to experience a sense of cultural homelessness and disconnect with what is otherwise known as the home culture. The aim here has thus been to gain a greater understanding of how home and belonging is experienced by young adult Third Culture Kids during the transitional phase related to graduation and application to university, and what factors influence this decision.

The study was conducted using a quantitative online survey distributed to 126 participants representing 44 nationalities, and qualitative, semi-structured interviews with two Third Culture Kids. The data sets showed that many of the TCKs who participated in this study have chosen to study in countries where they believe they will have a better chance at a good life, whether this be due to higher quality education, less violence, higher political stability, or warmer weather. Additionally, the data sets from the completed survey showed that the majority of participants, regardless of their country of origin, would prefer to study in English as they continue their education. With regards to home and belonging, survey and interview results showed that many individuals consider home in terms of relationships, rather than a physical place, and as such choose to actively pursue relationships wherein they have had similar experiences and a common understanding of the world. For some of the participants belonging refers to a place, or setting, in which they feel at home, or in specific relationships where they have an established history, while others feel a sense of belonging in more abstract contexts: a type of community rather than solely a list of people in a given context. Many individuals also express a desire to continue being part of international communities, where they feel more at home than they would in a mono-cultural context.

Table of Contents

Introduction

An increasing number of children today grow up globally mobile, living outside their countries of origin due to their parents' employment, and often attending international schools rather than becoming part of the local educational system. While no complete statistics exist showing number of people worldwide live in a country other than their passport country, some individual statistics can be found. The Association of Americans Resident Overseas published in 2016 that the U.S. State Department estimates showed that roughly 8.7 million American nationals were living abroad: an increase of 2.4 million people over a five-year period (AARO). The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs found in 2017 that 1.35 million Japanese citizens were residing outside of Japan, a 230% increase since 1968 when the Ministry started keeping a record (Nippon). India's Ministry of External Affairs reported in April 2020 that 12.6 million Indian passport holders were residing abroad (Kawoosa & Laskar, 2020), and the United Kingdom reports that roughly 1 in 10 of their population live permanently abroad, an estimated 5.5 million (BBC). In Denmark governmental statistics show a more moderate increase from 17,979 Danish citizens choosing to emigrate in 1980, to 20,127 in 2019 (Appendix 1), although it should be noted that these numbers do not reflect how many people reside abroad, but only those who move abroad in a given year. An article from 2014 by the Danish Employer's Association does however state that roughly 84,000 Danish citizens are estimated to live and work abroad (Ravn, 2014), thus accounting for upwards of 1.7% of the Danish population at the time. While all these numbers reflect slightly different areas, it all goes to show that there are large numbers of foreign nationals residing throughout the world in countries other than their country of origin. It can be assumed that while not all foreign nationals have families, a large number do choose to travel with their spouse and/or children.

Children growing up in a high mobility setting, as experienced when moving between countries, and living as foreign nationals, are often referred to as Third Culture Kids, but have also accumulated other names, such as transcultural (Kwon, 2018), global nomads (Ferstad, 2002), cultural chameleons (Moore & Barker, 2011), and a number of other terms (Bonebright, 2010; Fanøe & Marsico, 2018; Pollock & Van Reken, 1999). These children are the ones who grow up in a country apart from their own, but rarely with the intent of permanent relocation. Where their parents are likely to have

strong ties to their home country, many Third Culture Kids experience feeling like they do not fully belong to any one culture, and while some feel at home everywhere, for others the reality becomes an experience of cultural homelessness, and being unable to find a place to call home (Pollock et.al., 2017).

Having a place to belong is considered by many to be an integral part of a worthwhile life, as seen by both Maslow (2012), and Buber (1970). Maslow considers love and belonging to be a fundamental human need (Jacobsen, 2014), stating that "Just as all trees need sun, water, and foods from the environment, so do all people need safety, love and status from their environment" (Maslow, 2012). While Buber (1970), as a philosopher, has a different understanding and approach toward the individual and their needs, he still sees the importance of viewing the individual in relation to others, as well as the importance of strong interpersonal relationships. This is seen clearly in his work *I and Thou* (1970) where Buber quite eloquently puts forth the following proposition: "The concentration and fusion into a whole being can never be accomplished by me, can never be accomplished without me. I require a You to become; becoming I, I say You." Walter Kaufmann, who translated the 1970 edition of Buber's *I and Thou*, ponders in his foreword that there are many I-You relationships to be had. Among these he keeps coming back to how, by embracing the relationship, the connected individuals can dispel and ease each other's loneliness (Buber, 1970). Among those who grow up in international contexts it can be especially difficult to find a place, or context, in which to belong (Bonebright, 2010; Moore & Barker, 2011; Pollock & Van Reken, 1999; Wojtecka, 2018), and as time passes more and more of those who grew up as Third Culture Kids become adults, it does not change the way that their formative years serve to shape the individual, allowing for grown individuals around the world who are unable to find a place to call their own, or people with whom they belong (Pollock et al., 2017). In this thesis there is an interest in how young adult Third Culture Kids experience home and belonging during times of transition, and as such it has been constructed in an attempt to answer this question.

In the section below, the concepts of Third Culture Kids, Belonging, and Home will be unpacked and defined, to give a contextual understanding of the terminology and since these are the main theoretical concepts used in this thesis. Following the concept clarification will be a short review of existing literature on the subject, as well as the potential ethnocentrism apparent within this area of research. Finally, the aim of the

thesis and design of the study will be presented, as well as the overall structure of the paper.

Definition of Third Culture Kids

The concept of the Third Culture was first introduced by Drs John and Ruth Useem in the late 1950's and early 1960's, whose original understanding of Third Culture Kids referred to children who accompany their parents into another culture and can be roughly divided into four main groups: Foreign Service Kids, Military Brats, Corporate Brats, and Missionary Kids. These are children whose parent(s) work in a representative role, which in turn extends to the children (Cottrell & Downie, 2012). As part of one of these subgroups, the children were understood as living in an interstitial culture, between the home (first) and host (second) culture, where there is focus on shared commonalities based on belonging to neither the home nor the host culture – a trademark of those living an internationally mobile lifestyle. Nowadays this third culture is especially noticeable in international schools, where children from a multitude of countries and backgrounds are brought together.

The work of Drs Useem was built upon and expanded by David Pollock and Ruth Van Reken, and in 1989 Pollock presented the revised definition "A Third Culture Kid (TCK) is a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' culture" (in Pollock et al., 2017). What sets TCKs apart from other globally mobile individuals is that "the TCK builds relationships to all the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background" (Pollock, & Van Reken, 1999). As such it is understood that despite every expatriate family having lived in a unique composition of countries, with different durations of stay, the common implications and struggles that come from experiencing new cultures and living this nomadic lifestyle result in a camaraderie and mutual understanding (Fanøe & Marsico, 2018).

The Limitations of Third Culture Kids

One of the limitations that comes from the term TCK is that not only is it based on studies by Dr Useem, an American, among "U.S. American kids living in India with

parents who were most likely both U.S. citizens working in this one place" (Pollock et.al., 2017), but the majority of research done by others, especially in the earlier years, was done among Western children at international schools in different African nations. As such, the original concept, while helpful to some, appears inherently flawed when applied to a universal population rather than a more specific subset. The observations made by Pollock et.al. (2017) were that the primary reason for the concept of TCK falling short was due to an increasing cultural complexity. By this is meant that international children nowadays not only have to navigate passport culture, host culture, and the general shared internationally mobile experience referred to as the Third Culture, but also a variety of subsets of each of these. This can be due both to parents from different cultural backgrounds or being from a non-Western background and having to become part of the international culture, which is inherently rooted in Western practices and understandings (Pollock et.al., 2017). Furthermore, while some who on paper fit into the TCK mould are unable to relate to the descriptions and predictions made by Pollock and Van Reken (1999), on the other hand are a variety of groups and individuals who do not fit into the original definition of TCK, but nonetheless relate greatly to those challenges and benefits associated with the TCK lifestyle (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999; Pollock et.al., 2017). One such example would be refugee children who, on the one hand, qualify as individuals who spend a significant part of their developmental years outside their parents' culture, but whose experiences are shaped very differently from children of diplomats or missionaries moving abroad because of their parent's jobs, but still have a passport country to return to. In 2002 Van Reken introduced the concept of Cross-Cultural Kids (CCKs), explaining how this was done as "a way (hopefully!) to move past the arguments on language for who could or couldn't be named a TCK so the larger story of what is going on in our world could be better studied." (Pollock et.al., 2017). In this way, instead of considering that the TCK theory may be better suited as a particularistic framework, Van Reken chooses to expand and elaborate on the terminology to include more subgroups. This is a very optimistic, and largely simplistic view on the real issue at play; that the fundamental groundwork for the theoretical terminology is flawed. Korpela (2016) considers the concept of TCK flawed due to the "implicitly essentializing understanding of 'culture'" employed by Pollock and Van Reken, expanding on the complexity and dynamic nature of 'culture' and in turn pointing out how simplified it becomes when Pollock and Van Reken (1999) define cultures as

ethnic or national entities (Korpela, 2016). Another potential problem with the TCK concept is the inherent focus on conflict found in the theory. Pollock and Van Reken (1999) state that one of the challenges of growing up as a TCK is the lack of cultural balance that comes from not being rooted in any specific culture, and how being a so-called 'cultural chameleon' can result in an individual "who flip-flop back and forth between various behavioral patterns [and] have trouble figuring out their own value system from the multicultural mix they have been exposed to" (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Nonetheless, while there are a number of issues with the concept of TCK; most specifically the focus on conflict, the universalism, and the simplicity attributed to the term 'culture,' it is still a theoretical base that provides a fundamental stepping stone when discussing those individuals who grow up in a culture separate from those of their parent(s), and whose family does not plan to settle in the aforementioned culture long term.

Belonging and Home

The concept of belonging as used in this paper was developed primarily by Baumeister and Leary and presented in their 1995 publication titled *The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation*. Here they present their belongingness hypothesis, that "human beings have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships" (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

Belongingness, or the sense of belonging, is not based on a particular school of thought, or an isolated theoretical history, but rather as an introduced hypothesis, that was then tested vigorously through analysis of a variety of empirical studies, as well as theoretical foundations related to attachment, belonging and the overall need for human connection. Bowlby (1980) classifies attachment behaviour as an instinctive behaviour "that results in a person attaining or retaining proximity to some other differentiated and preferred individual," which, from an evolutionary perspective, would be beneficiary to the individual not just in terms of reproduction, but survival (Axelrod & Hamilton, 1981). The need to belong is proposed as being "innately prepared," which in this case implies nearly universal, and should have an evolutionary benefit to individuals as well as groups (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Where Bowlby's (1980) attachment theory separates from the belongingness hypothesis presented by

Baumeister and Leary (1995) it becomes clear in Bowlby's focus on the relationship between mother and child, and the way he suggests the reason for attachment among adults to various organisations or groups as revolving primarily around the relationship to the group leader or supervisor – as a stand-in for the primary caregiver. This is where Ainsworth's (1989) understanding of attachment allows for additional common ground to Baumeister and Leary's (1995) belongingness hypothesis, as she examines human attachment not just in infancy and the relationship between mother and child, but discusses attachment in friendships, companions, and intimates, as well as various other constellations (Ainsworth, 1989). Here she describes friendship as "a wide range of dyadic relationships, including relationships with acquaintances with whom one has occasional pleasant interaction, relationships with congenial companions with whom one spends quite a great deal of time in activities of mutual concern or interest, and close, intimate relationships with one or a few particularly valued persons whose company one seeks intermittently" (Ainsworth, 1989). This understanding that friendships can have different purposes, and that while some are short lived or context specific, Ainsworth (1989) is open to the idea that some individuals have platonic relationships of a sufficiently close and enduring sort that they can be said to have affectional bonds, in which "the partner is felt to be a uniquely valued person, not interchangeable with anyone else who might play a similar role." In a similar vein Baumeister and Leary (1995) state that they do not see the need to belong as being derived from a particular relationship or focused on a particular individual. Instead they propose that individuals can achieve a sense of belonging from any person, as long as the relationship fulfils the requirements set forth in the original hypothesis, as will be described in depth later (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

Happiness in life is strongly correlated with having close personal relationships, whether they be romantic or platonic. On the other side of this statement is the connection shown in research between the absence of close relationships, and unhappiness or depression (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Baumeister and Leary (1995) understand human beings to be fundamentally motivated by a need to belong, defining this as a strong desire to form and maintain enduring interpersonal attachments. There is an important distinction to be made between the need to belong compared to the need for affiliation or a need for intimate attachment. Belonging as such has two sides to it, as seen by Baumeister and Leary (1995). Firstly, there is the need for frequent

personal contact, ideally repetitive positive interactions with another person. Secondly is the need for stability in the aforementioned interaction. To fulfil the need to belong, there must be a stable, continual relationship, rather than just a passing acquaintance, with no potential for establishing a more lasting bond (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). As such it is possible to have relationships of a predominately positive nature, thus satisfying an aspect of the need to belong, without having the closeness and intimacy associated with belonging fully (Lambert et.al., 2013). Baumeister and Leary (1995) explain this by distinguishing between the relational context of the interaction in question. If a person shares their deepest worries and concerns with a stranger or casual acquaintance, it will not reinforce the feeling of belonging, as opposed to if these thoughts were shared with a close friend or confidant. In order for the need to belong to be fully satisfied, the individual must believe that the other person cares about their welfare and likes, or even loves them. Even better is it, if this relationship is reciprocal in nature, meaning that there is mutual concern and caring, rather than simply one-sided. Having a supportive social network, and supportive relationships within that, is beneficial in that it can reduce stress, enhance coping, and overall provide a buffer against negative input (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

Pollock and Van Reken (2009) propose a general pattern for how relationships are established, that in turn helps showing what Baumeister and Leary (1995) mean by distinguishing between acquaintanceships and the kind of relationships that fulfil the need to belong. The first of five levels, is the superficial level, also referred to as small talk. The second level is an exchange of no-risk facts, such as inquiries about a vacation or weekend plans, and encompasses conversation of a "safe" fashion, similar to the first level. Level three is the judgemental level, where the speaker shares opinions on politics, religion, as well as other topics that the listener may disagree with. On the fourth level the persons begin to share feelings about life, themselves, and others – which is why this is referred to as the emotional level. The fifth and final level is the disclosure level. This is the level where a person reveals their most private thoughts and feelings and confess both dreams and failures – this stage, according to Pollock and Van Reken (2009), involves an honesty and vulnerability that leads to true intimacy. These levels are helpful in understanding the partial deprivation of belonging that occurs in an interaction without a bond of caring. It is not sufficient for a person to have a stable acquaintance with whom one interacts on a daily basis, such as a casual

co-worker, to fulfil the need for belonging. Relationships that never progress past the first, second, or third level do not provide the safe, and supportive space needed to satisfy the need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Pollock et.al. (2017) note that it is common among TCKs to progress through the first few levels at a faster speed than non-TCKs. They hypothesise that a reason for this may be that TCKs are used to being up-rooted and re-planted in a new context, and as such have more practice with moving through the levels of getting to know another person. Furthermore, it is possible that being in part of a community made up of TCKs, there is an expectation of openness, and what Pollock et.al. (2017) refer to as "forced extroversion". Here they describe how a common technique for making friends is developing a confessional impulse; by sharing information related to the emotional level or the disclosure level, the speaker sends a message to listeners that they are willing to invest in this relationship. In this way, it is possible that TCKs in a community made up of TCKs, such as international schools, are able to develop and cultivate relationships that fulfil the need to belong in a way that would not be natural in a monocultural society if individuals here transferred as frequently as many international school students do. In her work on what constitutes a sense of home and community, Ferstad (2002) approaches the topic of belonging in relation to the notion of home among TCKs and other members of the international community. She describes how she, herself, feels a sense of belonging when connecting with others who, like her, do not belong – who are outsiders. As such, Ferstad (2002) understands belonging to an international community as belonging to a community where change is inherent. When considering this in light of Baumeister and Leary's (1995) understanding of fulfilling the need to belong in stable, frequent relationships, it is worth noting that a community in constant transition, where the inhabitants of the community change with time, can in itself be a form of stability. Ferstad (2002) goes on to describe how TCKs who attend international schools are able to achieve a sense of constancy through their school, and feel a sense of belonging to the school community that they cannot achieve in either their host culture or home culture. This is, however, only truly possible in a context where the academic approach and curriculum remains a constant in cases where host culture and friends are less so (Ferstad, 2002).

Ferstad (2002) defines home as the feeling of safety, comfort and familiarity, a state of being in which one can experience one's authentic self. The concept of home

appears to be universal and is used to encompass a place and the feelings associated with being at home (Ferstad, 2002). John O'Donohue (1999, in Ferstad, 2002) defines home as where a person belongs – a shelter, a place of rest, and the place you can be yourself. Pollock et.al. (2017) understand home to be somewhere you truly belong, and while home and belonging are not interchangeable concepts, they seem to be intertwined and closely related. Home is a concept that among TCKs can be very difficult to come to terms with. Ferstad (2002) defines home as the feeling of safety, comfort and familiarity, a state of being in which one can experience one's authentic self. Pollock et.al. (2017) describe how many TCKs grow up associating home with their immediate family – those who move alongside them. As such, it is natural to become adrift when leaving the nuclear family to attend university, or otherwise start a life apart from parents and siblings. Hoersting and Jenkins (2011) explain how individuals who undergo cross-cultural childhood moves, like is the norm for many TCKs, develop a form of cultural homelessness as they do not feel a kinship or a sense of belonging toward either country of origin or country of residence. Cultural homelessness is a concept covering persons who feel a lack of membership toward any cultural or ethnic group, emotional detachment from any cultural group, and a need for a cultural home (Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011). Feeling culturally homeless, according to Hoersting and Jenkins (2011), leads to feeling alone and as if one does not belong anywhere. Instead these individuals are left with a desire to "go home," but unable to do so, as home is no one place. It is in cases such as these, that it is beneficial to be aware of those feelings of cultural homelessness and not belonging, as it is possible to actively work towards identifying home, through stable relationships or by creating the conditions that allow home to grow, instead of just passively waiting for home to exist, or the feeling of belonging to exist (Ferstad, 2002).

Reviewing the Literature

The amount of available research on TCKs continues to grow, with large bodies of work dedicated to understanding how the TCK experience differs from a mono- or bicultural upbringing. It remains a topic of relevance, however, as the overall number of TCKs continues to rise steadily alongside the number of people choosing to embrace a high mobility lifestyle (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999; Pollock et al., 2017), and as the framework for the definition of TCK has changed significantly over time. Furthermore,

it can be difficult to obtain information or research on the topic of belonging in TCKs, not only because some research treats sense of identity and sense of belonging as the same construct (Moore & Barker, 2011), but also because there are several sub-groups within the concept of TCK, thus resulting in potentially narrow fields of study, or, if the researcher either does not know the term TCK, or does not consider it comprehensive enough, studies that may be relevant are difficult to locate. For this study, an attempt was made to bypass this issue by including a variety of TCK subgroups in the literature search and treating them simply as the subset of a greater whole. This means studies done exclusively with Missionary Kids or Army Brats were included, and an allowance was also made for studies focusing solely on Corporate Brats or Foreign Service Kids, although no such relevant studies were found. From the publications found to be relevant to this literature review five major themes emerged: Struggles associated with transition, the importance of support systems, staying global, home, and repatriation.

Transition

A common theme in TCK-related research is the struggles associated with transition. While grief and loss are not left behind in transit, TCKs are faced with a different slew of challenges upon entering a new culture – or even when re-entering a culture that should be known. Most obvious may be culture shock: feeling overwhelmed by the perceived foreignness of an unfamiliar culture. An area of interest to many who do research on the TCK experience is how many TCKs describe feeling this way upon entering, or re-entering, their home country (Bikos et al., 2009; Thurston-Gonzalez, 2009; Watson, 2016; Weigel, 2010). This reverse culture shock is defined as experiencing culture shock when returning to the passport country rather than a foreign land (Pollock et al., 2017).

Support Systems

Whether leaving or entering, transitions can be difficult to navigate, especially if there is not a good support system in place (Bikos et al., 2009; Davis, Suarez & Crawford, 2013; Thurston-Gonzalez, 2009; Watson, 2016; Weigel, 2010). This theme, while rarely the sole focus of research (Watson, 2016), often appears in qualitative interviews with TCKs about their life experience (Bikos et al., 2009; Thurston-Gonzalez, 2009; Weigel, 2010). The primary support system experienced by TCKs is that of the immediate family. The presence of parents and siblings can provide important support

when other aspects of a TCK's life are uncertain or unknown (Bikos et al., 2009; Klemens & Bikos, 2009; Weigel, 2010). Another type of support system that several studies reflect on is friendships (Bikos et al. 2009; Kwon, 2018; Thurston-Gonzalez, 2009; Watson, 2016; Weigel, 2010; Wojtecka, 2017). Especially friendships with other TCKs are perceived as rewarding, as they tend to have more commonalities, whether or not their cultural background is similar (Bikos et al., 2009; Fanøe & Marsico, 2018; Kwon, 2018; Pollock et al., 2017). Lastly organisational support is a small area of continued research, that nonetheless remains relevant as results of these can be beneficial to the different organisations sponsoring transnational workers (Bikos et al., 2009; Bonebright, 2009; Davis et al., 2013). This is especially true within the missionary field, where several mission agencies provide re-entry programmes for missionary kids (MKs) upon repatriation (Bikos et al., 2009; Bonebright, 2009; Davis et al., 2013). During these it is possible for MKs to process potential grief and ambiguity related to their relocation, as well as bond with other returning MKs – allowing for the support of peers who are more likely to understand their struggles, as mentioned previously (Bikos et al., 2009; Klemens & Bikos, 2009).

Staying Global

A recurring theme in TCK research is the desire to stay global. Having grown up with a high mobility lifestyle, the majority of TCKs are positively inclined toward moving to another country as adults (Bonebright, 2009; Kwon, 2019; Russell, 2011; Wojtecka, 2017). For some TCKs this may express itself negatively as what Wojtecka (2017) describes as a migratory instinct; a type of restlessness that makes it difficult for the individual to settle down in one place (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999). Nonetheless, a high mobility lifestyle is considered mainly positive in TCK research, leading to research such as Bonebright's (2009) article on TCKs and the challenges and opportunities they provide for Human Resource Development, even going so far as theorizing that TCKs make for highly desirable employees in global corporations due to their international world view, cross cultural skills and willingness to work internationally (Bonebright, 2009). As such adult TCKs are more likely to raise their own children in a globally mobile context, assuming that they themselves feel the benefits outweigh the challenges (Bikos et al., 2009; Pollock & Van Reken, 1999; Pollock et al., 2017).

Home

A large part of the choice many TCKs make to stay global in adulthood goes back to the concept of home, and the conflicting empirical evidence from TCK research – are TCKs at home everywhere or nowhere (Fanøe & Marsico, 2018; Pollock & Van Reken, 1999; Pollock et al., 2017). Continuous relocation in adulthood can reflect either of these, as expressed in most research looking at the relationship between TCKs and belonging (Bonebright, 2010; Fail, Thompson & Walker, 2004; Kwon, 2019; Moore & Barker, 2011; Wojtecka, 2018). Fail et al. (2004) state that feeling a sense of belonging is an integral part of feeling at home, and Moore and Barker (2011) reflect that despite TCKs being able to shift cultural identities or blend cultures, many still do not feel a sense of belonging to any specific culture, despite a deep desire to belong somewhere.

This feeling of being disconnected, or not belonging, is particularly notable among TCKs who relocate to their country of origin (Bonebright, 2010; Fail et al., 2004). While in a host country any social faux pas can be excused, since the TCK is considered a foreigner, upon returning to their passport country, many find that others expect them to be attuned to local customs (Bonebright, 2009; Pollock et al., 2017). Furthermore, for the TCKs who have spent little time in their parents' homeland, there may be few things about it that are familiar (Fail et al., 2004; Wojtecka, 2018). As such, it would be wrong to call it their homeland, which is a reason a person's country of origin is often referred to as *passport country* in TCK circles (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999). All of the included publications that reflected on home and belonging collected their empirical data through qualitative methods, which may account for how the theme emerged regardless of intent (Kwon, 2018; Moore & Barker, 2011; Wojtecka, 2017). Bonebright (2010) specify that TCKs may find it particularly difficult to find a sense of belonging in their passport culture, as this is the place where disconnection is felt the strongest.

Repatriation

The vast majority of studies regarding adult TCKs is focused on repatriation (Alexander, 2014; Bikos et al., 2009; Davis et al., 2013; Klemens & Bikos, 2009; Russell, 2011; Thurston-Gonzalez, 2009; Watson, 2016; Weigel, 2010); when a person returns to their country of citizenship (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999). Expected

repatriation is traditionally seen as one of four common factors of the TCK experience, as stated by Pollock and Van Reken in their 1999 publication. This understanding appears to be reflected in much of the available research, as half the publications included in this review were written with a focus on the repatriation experiences of North American TCKs (Bikos et al., 2009; Davis et al., 2013; Klemens & Bikos, 2009; Russell, 2011; Thurston-Gonzalez, 2009; Watson, 2016; Weigel, 2010), while one presumes repatriation of Japanese TCKs to Japan (Alexander, 2014). Of the publications assuming repatriation, half also focused on adjustment specific to re-entry (Bikos et al., 2009; Davis et al., 2013; Klemens & Bikos, 2009; Thurston-Gonzalez, 2009) or how family, friends and organisations in the home country can provide necessary support for a positive repatriation experience (Bikos et al., 2009; Davis et al., 2013; Thurston-Gonzalez, 2009; Watson, 2016; Weigel, 2010). The concept of Re-Entry Programs or Re-Orientation Programmes appear, based on the available literature, to be a primarily North American concept (Bikos et al., 2009; Bonebright, 2010; Davis et al., 2013; Klemens & Bikos, 2009), with one of the publications having the express purpose of evaluating the impact of Re-Entry Programs in order to improve upon it (Davis et al., 2013).

Ethnocentrism in TCK Research

As mentioned previously, the concept of TCKs, was primarily developed by Dr Ruth Useem, who was employed through Michigan State University (Cottrell & Downie, 2012). As such, this term would gain ground throughout the United States, thus explaining in part why most of earlier studies are centred on American TCKs. Langford (1998) speculates that while Dr Ruth Useem's work was focused on American TCKs, the theoretical qualities attributed to TCKs appeared, based on separate literature, to be reflected in young people of different national backgrounds. Even now literature intended for, and about, TCKs on a universal basis put emphasis on the American experience, as seen in Pollock and Van Reken's (1999) work written for TCKs around the world, where statistics on international workers are based on numbers from the United States, with barely a passing mention of similar numbers from other countries. In Pollock et al.s (2017) work on the same subject, 18 years later, a slight change can be found, in the sense that, while the primary focus remains on citizens of the United States, Australia and Japan also receive an honourable mention.

While these two works, by the same group of people, show a positive change in this area, it does not diminish the fact that there appears to be a severe case of ethnocentrism in TCK research. By this is mean that the vast majority of the articles and books made available are written by, and for, Americans.

While more ethnographies and studies emerge with a broader focus, there still appears to be a general assumption of US-centric research, with a large focus on repatriation. This type of research may prove problematic for two groups; non-Americans, and American passport holders who do not choose repatriation. For the first group there is a risk that research done amongst Americans is used when trying to help non-American TCKs. Even if organisations and individuals are aware of the potential problems incurred when generalising a diverse group of people in this way, if there is no research done that is specific to their culture, most will use that which is available to them. McCaig (in Pollock & Van Reken, 1999) cautions that when trying to gain understanding of a complex puzzle, such as TCKs, it is important to not allow the term to be broadened to such a degree that the terminology becomes so all-encompassing that it becomes obsolete (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999). As such many researches (Bonebright, 2010; Davis et al., 2009; Kwon, 2018; Thurston-Gonzalez, 2009; Weigel, 2010) limit the term TCK to cover the original four subsets distinguished between by Dr Ruth Useem; children whose parents live abroad for business, children of diplomats, children whose parents are in the military, and children whose parents are in missionary or non-profit work (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999; Pollock et al., 2017).

However, while focus has often been on the difference afforded by parental employment when considering TCK life experiences, it is rare that studies make note of the inequality afforded TCKs based on their country of origin, and linguistic limitations associated with repatriation as opposed to relocation. An example of this is the well renowned International Baccalaureate (IB), an educational organisation tailored to TCKs, wherein it is possible to complete a primary and/or secondary school programme in a cohesive manner despite repeated relocations, thus allowing students to experience a consistent education whether or not they are relocated once, or several times during their primary and secondary school years. The IB programme is offered in more than 150 countries on every continent apart from Antarctica (Fanøe & Marsico, 2018). Of the roughly 5500 schools offering an IB programme, 4726 provide their teaching in English, 919 in Spanish, 291 are taught in French, and around 550

schools teaching in another language as well as English (IB school list, 2020). While this researcher personally supports the concept of international school systems such as the IB, there is a downside to it: school must be taught in a common language that is accessible to most, if not all, students. In most international schools English is the common language chosen, meaning that all academics, apart from language classes, are taught in English. For students coming from a country where English is not the main academic language this may not only prove difficult when they enter the international school system, but also when applying for university or another tertiary education. While the expatriate groups from some countries, such as Japan (Alexander, 2014), show a vested interest in educating their children in a way that allows them to repatriate when their parents return home, this is not the case for most internationally employed individuals. Their children are unlikely to achieve a level of academic proficiency in what would otherwise be considered their native language, which in turn will make it very difficult for them should they choose to attend a university in their passport country, in the local language. For TCKs originating from the United States there is a risk in how much of American TCK literature is focused on repatriation. Having this as the primary focus implies an assumption of re-entry, potentially leaving TCKs feeling like their high mobility lifestyle is limited to childhood, and when becoming adults, they must return "home" whether they have a relationship to the United States or not. As such it is possible that the guidance and role models contributed by such TCK literature will cause a narrow view of the post-graduation life of young Americans returning to their passport country after living abroad (Fail et al., 2004).

It is interesting to note, that while most TCK research in the Western world remains centred around the American life experience, in Japanese culture there is the concept of "Kaigai/Kikokushijo," meaning overseas/returnee children. This concept, while established apart from Dr Ruth Useem's TCK, is understood to share its characteristics to a strong degree, as proposed by Kano Podolsky in 2005 (Bonebright, 2010). With this in mind, it is possible that more TCK research and studies exist, but we in the Western world have been unaware of it up until this time. It has, however, proven difficult to learn more about this, as the sources this researcher has been made aware of, and have sought out, are only available in Japanese – a language that is not understood by the researcher.

Aim

The researcher's initial interest in the intersection between TCKs and belonging was raised by reading Moore and Barker's (2011) article on cultural identity in adult TCKs. Here it was found that, while not specifically articulated in the research questions, a prominent theme in the collected data was that of belonging. These findings also revealed that "a sense of belonging to a culture and having a cultural identity are not necessarily one and the same. Participants described their ability to shift between different cultural identities or blend identities without necessarily feeling a sense of belonging to any of them (Moore & Barker, 2011)." Having previous knowledge on this topic, it was posited that since sense of belonging directly affects meaning in life, if TCKs tend to feel like they do not belong, it would be relevant to seek more information that might expand on the subject (Fanøe & Marsico, 2018). The researcher was intrigued by the possibility that there might be a dearth of TCK research in this area, as Moore and Barker (2011) in their recommendation for future research speculate, that "a sense of identity and a sense of belonging to a specific culture may have been treated as the same construct in previous research, while this study was able to differentiate the two." Furthermore, the ethnocentrism found in previous research accounts for the choice to expand upon this study by inquiring about what specific factors affect the choices made by TCKs with regards to where they choose to attend university.

For this reason, the aim of this paper is to gain a greater understanding of how belongingness – or the sense of belonging – is experienced by young adult Third Culture Kids during the transitional phase related to graduation and applying for university, and what factors influence their choice.

Method

The following section elaborates on the methods employed to obtain the empirical data used in this paper. First a rationale is given to explain why Mixed Methods have been employed, including the research questions that will be attempted answered throughout the remainder of the thesis, followed by a description of how the survey and interview, respectively, were constructed. At this point the respective samples are briefly presented and an explanation is given for how the data was analysed. To round up the Methods section there is a short paragraph presenting the researcher, to contextualise position and potential biases related to their personal background.

Rationale for choice of method

The area of belonging among TCKs is one that has not been overly researched previously, and most of the existing studies done have been focused on a smaller subset, such as Missionary Kids returning to the United States (Bikos et al., 2009; Davis et al., 2013; Klemens & Bikos, 2009; Watson, 2016), or are done as qualitative interviews focusing on the experiences of a few specific individuals (Kwon, 2018; Russell, 2011; Wojtecka, 2017), which does not necessarily reflect the experiences of other TCKs around the world. As such the decision was made to conduct this study using a Mixed Methods approach with both an online survey allowing for a comparatively broad sample size, as well as two qualitative interviews, providing more personal accounts of how life can be experienced as a TCK. Because there is so little research done in this area of study, it makes sense to use the Mixed Methods approach to gain a more overall sense of what is happening within the field, while also zooming in on a few select examples given. The hope is, that more comprehensive studies will be conducted among TCKs on a worldwide basis, creating a solid base of comparison and understanding, to such an extent that each new study serves to further unfold the individual aspects, rather than this attempt to chart a relatively unknown field.

This study made use of a Mixed Methods approach, wherein an online survey with both closed and open-ended questions, as well as two interviews provided the empirical data. The strengths of employing Mixed Methods in a study like this are such that the findings in the quantitative and qualitative parts, respectively, can complement each other, and allow for enhancement in otherwise singular observations (Creamer,

2018). The reason for using both quantitative and qualitative data sets was primarily to gain a wider and deeper understanding when facing the question of how belongingness is experienced among young adult TCKs as they anticipate the transition related to leaving home for the first time, and attending university. While this question may to some extent have been answered solely through qualitative means, it was decided that a quantitative approach would serve to elaborate, or expand, on what factors serve to impact the decisions made by TCKs as they consider university, and furthermore it allowed for an illustration as it pertains to the question of whether a majority of TCKs plan to repatriate, as assumed by many researchers (Alexander, 2014; Bikos et al., 2009; Davis et al., 2013; Klemens & Bikos, 2009; Russell, 2011; Thurston-Gonzalez, 2009; Watson, 2016; Weigel, 2010). The survey results and the rich description provided by the interviews should be considered complimentary to each other, thus giving context for themes found in the interviews, as well as providing contextual clues to the survey responses by holding them up against the statements made by the interviewees. These in turn allow for potential starting points for future research on the subject.

While the overall aim of this paper is to gain a better understanding of how the sense of belonging is experienced by young adult TCKs in transition, two research questions have been developed to help guide the focus and embrace the strengths of using Mixed Methods, as understood by Creamer (2018). As the data in this study is collected through separate means, using both qualitative and quantitative methods, two independent research questions have been developed, that, while related to each other and the overall aim of this study, one does not depend on the other (Clark & Badiee, 2010). As such the research questions, as stated below, will be answered through the use of the quantitative and qualitative data sets, respectively, and ultimately be used to complement each other as the aim is sought reached.

Q1, quantitative:

What factors are important for Third Culture Kids when deciding where to study in the future, and do they intend to repatriate?

Q2, qualitative:

How do Third Culture Kids understand home and belonging, and how does this influence their decisions about the future?

The Survey Process

Compiling the Survey

The survey (Appendix 2) was compiled based on a previous study by Thomas Patrick Gleason (1970), who conducted a quantitative study among 155 American TCKs attending college in the United States. After observing the questions and phrasing used by Gleason (1970), additional questions were composed and added alongside those of Gleason's (1970) questions that were relevant to the interest areas of this study. At this point 3 TCKs, as well as 2 parents of TCKs known by the researcher were asked about what factors they believe (based on personal experience) influence a TCK when deciding where to attend tertiary education, and their insights were considered, and further questions, or response options, were added. When an online questionnaire had been designed, a link was distributed to friends and family with a TCK background, and this additional feedback taken into consideration. All of the above communication regarding the online survey was facilitated either through email correspondence or in person conversation between the researcher and respective individuals. A consultation with the Thesis Advisor ensured that the questionnaire was approved, and it was then distributed by email to the IB schools interested in participation, from where it was distributed to the relevant student body.

Overall, the survey composition (Appendix 2) can be divided into three main groups. The first covers a list of questions about the nationality, as well as first language, and preferred language of both the participant and their parents. Further questions enquire about primary language(s) spoken in home and at school, as well as how many international moves the participant has made, and the total length of time spent abroad. The second grouping of questions centre around where the participant has applied for university or college, with a list of potential factors that affected this choice that could be graded on a positive rating scale from 1 (no effect) to 5 (strong positive effect). The list covered proximity to immediate family, extended family, and friends, reputation

of institution, study selection, extracurricular opportunities, multicultural setting, grade requirements, financial requirements, visa requirements, and linguistic requirements. The third component was based on whether participants answered in the affirmative to whether they applied to university in their country of origin, and then enquired to reasons why, or why not, this was the case, in turn allowing participants to either check off based on an offered list of potential reasons (e.g. financial benefits, preferred language, it feels like home), or use the provided space to give a personal answer – an offer that a large number of participants made use of.

With regards to distribution of the survey, it proved impossible to get the official IB organisation to distribute the survey directly to schools, as IB schools are independent from each other. Because of this it was necessary to go to the website of individual schools and find relevant contact information. 106 schools were chosen from the complete list of 3077 certified IB schools offering the Diploma Programme, based on location and seniority, in an attempt to reach the largest number of countries, with a focus on the more established school or schools in each country, in the hopes that these would have a larger student body, and be better accustomed to inquiries like the one made here. A vital prerequisite for whether the school would be contacted was whether an email address was available for either the DP coordinator, High School Director, or, if none of these were publicly available, an email address used for general inquiries. If none of these could be found, the school was discarded from the potential list. In the preliminary email the scope of the study was presented, and the school encouraged to ask further questions (Appendix 3). If interest was shown, another email was sent with further information, and for those requiring a copy of the questionnaire, a link was attached to a copy. Participation in the survey was voluntary with only two schools sending a follow-up email to encourage students to fill it out. Of the 106 schools contacted, 79 did not respond to the original as well as subsequent inquiries, 5 emails were returned as not having been delivered, 11 schools declined, with a final 11 schools agreeing to distribute the survey to their senior year students. A likely reason for this low response rate is the fact that inquiry was made in the spring of 2020, thus coinciding with the beginning of COVID-19 being termed a pandemic. The final list of schools covers two located in Denmark, and one from Germany, Hungary, Israel, Japan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Qatar, Russia, and Uganda, respectively.

Survey Sample and Presentation of Data

The online survey was finalized on March 16th 2020, and the link was sent to the first schools on this day for distribution. Further distribution of the survey link was dependent on when each school responded to the researcher, with the final being on May 14th. The survey link was deactivated, hereby making it closed for respondents on June 29th 2020, as there had been no contributions since May 20th, and no further responses were anticipated. By this point the participants for this study consisted of 126 survey participants between 16 and 20 years of age, representing 43 passport countries and 12 countries of residency. These 126 data points will be elaborated on and further explored in the Results section.

The Interview Process

Preparation and Conduction of the Interviews

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, meaning that a list of questions were prepared, but the interview guide should be considered more as a possible roadmap, thus allowing the interviewee to elaborate and introduce themes that are relevant to them, rather than force a topic that holds no importance. When working with TCKs there is a subconscious expectation of reciprocity in conversation, even in interviews, as noted by Pollock et.al. (2017) that exceeds what is normally seen in interviews with monocultural individuals (Ferstad, 2002). This means that the interviewer allowed the interviewee to ask questions in response when this came naturally. This was deemed a necessary allowance, as part of bonding in international communities appear to be based in common experiences, such as a short conversation between the male interviewee and the interviewer, as they have both spent time in the Middle East and a few moments were spent on reminiscing on the price of taxis, and as the interviewee and female interviewee have attended the same international school (although at different times), this was spoken about as well – in these cases the interviewer has chosen to omit her own responses, as she is not the subject of interest. Pollock et.al. (2017) have observed that there is a tendency between TCKs to establish social bonds through questions, and often finding commonalities is possible despite immediate differences, as the world of TCKs is smaller than one may initially think (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). A reason for this may be that TCKs often feel like

outsiders, and an easy way to establish trust is to share experiences that show understanding of the TCK lifestyle and upbringing (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999).

Participants for the interviews were recruited through local IB schools in conjunction with the survey distribution. As the original hope was to conduct interviews face-to-face only Danish IB schools were asked for permission to recruit students for the interview. This was done by adding a paragraph in the email encouraging students to fill out the online survey, where those interested in participating in an interview were asked to contact the researcher by email (Appendix 4Appendix). Only one person responded to this email, and the second interviewee was recruited by asking the first if he knew of someone else who may be inclined to participate. In this way two students from an IB school in Denmark were interviewed.

Interviews were conducted by the researcher, in English, and lasted roughly 40 minutes. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic interviews could not be conducted in person and were instead held using Microsoft Teams. This form of online communication allows the user to record meetings, and this was done with the consent of the interviewees. There were some limitations due to this, including sporadic lagging in the connection, meaning that sometimes words were lost, or the interviewer and interviewee spoke on top of each other. Furthermore, one of the interviewees was unable to get his camera to work, and the interview was conducted without visual contact – only sound was transmitted. Before participating in the interview, both participants were able to ask questions by email, and the email correspondence made it possible to establish some level of report in advance. Additionally, participants were sent informed consent forms (Appendix 5) to read through in advance and asked to return signed before the interview was conducted. Because one participant was a minor (17 years old), her parents were asked to fill out an additional form asking for their consent on behalf of their child (Appendix 6). Finally, the interviewees received a short form by email (Appendix 7) asking them to fill out their name, age, nationality, nationality of parents, preferred language, countries lived in, as well as universities applied to.

An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach was used for the interviews in this study. As such the interview guide was rooted in a more general area of exploration rather than a predetermined research hypothesis, and composed of a number of open-ended questions, in order to allow for elaboration from the

interviewee, and so they may choose to articulate in as much or little detail as they feel comfortable with (Langdridge, 2007). The interview guide (Appendix 8) was established gradually by utilising the input of a variety of relevant persons. The first draft of the interview guide was outlined by the researcher, then piloted with a TCK, edited by the researcher, and finally approved by the researcher's advisor. A semi-structured approach was employed, and as such the questions can be categorized as focusing on: (1) demographics and global mobility during childhood, (2) the concept of home and belonging, (3) university plans, and (4) the future beyond. The first part broached more concrete information about the ethnic and cultural background of the participants, as well as personal experiences related to growing up abroad, or as part of an international environment. In the second part of the interview the questions had a focus on where or what home is, as well as belonging, and social relationships in differing cultural contexts. Part three brought out thoughts and considerations related to university applications, and where the interviewees want to study. The last section of the interview asked questions related to where the participants want to live when they finish their education, as well as thoughts relating to where they want to establish their own homes, and whether the way they were raised is something they want to pass on to future generations.

Presentation and Analysis of Interview Data

Two interviews were conducted as part of this study, as mentioned previously. When referencing the interviews and interviewees, pseudonyms will be used throughout, and places have been changed insofar as this was deemed needed to uphold anonymity for the interviewees. The first interviewee is Ben, a young man aged 18, born to Iranian immigrant parents living in Denmark. He holds dual citizenship from Denmark and Iran. Ben grew up in Denmark where he attended Danish primary school but moved with his family to Qatar for secondary school. Upon returning to Denmark he chose to complete his education at an international school and has now applied for universities in the UK as well as Denmark. The second interviewee is Sarah, a young woman aged 17, born to a Danish father and Korean mother. She has lived in Denmark her entire life, with yearly visits to Korea. Sarah has attended international schools, exclusively, and has applied to universities in both the UK and Denmark.

After completing the interviews, thus collecting the data, the audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim, with a focus on semantic meaning, and checked for accuracy against the original recordings. At this time, the transcripts were analysed based on the five stages generally used in the IPA approach, as described hereafter. This began with becoming familiar with the data, by re-reading the transcripts, and the use of observational note-taking during this task. Next the data was coded, which was done using a set list of descriptive words that became apparent during the previously mentioned read-throughs (Langdridge, 2007). An example of this process is shown in the excerpt from Interview Transcript B, lines 177 through 197, below.

Transcript B line 177-197	**Comments**
Interviewer: So, would you want to live somewhere else or?	
Sarah: Oh, yeah, I'd want to live somewhere else.	Desire to live abroad
Interviewer: So, just dreaming, what would that look like. Just an example, like where, or under what circumstances.	
Sarah: Well, speaking of university, I'd want to be surrounded by people who maybe are like me: Who are international students, who have an international background, and somebody who I'd be able to relate to in that way.	Relates better to TCKs, Wants int. community
Interviewer: So, is that important to you? To have people around you who have shared experiences. Like, with the international stuff?	
Sarah: Yeah, I think that's something that I value. It makes me feel much more comfortable to be around people who have similar experiences to me.	Int. community is priority

Going over the transcripts in their entirety and observing the comments, repetitions were found in what the interviewees spoke of as important and relevant to their experiences, both within the respective interviews, and when considering the two side by side. Thus, the data sets were categorised, and four primary themes were identified: international friendship and community, language barriers, having a desire to travel,

and a desire to ultimately settle in a familiar context. These themes will be explored further and elaborated on in the Results section.

Position and Consideration of the Researcher

At the risk of seeming overly familiar, the following paragraph will be written using personal pronouns, as the person discussed is the researcher writing this. I consider myself to be a TCK. I was raised by Danish parents, primarily in Denmark, with short stints in Bhutan, Thailand, and Vietnam during childhood, during which I was either home schooled or attended a local international school. I attended the IB Diploma Programme in Denmark, and have studied locally as well, choosing to go abroad to live in Sweden, England, and Jordan, respectively, for up to 9 months when possible. I am aware that I am biased when relating to TCKs, as I consider myself to be one of them, and as such am at risk of projecting my own experiences, and those of my friends onto others. Knowing this, I continually attempted to approach both interviewees and survey responses with an open mind and present the opinions of these regardless of own personal view, by consulting my supervisors continually and conducting a systematic analysis of the data. Previous works primarily include a chapter titled *Identity and Belonging in Third Culture Kids: Alterity and Values in Focus* co-authored with Giuseppina Marsico, published in Branco and Lopes-de-Oliveira's 2018 work *Alterity, Values, and Socialization: Human Development Within Educational Contexts*.

Results

Survey Results

The following section presents the data accumulated through analysis of the online survey results, as these pertain to answering the question posited previously regarding what factors affect study choice among young adult TCKs, and whether they are intent on repatriation or a continued international lifestyle.

Prior to data analysis, the datasets were checked in order to address missing data, as well as other factors marking participants as ineligible for inclusion. Of the original 235 students who took part in the survey, 99 were eliminated as they were only partially completed. Of those who fully completed the survey, three participants were eliminated as they were under 18 and did not have parental consent and an additional 7 either had no plans to attend a tertiary education or had not yet given thought to the matter. In the end 126 surveys were included in the study.

Gender distribution for the online survey showed that 63% of participants (79 individuals) were female, with the remaining 37% (47 individuals) being male. The vast majority of the participating TCKs were 17 (32.5%) or 18 (50.8%) years of age, with only 4% of participants being 16, 10.3% being 19, and 2.4% being 20 years old. The age distribution of survey participants is shown in the figure below (Figure 1), as it more easily illustrates the age distribution seen in the dataset.

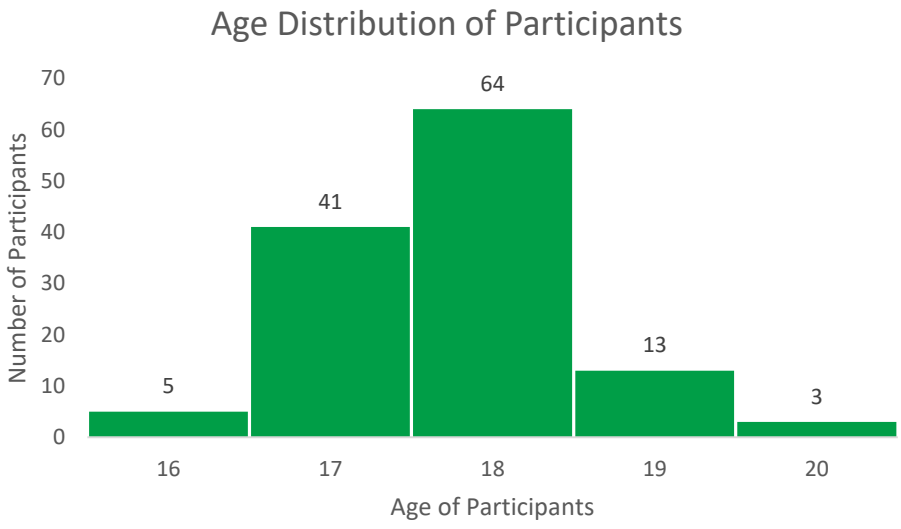


Figure 1

The 126 survey participants represented a total of 44 different nationalities, as shown in Table 1 below. Of these, 35 individuals hold dual citizenships, which explains why the frequency total of nationalities surpasses the number of participants. The most common bi-national constellations found were Canadian-Pakistani (4), German-American (3), and Canadian-French (2) with the remaining 26 individuals having unique country combinations.

Frequency of Nationality in Survey Participants

Table 1

Frequency	Nationality
19	USA
17	Denmark
16	Pakistan
11	Russia
10	Germany
10	Hungary
8	Canada
7	UK
6	Nepal
5	Spain
3	France, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Switzerland
2	Uzbekistan, Belgium, Ethiopia, Iran, Philippines
1	Algeria, Austria, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Croatia, Ecuador, Finland, Iceland, Jordan, Lebanon, Mexico, Netherlands, Qatar, Romania, South Africa, Sweden, Tunisia, Ukraine, Venezuela, Vietnam

12 schools in 11 countries were represented in this survey, however, when studying the data it was found that there were no data sets from two of the schools that distributed the survey, and that one country (Nepal) is represented, where the school contacted did not respond to any email enquiries. It is possible that the survey was distributed but the researcher was not made aware of this. Additionally, two countries (where no schools were contacted) are represented with one participant each, and it is most likely because these individuals had relocated at the time of survey completion due to either COVID-19 or graduation. This data is illustrated in Table 2 below.

Frequency of Country of Residence in Survey Participants

Table 2

Frequency	Country
32	Denmark
21	Germany
19	Qatar
18	Hungary
14	Pakistan

8	Russia
6	Nepal
5	Uganda
1	Costa Rica, Japan, Uzbekistan

When considering the linguistic background and preference of the survey participants, 34 of have English as their first language (mother tongue), 51 of the remaining 91 individuals report a preference for English over their own first language, with an additional 11 claiming no preference between English and their first language (Table 3).

Preferred Spoken Language

Table 3

First Language (not English)	30
Mix of First Language and English	11
English (as First Language)	34
English	51
Total	**126**

Looking at only those who have a first language other than English – and whose passport countries do not have English as their official or dominant language, these TCKs can be divided into three linguistic categories: those whose preferred spoken language is their first language, those whose preferred spoken language is English, and the third group who feel equally comfortable with English as they do their first language. In the diagram below (Figure 2) it is shown what type of countries the individuals in these three groups have applied to for university. The data reflects an overall tendency among TCKs from non-English speaking passport countries in choosing to apply to universities in English speaking countries, such as Scotland, England, and the United States. Among the group who prefer English to their first language, only 22% have applied for a tertiary education in their country of origin, while 39% of those who are more comfortable with their first language have chosen to apply to universities in their passport countries.

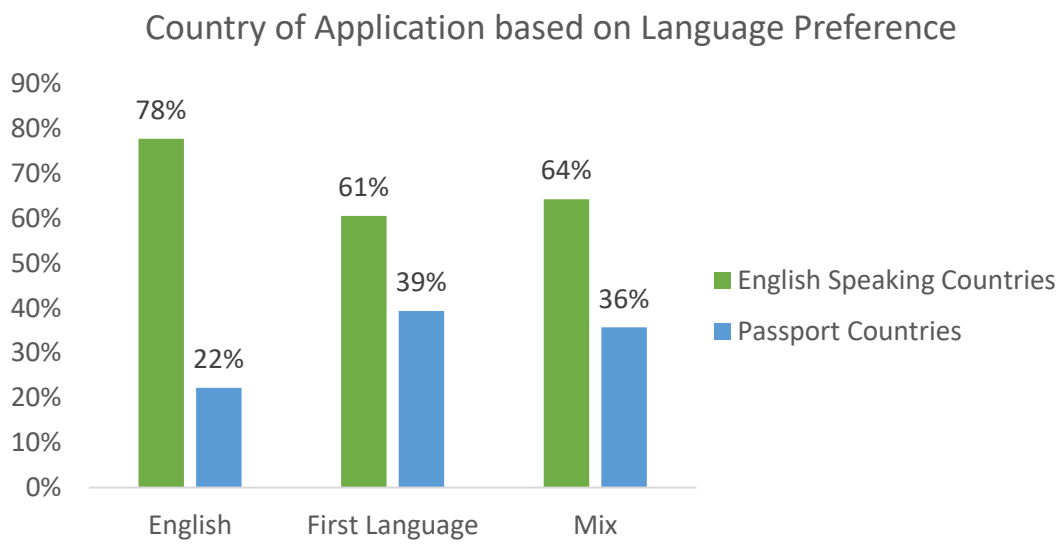


Figure 2

As part of the survey, participants who had not applied for university programmes in their country of origin were asked why they had made this choice. Of the 68 who chose to elaborate on their reasoning, 15 specifically mentioned language as a deterrent, with one Finish student explaining that her proficiency in her mother tongue is not good enough for the courses she would like to do, and several others simply stating that they lack fluency in the first language, or that English is their dominant language. Other answers to why the participants had decided against studying in their country of origin reflected a variety of reasons that were found to be quite enlightening, and would, most likely, not have been found if only TCKs from First World Countries, such as Canada, Denmark, and Germany, had been included in this study. Participants from Algeria, Hungary, Iran, Russia, Pakistan, and a number of other countries expressed that the living situations in their country was not the best, and that the level of education was lower than if they studied elsewhere. A young man from Brazil stated high unemployment and too much violence as the primary deterrents, while participants from Nepal and Venezuela both highlighted political instability in their country of origin as reasons to not return there. This topic was reflected and elaborated on by another participant from Ethiopia, who has spent 16 of her 17 years outside of her country of origin. She said that "political instability and tribal clashes would put my safety at risk especially because I do not understand the deep-rooted issues that resulted in these inter-tribal wars," which shows that she has given thought to returning to her country of origin, but feels that she would put herself in danger by doing so. Another young girl, who holds dual citizenship from Mexico and the United States,

gives a comprehensive list of reasons why she has decided against attending university in either North American country and instead has applied for programmes in the United Kingdom. She cites that university and health care are too expensive, and that the people are known for being ignorant, but her top two reasons for not repatriating are because (1) guns are allowed, and (2) that there are many school shootings. A Japanese respondent likewise cites specific reasons for not choosing to repatriate, including the fact that Japan has high rates of depression and suicide.

As part of the survey, participants were asked both how many years they had lived abroad (outside of passport country), and how many countries they have lived in, with "lived in" being defined as a time period surpassing 6 consecutive months' stay (Appendix 2). Perusing the data for these specific questions, five datapoints were excluded, as the combination of years spent abroad, and countries inhabited appear incongruent. Specifically, this concerns three individuals who have spent no years abroad in two different countries, an individual who has spent two years abroad in no countries, and one individual who has spent three years abroad in zero countries. These five datapoints have as such been precluded from further inclusion. The remaining 121 participants have spent an average of roughly 7.5 years outside their country of origin. The spread of these is illustrated better in the graph below (Figure 3), as it clearly shows that roughly 21% of participants have never lived abroad.

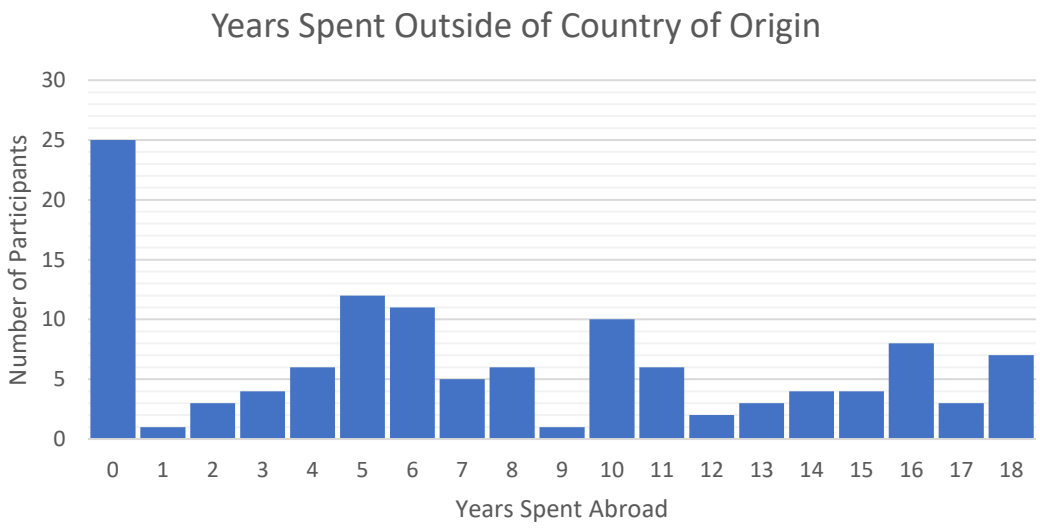


Figure 3

The 96 individuals who have spent between 1 and 18 years outside of their country of origin have spent this time in 1 to 7 different countries, making an average of three national relocations. A two sampled t-test was conducted to evaluate whether the

amount of time spent abroad affected the likelihood of individuals choosing to study in their country of origin. As such the controlled variable was the number of years spent abroad, with three separate t-tests done based on different divisions within this group, in an attempt to avoid manipulating the data unknowingly. The first t-test was conducted to evaluate the hypothesis that individuals who had lived 0 years outside their country of origin would be equally likely to study in their country of origin as those who had spent 1-18 years outside their country of origin. The t-stat, at -0.495, was not significant, indicating that equal population variance may be assumed. The second t-test was conducted to evaluate the hypothesis that individuals who had lived 0-6 years outside their country of origin would be equally likely to study in their country of origin as those who had spent 7-18 years outside their country of origin. The t-stat, at -0.435, was not significant, indicating that equal population variance may be assumed. The third t-test was conducted to evaluate the hypothesis that individuals who had lived 0-2 years outside their country of origin would be equally likely to study in their country of origin as those who had spent 14-18 years outside their country of origin. The t-stat, at -0.368, was not significant, indicating that equal population variance may be assumed. This three tests, while slightly different, all reflect the same reality: that there is no provable correlation between how many years a person has spent outside their country of origin, and whether they choose to return to said country for university.

Interview Results

Attempting to understand the sense of belonging felt by young adult TCKs, as well as how these feelings affect how they make decisions about the future, four major themes emerged through the analysis of the interview data. These were as follows: international friendships and community, language barriers, the desire to travel, and the desire to ultimately settle in a familiar context. These themes are illustrated in the following section and supported by quotations from the interviewees.

International Friendships and Community

The issues of establishing international friendships and communities was a theme that was found prominent in both interviews. Ben describes how, when first coming to Qatar, another student intentionally went out of his way to befriend him, and despite

this friend remaining in Qatar while Ben moved back to Denmark, he explains that "to this day he's still like my best friend, and […] we still talk a lot" (Transcript A, line 140). He continues to elaborate on the importance of friendship during transitional periods, in particular upon repatriation, explaining:

> [Moving to Denmark] *was also very tough, and also having to adapt to a whole new lifestyle because when you're 16 in Denmark it's very different from when you're 11 in Denmark. So, I didn't really know much about that, but I was also lucky enough to have some Danish friends in Qatar who were also moving back at the same time, and we had all planned we would attend the same school. So that was also nice.* (Transcript A, line 162)

Ben continually shares insights with regards to different friend groups throughout his upbringing, lamenting the struggles of relocating to Qatar at an early age, as it made it more difficult to keep in contact with friends. When asked how it felt to move, he shares that if he was given the choice, he would prefer to have been older when his family moved; "like, how my brother was when we moved there – he moved there at 15 and came back at 19. I moved there at 11 and came back at 16" (Transcript A, line 62). His reasoning for this being that there are more resources available to remain connected for older teens than for younger children.

Sarah, while having only lived in Denmark, has still experienced the high level of transience typical for international school students – that due to the lifestyle of their parents, international schools tend to have high turnover rates, as many students transfer regularly. Still, she feels that having been part of the international community to this degree has been a positive experience for her, sharing that it has awarded her "a bunch of really good friends, so many people from older schools that I'm still friends with" (Transcript B, line 301). When asked what she envisions for her future, Sarah shares: "I'd want to be surrounded by people who maybe are like me: Who are international students, who have an international background, and somebody who I'd be able to relate to in that way" (Transcript B, line 187). She continues, when asked if this is something that is important to her: "I think that's something that I value. It makes me feel much more comfortable to be around people who have similar experiences to me" (Transcript B, line 196).

Language Barriers

Another major theme found in the interviews with Sarah and Ben was the language barriers they foresee when considering staying in Denmark to study. While both had applied for Danish taught university programmes in Denmark, both expressed levels of apprehension at the prospect of studying in Danish. Ben explains that:

> *"I would naturally prefer it was in English at first, due to the fact that all my academic knowledge is in English. My social knowledge in English and Danish is around the same, but when it comes to academics, I just* ***know*** *everything in English"* (Transcript A, line 379)

In this way he distinguishes between academic and social knowledge; there appears to be a difference between the linguistic and social barriers associated with studying with other Danes. Where Ben feels comfortable interacting with his Danish peers in a social context, he is aware that his academic skills are rooted in the English language and transferring this knowledge into Danish will take time. When Sarah was asked if she worries about potentially studying in Danish, she shared that:

> *"If I* ***do*** *end up going to KU* [Copenhagen University] *it would be something that I would be afraid about because everybody there would be native speakers and I'd be someone who* ***is*** *fluent in Danish, but not as fluent and not used to being around Danish teenagers all the time"* (Transcript B, line 130)

Where Ben is aware of potential difficulties associated with language barriers, but not worried about the social aspects of Danish society, Sarah is apprehensive about the barriers she predicts facing with regards to both academic and social knowledge if she chooses to remain in Denmark. She shares that while she can pass as a native Danish speaker – which she is – her social and cultural knowledge is not up to par with Danish young adults who have been part of the Danish school system during their upbringing. Instead Sarah is more comfortable in an international context, as mentioned previously, and understands her Danish skills as being less than her peers who have grown up as what she refers to as "fully Danish". It is a similar experience as what she describes when asked if she has considered one day moving to Korea: "I would still

feel a little bit like I wouldn't be completely included in the society, just because I'm a little bit different" (Transcript B, line 249). Whether she is partaking in Danish or Korean culture, Sarah feels to some extent, like she does not fully belong, as opposed to when she is with others who have international backgrounds. She does not have the cultural understanding, or sense of belonging with mono-cultural Danes or Koreans that she has with those individuals with whom she shares common experiences of international life.

Desire to Travel

When asked about their future plans, Sarah, and Ben both spoke of travelling abroad in the future, preferably for an extended period of time. Sarah expresses that "I think for part of my life, I think I really want to move away. Just because I've spent so much of my life here, and I want to experience something new" (Transcript B, line 121). When asked if she has given any thought to a particular place, where she would like to live, her answer is "No, I think I would enjoy moving away again. Somewhere else. I've never really thought about that" (Transcript B, line 240), although, when asked if she has considered Korea, she shares:

> *I **have** thought about moving to Korea. Of course, I have family that, so it would be much nicer to move somewhere where I know people, and I know the language. But, from somebody who only goes there once a year I would still feel a little bit like I wouldn't be completely included in the society, just because I'm a little bit different.* (Transcript B, line 247)

Sarah continues to elaborate on positive and negative aspects of moving to Korea, concluding that having an established social circle to be part of would be "really cool" and as such is considered a strong motivator. Nonetheless she appears open to living in a wholly new country, where she does not already have a familial network in place, as she states clearly: "I of course want to go out and see what it's like to be in other places and see how that feels" (Transcript B, line 292).

Ben is very clear in where he wants to live in the future, saying "I think after my bachelor's – if I do end up going to London, I would generally go anywhere that would take me. And, of course, somewhere nice! I don't really have a big preference about different places" (Transcript A, line 411). His attitude towards international relocation

is open, giving an impression of someone to whom the vastness of the globe is to be enjoyed rather than feared. Ben speaks highly of the weather in Qatar, and jokes about how Denmark is nice, "except for the weather – the weather is really bad" (Transcript A, line 208), and when considering places to move in the future, the climate seems to hold some importance. This laid-back attitude towards travelling and committing to international relocation is recurrent in both interviews and reflect a desire to remain globally mobile throughout young adulthood, if not for longer.

A Wish to Return

When the question of where they plan to live in the future was brought up, and Sarah was asked if she would like to live outside of Denmark, her response was clear "Yes. I would. I would like to do that. I would also want to come back" (Transcript B, line 279). She explains this thought process, saying that "I think when I'm older I would want to come back to Denmark, just because I've grown up here, and I know what a great place it is to grow up" (Transcript B, line 269). She reflects on how Denmark is "a society that has things like good healthcare, and a lot of great opportunities for families" (Transcript B, line 270), finally concluding that Denmark is the country where she would prefer to grow old.

Ben shares a similar view, stating that "I definitely want to come back to Denmark one day" (Transcript A, line 420), although his reasoning behind this decision varies from Sarah's. Ben shares that he thinks "growing up in Denmark is the best thing you can do to a kid" (Transcript A, line 427), expanding on the topic when asked, saying:

> *The way that you're taught, and the way that society is here, it's perfect for kids,* […] *it's just a mix of allowing you to become who you are as long as parents are kind of guiding you and paving a path for you, in a way, but you are the one making decisions. It's like a mix of independence plus dependence.* (Transcript A, line 433)

Ben shows, in this way, an attitude towards childrearing that corresponds with the values he sees in Danish society, and recognizes that this is something he would be interested in sharing with the next generation, thus helping him make the decision to return when the time comes to settle down.

Discussion

In the following sections the results found in this study will be discussed in relation to previously presented theory, as well as other existing empirical studies of relevance. The first major theme found was that of belonging, and the importance of having both community and closeness with other individuals, Secondly the concept of 'home' is discussed based on the experiences described in the included interviews, and theoretical frameworks by Ferstad (2002), and Pollock & Van Reken (1999). When contemplating where to study in the future, several factors proved recurring not only within the survey sample but were also reflected by the two interviewees. Of these, the most salient to this study are belonging, and home, but three additional areas of interest came to light as well and will as such be discussed at this point: global mobility, quality of life, and language abilities. Finally, possible limitations of this study are discussed, and potential future research opportunities are presented.

Belonging: Community and Closeness

Sarah made a point of bringing up the fact that she had taken Danish as a First Language while attending international school, and also been part of a Korean School over the weekends for nine years. She describes how being part of these fellowships allowed her to bond with others of similar backgrounds:

> *I think that even in Danish classes, there are also people like me, who speak fluent Danish, and there's also people who aren't even Danish at all, but also speak fluent Danish. So, I think that's also a setting that makes me feel more at home, because there are so many different people who do speak the same language* […] *There were quite a few people like that, who spoke the language, but didn't necessarily feel like they had a strong connection to it* (Transcript B, line 474)

Having community with others who, like Sarah herself, do not consider themselves fully Danish for different reasons, has helped her in feeling a closer connection to her native language and culture. In the same way she describes how being part of the Korean School was a way for her to get closer to Korean culture, as well as becoming

more proficient at the language. When asked about the experience, Sarah was effusive, saying she made great friends, and got to learn about Korean tradition, also reflecting more on what she achieved from this time:

> *I think, being with people who also, again, like in the Danish class, who spoke Korean, but weren't necessarily fully Korean, it was a whole community of those kinds of people, so I think that's really a big part of who I am* (Transcript B, line 508)

Through her language studies, Sarah found a community of others like her, who did not necessarily feel like they fully belonged to their country of origin – or the language spoken there.

Ferstad (2002) understands belonging to an international community as belonging to a community where change is inherent. When considering this in light of Baumeister and Leary's (1995) understanding of fulfilling the need to belong in stable, frequent relationships, it is worth noting that a community in constant transition, where the inhabitants of the community change with time, can in itself be a form of stability. Ferstad (2002) goes on to describe how TCKs who attend international schools are able to achieve a sense of constancy through their school, and feel a sense of belonging to the school community that they cannot achieve in either their host culture or home culture. Sarah's description of her experiences in both Korean and Danish communities reflect a similar sentiment, as she shares:

> *"Even when I go to Korea people are surprised when I speak Korean, and when I'm in Denmark people are surprised when I speak Danish, so it just feels weird – like sometimes I don't really belong anywhere.* […] *When I'm around people who are Danish, or when I'm around people who are Korean – like fully Korean or fully Danish, it's like I'm different, and so it feels wrong to say that I'd be Danish, or that I'd be Korean, just because I'm not like them, in that respect."* (Transcript B, line 338)

This feeling of not being fully Korean or fully Danish, as expressed by Sarah, is something that she knows to be normal, and she is able to talk about it with her friends and experience that they understand her, thus allowing her a space to belong in the midst of feeling like she does not belong and providing a community where she does

belong. Sarah shares that while she now has reached a point of contentment with regards to feeling as if she belongs nowhere, it used to be a bigger thing, and made her feel less confident in who she was. Having found a fellowship with other TCKs has helped her feel more confident and secure in where she belongs.

> *I think having friends who have been through the same things, it's a lot easier to talk about* [feeling like you do not belong] *and have someone who feels the same way. It makes you feel more comfortable with them, like, you could belong with the friends who feel the same way as you.* (Transcript B, line 369)

This understanding is reflected by Baumeister and Leary (1995) as they clarify the importance of having a bond of caring within an interaction. While being part of a community – like Sarah's Korean School, to some extent satisfies the need to belong, loneliness is still possible within this context if there is not a measure of relatedness, as the individual does not simply desire company, but rather an actual relationship (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Sarah continues to mention these closer friendships throughout the interview, describing how having international friendships allows her to feel like a part of something. In this way it appears Sarah has managed to help create a community where questions like those of home and belonging can be explored, thus allowing others with similar experiences to reflect their thoughts on the matter, and bringing them all closer together through the knowledge that none of them are alone. They have, as Baumeister and Leary (1995) understand it, managed to create a space where there are interactions bound by positive concern and caring. By being open with each other, in a context of safety and intimacy, Sarah and her friends are able to discuss personal subjects that their mono-cultural peers may not understand, and Sarah describes how "It's more like when we talk about [where we belong], we feel more together, because we have something that makes us similar. Which brings us together, in a society where we don't really feel like we belong" (Transcript B, line 401). Furthermore, she expresses a desire to continue being part of an international community, and that when she attends university, she "want[s] to be surrounded by people who maybe are like me: Who are international students, who have an international background, and somebody who I'd be able to relate to in that way" (Transcript B, line 187). This sentiment is something that a large number of the survey participants can relate to. Participants were asked to consider how a list of potential

factors have affected their choice of university and grade each factor on a scale from 1 (no effect) to 5 (strong positive effect). The diagram below (Figure 4) shows the frequency of different responses when asked how important a multicultural setting was to their choice of university, with 49% of respondents choosing a 4 or 5, meaning that their choice was affected quite strongly by the presence or potential for being part of a multicultural setting.

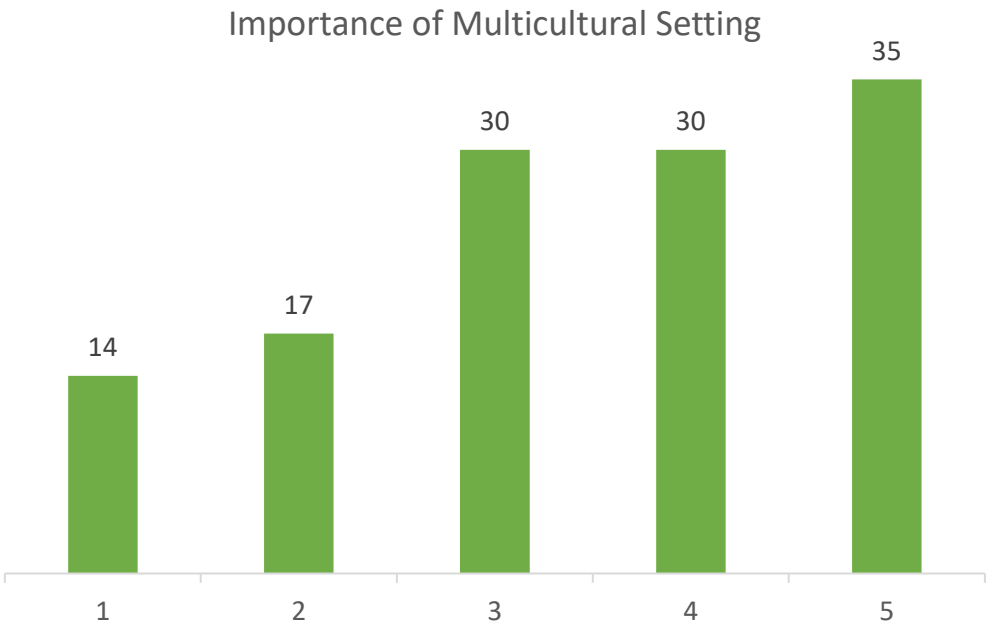


Figure 4

A young Ethiopian TCK who completed the survey describes:

> *I haven't lived there for years and moving back would be really difficult for me* […] *I would like to experience university in a more multi-cultural setting where I can interact with people from all around the world.*

This desire, as felt by both Sarah, as well as a number of the survey participants is far from abnormal among young adult TCKs, with several of the respondents adding, of their own volition, that they have enjoyed being part of a multicultural community, and want to continue being part of one. Ben, when asked what being raised internationally meant to him, brought up how this upbringing has taught him to adapt and be more open-minded, and it is due to having been exposed to so many different cultures and people. He has enjoyed having friends from all over the world, noting

how entering the homes of different friends has allowed him to step into their different cultures and lifestyles.

Home

The question "Where is home?" is one that may seem straight forward. Nonetheless it is one that, when asked of TCKs, can seem almost insensitive, and as such demands some context before being asked, since asking it without contextualising implies a level of ignorance of what it means to grow up internationally, that is not optimal when trying to establish report as part of an interview. When the question was asked during the interviews with Ben and Sarah, the interviewer attempted, insofar as it was natural, to rephrase the question and introduce it at a time where a similar topic was in play. Neither of the interviewees gave a short and clear response, as may be expected from a mono-cultural individual, with Ben deciding that "I would say Denmark right now" and Sarah's instant response being "That's a really hard question!"

When given more time to reflect over the question a more elaborate response was given by both interviewees. Sarah reflects on what home means to her, saying that:

> *I feel like for me home isn't necessarily a place, because I feel at home maybe with people that I feel safe with instead of the specific place where I am because I also feel at home when I'm in Korea with my family, I feel at home with my uncle and my aunt in, like,* [other end of the country], *and of course I also feel at home here, where I live, so, I don't think it's necessarily where my parents are from, but more the people that I'm so used to being around.* (Transcript B, line 46)

This understanding indicates that Sarah has an understanding of home similar to that expressed by Ferstad (2002). Instead of focusing on the absence of home as one physical place, Sarah identifies home through stable relationships, and actively works towards creating home by seeking out others with whom she feels a sense of belongingness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Ferstad, 2002).

The feeling of not necessarily belonging to one's culture of origin, and preferring to be part of a multicultural community, is something that several of the survey

participants have expressed as well, and especially one respondent from Ethiopia puts it very well:

> *"I haven't lived there for years and moving back would be really difficult for me as someone who looks like a part of the community but does not fully feel like a part of the community. Especially being surrounded by only Ethiopians or having just Ethiopian friends, I would feel extremely isolated."*

This experience of appearing as part of a culture, while not feeling like you belong is known as being a hidden immigrant (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999) and while few TCKs know to use this terminology, many are familiar, to some extent, with the feelings described by either Sarah or the Ethiopian TCK quoted here. A young woman whose parents are from the United States, but who has spent her entire life abroad explains her choice of not applying to a college or university in the States by saying that although both her parents are from the US, she has never lived there, and she does not feel 100% comfortable with the culture there. This sentiment appears to be shared by a number of other American TCKs who have filled out the survey, who also have no plans of studying in the United States, sharing that they feel unable to relate to people there, do not connect to the culture, or they feel too much like an outsider. It is possible that while American TCKs are well equipped to repatriate from an academic standpoint, as the IB system is very well received by American universities and colleges (Pannoni & Moody, 2019), they are very likely to become what Pollock & Van Reken (1999) refer to as Hidden Immigrants; individuals who look and sound like they belong, but who think and experience themselves as different. In cases like these it may be more appealing to choose to study in a place where you are able to either (a) pass as a foreigner, or (b) pursue relationships with others who are like you (Pollock et.al., 2017), thus actively creating a space to belong, as described by Ferstad (2002).

When Ben was asked why he said that Denmark is home "right now," rather than just stating that Denmark is home, he explained it this way:

> *I am pretty confident that I won't be spending the rest of my life here, so when I do move somewhere else – and I am probably going to be there for a pretty long time – then that'll slowly evolve into home until the point – well, when I still have family in Denmark, then*

> *Denmark will always be my home. But then if my family leave, or if I – in a long time, do ever start my own family somewhere else, then that place would naturally be home.* (Transcript A, line 220)

He appears to understand home as being more geographically specific, but still dependent on where one's family resides, describing how he believes home is made up of "where your family is, and where you feel comfortable, and where you are, and […] where you're involved" (Transcript A, line 232). At different times during the interview Ben refers to Denmark as home, while still speaking of it in a way that allows for this choice to change as time passes.

While the online survey did not include a specific question about where the participants consider home to be, partly because of the aforementioned complications related to such an inquiry, those who confirmed that they had applied for a university in their country of origin were asked to consider why they had made this choice, and were given a list of options, as well as the opportunity to add additional reasons why they are interested in studying in their country of origin. One of the options given was that their country of origin feels like home. Of the 57 participants who have applied to a tertiary education in their country of origin, 36 (63%) confirmed that this country feels like home. Among those who have no interest in studying in their country of origin, one respondent did state that "Although I am Korean, I was born in Germany and feel at home here," which only supports the reasoning behind the choice in wording used throughout this paper; that country of origin does not automatically mean that this is also a person's home country, in the sense that the country is home.

Continuing an International Lifestyle

Pollock et.al. (2017) use the term *migratory instinct* to describe the tendency amongst TCKs to continue travelling when reaching adulthood. When asked about the future after university, Ben showed an interest in going abroad again, saying that "I think after my bachelor's […] I would generally go anywhere that would take me. And, of course, somewhere nice!" (Transcript A, line 411). He mentioned how he quite disliked the weather in Denmark and would be very interested in living somewhere with a more pleasant climate. This openness to relocate based on something as seemingly minor as weather patterns was reflected in the survey results when participants were asked what affected their choice of where to study, and seven

different respondents, unprompted, added climate to the list of potential factors affecting where they chose to study, and rated it as a 4 on the 1-5 scale mentioned earlier, where 5 indicates a strong positive effect. Furthermore, several others noted, with some variation of disdain, the climate in their current country of residence or that of their home country with one young woman from Russia including as a reason for not studying in her country of origin that "the weather conditions are awful". In no way is this meant to belittle or demean the impact the physical climate can have on an individual's interest in residing in a certain place.

Having a desire to move abroad, or otherwise uphold an international lifestyle is exceedingly normal among TCKs (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999; Pollock et.al., 2017), and is also seen among both survey respondents and interviewees during this study. Sarah, while describing how she wants to live in Denmark one day, shares that "I think for part of my life, I think I really want to move away. Just because, I've spent so much of my life here, and I want to experience something new" (Transcript B, line 121). This longing to be elsewhere, and have new experiences in other countries is also reflected by survey participants, with a Finnish respondent stating that ", I feel as if going to university in a new country would be a rewarding experience" and another young German-American girl explaining that she has lived in her current host country for a long time, and she does not want to build more new experiences there, but would much rather be somewhere she has never lived before. Pollock et.al. (2017) describe how this migratory instinct, while normal, can lead to a restlessness, and some TCKs find it impossible to put down roots later in life. On the opposite side are those TCKs who respond to their highly mobile upbringing by that they make an effort to settle in one place, as reflected by another young German who has spent 16 of her 17 years outside of her country of origin, and now has chosen to apply for university programmes exclusively in Germany because, as she states: "I have lived almost my whole life abroad and I think I would like to discover my country of origin and spend time there."

Quality of life as Affecting Choice

As previously mentioned, both Sarah and Ben have applied to studies in Denmark, partly due to the financial convenience found in the Danish welfare system. Denmark is a social democracy, where health care, childcare, schooling, university,

unemployment, and elderly care are all provided by the government through taxation (Granov & Andersen, 2020). While having financial security is an advantage of being Danish in Denmark, it is also a healthy democracy ranked as the least corrupt nation in the world in December 2019 by Trading Economics (2020), and a society wherein children are considered valid participants. When the interviewees were asked about where they hope to settle down in the future Ben speaks highly of returning to Denmark to establish a family, as he likes the independence that children are allowed and encouraged toward, and that he finds to be very different from his time in Qatar. He goes on saying that "I think growing up in Denmark is the best thing you can do to a kid" (Transcript A, line 327). Sarah was asked about where she would want to establish her home in the future and answered, similarly to Ben, that she would want to come back to Denmark when she is older. The primary reason she gives for this is Denmark's established welfare system, and good healthcare, and because she believes it to be a country with great opportunities for families (Transcript B, line 269). This, however, is not the case for every TCK, as became clear when studying the survey data. Furthermore, upon noticing this distinction between participants in the survey, as well as the interviews, an attempt was made to find supporting literature among the known, and accessible, studies and theoretical works on TCKs, with little to no results. Instead studies done on TCKs with regards to tertiary education and/or repatriation seem to show no regard for whether a person's country of origin is considered "attractive" for nationals to repatriate to. As mentioned under Results, the survey participants who have not applied for university in their country of origin were given the opportunity to elaborate on why they had made this decision. These statements indicate that to young people there may be factors affecting their choices regarding relocation that extend beyond those commonly associated with young adult TCKs. Where Pollock et.al. (2017) consider one of the major motivators to be family bonds, and one survey participant shared that "I did get into very good universities such as Duke and NYU, but I have a community living here in Pakistan, and I can't abandon it for 4 years," statements such as these were rarely made in the survey. It is suggested here that since TCKs do not necessarily have a 'connection' to their country of origin, or value their international bonds higher, their selection process is based more on the quality of life envisioned in a specific country, rather than their personal affiliation to said place: not only do individuals holding Danish passports appear to be more inclined to return to their country of origin, in part due to the financial benefits associated with being

Danish in Denmark, but on the other hand individuals from countries with political instability, like Ethiopia, Nepal, or Venezuela, or countries with excessive violence, like Brazil, Mexico, or the United States, appear less likely to consider returning to their country of origin.

Linguistic Preference Affecting Choice

In much the same way, that the quality of life expected in a person's country of origin may affect their choice regarding relocation and future studies, so it may be when it comes to linguistic expectations. This is another area, as the one presented above, that appears conspicuously absent when discussing the benefits and challenges of growing up as a TCK. Pollock et.al. (2017) refer to the practical skills afforded those who are bi- or multilingual, using the example of an American woman working as a translator after having grown up in Japan, and learning the language there. However, like many of the examples given in their work, Pollock et.al. (2017) seem to have the United States as their common starting point, with no consideration of what the other side of the coin looks like. Where American children attending international school while overseas can study in their mother tongue while learning a secondary language through immersion outside the classroom, for those who do not come from an English speaking country this is not the case. Instead these children are likely to speak the official language of their country of origin at home, and English at school, and while the language they speak at home may be their first language, if they remain in the international system throughout childhood, it is likely that English will become their preferred language, as was also seen earlier under Survey Results. It can be posited that TCKs who have attended international schools, as such having had English as their primary academic language, are more inclined to have the desire to continue further studies in English. This preference was clearly reflected in the survey results, with roughly 82.5% having applied to universities in English speaking countries, as opposed to the 27% who have applied in their country of origin, and is, to some extent, also reflected by Ben and Sarah in their interviews, although the reasons for their choices differ from each other. Ben has applied to several universities in London, as well as a few Danish taught programmes in Denmark. He describes how the London-based programmes appeal to him because of the specific study selection, while studying in Denmark is more about convenience – presumably because it is free for

Danish citizens to attend university in Denmark, and a stipend is given to all students regardless of parental income. Sarah also applied to universities in both England and Denmark, although she considers the Copenhagen-based programmes more of a "safety option" (Transcript B, line 113). According to her it "was more of like, a convenient sort of decision. I mean, of course, I live in Denmark, so that was one, but it was also free education, so that was a big part of it" (Transcript B, line 91). When asked about her thoughts during the application process, Sarah immediately brought up language concerns, stating that "The majority of it was that I've been speaking English my whole, entire life – international school, so I figured that I would do the best in a setting where I would be speaking English" (Transcript B, line 83), which is a statement that several of those who completed the survey agree with, including a 17 year old Vietnamese national who shares that her proficiency in her first language is not strong enough, which would make studying in Vietnam extremely difficult for her.

Limitations

Both while conducting the empirical research, and later, while analysing and presenting the results, several potential limitations have become clear, and as such will be presented here.

While an attempt was made to gain a large sample size for the online survey, by both contacting the IB organisation directly, and reaching out to a large number of schools, the end result was 126 useable data sets, and as such it may have been difficult to find significant relationships from the data, and the results might be vastly different if the survey was replicated with different students. One reason for the low response rate may be that schools were contacted in March 2020: around the time when COVID-19 started spreading and being classified as a pandemic rather than an epidemic. Many schools responded with an automated email stating that schools were closed due to COVID-19, and of those who did respond, several were reluctant to add to their students' workloads as they were only just starting distance learning. COVID-19 also meant that the interviews, that had originally been planned for early April, were not conducted until May, after the IB organisation had decided to cancel all IB exams. As such, it is possible that individuals who may under normal circumstances have been interested in participating had either a) already left the country, or b) no longer checked

their school email, as there was no academic need for it. As it is, only two interviews were conducted, rather than the four originally intended.

Another limitation is rooted back in the potential issues associated with the TCK terminology, as mentioned previously. This concept is highly rooted in structure based theory, and focuses primarily on the conflicts deemed inherent among TCKs, rather than an observation of the agency seen among the individuals as they navigate this time of transition and choose where to live and attend university.

Potential for Future Research

The main reason for using Mixed Methods in this study was that the area of belonging among TCKs worldwide is rather undocumented – or rather, only certain subgroups have begun being studied. As mentioned in the Method section, by employing Mixed Methods here, it has been possible to not only gain a more general understanding of what is happening within this field, but also provide more in-depth, rich descriptions, that adds to existing knowledge of this phenomenon. The results to some extent reflected the findings in existing literature, and also illuminated new areas of interest that could benefit from additional research. As such it may be prudent to conduct greater studies cross-culturally among larger groups of TCKs in international schools, in order to gain understanding of how growing up in this context affects their decision making during transition. Furthermore, it would be of interest to continue qualitative studies focused on where young adult, and adult, TCKs choose to live, and how they experience the process of making this decision.

Conclusion

This thesis focused on how the sense of belonging is experienced by young adult TCKs as they apply for a tertiary education, and what factors influence their decision. The findings showed that some individuals choose to actively pursue relationships wherein they have had similar experiences and a common understanding of the world. For some of the participants belonging refers to a place, or setting, in which they feel at home, or in specific relationships where they have an established history, while others feel a sense of belonging in more abstract contexts – like a type of community rather than solely a list of people in a given context. Many individuals also express a desire to continue being part of international communities, where they feel more at home than they would in a mono-cultural context. Furthermore, it appears that many of the TCKs who participated in this study have chosen to study in countries where they believe they will have a better chance at a good life, whether this be due to higher quality education, less violence, greater political stability, or warmer weather. Additionally, the data sets from the completed survey showed that the majority of participants, regardless of their country of origin, would prefer to study in English as they continue their education. While this study serves to contribute data points to a relatively small field of study, it is important to remember that it is based on a small sample size, as well as the unique experiences of the individuals involved, and as such others may express differing opinions that are equally valid and important.

References

Ainsworth, M. S. (1989). Attachments beyond infancy. *American Psychologist*, *44*(4), 709–716. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066x.44.4.709

Alexander, M. M. (2014). The early graduation gambit of Japanese high-school sojourners in the US: organizing educational paths across borders. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, *36*(3), 350–363. https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2014.959467

Axelrod, R., & Hamilton, W. (1981). The evolution of cooperation. Science (American Association for the Advancement of Science), 211(4489), 1390–1396. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.7466396

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, *117*(3), 497–529. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.117.3.497

BBC. (n.d.). *BBC NEWS | Special Reports | Brits Abroad*. Www.Bbc.Co.Uk. Retrieved October 31, 2020, from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/in_depth/brits_abroad/html/

Bikos, L. H., Kocheleva, J., King, D., Chang, G. C., McKenzie, A., Roenicke, C., Campbell, V., & Eckard, K. (2009). A consensual qualitative investigation into the repatriation experiences of young adult, missionary kids. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, *12*(7), 735–754. https://doi.org/10.1080/13674670903032637

Bonebright, D. A. (2010). Adult third culture kids: HRD challenges and opportunities. *Human Resource Development International*, *13*(3), 351–359. https://doi.org/10.1080/13678861003746822

Bowlby, J. (1980). *Attachment and Loss Volume III: Sadness And Depression,Volume 3 (Basic Books Classics)* (Vol. 3). Basic Books.

Buber, M. (1971). *I And Thou* (1st Touchstone Ed). Touchstone.

Clark, V. L. P., & Badiee, M. (2010). Research Questions in Mixed Methods Research. In C. B. Teddlie & A. M. Tashakkori (Eds.), *SAGE Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research* (pp. 275–304). SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506335193

Trading Economics: *Corruption Rank: Country List*. (n.d.). Trading Economics. Retrieved October 31, 2020, from https://tradingeconomics.com/country-list/corruption-rank

Cottrell, A. D. & Downie, R. D. (2012). TCK – the History of a Concept. FIGT Research Network Newsletter 5.1.

Creamer, E. G. (2018). Categorizing the Purposes of Mixed Methods Research. In *An Introduction to Fully Integrated Mixed Methods Research* (eBook ed., pp. 20–40). SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071802823

Davis, P. S., Suarez, E. C., Crawford, N. A., & Rehfuss, M. C. (2013). Reentry Program Impact on Missionary Kid Depression, Anxiety, and Stress: A Three-Year Study. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, *41*(2), 128–140. https://doi.org/10.1177/009164711304100203

Fail, H., Thompson, J., & Walker, G. (2004). Belonging, identity and Third Culture Kids. *Journal of Research in International Education*, *3*(3), 319–338. https://doi.org/10.1177/1475240904047358

Fanøe, E. S., & Marsico, G. (2018). Identity and Belonging in Third Culture Kids: Alterity and Values in Focus. In M. C. Lopes-De-Oliveira & A. U. Branco (Eds.), *Alterity, Values, and Socialization: Human Development Within Educational Contexts* (1st ed. 2018 ed., pp. 87–102). Springer.

Ferstad, C. F. (2002). *A sense of home: What constitutes a sense of home and community for pre -adolescent and adolescent youth living in international transition?* (Order No. 3048030).

Gleason, T. P. (1970). *Social Adjustment Patterns And Manifestations Of Worldmindedness Of Overseas-experienced American Youth* (Order No. 7020460).

Granov, K. & Andersen, A. A. (2020, October). *Velfærdsstaten*. Faktalink. https://faktalink.dk/titelliste/velfaerdsstaten#:~:text=Fremkomsten%20af%20de%20moderne%20velfærdsstater,grad%20af%20ulighed%20i%20indkomstfordelingen.

Hoersting, R. C., & Jenkins, S. R. (2011). No place to call home: Cultural homelessness, self-esteem and cross-cultural identities. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *35*(1), 17–30. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2010.11.005

IB School List: International Baccalaureate. (n.d.). *Find an IB World School*. Www.Ibo.Org. Retrieved October 31, 2020, from https://ibo.org/programmes/find-an-ib-school/

Kawoosa, M. V., & Laskar, R. H. (2020, April 27). *70% of Indian citizens abroad are in 6 W Asian nations, shows data*. Hindustan Times. https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/70-of-indian-citizens-abroad-are-in-6-w-asian-nations-shows-data/story-DEy4vc6U8g0tFtHLrkwOoN.html#:%7E:text=Affairs%20(MEA).-,There%20are%2012.6%20million%20non-resident%20Indians%20(NRIs)%2C,live%20in%20just%20six%20countries.

Klemens, M. J., & Bikos, L. H. (2009). Psychological well-being and sociocultural adaptation in college-aged, repatriated, missionary kids. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, *12*(7), 721–733. https://doi.org/10.1080/13674670903032629

Korpela, M. (2016). A (sub)culture of their own? Children of lifestyle migrants in Goa, India. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, *25*(4), 470–488. https://doi.org/10.1177/0117196816671959

Kwon, J. (2018). Third Culture Kids: Growing up with mobility and cross-cultural transitions. *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education*, *13*(2), 113–122. https://doi.org/10.1080/15595692.2018.1490718

Lambert, N. M., Stillman, T. F., Hicks, J. A., Kamble, S., Baumeister, R. F., & Fincham, F. D. (2013). To Belong Is to Matter. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *39*(11), 1418–1427. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167213499186

Langdridge, D. (2007). *Phenomenological Psychology: Theory, Research and Method* (1st ed.). Pearson Education Canada.

Langford, M. (1998). Global nomads, third culture kids, and international schools. In M. Hayden & J. Thompson (Eds.), *International education: Principles and practice* (pp. 123–145). Stylus Publishing.

Maslow, A. (2012). *Toward a Psychology of Being* (eBook ed.). Start Publishing LLC.

Moore, A. M., & Barker, G. G. (2012). Confused or multicultural: Third culture individuals' cultural identity. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *36*(4), 553–562. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2011.11.002

Pannoni, A., & Moody, J. (2019, December 4). *IB vs. AP: Discover the Differences*. U.S. News. https://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/high-school-notes/2014/09/02/discover-the-difference-between-ap-and-ib-classes

Pollock, D. C., & Van Reken, R. E. (1999). *The Third Culture Kid Experience* (1st ed.). Intercultural Press.

Pollock, D. C., & Van Reken, R. E. (2009). *Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds* (Revised ed.). Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Pollock, D. C., Van Reken, R. E., & Pollock, M. E. (2017). *Third Culture Kids 3rd Edition: Growing up among worlds* (3rd ed.). Nicholas Brealey.

Ravn, L. K. (2014, January 29). *Tusindvis af danskere arbejder i udlandet*. Www.Da.Dk. https://www.da.dk/politik-og-analyser/eu/2014/tusindvis-af-danskere-arbejder-i-udlandet/

Nippon: *Record Number of Japanese Living Overseas*. (2018, July 10). www.Nippon.Com. https://www.nippon.com/en/features/h00232/

Russell, K. M. (2011). Growing up A third culture kid: A sociological self-exploration. *Human Architecture : Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, *9*(1), 29–42. https://search-proquest-com.zorac.aub.aau.dk/docview/920095352?accountid=8144

AARO: The Association of Americans Resident Overseas. (n.d.). *8.7 million Americans (excluding military) live in 160-plus countries.* Www.Aaro.Org. Retrieved October 31, 2020, from https://www.aaro.org/about-aaro/8m-americans-abroad

Thurston-Gonzalez, S. (2009). *A qualitative investigation of the college choice experiences and reentry expectations of U.S. American Third Culture Kids* (Order No. 3367137).

Useem, J., & Useem, R. H. (1967). The Interfaces of a Binational Third Culture: A Study of the American Community in India. *Journal of Social Issues, 23*(1), 130–143. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1967.tb00567.x

Watson, M. L. (2016). *Attachment as a predictor of acculturative stress in missionary kids* (Order No. 10107477).

Weigel, D. S. (2010). *Third-culture students: An exploratory study of transition in the first year of college* (Order No. 3404298).

Wojtecka, M. (2018). *The experience of identity development in a third culture kid with polish roots* (Order No. 10750939).

Appendix 1

Udvandring efter statsborgerskab, alder og tid

Enhed: antal

Dansk	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
0 år	302	313	287	237	256	265	280	290	335	374	337	347	321	348	366	362	370	408	408	428	455	433	411	387	452	470	528	393	418	370	409	418	346	313	334	324	319	315	319	282
1 år	279	270	260	245	210	248	234	260	365	370	351	292	313	297	302	383	393	407	402	392	452	466	433	420	443	487	525	486	426	421	386	400	442	381	319	297	315	308	297	297
2 år	285	281	244	231	203	234	236	221	287	350	279	282	310	262	278	327	363	364	376	412	423	419	384	388	430	453	450	409	358	361	375	370	333	324	310	283	299	314	306	273
3 år	258	272	233	235	224	210	202	234	265	296	264	242	258	261	309	264	314	338	342	360	364	398	292	366	387	417	454	407	371	325	324	330	357	299	312	285	249	286	292	265
4 år	233	258	260	236	197	215	199	211	224	299	252	212	228	228	265	297	298	310	283	336	370	366	322	354	379	453	371	407	349	292	340	339	294	326	261	269	252	256	258	237
5 år	211	299	213	215	203	201	212	199	240	232	227	194	189	210	227	247	303	256	304	327	347	327	325	358	356	381	438	327	345	320	296	307	272	314	260	283	258	272	225	211
6 år	233	274	232	179	173	205	199	195	229	235	221	189	178	183	227	245	240	228	243	280	307	302	310	294	316	336	391	331	329	241	313	254	280	251	214	235	228	228	190	182
7 år	232	214	234	199	165	171	185	183	243	197	196	172	156	155	189	198	213	224	230	256	286	276	301	282	284	351	326	323	320	253	255	230	230	234	194	200	194	197	230	174
8 år	224	232	215	182	167	171	175	163	222	212	189	152	143	149	143	158	176	183	197	240	233	248	233	263	293	325	336	225	267	245	231	239	221	210	192	187	196	220	178	181
9 år	165	202	217	178	182	187	174	177	184	191	175	133	140	131	129	152	157	176	189	197	226	221	239	223	256	251	301	231	243	224	236	212	209	226	164	189	179	217	194	136
10 år	171	180	213	153	155	169	169	171	201	209	146	156	122	125	126	140	147	158	151	163	189	193	209	215	227	289	289	218	267	207	186	200	184	205	179	205	207	162	161	147
11 år	158	167	161	175	153	149	178	160	206	177	167	138	141	118	120	123	151	144	140	176	176	168	182	188	208	244	250	218	210	180	185	155	164	197	163	194	161	164	187	166
12 år	159	164	151	154	153	134	140	158	169	181	143	136	106	101	115	108	135	152	128	153	160	169	170	172	185	196	196	192	218	200	161	158	146	165	152	152	174	160	139	143
13 år	165	137	131	106	117	128	125	137	178	173	136	114	102	99	129	109	143	116	131	129	111	141	148	145	162	204	196	189	180	157	154	133	114	146	166	144	164	142	138	127
14 år	140	126	127	119	119	106	136	143	160	161	139	118	99	92	101	103	129	110	95	127	124	117	136	124	149	177	171	172	160	143	149	137	143	152	124	148	146	119	150	109
15 år	118	138	125	117	85	108	99	118	162	159	180	182	131	153	147	131	160	171	114	159	164	165	162	164	186	203	214	172	156	212	183	193	179	214	184	199	188	185	208	193
16 år	221	223	218	197	145	163	169	171	267	293	319	374	310	314	311	301	326	309	258	266	255	277	233	259	335	306	338	295	307	381	398	389	434	368	405	473	409	385	491	466
17 år	380	395	376	331	327	318	334	302	389	505	501	486	509	475	461	493	452	470	430	431	402	366	386	383	389	378	357	374	343	345	306	320	306	307	323	295	258	271	314	297
Total	**3.934**	**4.145**	**3.897**	**3.489**	**3.234**	**3.382**	**3.446**	**3.493**	**4.326**	**4.614**	**4.222**	**3.919**	**3.756**	**3.701**	**3.945**	**4.141**	**4.470**	**4.524**	**4.421**	**4.832**	**5.044**	**5.052**	**4.876**	**4.985**	**5.437**	**5.921**	**6.131**	**5.369**	**5.267**	**4.877**	**4.887**	**4.784**	**4.654**	**4.632**	**4.256**	**4.362**	**4.196**	**4.201**	**4.277**	**3.886**

Tallene fra 2007 og frem er den 11. maj 2016 revideret i forhold til tidligere offentliggjorte tal. Se mere på http://dst.dk/doku/flytninger-til-og-fra-udlandet

Appendix 2

This following survey is part of a study on what influences international school students when applying for university/college.

There are two primary parts to the survey. The first part concerns nationality and country of residence, as well as preferred languages. The second part questions where you have applied to university/college, as well as which factors have affected your choice.

The entire survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are welcome to stop at any time. The survey results will be pooled for the thesis project and individual results of this study will remain confidential and anonymous. Should this study be published, only pooled results will be documented. This means that you will remain anonymous, and your answers will only be used as part of statistical data.

This survey is done as part of a Master's Thesis in Psychology at Aalborg University in Denmark. If you have any questions about the study or how your data is being used, please feel free to contact me at efanae13@student.aau.dk

Because of local legislation, consent is needed from a parent or guardian if you are under 18. If your parent/guardian has questions or concerns, they are welcome to contact me.

Thank you,
Esther Fanoe
Stud. Psych.
Aalborg University

Do you have parental/guardian's consent to participate?

(1) ❑ Yes
(2) ❑ No
(3) ❑ I am 18+

How old are you?

(7) ❑ Below 15
(1) ❑ 15

(2) ❑ 16
(3) ❑ 17
(4) ❑ 18
(5) ❑ 19
(6) ❑ 20
(8) ❑ Above 20

What is your gender

(1) ❑ Male
(2) ❑ Female
(3) ❑ Other
(4) ❑ Prefer not to respond

What is your nationality/passport country? (if bi-national, select one here and the other below)

If bi-national: What is your nationality/passport country?

Where were you born?

What is your first language (native tongue)?

What is your preferred language?

What is your current country of residence?

What is your father's nationality/passport country?

If bi-national: What is your father's other nationality/passport country?

What is your father's preferred language?

What is your mother's nationality/passport country?

If bi-national: What is your mother's nationality/passport country?

What is your mother's preferred language?

What is the primary spoken language in your home?

(2) ❑ Father's primary language

(4) ❑ Mother's primary language

(5) ❑ Parents' primary language(s)

(1) ❑ English

(6) ❑ Mix of parents' primary language(s) and English

(7) ❑ Other

If you chose "Other" please specify below

_____

What is the primary spoken language at your school?

(1) ❑ English

(2) ❑ Primary language of host country

(3) ❑ Other

If you chose "Other" please specify below

_____

How many years have you lived abroad (outside of passport country)

How many countries have you lived in? (+6 months)

Are you planning to attend university/college?

(1) ❑ Yes, I will start straight away (2020)

(4) ❑ Yes, but I will take a gap year/year to work first

(5) ❑ No

(3) ❑ Undecided

In which countries have you applied/considered applying for University/College

(8) ❑ Australia

(7) ❑ Canada
(6) ❑ England
(10) ❑ Ireland
(9) ❑ New Zealand
(12) ❑ Northern Ireland
(5) ❑ United States of America
(11) ❑ Scotland
(1) ❑ Passport country/countries
(2) ❑ Current host country (not listed already)
(3) ❑ Former host country (not listed already)
(4) ❑ Other unlisted country/countries

If you chose "Other unlisted country" please specify below

_____

On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is no effect and 5 is strong positive effect, how have the following factors affected where you applied for University/College?

Proximity to Immediate Family

1 No effect	2	3	4	5 Strong positive effect
(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑

Proximity to Extended Family

1 No effect	2	3	4	5 Strong positive effect
(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑

Proximity to Friends

1 No effect	2	3	4	5 Strong positive effect
(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑

Reputation of Institution (e.g. school ranking)

1 No effect	2	3	4	5 Strong positive effect
(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑

Study Selection

1 No effect	2	3	4	5 Strong positive effect
(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑

Extracurricular Opportunities

1 No effect	2	3	4	5 Strong positive effect
(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑

Multicultural Setting

1 No effect	2	3	4	5 Strong positive effect
(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑

Grade Requirements

1 No effect	2	3	4	5 Strong positive effect
(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑

Financial Requirements

1 No effect	2	3	4	5 Strong positive effect
(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑

Visa Requirements

1 No effect	2	3	4	5 Strong positive effect
(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑

Linguistic Requirements

1 No effect	2	3	4	5 Strong positive effect
(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑

Were there other factors that had a strong impact on where you applied for University/College?

Please list them below, alongside a number from 1 to 5, where 1 is no effect and 5 is strong positive effect.
Example:
Housing is cheap (3)
I like the mentality of the people (4)
The climate is nice (3)

Other factors that affected my application choice

_____

Did you apply to University/College in your Country of Origin?

(1) ❑ Yes
(2) ❑ No

Why are you interested in studying in your Country of Origin?

(1) ❑ I have an established social network (family and friends)
(3) ❑ There are financial benefits
(4) ❑ I will have a place to stay
(2) ❑ It feels like home
(5) ❑ I can study in my native language
(6) ❑ I can study in English
(7) ❑ I want to be closer to my roots

If you feel there were other factors that were not included above, please elaborate below

_____

Why are you not interested in studying in your Country of Origin? Please respond in bullet points

_____

If you feel that you were unable to correctly express how you reached your decision of where to apply for University/College, please feel free to elaborate in the text box below.

_____

Thank you for participating. Your time and effort are very much appreciated.
If you have any questions or concerns at this point, feel free to contact me.
If you are interested in the results of this study please let me know, and the finished product will be provided upon completion.

Esther Fanoe
Stud. Psych.
Aalborg University
Email: efanae13@student.aau.dk

Appendix 3

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to request permission to distribute an online survey at your school as part of a research study. As I am unsure whether this email has reached the person in charge of DP, please be kind enough to forward this email.

I am an IB graduate from Copenhagen International School, and currently enrolled in the Psychology Programme at Aalborg University in Denmark where I am in the process of writing my master's thesis. The thesis focuses on what influences choice of university/college amongst international school students, especially to what extent country of origin affects where students apply for tertiary education. I have previously contributed with research on identity and belonging in Third Culture Kids (https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-70506-4_5) and am hoping to help expand on existing research as it pertains to cultural homelessness and decision making among internationally raised young adults.

I hope that you will help me by sharing a survey link with your DP2 students, allowing those interested to complete the anonymous questionnaire. Interested students, who volunteer to participate, but are under 18, will be asked to confirm that they have parental/guardian's consent. The questionnaire cannot be completed without consent. If approval is granted, student participants will be able to complete the survey online between March 20th and March 31st 2020. The survey process should take no longer than 10 minutes. The survey results will be pooled for my thesis project and individual results of this study will remain absolutely confidential and anonymous. Should this study be published, only pooled results will be documented.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. If you, or your students are interested in the results of this study please let me know, and the finished product will be provided upon completion. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at my email address: efanae13@student.aau.dk. You are also welcome to contact my supervisor Dr Carolin Demuth at her email address: cdemuth@hum.aau.dk

Sincerely,
Esther Sofie Fanøe
Stud. Psych.
Aalborg University

AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

Appendix 4

Hi,

I am conducting a study for my master's thesis where I try to better understand how IB students choose where to attend University and what influences their choices. As such I hope you will help me by completing a short anonymous survey (5-10 minutes) about where you are from and where you plan to attend University. I'm hoping to obtain a large variety of results, and as such hope you are willing and interested in participating.

https://www.survey-xact.dk/LinkCollector?key=Q82LVTQ5JN1K

I am also hoping to conduct several interviews regarding this, so if you complete the survey and find it interesting, and you are willing to talk to me about your thoughts on the future, where you want to study and what home is to you, please send me an email: efanae13@student.aau.dk and we will discuss in more detail.

Thank you in advance,

Esther Fanoe
Stud. Psych.
Aalborg University

AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

Appendix 5

Consent Form to participate in Research Interview

Department of Communication and Psychology

Esther Sofie Fanøe
E-mail:
efanae13@student.aau.dk
Date: 30/04/2020

This is a study conducted by Esther Fanøe, as part of a master's thesis in psychology at Aalborg University.

If you consent to the following, you will be asked to participate in an interview of no more than 60 minutes. The focus of this interview is centred on your thoughts regarding university applications, especially which countries you have considered studying in, as well as what home means to you, and how this comes into play with your choice of future studies.

The data collected in this research project will be kept confidential. Your interview will be recorded and transcribed. This data will be kept in a secure location and only be available to me, the researcher, and my supervisor, Dr Carolin Demuth. Any summary interview content, or direct quotations from the interview, that are made available through academic publication or other academic outlets will be anonymized so that you cannot be identified, and care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify you is not revealed.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to answer individual questions and may discontinue the interview at any time.

I will be glad to answer any questions about the procedures of this study. You may contact me at my email address: efanae13@student.aau.dk. If you are interested in the results of this study please let me know, and the finished product will be provided upon completion.

Concerns about any aspect of this study may be referred to either myself or you are also welcome to contact my supervisor Dr Carolin Demuth at her email address: cdemuth@hum.aau.dk.

_____ _____

Signature Date

_____

Name

Appendix 6

Parental Consent form to participate in Research Interview

Department of Communication and Psychology

Esther Sofie Fanøe
E-mail:
efanae13@student.aau.dk
Date: 30/04/2020

This is a study conducted by Esther Fanøe, as part of a master's thesis in psychology at Aalborg University.

If you and your child consent, he/she will be asked to participate in an interview of no more than 60 minutes. The focus of this interview is centred on your child's thoughts regarding university applications, especially which countries he/she has considered studying in.

The data collected in this research project will be kept confidential. Your child's interview will be recorded and transcribed. This data will be kept in a secure location and only be available to me, the researcher, and my supervisor, Dr Carolin Demuth. Any summary interview content, or direct quotations from the interview, that are made available through academic publication or other academic outlets will be anonymized so that your child cannot be identified, and care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify your child is not revealed.

Your child's participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your child may refuse to answer individual questions and may discontinue the interview at any time.

I will be glad to answer any questions about the procedures of this study. You may contact me at my email address: efanae13@student.aau.dk. If you or your child are interested in the results of this study please let me know, and the finished product will be provided upon completion.

Concerns about any aspect of this study may be referred to either myself or you are also welcome to contact my supervisor Dr Carolin Demuth at her email address: cdemuth@hum.aau.dk.

_____ _____

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian Date

_____

Name of Child

Appendix 7

Background information for interviews

May 2020

Department of Communication and Psychology

Esther Sofie Fanøe
E-mail:
efanae13@student.aau.dk
Date: 12/05/2020

First name: .....

Age: .....

Nationality: .....

Nationality of parents: .....

Preferred language: .....

Countries lived in: .....

Universities applied to: .....

Appendix 8

Theme	Interview Questions	Clarifying follow-ups
Intro	Can you share with me the circumstances that led to you attending an international school?	
Home	**Where is home to you?** You mentioned having lived abroad, can you tell me about how it felt to move between countries? How did you adjust to living in a new place? What do you believe it has meant for you to grow up in this way (internationally)? Can you give an example of where you feel most at home? (place, people)	How did it feel knowing you would be going abroad (before/after relocating)?
University	Can you share your thought process on how you decided where to apply for university? What do you consider to be the largest contributing factors in choosing where to study?	
Future beyond	Broad strokes, what are your hopes for the future? Where do you hope to live (geographically) when you "grow up"? When you think of yourself in 10-15 years, what do you hope your life looks like in terms of job, location, and relationships? [define repatriation] **Under what circumstances would you be open to the idea of repatriation?**	

Appendix 9: Transcript A

Interviewer:
Okay. So, where is it your parents are from?

Ben:
Originally, they're Persian, so Iran.

Interviewer:
Yeah. And where were you born?

Ben:
Yeah, I'm born in Denmark.

Interviewer:
Okay. So, your parents both grew up in Iran?

Ben:
Yeah, my dad moved here in 1986 when he was 19 or 18 I think. And my mum came a couple of years later. They met in Denmark, not in Iran.

Interviewer:
Okay, so, you were born here. Do you have any siblings?

Ben:
I have an older brother.

Interviewer:
So, when you grew up, what languages did you speak at home?

Ben:
When I grew up as a kid it was mainly Persian and Danish. Primarily Danish.

Interviewer:
Can you share with me a bit about, like, the circumstances that led to you attending international school?

Ben:
So, when I was around 11-12, we moved abroad. We moved to Qatar. So, from grade 6 until grade 9, all my schooling was in English, so when we came back now, I had to attend gymnasium, and it just made sense for me to attend something in English.

Interviewer:
So, why did you guys move to Qatar?

Ben:
It was for my dad's job. It's within the same company and they offered him a new position there and he took it.

Interviewer:
How did it feel for you guys to move?

Ben:
At first, I was kind of, like, scared, because I had all my friends here, but then once we got there, it was a very nice experience I would say. But I would want, if I could go back, I would want to move there later, 'cos I think you get more out of it when you're older. But it was really nice.

Interviewer:
Yeah. So, when you say you wanted / you would want to move later, what would that look like?

Ben:
Around like early twenties maybe. Or late teens. Like, how my brother was when we moved there – he moved there at 15 and came back at 19. I moved there at 11 and came back at 16.

Interviewer:
Okay. So, he did the DP in Qatar or what?

Ben:
He did IGCSE, then DP.

Interviewer:
Okay. Yeah. So, if you could choose you would've only done the last part of your education there?

Ben:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
So, before you moved, how did it feel / like what kind of stuff was going on / you said that you missed your friends. Do you want to elaborate on that?

Ben:
Yes. So, because I don't live in central Copenhagen / So me and my friends we were all living really close together, so all the time we would either be hanging out either at someone's house, or out playing football or just, whatever we were doing / so we were really close at the time, then of course when you're such a young age, like 11-12, once you move abroad it's much harder for you to keep a connection compared to when you're like 16, but then you can easily just text over facebook or something. But when you're really young you don't really think of that.

Interviewer:
After you moved, when you were in Qatar, were you able to keep any of those friendships going?

Ben:

Yeah, but much less of them, I only speak to around 2, 3 of the same people though. From folkeskole. A decent [unclear passage]

Interviewer:
Yeah. Do you think that would've been different if you had not moved?

Ben:
Yeah. Because then I would've been with them for 10 years in school and we probably would've been closer and going to the same gymnasium and stuff. But, of course I would've naturally also left some of them, but I just think less.

Interviewer:
Yeah. So, what did you like about Qatar?

Ben:
Mainly the weather was really nice. But I'd say, just how easy it was living there. Like, I know it sounds kind of arrogant, but everything was so easy, you could get from point A to point B in a taxi for very little money or you could go to a really nice restaurant, like, by the beach, and you wouldn't be paying too much money, and it would just be really nice.

[…]

Ben:
I mean, also, your friends they have cooler lives there. Like, I remember having people from all over the world; one from Russia, one from China, one from Palestine, Jordan, like everywhere. And when you go to their house you also notice the different lifestyles they have. Compared to like /

Interviewer:
So, did you like that?

Ben:
Yeah, I thought it was really cool.

Interviewer:
So, how did it go with making friends when you moved?

Ben:
It went pretty well. The first friend I made; his name is Mohammad. It was a really awkward thing, it was my first day there in school and I barely spoke any English, I just knew how to say "my name is" [unclear passage] and then this one guy, he had like a blue mohawk and green glasses, he was like "do you want to be friends?" and I was like "sure, I don't really have anything else to do" and then we became friends and to this day he's still like my best friend, and we play – I don't know if you know the game "Warzone"? We just play on our Xboxes together every night now. Quarantine stuff. So, we still talk a lot.

Interviewer:
That's really neat. That's so great.

Ben:
Also, when you're older it's easier to keep the connection. Because there are resources.

Interviewer:
Yeah, was he in Qatar all the time you were there as well?

Ben:
Uhm, yeah, he has lived in Qatar his whole life.

Interviewer:
Okay. So, when you went back to Denmark, how was it to give up on those friendships – or do you feel like you had to give them up?

Ben:
Well, of course I knew it would be easier than last time, because I am older now. But it was also very tough, and also having to adapt to a whole new lifestyle because when you're 16 in Denmark it's very different from when you're 11 in Denmark. So, I didn't really know much about that, but I was also lucky enough to have some Danish friends in Qatar who were also moving back at the same time, and we had all planned we would attend the same school. So that was also nice. So, I had two friends in my first year here, because I switched schools after. So that was kind of nice. But, yeah. The transition was a lot easier.

Interviewer:
That's good. I'm happy to hear it. So, what do you believe it has meant for you as, like, in who you are as a person to grow up with this international transition?

Ben:
I think it makes you more resilient. It allows you to adapt more to different situations and be more open-minded in a lot of situations I think, too. Because you are exposed to a lot of cultures and a lot of people. So, you gain many different perspectives and a lot more understanding. So, I'd say in that way it has benefitted me and I also think it's made me more social. Generally speaking, I'm a pretty outgoing person, and I'm not really scared to say what I think – of course if it's rude I wouldn't, but I'm not really scared to say what I think or to initiate a conversation in that sense, and I also think that comes from me being moved from place to place and having to do that.

Interviewer:
Yeah, that makes sense. So, what I am looking at, and that I'm really interested in is this concept of Home, so –

Ben:
Yeah, I saw there were like two questions about it in that thing you sent me a long time ago.

Interviewer:
Oh yeah, so, real potentially basic question, but where is home to you?

Ben:

I would say Denmark right now. I really, really like Denmark.

[…]

Ben:
It's just, that being in Denmark is very nice. It's a very mature country, I think. Compared to other cultures as well. Because you can do a lot more here and, like, in Denmark it's almost not normal to not have a job at this time, whereas in other countries – especially in Qatar, it's like a thing you never hear of. And people are generally more mature, and you just have a lot more freedom here. Here you can go down to the supermarket and buy shots or beer if you really want to, and then I just really like the atmosphere as well. Except for the weather – the weather is really bad.

Interviewer:
We're in agreement on that at least. Yeah.

Ben:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
You said "Home is Denmark **right now**" why do you say it like that?

Ben:
Because I am pretty confident that I won't be spending the rest of my life here, so when I do move somewhere else – and I am probably going to be there for a pretty long time – then that'll slowly evolve into home until the point – well, when I still have family in Denmark, then Denmark will always be my home. But then if my family leave, or if I – in a **long** time, do ever start my **own** family somewhere else, then **that** place would naturally be home.

Interviewer:
Yeah. So, I just want to make sure that I'm not putting words in your mouth, but what is it you believe makes up a home?

Ben:
Uhm, typically where your family is, and where you feel comfortable, and where you are, and where you follow what's happening, and stuff like that. It's where you're involved, I would say.

Interviewer:
So, from that perspective, where do you think your parents consider home?

Ben:
They would consider Iran home, I think.

Interviewer:
Despite the fact that their family is in Denmark?

Ben:

Uhm, yeah. Just because **their** parents are in Iran. They are still very connected – I think if when they moved to Denmark if they lost their connection to Iran or evaded the law then Denmark would naturally become their home. But since it hasn't, I think Iran stays –

[…]

Ben:
Yeah. 'Cos I think when you're in that situation where you've been moving around a lot, you typically, I think at least, you can't really call one place home, because you don't belong to just one place. There's a lot of different things that I like about a lot of different places, and there's [unclear word] that's going to have all of those.

Interviewer:
So, do you feel more like you're at home everywhere or?

Ben:
Uhm, no, I wouldn't say so. I would say I feel the most **at home**, you could say, in Denmark. As I said, that might, or probably **will** change one day.

Interviewer:
Mhm, that's fair! If it's alright we'll jump a little bit and talk about your university ideas? Is that okay?

Ben:
Yeah that's fine.

Interviewer:
Alright. Where have you applied for university?

Ben:
In Denmark I've applied to University of Copenhagen, University of Aarhus and Syddansk. And then in the UK I've applied to King's College London, and University College London.

Interviewer:
Nice. Can you share a bit about the thought process, like, how did you decide where to apply?

Ben:
Uhm, well, when it came to the UK I just knew that I wanted to study somewhere in London, so I naturally applied to two of the best schools in London, being very optimistic. Uhm, when it came to Denmark, because I'm applying for medicine here in Denmark, then those three universities are the only three places that I would see myself living, 'cos I like being in a big city [unclear passage]. So, Odense, Aarhus, København, that would work pretty nice for me, so I applied to those, and the reason I didn't apply for any other programmes or any other universities is because I have to supplement two subjects, so I can't do that until vinterstart, so I have to take a subject that has vinterstart, and medicine is one of the only ones.

Interviewer:

Yeah. Do you feel that, like, it's been harder getting in because of your IB diploma?

Ben:
In the UK definitely not. In Denmark, a little bit, and not because I think that they discriminate, 'cos I'm pretty confident they don't really care about where your numbers come from as long as you have the numbers. I think it's more to do with the fact that the conversion rates are pretty unfair in comparison to a Danish gymnasium degree. It's not as hard to obtain as an IB degree.

Interviewer:
So, what do you consider to be the largest contributing factors in choosing where to study?

Ben:
Well, that's a big question. Can you give me a second? I actually have an excel sheet with this diagram thing I made. I used it to apply for my universities, and I put different categories and then how much they weigh on my decision.

Interviewer:
That's amazing!

Ben:
Here. Okay, so the ones that have the highest rating are personal interest, education quality and career prospects.

Interviewer:
Yeah. But, do you want to study medicine, is that, like, the thing you want?

Ben:
Yes, but not for the same reasons most other people do.

Interviewer:
What does that mean?

Ben:
I want to study medicine for the interest of medicine, I don't want to be a doctor because I don't like the lifestyle of a doctor. I think I don't have enough passion for helping people to become a doctor. Not that I'm mean to people, just in general.

Interviewer:
No, no, that's okay.

Ben:
Yeah, I would mainly do it for the career prospects of it, and then of course the decent income you would get. But compared to the UK, I've applied to something that's more of personal interest. And then the two courses I've found [unclear passage], they're both at UCL, one is called bioprocessing of new medicines with business management and the other one is called medical innovation and enterprise. So they're more of a bio-med-tech world with business. When I had to apply, I had to choose which one I want; business or science slash medicine, 'cos those are the two things I love the most, and then I think those two courses at UCL are a perfect balance, and the middle of them. […] It's the only reason

to why I was even considering going to the UK, because it's just so much more convenient being in Denmark, and medicine is also a really nice programme to get into. It's more to do with the fact that it is at a pretty good university, so I'm pretty confident that it would also bring about good job opportunities. And, I hope, a decent, high income.

Interviewer:
That's a fair reason.

Ben:
Yeah, 'cos, I'm still stuck. I haven't decided on which one yet. And I know, in Denmark that I might not have to decide, the decision might be made for me.

Interviewer:
Yeah, Denmark does it way different from most other countries.

Ben:
But from when I get my grades in early July I can tell if I'll get in or not.

Interviewer:
Yeah, that's true. […] As far as I remember, if you get into any of the Danish medicine programmes it's going to be taught in Danish, right?

Ben:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Is that something you find to be a positive or a negative?

Ben:
Of course, I would naturally prefer it was in English at first, due to the fact that all my academic knowledge is in English. My social knowledge in English and Danish is around the same, but when it comes to academics, I just **know** everything in English now, and I think it would take a couple of months' period for me to have to adapt to it being in Danish now, and having to translate everything I already know. I think it would be a bit of a problem at first, but then after half a year I don't think I would even think about it anymore.

Interviewer:
Yeah, so it's not too daunting for you?

Ben:
Yeah, it's fine, it's not a big factor at least.

Interviewer:
No, that's good, I'm happy to hear that. Moving on again: What are your hopes for the future; like after university.

Ben:
Well, depending on which route I go, they're mainly career-based if that's what you're looking for. But, I would be looking for potentially opening up a clinic or something, 'cos I don't want to be working for a hospital. But if I **do** end up going the route with London,

I have this dream, and I've had it for like three years, of one day getting into management consultancy, of a big firm, 'cos I just love the lifestyle they have and it just seems really interesting to me, so that's my **primary** goal, and it's also what I'm working towards right now. But I would also of course want to have close relationships with people and be having a stable life, a healthy life as well.

Interviewer:
Have you given any thought to where do you want to be more geographically?

Ben:
Geographically? No, not really. I think after my bachelor's – if I do end up going to London, I would generally go anywhere that would take me. And, of course, somewhere nice! I don't really have a big preference about different places.

Interviewer:
No? I guess what I'm trying to get at is, long term, do you want to stay in Denmark or get out?

Ben:
I definitely want to come back to Denmark one day. Probably [unclear passage]

Interviewer:
So, when you think of yourself, like, if you get married, have kids, do you want to raise them in Denmark, or do you want to raise them somewhere else?

Ben:
In Denmark. I think growing up in Denmark is the best thing you can do to a kid.

Interviewer:
And why is that?

Ben:
I just think that the way that you're taught, and the way that society is here, it's perfect for kids, in my opinion. I'm probably very biased but I think it's just a mix of allowing you to become who you are as long as parents are kind of guiding you and paving a path for you, in a way, but you are the one making decisions. It's like a mix of independence plus dependence.

Interviewer:
So, with that: Do you believe that having grown up with, like, going abroad and coming back – is that something you would want for your kids?

Ben:
Yeah. I know it probably sounds really narcissistic right now, but I want my kids to have, like, the **exact** same upbringing that I had. I think it **is** a good experience and of course it's not something I would try to force, it's something that, just the opportunity, I'd probably lean towards taking it. But it's something I definitely would want for a kid.

Interviewer:

[…] What I have seen, and I don't know if you can relate to this, is that we actually can relate to each other, despite not having anything in common.

Ben:
Yeah, I agree. You also definitely notice – like, from living in Qatar, 'cos people were coming in and out of the grade all the time, right? But when you do notice someone new coming in who barely speaks English and is coming from a completely different country, like **I** was a couple of years prior, you notice that they are typically very quiet, and, not very social but then, if there's someone who comes in, who **has** experience, who **has** been in a different school before – an international environment before, like, when they come, and they're a completely different person 'cos they **have** gone through that adaptation phase, in a way.

Interviewer:
So, do you think that this has been a positive experience? That it has prepared you for the rest of your life, or?

Ben:
Yeah, I would say so. I'm happy it happened.

Interviewer:
Despite the fact that it didn't happen later?

Ben:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Is there anything that you feel like I haven't gotten around to?

Ben:
Not really.

Appendix 10: Transcript B

Interviewer:
Can you tell me a bit about, like, where you're from?

Sarah:
Yes, my mom is Korean, and my dad is Danish, but I've never lived in Korea. My whole life has been in Denmark. We **do** visit Korea once a year, just to go back, to see my family over there, but other than that my life is in Denmark.

Interviewer:
How come you've attended international school? Or is that a recent thing?

Sarah:
That was my mom's idea, because she really wanted me to go to an international school, but my dad really wanted me to go to a Danish school, so that was because of my mom.

Interviewer:
So, has that been from, like, the get go, or from high school?

Sarah:
Well, I've been in international school since I was around like 6 years old.

[…]

Interviewer:
Alright, so how has that felt? Like, living in Denmark, but only being part of the international community or?

Sarah:
Weird, because you feel a little bit left out of the Danish community, because the majority of the people who go to those international schools aren't people who are completely Danish, they're people who come from different places, you know? Who don't have much of a connection to Denmark, but when you're somebody who's lived here for a really good part of your life and all of your friends are people who are **not** from Denmark, it's a little bit of a different sort of feeling.

Interviewer:
Yeah, that's fair. So, with that in mind, where do you feel like home is to you?

Sarah:
That's a really hard question!

Interviewer:
I know.

Sarah:
I feel like for **me** home isn't necessarily a place, because I feel at home maybe with people that I feel safe with instead of the specific place where I am because I also feel at home

when I'm in Korea with my family, I feel at home with my uncle and my aunt in, like, Vejle, and of course I also feel at home here, where I live, so, I don't think it's necessarily where my parents are from, but more the people that I'm so used to being around.

Interviewer:
So, do you identify as Danish or where do you feel like you're from?

Sarah:
When people ask me that question, I would say I'm both Danish and Korean, I **can't** choose one specific identity, and even if I **do** decide that I am Danish, I wouldn't feel **as** Danish as if I was 100% a Danish child. So, it's a hard question to answer for me.

Interviewer:
Yeah. And that's fair – that's why I'm asking it. Also, just 'cos you such a unique international story because you have lived in Denmark your whole life. Did you live abroad at all?

Sarah:
No, we only visit Korea now and then, and, no I've lived here my whole life.

Interviewer:
[…] So, looking more at, like, the future and university and stuff; where is it you've applied again? I have it somewhere, but I /

Sarah:
I've applied to both the UK and Denmark.

Interviewer:
Yeah, so, do you want to share with me the thought process that you went through when deciding where to apply?

Sarah:
Well, the majority of it was that I've been speaking English my whole, entire life – international school, so I figured that I would do the best in a setting where I would be speaking English. [unclear passage] The UK offers some really great schools, so, I feel like that was just the perfect place for me to apply.

Interviewer:
But you also applied in Denmark. Is that to English taught programmes or?

Sarah:
Oh, no, those were Danish, but that was more of like, a convenient sort of decision. I mean, of course, I live in Denmark, so that was one, but it was also free education, so that was a big part of it.

Interviewer:
So, can I ask what programmes you applied for here?

Sarah:

Yeah, in Denmark I applied to medicine, and in the UK I applied to bio-medicine, and a programme called Applied Medical Sciences.

Interviewer:
Cool!

Sarah:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Alright, yeah. So, assuming you get in in Denmark, would you actually go, or is it more of, like, a safety option?

Sarah:
I think for now, Denmark is, like, my safety option, 'cos I would prefer to go to the UK. The programmes sound more interesting to me, and I think it would be really exciting to, finally move away from Denmark.

Interviewer:
Yeah, so that's something you want to do? Is not live in Denmark?

Sarah:
I think for part of my life, I think I really want to move away. Just because I've spent so much of my life here, and I want to experience something new. Even just for a little bit.

Interviewer:
So, in relation to this whole studying in Denmark, is it something you worry about? Getting into a programme that's taught in Danish?

Sarah:
It's definitely something I worry about, it's one of the reasons that I was also considering the UK. I mean, if I **do** end up going to KU it would be something that I would be afraid about because everybody there would be native speakers and I'd be someone who **is** fluent in Danish, but not as fluent and not used to being around Danish teenagers all the time.

Interviewer:
Did you do Danish at CIS or Birkerød?

Sarah:
Yeah. We were taught Danish.

Interviewer:
Okay, so did you do it as an A1 or?

Sarah:
As a first language.

Interviewer:
[…] Alright, so it's not like you're at a huge disadvantage if you get in.

Sarah:
No, I would just feel, maybe, just a little bit out of place.

Interviewer:
So, when you say you would feel out of place is that purely or primarily because of language abilities or is it something else as well?

Sarah:
I think also socially, like, I'm much more used to being around people who **aren't** from Denmark. I think it would just be a little bit of a different experience for me.

Interviewer:
In a good or a bad way?

Sarah:
Well, I assume it would be in a good way, but it makes me nervous to have to do something like that.

Interviewer:
So, you said something about that you would want to go abroad for a while, is that something that you've been planning, or hoping, for a long time?

Sarah:
It's not necessarily something I've been planning, it's more something that I've been wanting to do for a while. Just get out of here for a little bit, and see what it's like.

Interviewer:
So, would you want to live somewhere else or?

Sarah:
Oh, yeah, I'd want to live somewhere else.

Interviewer:
So, just dreaming, what would that look like. Just an example, like where, or under what circumstances.

Sarah:
Well, speaking of university, I'd want to be surrounded by people who maybe are like me: Who are international students, who have an international background, and somebody who I'd be able to relate to in that way.

Interviewer:
So, is that important to you? To have people around you who have shared experiences. Like, with the international stuff?

Sarah:
Yeah, I think that's something that I value. It makes me feel much more comfortable to be around people who have similar experiences to me.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Sarah:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
So, and this is just a curiosity, but, having this unique experience of being international in your own culture, has that made you stand out also in the international culture?

Sarah:
No, I wouldn't say so. 'Cos there are so many unique people in international schools, that you just fall into the crowd. I think it's not something that makes you stand out.

Interviewer:
Yeah. So, if you end up going to the UK and you study there, would that be for, like, a full master's or just for a few years?

Sarah:
It's difficult to say because I don't know yet. I think it would be great to study just the bachelor's there and maybe come back to Denmark for my master's. That would be because I know that they offer a lot of great master's programmes in English, but I wouldn't **mind** studying in the UK for a while.

Interviewer:
And after university, how do you imagine yourself?

Sarah:
I don't quite know that yet, because I'm not sure what kind of job I'd want to have, but –

Interviewer:
That's okay.

Sarah:
Yeah, but I'm not sure. Kind of looking forward to find out.

Interviewer:
Yeah. Have you, like, just you know, spit balling, but have you given any thought to **where** you'd want to be afterwards, or?

Sarah:
No, I think I would enjoy moving away again. Somewhere else. I've never really thought about that.

Interviewer:
No? That's okay. Have you ever thought about, like, moving to Korea?

Sarah:
I **have** thought about moving to Korea. Of course, I have family that, so it would be much nicer to move somewhere where I know people, and I know the language. But, from

somebody who only goes there once a year I would still feel a little bit like I wouldn't be completely included in the society, just because I'm a little bit different.

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Sarah:
I think it'd be really cool to move there someday. Because I would still be able to connect with some of the people there and I have friends over there as well.

Interviewer:
That's cool. A lot of what I'm looking at is this thing about how growing up in an international context, how does that affect where, like, where you study, but also where you want to settle down. So, if you think, like, you know, 10, 15 years in the future and I don't know if you want to get married and have kids and stuff. But, where do you / if you can just dream, and we don't have to talk about, you know, reality, but would you want to live in / like, where would you want to live? Or would you want to live different places?

Sarah:
I think when I'm older I would want to come back to Denmark, just because I've grown up here, and I know what a great place it is to grow up [unclear passage] In a society that has things like good healthcare, and a lot of great opportunities for families, I think, specifically. So, I think it'd be great to grow old in Denmark.

Interviewer:
Yeah, that's true, there are some definite benefits. Yeah. Am I correct in hearing that you would want to, for some of your life, live outside of Denmark?

Sarah:
Yes. I would. I would like to do that. I would also want to come back.

Interviewer:
Alright. So, Denmark is home base in some way?

Sarah:
Yeah, in some way I feel a stronger connection to Denmark than I do to other places. So, it's somewhere where I'd definitely return.

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Sarah:
I of course want to go out and see what it's like to be in other places and see how that feels.

Interviewer:
Yeah. So, growing up, like, going to international school and being immersed in, you know, the international community, do you feel like that's been more of a positive or a negative?

Sarah:
Well, **I** would say it's been a positive experience. I mean, a bunch of really good friends, so many people from older schools that I'm still friends with, and, yeah, I think it's really great to know people who have really unique experiences from all different parts of the world, and I think it's really cool to be in an international school.

Interviewer:
[…] 'Cos, you **have** grown up in Denmark, but in some ways you have **not** grown up in Denmark, if that / is that -

Sarah:
You're right, I guess you could say that.

Interviewer:
Would that make sense?

Sarah:
Kind of. Because I **would** say that I've grown up in Denmark, but usually if you say that you've grown up in Denmark, you'd say you went to a Folkeskole and then you went to a Gymnasie … so in **that** way I would say that I'm a little bit different from growing up in Denmark maybe, just because I've gone to international school.

Interviewer:
Yeah. So, have you ever felt like a foreigner in Denmark?

Sarah:
Yeah. I definitely have. As weird as it is to say, I think, just because I'm half something else and because I haven't had the same experiences growing up as somebody who was completely Danish, who'd gone to Folkeskole and into Gymnasie. I think that sometimes I do feel a little bit like a foreigner in my own country.

Interviewer:
I really hope I'm not putting words in your mouth with this. It's just 'cos that's what I've heard from some of **my** friends, […] this fear of being, like, a hidden immigrant; that people will assume that they belong, but **they** don't feel like they belong. If that makes sense at all to you? I don't know.

Sarah:
It does. [unclear passage] I mean, even when I go to Korea people are surprised when I speak Korean, and when I'm in Denmark people are surprised when I speak Danish, so it just feels weird – like sometimes I don't really belong anywhere. It's difficult.

Interviewer:
So, you say that you don't feel like you belong anywhere. What do you mean by that?

Sarah:
Well, it's more like when I'm around people who are Danish, or when I'm around people who are Korean – like **fully** Korean or fully Danish, it's like **I'm** different, and so it feels wrong to say that I'd be Danish, or that I'd be Korean, just because I'm not like them, in that respect.

Interviewer:
But you do realize that's very normal, right?

Sarah:
Yeah, I have a lot of friends who also feel the same.

Interviewer:
So, do you think that's been helpful growing up? Like, in an international community over a fully Danish community?

Sarah:
In terms of, like, being more okay with not belonging anywhere?

Interviewer:
Yeah, or like, having people who can relate? Who have the same kind of feeling?

Sarah:
Yeah, definitely! I think having friends who have been through the same things, it's a lot easier to talk about those kinds of experiences and have someone who feels the same way. It makes you feel more comfortable with them, like, you could belong with the friends who feel the same way as you. Like, your own home. Yeah.

Interviewer:
So, is my assumption correct in that it has been beneficial for you and, like, that you've gotten something out of having these friendships that are built on, like similar experience, or like, similar [unclear passage]

Sarah:
That would be a correct assumption. Yeah. It's definitely helped.

Interviewer:
Yeah? And it's something you feel like you can talk about together?

Sarah:
Yeah, but that was just because we share a lot of similar experiences, and the whole idea of "Where is home?" Yeah.

Interviewer:
So, that's something you've talked about with, like, your friends and stuff?

Sarah:
Yeah, I've talked about it with a few of my friends and they have similar experiences and similar opinions when it comes to that.

Interviewer:
Yeah. So, what conclusions do you normally reach when you talk about that stuff?

Sarah:

It's more like when we talk about it, we feel more together, because we have something that makes us similar. Which brings us together, in a society where we don't really feel like we belong [unclear word].

Interviewer:
This not belonging, is it something that's a big thing in your life or is it more of, like, a small thing that you just think about once in a while?

Sarah:
It's more of, like, a small thing. I think I've gotten used to the idea, definitely. It used to be something bigger when I was younger but, I think, now, that I've definitely gotten used to the idea, and I'm much more comfortable, also knowing that other people are going through the same thing.

Interviewer:
With that in mind of, like, not belonging, how do you want to work with that in the future? Or is it something you want to work with?

Sarah:
I think in the future it's something that I want to be more confident about. That it's something that really defines who I am rather than something that makes me feel like I don't belong, I want it to be a big part of me. That it's important.

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Sarah:
It's a big part of what makes me the person I am, I think.

Interviewer:
How so? In what ways?

Sarah:
Because going to international school, right? I think, it's just definitely made me a different person than if I'd gone to Danish schools and, I don't know how to explain this, I just think it's made me a different person.

Interviewer:
So, would you want to, like, if you have hypothetical kids one day, would you want to raise them in an international context or do you think that you would want to raise them solely in one culture?

Sarah:
That's also a hard question.

Interviewer:
Yep, I know.

Sarah:

I guess, seeing as I want to move back to Denmark in the future and raise a family here, I think, for **me** I would prefer that they went to an international school.

Interviewer:
So, this way that you have been raised is something you feel you would want to pass on to others?

Sarah:
I think it is, yeah. [unclear passage] It's been a good experience for me, [unclear passage] something I hope they'd enjoy too.

Interviewer:
[…] Is there anything you feel like I've completely missed asking about? Something that's important to you in relation to all of this?

Sarah:
Something random that just came to mind
maybe my Danish classes?

Interviewer:
Oh yeah, you do Danish classes? Like outside of school, or?

Sarah:
Just in international school. [unclear passage] So in there. I think that because there are people who **are** fully Danish and **do** go to international schools and, I think that even in Danish classes, there are also people like **me**, who speak fluent Danish, and there's also people who aren't even Danish at all, but also speak fluent Danish. So, I think that's also a setting that makes me feel more at home, because there are so many different people who do speak the same language – maybe at different levels, but I think it's really cool.

Interviewer:
Have there been a lot of Danish students in your Danish classes who also have this thing about being, like, international in Denmark despite being Danish?

Sarah:
Yeah, there are. I think especially at CIS there were quite a few people like that, who spoke the language, but didn't necessarily feel like they had a strong connection to it.

Interviewer:
So, was that something you talked about in Danish class?

Sarah:
No. No, never.

Interviewer:
That's fair. […] CIS used to have Chinese school on Saturdays, did they also have Korean school?

Sarah:
Yeah, they did. I went to Korean school for 9 years.

Interviewer:
So, how was that?

Sarah:
That was a really, really great experience, I made some really, really good friends there, and I think it was an amazing experience even though I didn't necessarily enjoy the part where we had to do work, but, I think, being with people who also, again, like in the Danish class, who spoke Korean, but weren't necessarily fully Korean, it was a whole community of those kinds of people, so I think that's really a big part of who I am.

Interviewer:
So, was that a way to get closer to Korean culture or was it just a way to learn the language?

Sarah:
Well, it was both. We did a lot of things that related to the culture. Like, a lot of specific traditions and we had, like Christmas shows, and things that were fun, so I think it was a really great experience to be there.

[…]

Interviewer:
I'm glad. So, do you think it's beneficial to those kinds of little extra communities within the international communities?

Sarah:
I think, definitely. I mean, again, having a connection with people who are similar to you, making some really good friends.

Interviewer:
Yeah. That's cool. So, if you wanted to, would you be able to study in Korea?

Sarah:
It gave me a certificate, but I don't think it was enough to let me study in Korea.

Interviewer:
No. That's fair. […]

Sarah:
No, I think at the end of the day it was it was great fun, being with all the people yeah.

Interviewer:
Yeah, no I hadn't thought about that Danish classes and Korean classes would also contribute something, but that's true. Also just 'cos you have both the international aspect, plus your parents are from two different cultures going on, so there's like, the question of how much of one versus the other thing is affecting all the stuff that's happening in your head.

Sarah:

It's a difficult question as well. I don't know if I would say that I'm more Danish or Korean. I guess the fact that I live in Denmark and I speak the language a little bit better would mean that I **am** more Danish than I am Korean.

Interviewer:
Why?

Sarah:
I think just because I've grown up here. I feel more comfortable being in Denmark than I do in Korea. I feel like it's easier to communicate to people. I don't know, it's easier to be here than it is to be in Korea.

Interviewer:
Yeah, that's fair. […] Is there anything else you feel is important to you and your experiences?

Sarah:
Maybe my sister?

Interviewer:
Oh yeah!

Sarah:
Having somebody who's completely the same as you, just, you [unclear passage] exact same things maybe [unclear passage] is more comforting.

Interviewer:
So, how old is your sister?

Sarah:
She's a year and a half younger than me. So, she's 16.

Interviewer:
So, is she going to start DP1 or DP2 now?

Sarah:
She's actually decided to go to Niels Brock.

Interviewer:
Okay!

Sarah:
Yeah, she finished the pre-IB programme this year at Birkerød and then she decided that she wanted to go to Niels Brock, so she actually has to repeat a year.

Interviewer:
So, then all her schooling is going to be in Danish, hey?

Sarah:

Oh, no, it's an English programme. But they do have Danish classes and the majority of the people there are completely Danish.

Interviewer:
So, is it like an IB programme or?

Sarah:
I don't know the specifics of the programme, but I think it's like a normal gymnasie, but specific to business?

Interviewer:
So, it's more like a HHX?

Sarah:
Kinda, yeah.

Interviewer:
So, the fact that she's chosen to go this way, how has that been for you guys?

Sarah:
Well, I think it made sense to her. I mean, I can also understand her decision. I mean, seeing me going through the IB programme, it was something that she really didn't want to do. And, she's a lot more of a creative, sort of. She wants to do, like, whatever she wants to do in her life, and she feels like the IB isn't right for her, so she decided to go with the business direction.

[…]

Interviewer:
If you could redo your high school years, would you have done something different than the IB?

Sarah:
No, I wouldn't. I think the fact that I've participated in the IB programme my whole life, I think it just made more sense to finish it.

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Sarah:
I think it was actually, pretty interesting at some points and I really enjoyed it.

Interviewer:
Well, that's good. […] So, where do you hope to get in? Number 1 choice?

Sarah:
I think it would actually be in the UK, at least now that's what I'm thinking. It'd be the most exciting. More me.

Interviewer:

What makes it more you?

Sarah:
The programme itself. It sounded like something that I'd be more interested in.

Interviewer:
So, do you have friends there that you could, like, live with? Or how would you go about that?

Sarah:
I don't have any friends there right **now**, but I know that there are a few people who also have offers for the UK, so I could get in touch with some of those people.

Interviewer:
So, you're not worried about moving abroad, like, without your family and stuff?

Sarah:
I mean, right now, no. I think it'll hit me when I do actually leave the house, but, no. No, I'm really excited about it actually.

Interviewer:
Yeah, that's cool. […] At Birkerød, did you guys have, like, "Careers Week" type things where universities came out and talked to you about, like, options?

Sarah:
No.

Interviewer:
[…] So, was the college counsellor there a good resource?

Sarah:
Not really. She was more there to help with the application process than to help figure out where we want to study.

Interviewer:
So, was she knowledgeable about only Danish universities or?

Sarah:
She was more for the U-CAS applications to the UK. We had another Danish studievejleder who told us about the application process for optagelse.dk

Interviewer:
Okay. So, you were able to get some kind of guidance for both the UK and Denmark.

Sarah:
Yeah, we were given both.

Interviewer:
That's good. […] So, is there a reason why you've only looked at the UK, like, not Scotland, not Canada, not anywhere else?

Sarah:
For Canada and the US, it felt like it was a little bit too far from Denmark, and it was also a lot more expensive. So, I think the UK seemed like a pretty good in-between option.

Interviewer:
Okay. So, why not Scotland?

Sarah:
I don't know, I don't think [unclear passage] just didn't really look at the different programmes in Scotland, but I found some pretty great options in the UK.

[…]

Interviewer:
And how are your parents about you moving far away?

Sarah:
My parents are pretty supportive of it. They just want me to study whatever I want to study, and they're both really supportive of what I want to do. It's nice.

[…]

Interviewer:
Okay, so, do you know how it's been for your mum to move to Denmark and live here?

Sarah:
Oh, it's been a difficult process. She's wanted to move back to Korea for a really long time, and I think when me and my sister move out she will probably want to go back and at least have like a part time home over there. I know she really wants to go back, which is why we visit there every year. She misses it.

Interviewer:
Mhm, that makes sense. 'Cos I guess, to her, that is home?

Sarah:
Exactly.

Interviewer:
Well, I am out of questions. Anything else you want to add?

Sarah:
No, I think we covered everything.

Interviewer:
Okay.