

# **EMIRATI STUDENTS IN THE UK: Cultural Identity Transformation**

**Samineh Izedi Shaheem**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the  
Cass School of Education and Communities for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**April 8<sup>th</sup> 2014**

## **ABSTRACT**

The number of Gulf students, particularly those from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), who travel specifically to the United Kingdom (UK) for tertiary educational purposes, are continuously increasing. Immigration and sojourning discussions have been informed by concepts of globalisation, postmodern identity and cultural nationalism. This work discusses and draws on such concepts to inform the study, which focuses on acculturation experiences of Emirati student sojourners. Reflecting upon sojourner identities during their time abroad, as well as repatriation experiences when back in the UAE, this study explores cultural identity transformation for Emiratis between two different locations.

The samples were of 25 participants in total. Of those, there were 16 UK based sojourners (4 as pilot studies) and 9 UAE repatriates. Different sets of students were interviewed and therefore the sojourners were not the same repatriated students. Their interviews were collected, coded, analysed using deductive thematic analysis, guided by research questions and the theoretical framework, that resulted in the identification of five themes: Emirati cultural identity, Emirati cultural identity affected through acculturation, sojourner acculturative strategies used in the UK, repatriation difficulties and repatriation strategies used upon return to the UAE. A stronger connectivity to the cultural dimensions of Emirati identity resulted in a more successful acculturative outcome, with fewer repatriation challenges for Emirati students.

The study aims to extend understanding of cultural identity and acculturation through the data emerging from this investigation. Implications of the study for support of Emirati students in higher education are also explored.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank my mother, Nasrin, and father, Massoud, who instilled the value of education, learning, hard work, determination and perseverance in my siblings and I. Your love, strength and unwavering support have been instrumental in all aspects of my life, especially in helping me complete this research.

Of course, this thesis would not have been possible without the guidance and knowledge of Dr. Helen Penn, Dr. Margaret Malloch and Dr. Peter Martin, bless his soul, who I am sure is smiling down at us from above. I will always treasure, remember and pass on what you imparted to me.

I am grateful to my brother Ali Reza and sister Salma, who are so special; they mean the world to me and fill my heart with only pride and happiness. You always make the darker days seem so much brighter.

I would like to thank my precious son Yousef, who gave me his permission and blessing to complete this journey so that he could always be proud of his mother. Your smile is what keeps me alive.

My life partner Sina who I would like to thank for always reminding me who I am and that no triumph is ever impossible for us to achieve together.

Thank you to Kathryn Spellman, Nadimeh Mehra and Arezoo Rezaei for encouraging me to embark on this challenging expedition and remaining tirelessly by my side, in their own way, throughout.

I am forever grateful to the UAE for being so welcoming to my family and I and offering us a secure and stable environment to live, learn, lament and laugh. I hope this research can contribute to a better understanding of the cultural identity of the Emirati people.

Finally, special thanks to all the Emirati students who took part; without your narratives, this story would not have been possible.

To all the above, and to the many others who supported me in so many ways in my effort, I express my sincere appreciation.

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Name: Samineh Izedi Shaheem

Signature: *Samineh Izedi*

Date: April 8th 2014

# CONTENTS

<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Declaration.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	<b>14</b>
1.1 Setting the Scene.....	14
1.2 Rationale for the Study.....	19
1.3 Assessing Cultural Identity – Transformation – for the Sojourner .....	21
1.4 Research Questions.....	22
1.5 Purpose and Objectives of Research.....	23
1.6 Stages of the Study.....	23
<b>Chapter 2: A Flourishing Desert Country – The United Arab Emirates</b>	<b>26</b>
2.1 Locality and Focus.....	26
2.2 Exploring Development and Change in the UAE.....	27
2.2.1 The UAE, Pre-Oil Synopsis.....	28
2.2.2 The UAE, Post-Oil Synopsis.....	29
2.2.3 An Emirati and Expatriate Population.....	30

2.2.4	Protection and Strength in Cultural Nationalism.....	32
2.3	Emirati Culture, Religion and Identity.....	32
2.3.1	Sunni and Shi'ites (Demographics and Religious Interaction).....	33
2.3.2	Shari' a: Islamic Law.....	33
2.3.3	The Holy Month of Ramadan.....	34
2.3.4	Social and Familial Relationships in the UAE.....	35
2.3.5	Traditional Values.....	36
2.3.6	The Old and New: Expressive Language in Cross-Generational Attitudes.....	37
2.4	Statistics for Tertiary Education in the UAE.....	38
2.4.1	Government Sponsorship and Emirati Students in the UK.....	39
2.4.2	Reasons for Studying in the UK.....	41
2.5	Chapter Summary.....	43
 <b>Chapter 3: The Student in Cultural Transition – Literature Review</b>		<b>45</b>
3.1	Introduction.....	45
3.2	Overview.....	46
3.3	Understanding Identity.....	48
3.3.1	Self Concept and Theoretical Dimensions of Identity Development.....	52

3.3.2	Identity Achievement.....	56
3.4	Cultural Identity.....	57
3.4.1	Language.....	58
3.4.2	Cultural Nationalism.....	60
3.4.3	Religion (Ethics and Morality).....	61
3.4.4	Social Relationships.....	62
3.4.5	Gender Structures.....	64
3.4.6	Ways of Seeing ‘Self’, and the ‘Other’.....	65
3.4.7	The Collectivism/Individualism Continuum.....	67
3.5	Individual and Collective Identities.....	70
3.5.1	Interdependent vs. Independent Construal of Self.....	71
3.5.2	The Self Concept of Sojourners.....	75
3.6	The BII – Bicultural Identity Integration.....	77
3.7	Acculturation and Identity.....	78
3.8	Focused Acculturative Outcomes for Emiratis in Transition.....	83
3.9	Integrative Acculturative Framework.....	86
3.10	Strategies for Successful Integration.....	89
3.10.1	Culture Shock, Coping and Comprehension during Acculturation.....	91
3.10.2	Variations in Coping Studies.....	95

3.11	Repatriation and Re-Integration.....	98
3.11.1	Repatriation Framework.....	100
3.11.2	Repatriation Across Cultures.....	101
3.11.3	Deculturation and Reverse Culture Shock.....	102
3.11.4	Techniques for Re-Integration / Re-Settling.....	104
3.12	Shifting Attitudes in Acculturation (Overview).....	105
 <b>Chapter 4: Methodology</b>		 <b>108</b>
4.1	Appropriating Analysis.....	108
4.1.1	Consideration of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods.....	109
4.1.2	Moving Towards Qualitative Analysis .....	111
4.2	Understanding Thematic Analysis.....	112
4.2.1	Comparison with other Qualitative Methods .....	118
4.2.2	Advantages and Limitations of Thematic Analysis.....	120
4.2.3	Methodological Framework .....	122
4.3	Researcher Considerations and Ethical Guidelines.....	123
4.4	The Sample.....	125
4.5	Limitations.....	129
4.6	The Pilot.....	130
4.7	Main Study Design.....	133

4.8	Processes for Transcription and Analysis .....	135
4.9	Courtesies for Participant Review .....	138
4.10	The Role of the Researcher.....	140
4.11	Research, Reliability, Validity and Results.....	141

## **Chapter 5: Findings 144**

5.1	Emerging Themes.....	144
5.2	Theme #1: Emirati Cultural Identity.....	146
5.2.1	Sub-theme # 1- Focus on Religion.....	149
5.2.2	Sub-theme # 2 - Focus on Family .....,.....	155
5.2.3	Sub-theme # 3 - Focus on Traditions and Values.....	162
5.2.4	Sub-theme # 4 - Focus on Emirati Privilege.....	167
5.3	Theme # 2 – Emirati Cultural Identity, Affected through Acculturation.....	171
5.3.1	Transformative Sub-theme # 1: Self-Efficiency and Independence...172	
5.3.2	Transformative Sub-theme # 2: Religious Commitment.....	175
5.3.3	Transformative Sub-theme # 3: Broadmindedness.....	182
5.3.4	Transformative Sub-theme # 4: Performance Rather Than Privilege...186	
5.4	Theme # 3 - Acculturative Strategies Used While in the UK.....	188
5.4.1	Coping Strategy #1: Regular Contact with Family and Friends .....	189

5.4.2	Coping Strategy #2: Religious Activity and Prayer.....	189
5.4.3	Coping Strategy #3: Improved Language Proficiency.....	191
5.4.4	Coping Strategy #4: Making Non-Emirati Friends.....	193
5.4.5	Coping Strategy #5: Co-National Friendships.....	194
5.5	Theme # 4 - Difficulties Encountered in Returning Home.....	196
5.5.1	Repatriation Difficulty #1: Having Bicultural Experiences (in the UAE) .....	196
5.5.2	Repatriation Difficulty # 2: Feeling Misunderstood.....	199
5.6	Theme # 5 Emirati Re-Integration and Post-Repatriation Strategies.....	204
5.6.1	Post-Repatriation Strategy #1: Being Aware of Cultural Changes in Identity.....	205
5.6.2	Post-Repatriation Strategy #2: Working upon Return.....	207
5.6.3	Post-Repatriation Strategy #3: Respecting Home Norms and Value...	208
5.6.4	Post-Repatriation Strategy #4: Maintaining Contact with Friends.....	210
5.6.5	Post-Repatriation Strategy #5: Returning to the UK for Further Education.....	211
5.6.6	Post-Repatriation Strategy #6: Integrating Learnt UK Value Systems .....	213
5.6.7	Post-Repatriation Strategy #7: Physical Activities.....	214
5.7	Hearing Their Story - Summary.....	216

**Chapter 6: Conclusion ‘Still Emirati, but maybe more Emiratish’ 217**

6.1 ‘Still Emirati, but maybe more Emiratish’ .....	217
6.2 Overview and Discussion of Findings.....	218
6.3 Overview of Findings Guided by the Theoretical Framework.....	220
6.4 Cultural Identity Transformation.....	222
6.5 Acculturative Outcomes.....	227
6.6 Repatriation.....	234
6.7 Limitations and Advantages.....	235
6.8 Significance of the Study.....	236
6.9 Implications for Future Research.....	237
6.10 Final Thoughts .....	240

**List of References .....242**

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 Interview Schedule 1 and 2.....	271
Appendix 2 Examples of Emirati student sojourner and repatriate transcripts.....	277
Appendix 3 Participant Information Sheet.....	302
Appendix 4 Written Informed Consent Form.....	303

## Tables

1	Registered Subject Areas in the UK.....	43
2	Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development.....	53
3	Group #1: Emirati Sojourners in the UK - (UK Interviews).....	127
4	Group #2: Emirati Repatriates – (UAE Interviews) .....	128

## Figures

1.	Map of the United Arab Emirates.....	26
2.	Main Theoretical Dimensions of this Study.....	48
3.	Rosch's Level of Abstraction.....	50
4.	Sojourn cycle - Focus on Cultural Identity.....	57
5.	Sojourn cycle – Focus on Acculturation.....	79
6.	Berry's Acculturative Outcomes .....	86
7.	Stress and Coping Model based on Lazarus and Folkman.....	93
8.	Sojourn cycle – Focus on Repatriation.....	98
9.	Five Main Emergent Themes in Relation to the Sojourn Cycle.....	146
10a.	Four Main Sub-themes of Emirati Cultural Identity.....	147
10b.	A Schematic View of Emirati Cultural identity .....	148
11.	The Four Main Dimensions of Emirati Cultural Identity, Acculturatively Effected.....	171
12.	The Different Coping Strategies used by Sojourners in the UK.....	188

13. The Different Coping Strategies used by Repatriates .....	204
14a. Original Paradigm Placement of Independent Self Construal.....	223
14b. Original Paradigm Placement of Interdependent Self Construal.....	223
15a. Emirati Self-Construal Pre Sojourn.....	224
15b. Emirati Self-Construal Post-Sojourn.....	224
16. Berry's Acculturative Outcomes.....	228

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 – Setting the Scene**

People living and studying in environments different from their homeland or country of origin are a sign of progressive accessibility to international prospects and travel (Trumbull et al., 2001; Tomlinson, 2003). As labour mobility and population migration are significant issues worldwide, there is growing interest in exploring the acceleration in cross-cultural, between-society, contact (Black et al., 1991; Paludi, 2002; Markus and Kitayama, 2003; Van de Vijver and Phaet, 2004; Dunkel, 2005; Neyestani, 2005; Hendry et al., 2007). Beside more permanently based migrant populations, temporary multinational employees, academics and international students have all become increasingly mobile with global developments, in the last few decades (Sakamoto, 2006). These more temporary residents and transnational travellers are known as ‘sojourners’. The term ‘sojourner’, as in the works of Sussman (2002) and Ward et al., (2001), refers to the person who has chosen to go to a host country to meet a clear objective over a period of time, with the initial and sustained intention of returning home, to their country of origin.

Leaving one’s country to begin relocation, however, requires individuals to become disconnected from family, support systems and familiar cultural practices. It also requires them to interact with people whose language and culture may seem different than their own (Dien, 2000; Kim, 2001; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2002; Berry, 2003; Benet-Martinez and Haritatos, 2005; Berry, 2006a; Berry and Sam, 2006). For sojourners, shifts in location and therefore varying cultural systems, might present both benefits and perceived risks (Bhatia and Ram, 2001; Bosma and Kunnen, 2001; Penrose, 2002; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2002; Constantine et al., 2004; Del Pilar and Udasco, 2004; Bikos et al., 2007; Birman and Taylor-Ritzler, 2007), especially to identity.

Emirati students, the focus of my research, represent a previously unstudied population in relation to issues of acculturation, (Del Pilar and Udasco, 2004) cultural identity transformation through temporary residencies and/or repatriation. In this thesis, I focus on

the experience of Emirati student sojourners in the United Kingdom (UK) and Emirati repatriates in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), having been students in the UK, to illustrate aspects both during and after a sojourn experience. In addition, this study draws attention to:

- (1) the subsequent and accumulative benefits of being a ‘student’ sojourner abroad (in terms of personal and cultural identity),
- (2) the risks of being a sojourner (e.g. disorientation and cultural dilemmas),
- (3) the strategies for coping between the host and home cultural structures and
- (4) the exploration of cultural identity achievement, expansion and/or retention during acculturative processes for the Emirati student sojourner.

Using deductive thematic analysis, as explained in Chapter 4, I contextually examine these areas with reference to collective and individualistic cultures, being, firstly the UAE and then the UK. In recognition of the increasing UAE students travelling into more individualistic societies, my thesis explores Emirati student sojourners’ cultural transformation during their time abroad and upon their return. Hofstede (2003) stated that with globalisation propelled, more research needs to be carried out on identity, on a collective and individualistic scale. This study makes a contribution to this identified area of research.

Mr. Al Marri (Personal Communications, 2007; 2008), who has been the head of the Cultural Affairs and Educational Department at the Embassy of the UAE in London for more than 20 years, helped contribute to the context of this research to get a better idea of the background of Emirati international students. He explained that Emirati students have enjoyed the benefits of higher learning in the UK since 1968, even before the establishment of the UAE federation in 1971. Sheikh Zayed, former and late president of the UAE, encouraged the increase of UAE-UK sojourn. He funded the first group of Emirati students who were sent to learning institutes throughout the UK, by introducing a scheme for offering nationals scholarship/sponsorship packages. When the Ministry of

Education was formed in the UAE, a special department responsible for the ‘study abroad program’ was developed so that these packages could accordingly be offered to interested Emiratis, who had successfully completed their secondary education in the UAE. Also connected to the discussions in Chapter 2, these initiatives appear to align with the modernisation plans carried out and currently being implemented throughout the country (UAE Embassy in London, Interview, 15 May 2007). With a quick succession of potential UAE leaders trained abroad, there has only been support and additional encouragement for such educational programs.

More than any other Gulf nation during the last 20 years, the UAE has experienced rapid visible socio-economic growth, including great advancements in education (Kamali and Al Simadi, 2004; Schvaneveldt et al., 2005; Gogia, 2007; Khan and Khan, 2007; Johnson, 2010). With extensive proposals for modernisation in the UAE, there are continuously conjoined plans for higher education. Escalation of student sojourners travelling to the UK in more recent years, exhibiting an increase annually in enrolment, is as a result of the expanding population in the UAE and also indicates a greater value placed on tertiary education overseas. Although additions to the National Curriculum are proceeding at a steady pace within the UAE, there is still an acknowledgement and need for education abroad (UAE Embassy in London, Interview, 15 May 2007).

In the 2008-2009 academic year, 368,970 individuals in UK universities were international undergraduate students, of which approximately 10,000 represented students from the Gulf nations (The Council for International Education, 2009). Within this group, the percentage from the UAE, although small, has been steadily rising. The Higher Education Students Agency (HESA, 2009/2010) assessed the number of students from the UAE studying at institutions, specifically in London. In 2000, there were only 185, but by 2010, it had increased to 2,995 individuals: 980 females and 2,015 males.

Students transition to study in the UK so that they may improve their English language proficiency, an area that Emiratis recognise to be predominant within business, globally (Smart et al., 2000; Findlow, 2001; Liddicoat, 2002; Tseng and Newton, 2002; Yeh and Inose, 2003; Kamali and Simadi, 2004; Findlow, 2006; Yoon, 2006; Khan and Khan,

2007; Baalawi, 2009; Johnson, 2010). Likewise, sojourners learn skills and gain qualifications that enhance their professional attributes and Emirati students are assisted to attend institutions of higher education abroad, with local and national support, thus may benefit and take advantage of this opportunity.

The United Arab Emirates National Bureau of Statistics (2012) put the UAE's population at approximately 8.2 million. Furthermore, the report showed that Emiratis were estimated at 947,997, only about 12% of the total. This made the UAE have the lowest proportion of nationals, to overall population, among the Gulf countries.

Since Emirati nationals are a minority of 12% of the total UAE population today, these numbers show a heightened importance both in terms of their psychosocial development in the UAE amongst such a diverse population, as well as strategies needed to ensure they are not side-lined, economically or socially, by the large presence of expatriates in their own country (UAE Embassy in London, Interview, 17 October 2008). Increasingly, Emiratis are leaving their country and travelling, or sojourning, for various reasons, such as work assignments or education as discussed in Chapter 2. Their identity, culture and cross-cultural interaction is undergoing unique changes, presenting an opportunity to be studied and understood further in relation to research on acculturation and repatriation.

Motivation for a cultural transition appears to be significantly different for the student sojourner in comparison with an immigrant, for example (Hofstede, 1980; Khalaf and Al-Kobaisi, 1999; Gjerde, 2004), and most especially for Emirati student sojourners, with cultural loyalties and privileged incentives, such as tertiary educational programs funded by their government. Where immigrants can be driven by economic or political hardship and may often include refugees looking for work, shelter and safe surroundings, Emirati sojourners have a short-term purpose for travel and base their core decisions on different rationales. Generally, student expatriates from various countries, might experience financial difficulty or disagreement with their countries' interpreted government agendas (Hendry et al., 2007). However, the rhetoric is that: 'Emiratis are proud to be Emirati', and they are rewarded and sponsored, by their governments – to study (UAE Embassy in London, Interview, 17 October 2008).

As Emiratis receive support from the government in sponsorship, citizenry benefits and return packages; incentives to return to the UAE for sojourners and repatriates are important variables to consider in regard to job opportunities and transit motivation (UAE Embassy in London, Interview, 15 May 2007).

Mr. Al Marri (Personal Communications, 2007) confirmed that the majority of students, ‘approximately 97%’, have the intention of returning to the UAE. He explained that there are many reasons for this such as community loyalty, the influence of cultural nationalism, employment opportunities – in both the public and private sector at home and connectivity to family.

A sojourner’s self-concept and his/her relation to cultural identity and cultural in-groups, are often altered during time spent in a host country and as a result of acculturation (Dien, 2000; Bhatia and Ram, 2001; Bosma and Kunnen, 2001; Penrose, 2002; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2002; Constantine et al., 2004; Del Pilar and Udasco, 2004; Benet-Martinez and Haritatos, 2005; Berry, 2006a; Berry and Sam, 2006; Bikos et al., 2007; Birman and Taylor-Ritzler, 2007; Hendry et al., 2007). When returning to the country of origin, however, the student sojourner is likely to have gone through, in varying degrees, a transformation. Many features of their home life will have been transformed through additional and overlapping cultural perspectives.

## **1.2 – Rationale for the Study**

Literature suggests that different experiences, as a result of being a sojourner, can create adjustment difficulties when a student studies abroad and then returns to their home society (Al-Wraikat and Simadi, 2001; Berry, 2006a; Berry and Sam, 2006; Bikos et. al., 2007; Birman and Taylor-Ritzler, 2007; Hendry et al., 2007). Although international students sojourn for different reasons, being enthusiastic to advance their skills and country may a motivating factor, also relevant to this study. Through the duration of their residency in a host country and upon return, many noted that their social networks of initial support are often found to have shifted and/or diminished (Berry and Sam, 2006)

Part of being an international student is that sojourners face novel situations and are required to develop new skills (Smart et al., 2000; Findlow, 2001; Tseng and Newton, 2002; Markus and Kitayama, 2003; Kamali and Simadi, 2004; Yeh, 2003; Findlow, 2006; Yang et al., 2006; McClure, 2007; Baalawi, 2009). Sojourners can encounter difficulties arising from cultural differences between their place of study and their home countries. Collective, community, and individual concerns arise when everyday practices are disregarded and new ones are adopted, and moreover, when values, beliefs and ethical systems blur. Furnham and Bochner (1986) identified struggles with cultural differences, similarly, as a consequential impact of combined and/or clashing perceptions. The sojourn experience can involve a series of psychological changes that are not necessarily apparent or expected during sojourn preparation. Even though Emirati students are a small percentage of the collective group of global sojourners, their presence is steadily increasing and so research investigating their acculturation experience is timely and recommended. The common goal in most acculturative studies, and adding to the rationale of my study as well, is to try to explore the processes involved in sojourning, so that with an increased awareness, those in cultural transition may have a better understanding of the overall sojourn cycle.

A central critique of acculturation identity studies, however, is that (1) most do not take into account deeper, wider psycho-social contexts for student sojourners as such, (Hunt et al., 2004; Coyle, 2006) and/or (2) although acculturative change is usually located

exclusively within an individual, qualitative methodology exploring deeper individual analysis have thus far been undermined (Gutmann, 1999; Hunt et al., 2004; Flick, 2006). Previous methodological investigations have been mainly quantitative, involving large-scale sampling and an aggregation of results. For this research, considering past methods, gaps in literature, research questions being asked, the theoretical framework and the particular cultural characteristics of this population, I chose a qualitative research methodology, namely 'deductive thematic analysis'. This is discussed further in Chapter 4 on methodology. In doing so, my main intention was to identify patterns of meaning across the data in relation to the perception of the Emirati students' sojourn experiences, that provide answers to research questions being asked. Since there are three main theoretical threads being explored (cultural identity, acculturation and repatriation) a thematic analysis offers the opportunity to effectively identify emerging findings and contextualise the analysis in relation to existing literature. Studies from different methodological perspectives, like this one, can also be disseminated and used practically. Shared knowledge and understanding of results may be used to prepare students, from similar backgrounds, to the difficulties they might face. In doing so, some of the findings may help promote a better understanding of relevant experiences of other sojourner populations.

My work also seeks to explore one of many Arab nations underrepresented in acculturative research (Halamandaris, 1995; Maundeni, 2001). Whereas a predominance of studies are traced to regions in the United States, Australia and Canada, which usually explore the Chinese or Mexican student populations through quantitative methods (Furnham and Bochner, 1986; Ward and Searle, 1991; Brice, 2002; Constantine et al., 2004; Coatsworth et al., 2005; Berry, 2006a; Christofi and Thompson, 2007; Hendry et al., 2007), no acculturative analysis has yet focused on Emirati student sojourners whilst they are studying in a host country. Studies on Arab countries, with more qualitative approaches especially, such as this one, may broaden the discourse on cultural identity transformation and acculturation. The findings of this thesis make a contribution to understandings of cultural identity, acculturation and repatriation, with a view to be of particular use to UAE sojourners. The specific analysis related to Emirati cultural identity

and values may also be useful for those expatriates who live and work in the UAE. Through this information, they may understand their hosts better and in turn have a smoother acculturation process while in the UAE.

### **1.3 – Assessing Cultural Identity - Transformation- for the Sojourner**

Throughout this study, the definition of acculturation employed is that of ‘the process of cultural change and adaptation that occurs when individuals from different cultures come into contact’ (Gibson, 2001, p. 19). Since Berry (1980) is one of the most significant theorists in acculturative areas, as well as emphasising the importance of ‘psychological acculturation’ (Berry et al., 1987), his work is central to my analysis. Berry (1980) suggested four main acculturative outcomes, which explore psycho-social domains, applied here and culturally contextualised for classification of Emiratis in transition. Where cultural identity is considered to be a broad term with varying definitions, in this context it refers to an individual’s psychological membership in a specific national group with a distinct history, language and set of values (Kosmitzki, 1996). During any sojourning journey, memberships and identification can change and/or expand, hence effecting and transforming outcomes for original cultural identity. Berry’s model helps to measure and assess that transformation in this research.

The integrative theories and frameworks, being, Berry’s 4-dimensional model (1987), as well as the works of Markus and Kitayama (1991; 2003) and Sussman’s theory of repatriation (2002), are tools within the structure and framework of this thesis used for a multi-directional and in-study validation of key variables being explored. As appraising any cultural identity transformation can be difficult in qualitative data, although more deeply extracted and plausibly revealing; merging these theories and systems together in Chapter 6 and keeping them in mind throughout the research, allows a greater validity and coherence of my findings.

In cross-cultural encounters, the process of the Emirati student sojourners adaptation is viewed along two main continuums, within a broader collectivistic-individualistic framework: ‘(a) adoption of ideals, values and behaviours of the receiving culture, and (b)

retention of ideals, values and beliefs from the individual's culture of origin' (Phinney et al., 2001, p. 2, cited in Schwartz et al., 2006). Acculturation dimensions closely related to cultural identity (Bhatia and Ram, 2001) are further assessed after analysing participant responses to categorise and stratify Emirati student sojourner cultural identities, as well as individual and collective self-construals, based on Markus and Kitayama's framework (1991).

Looking at these theories, supported also by Triandis (1997) and Hofstede (2003), patterns of cultural identity transformation can be noted. Additionally, since this research is interested in reflecting upon the overall sojourn cycle, Sussman's theory of repatriation (2002) was a central structure used to evaluate the cultural identity changes of Emirati repatriation outcomes.

#### **1.4 – Research Questions**

This research aims to explore the experience of Emirati student sojourn acculturation in relation to cultural identity transformation, coping strategies used and repatriation. Investigating patterns in data, during and after sojourn of the two groups, research questions are applied and answered. The research questions are:

- (1) What aspects, if any, of the Emirati cultural identity are perceived by participants as being altered during their time as students in the UK?
- (2) What strategies do Emirati students identify as being helpful during the acculturation process, while in the UK?
- (3) What challenges, if any, do Emirati students identify/perceive while talking of re-adjusting in their home country upon return?
- (4) What strategies do Emirati students use during the repatriation process after returning to the Emirates?

The focus of this study is structured through these research questions, which provide a basis to a more focused yet fluid interview, in line with the methodological processes discussed in Chapter 4. Quotes and excerpts from interviews appear in Chapter 5, while findings to these questions are revealed connectively and discussed in Chapter 6.

### **1.5 – Purpose and Objectives of Research**

Through the research questions, theoretical framework and using deductive thematic analysis (see Chapter 4), this study aims to explore the Emirati students' subjective experiences, perceptions and strategies in sojourning and repatriation. In exploring cultural identity, acculturation and repatriation experiences of Emirati student sojourners, I aimed not only to address sojourner concerns, but also to highlight the psychosocial benefits that come with studying abroad. In heightening global community awareness, sojourners may be better placed and prepared for a successful transition, secured identities and accumulative cross-cultural understanding.

### **1.6 – Stages of the Study**

In Chapter 1, I have outlined the context of my research by introducing the background and importance of this thesis, along with the main theoretical tools or framework and chosen methodology incorporated to help explore cultural identity changes. I have introduced the participants, namely Emirati student sojourners, studying, or who have studied in the UK. The two of which are separated into 'during sojourn' and 'after sojourn' participants. Through sharing sojourn experiences, this work hopes to make a contribution to the literature in this field of research. Through research questions and the methodology employed, main themes continue in my thesis to explore aforementioned issues of acculturation, cultural identity, strategies used in adjustment and repatriation.

In Chapter 2, I contextualize the acculturation study, by providing a historical as well as psychosocial discussion of the way in which the UAE has developed and transformed since its inception in 1971. In doing so, important motivational reasons, such as the forces that result in Emirati students choosing the UK as a host country, as well as the reasons why the majority of them return to the UAE, is considered. Links between tertiary

education, modernisation and cultural identity are also briefly discussed.

Chapter 3 provides a critical discussion and analysis of literature, supplemented by some alternative perspectives to add to the literature. Central theoretical formulations of identity, cultural identity, acculturation, sojourner adaptation and repatriation are presented and used in the conceptual framework as a basis for linking existing theories together to comprehensively support the exploration of the Emirati sojourner experience.

Chapter 4 discusses the methodology and the use of a deductive thematic analysis for this study. This critical interpretation and explanation of the data were guided carefully postulating why certain ideas recurred in order to connect the most significant themes relevant to the research questions and those themes that developed through the content of the data. This proved to be a valuable tool since it aims, in addition to analyzing and thematically classify the responses presented by participants, to understand underlying beliefs and assumptions to make connections between important concepts, such as identity, culture, acculturation and repatriation. Thematic analysis is a qualitative method that offers the possibility for more subtle arrangement and interpretation of sojourner views, especially useful with a group whose attitudes have not been previously explored. I discuss the theories underpinning deductive thematic analysis and highlight the reliability and validity of this methodology within the parameters of the work, even though this method has not been widely used in other sojourner studies. I explain how I designed my interview practices to be culturally and ethically appropriate highlighting structure, considerations and precaution in my examiner interaction with participants. I also explain the methodological steps taken, while interviewing, data transcription and coding and analysis.

In Chapter 5, I reveal a number of patterns that have emerged through thematic analysis from the data in the shared acculturative experiences of the Emirati student sojourner and repatriate groups. These findings have been sectioned out into categories that are in line with the research questions and the sojourner cycle starting with exploring key elements of the Emirati cultural identity, the acculturation process and finally the repatriation concerns of the Emirati returnees.

Finally, in Chapter 6, the key theoretical principles, main conclusions and the tools for Emirati student sojourner identity classification are drawn together. By contextualising incorporated theories and frameworks for assessing cultural transformation validly, this study's framework and findings are cross-checked accordingly. The limitations and advantages of my study are also discussed in Chapter 6, accentuating that they may be considered as opportunities for additional research and programs.

## Chapter 2: A Flourishing Desert Country - The United Arab Emirates



Figure 1 – Map of the United Arab Emirates, digital image © The XYZ Digital Map Company, Informed Comment: Thoughts on the Middle East, History and Religion, accessed 29 March 2012, <<http://www.juancole.com/2011/01/map-of-united-arab-emirates.html>>

### 2.1 – Locality and Focus

The UAE is situated between Saudi Arabia and Oman. It is southwest of Iran, southeast of Qatar, and it borders the waters of the Persian/Arabian Gulf. Comprised of seven sheikdoms, or Emirates: ‘the UAE covers 83,600 square kilometres, 80 percent of which is desert’ (Al-Saloom, 2010, p.14). Amongst over 200 islands, Abu Dhabi, the city accounting for 80% of total UAE land area, is the capital (CIA, 2011). All of the participants interviewed in this study are from (1) Al’Ayn, (2) Abu Dhabi, (3) Dubai and (4) Sharjah.

The majority, approximately 3,000 in number, of Emirati student sojourners in the UK in 2010 (Johnson, 2010) are from these four locations (Baalawi, 2009; Johnson, 2010). As discussed in

Chapter 1, the diversifying and modernising infrastructures of the Emirates have created a need to send students abroad (Baalawi, 2009; UAE Embassy in London, Interview, 17 October 2008), in order to attain relevant qualifications, so that when they return they can then help to further develop their country (Baalawi, 2009; Johnson, 2010).

While overseas, the students are subject to a wide range of experiences and outcomes that may not be predicted pre-sojourn. The time they are abroad impacts and may even shape both cultures and individual identities. Cultural identity transformation, as a result of Emirati sojourner processes in the UK, is the central focus of this study. To contextualise my work, which explores these changes for Emirati students between the UAE and UK, it is important to understand the history and makings of the UAE, in light of Emirati culture.

## **2.2 – Exploring Development and Change in the UAE**

Rapidly changing Gulf societies, including the UAE, have been researched and noted by several observers (Zahlan, 1989; Khalaf, 1998; El-Haddad, 2003; Heard-Bey, 2005; Schvaneveldt et al., 2005; Gogia, 2007). The general pattern, as Khalaf and Al-Kobaisi (1999) explained, is quick development achieved in technological and material features of life, while forms of socio-cultural and political structures remain preserved in tradition. Emirati ‘conservative’ lifestyles and ‘cultural nationalism’ are not directly linked to a large degree to areas of economic achievement or post-oil modernisation (Khalaf and Al-Kobaisi, 1999). Oil links Emiratis to the Gulf Cooperation Council monarchies (the GCC: with Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Oman), and that core affiliation in the region, enables the preservation of the unique cultural space and ‘territory’ that is the UAE:

Here, the significance of territory is that it encompasses the geographical distribution of a culture [an Emirati culture to be protected]. As this suggests, it is the emotive power of a group’s attachment to the land that has primary influence in the formation of a territory [and *identity*] and in strategies to preserve it. Here, material resources are still important, but they are used to reinforce what are fundamentally emotional bonds and claims to space [including original and/or particularly distinct traditions for identity] (Penrose, 2002, p. 284).

Since the UAE occupies a strategic location along the southern approach of the Strait of Hormuz (a fundamental transit point for oil), the geography of Emirati land has given the nation a head

start over their Gulf counterparts' progressions (Findlow 2001; Kamali and Al-Simadi, 2004; Heard-Bey, 2005; Schvaneveldt et al., 2005; Findlow, 2006; Ypinazar and Margolis, 2006). Although current GCC countries share similarities, in regard to transformation of social structures; amongst all the changes experienced in the Gulf, those that have been internationally noted or evident to a greater degree, are those of UAE progression, hospitality and cultural etiquette (Findlow, 2001; Al-Wraikat and Simadi, 2001; Ouis, 2002; El-Haddad, 2003; Kamali and Al-Simadi, 2004; Heard-Bey, 2005; Schvaneveldt et al., 2005; Findlow, 2006; Ypinazar and Margolis, 2006; Gogia, 2007; Baalawi, 2009; Johnson, 2010). In comparison to other GCC countries, the 'indigenous-expatriate population imbalance, speed of modernisation, traditional way of life of citizenry and closeness of working relationships between tribal rulers' continue to be focused distinctions for the UAE (Findlow, 2001, p.7).

Even though the country's official language is Arabic and the national religion of the UAE is Islam, the UAE is becoming reminiscent of diverse and multicultural societies where a plethora of languages and religions are practiced and respected (Ouis, 2002). Since it achieved independence, with the formation of the federation or conjoining of individual Sheikdoms on 2 December 1971, the UAE has earned a reputation for being a safe, dynamic and fast-developing multicultural centre (El-Haddad, 2003; Heard-Bey, 2005; Schvaneveldt et al., 2005).

Being one of the most successful small emerging nations in the world, the UAE has the second largest economy in the Middle East (Findlow, 2006). As the arrival of oil (being a main resource), has enabled a great transformation, sociological and economical changes are sometimes viewed in terms of 'pre-oil' and 'post-oil' periods (Khalaf and Al-Kobaisi, 1999).

### **2.2.1 – The UAE, Pre-Oil Synopsis**

Before the formation of the federation, Emirati Sheikdoms were attributed power through dynasties. The original seven Emirates include (1) Abu Dhabi, (2) Dubai, (3) Sharjah, (4) Ra's Al-Khaymah, (5) Ajman, (6) Fujairah and (7) Umm Al-Qaywayn. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, an alliance of protection, crafted through a treaty with the British, encouraged the limiting of disputes between Emirati families. For exchange of British aid in managing Emirates' territories, the UK received allegiance against unwelcoming European rivals, with agreement that Sheikdoms would not enter into any additional government relationships (Al-Saloom, 2010). It

should be noted here that the UK has already had a historical influence on Emirati identity and this influence could arguably have been a force, along with other key variables, which propelled the UAE toward modernisation.

The UK stepped out of its direct agreement with the UAE (during the middle to end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) just before the arrival of oil. An intermediary council of leaders formed by the seven Emirate tribes entered discussions on how to further protect and preserve the Emirati territory themselves. Interestingly, this included both land and culture (Al-Saloom, 2010). When the UAE federation was independently formed, for the most part, defining the ‘nation’ was not political, but more so, of a cultural ideology (Penrose, 2002, p. 283). The Sheikdoms that were once split between dynasties, united in heritage, traditions and similarities: to protect one land and one main cultural body from any otherwise threatening external influences, including disagreeing kingdoms within the Gulf region.

Most of the working population of the UAE, pre-oil era, worked in pearling, fishing, trading and dhow building (Al-Saloom, 2010). As the demand for these jobs declined and the oil industry emerged, other skills and abilities were needed. UAE society moved towards modernisation and skilled labour from all facets of economic dimensions and foreign experts were invited into the country to improve the infrastructure (El-Haddad, 2003; Heard-Bey, 2005; Schvaneveldt et al., 2005). Large numbers of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled expatriate workers, mainly from the Asian subcontinent and also from Arab, North American and European countries, participated to build the work force necessary for expansion (Ghanem, 1997).

### **2.2.2 – The UAE, Post-Oil Synopsis**

In carrying out plans for modernisation and opening borders to expatriates, the Emirati government secured a solid position in international relations. In turn, heightened acknowledgement for the progression of the UAE attracted foreign investment (Heard-Bey, 2005; Schvaneveldt et al., 2005; United Arab Emirates National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). New sources of income, in addition to the generation of oil profits, assisted the government to continue the UAE’s unique citizenry benefits and scholarship/sponsorship programs (United Arab Emirates National Bureau of Statistics, 2012).

Between older traditional frameworks and strides towards modernisation, the UAE continues to advance its global status while trying to keep Emirati cultural identity, tribal and collectivist traditions intact. Although a growing influx of expatriates has embedded diverse cultural hubs, communities and cross-cultural atmospheres in the UAE, local Emiratis have a very specific and preserved way of life. That is mainly due to the fact that social and legal structures within the country are largely formed around the laws and practices of Islam (Ouis, 2002; Schvaneveldt et al., 2005).

While the UAE has been quite welcoming to people from a diverse background, the Emirati community remains relatively separate from the expatriate communities, embracing Emirati beliefs and values, territory, and culture reverent to ancestry:

‘ . . . and it is this environment, which is seen to shape them even as they place their mark upon it. . . . they become indistinguishable from the soil itself. Thus, in caring for the land . . . [Emiratis] . . . can come to see themselves as caring for their ancestors, themselves and future generations’ (Penrose, 2002, p. 281).

Locals in the UAE are not always a common or apparent feature on the foreground of modernity. Maintaining the deep-rooted cultural values of the Emirati people has always been, and remains, one of the most important priorities for the government and their people. (Findlow, 2001; Al-Wraikat and Simadi, 2001; Ouis, 2002; El-Haddad, 2003; Kamali and Al-Simadi, 2004; Heard-Bey, 2005; Schvaneveldt et al., 2005; Findlow, 2006; Ypinazar and Margolis, 2006; Gogia, 2007; Baalawi, 2009; Johnson, 2010).

### **2.2.3 – An Emirati and Expatriate Population**

Emirati nationals amount for only 12% of the approximately 8.2 million total UAE population (The United Arab Emirates National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). The remaining 88% of people are expatriates. One third of the total population, live in Abu Dhabi, the capital (CIA, 2011). Another third of the population is based in the second largest Emirate, Dubai and the rest of the people are dispersed throughout the other major cities. Furthermore, Dubai is forecast to treble over the next 15–20 years with an increase in population, due to a continually growing and multinational labour force (United Arab Emirates National Bureau of Statistics, 2012).

This diversity comes with a wide range of values and cultural principles. As mentioned, Emiratis are a minority amongst people from different backgrounds and therefore, to try to preserve original cultural identity, they tend to interact mainly with their own in-group. For similarly diverse countries, when different communities, traditions and ways of life increasingly interconnect, the concept of a national 'culture' can become problematic (Appadurai, 1996). In order to continuously reinforce core cultural values to avoid them becoming diluted, especially outside of work activities, Emiratis tend to mix less with the expatriate population and more with their family and close friends. They are well aware of the importance of maintaining their cultural heritage and social systems, and so proactively remain closer to their own kind. (Khalaf and Al-Kobaisi, 1999; Ouis, 2002; El-Haddad, 2003; Heard-Bey, 2005; Schvaneveldt et al., 2005).

Though Emiratis seem to support their government with 'fierce patriotism' (Al-Saloom, 2010); some may not always welcome the social and/or cultural changes that have accompanied expansion and modernisation (Kamali and Al-Simadi, 2004), for fear of sacrificing who they are in pursuit of modernisation. The government acknowledges the concerns of the people, since it is also a worry they share, and goes to great lengths to preserve the rights of its people and their culture. The leaders are very generous with the local population and that is one of the main differences between the Emirati people and expatriates. Nationals are extremely advantaged in comparison to non-nationals and receive many benefits for which others are not eligible. These privileges include free housing, citizenship rights, marital allowance, reduction in utility payments, *wasta* (privileges gained through familial or tribal connections) set-ups (see Chapter 3), the scholarship and sponsorship programs and more (UAE Embassy in London, Interview, 17 October 2008). This point is especially relevant in order to try to fully understand the attraction to return for sojourners.

As Mr. Al-Marri (Personal Communications, 2007) explained, nationals also maintain exclusivity amongst job opportunities in some sectors such as Human Resource Management, oil and government positions. This is financially beneficial to Emiratis to work in their own country. *Wasta*, the Arabic word for nepotism, familial connections, in-group loyalties and the government implemented 'Emiratisation' program, all affect student and repatriate job placement. As the 'Emiratisation' plan was initially structured to immerse Emiratis into the diversifying

communities of business, so as to be more integrated with expatriates and travellers (Al-Suwaidi, 2011), then students returning from overseas have even greater chances for, and/or expedited, job placement.

#### **2.2.4 – Protection and Strength in Cultural Nationalism**

Cultural nationalism and an inherent loyalty within social relations is a relevant point here. This also fits accordingly with why the majority of Emiratis return to the UAE, even in situations where they might predict or be anxious about re-settling difficulties after their experiences abroad. It is like ‘family’: ‘the question of the character of nationalism or patriotism is the question of one’s identity. Nationalism and patriotism are political manifestations of an identity that exists as a personal and a group identity’ (Trauner, 2007, p.21). Nationalism and patriotism for Emiratis, is at the same time, mainly cultural. While the ideas of culture and nationalism are often treated differently, when infused, nationhood represents collective practices that are supported and perhaps even sanctioned by both the people and the ruling authorities (Schmidt, 1956; Barnard, 1983; Trauner, 2007).

An important dimension of relevancy, aside from the Emirati patriotism in shared cultural identity, is the way in which Emirati, ‘cultural nationalism’ has influenced and guided attitudes, choices and behaviours, perhaps regardless of politics and citizenry benefits. This also has to do with acting in accordance to the collective rather than the individual (Triandis, 1997; Hofstede, 2003).

In the case of Emiratis the government has provided benefits that include generous university sponsorship packages, free health care and interest free loans which could otherwise be argued as a socio-political mechanism with national and cultural pulls: (1) further reinforcing Emirati loyalty, and subsequently (2) re-instilling Emirati cultural identity (Al-Suwaidi, 2011).

## **2.3 – Emirati Culture, Religion and Identity**

In the UAE, culture, religion and identity are not separate concepts of ‘self’, but rather correlating values for the nation (Al-Suwaidi, 2011). Emirati cultural identity is strong and prominent, regardless of location. The details, geographic location and atmosphere of everyday life may change, but their integral religious, cultural and social practices are rarely removed (Ouis, 2002).

Moreover, Emirati culture is intertwined with Islamic law, devotion and practiced pillars of Islam. Although sojourners may explore new environments, they are able to make systematic compartmentalisations and strategic compromises without losing connection to their core cultural components and religious beliefs. Attributes of culture for Emiratis not only include dimensions of religion and cultural nationalism, but also language, food, music, values, traditions, and even family and gender relations.

In the UAE, culture and religion go hand in hand. Religion affects many cultural attributes and almost all facets of life, including, social, economic, spiritual and political modalities (Ouis, 2002). Islam is not only a system of beliefs for Emiratis, but it is also a system of rules and guidelines for everyday behaviour, ethics and morality. It is a regulation through Shari’ a (Divine Islamic Law) and most importantly, it is reverence in faith and community. The following sub-sections further highlight these points especially in relation to Emirati cultural identity and UAE social systems.

### **2.3.1 – Sunnis and Shi’ites (Demographics and Religious Interaction)**

The majority of the Emirati population are Sunnis and a small minority of them are Shi’ite Muslims. The difference between the sects, not to be simplified, remains mainly in terms of ancestral Islamic beliefs regarding the prophet, spiritual/religious relations and also bloodline successors in carrying out the holy word. Sunnis and Shi’ites share many basic religious tenets, but their differences are sometimes significant enough to result in political clashes and religious intolerance. Such unrest, however, and conflict does not exist openly or publically in the UAE.

### **2.3.2 – Shari’ a: Islamic Law**

Islamic codes of conduct, based on the Qur'an and way of the Prophet Muhammad, outline a wide range of practices throughout daily life. These practices range from spiritual actions, like prayer and meditation, to washing, eating, dress, economic activity, rules for war and peace, relationships and roles in society, family interactions, marriage, birth and death (Hammad, 1989 p. 56-71). Should an offence be made by any person in the UAE, against Shari’ a, regardless of citizenship and/or cultural origin (e.g. even for dressing inappropriately, for instance), those who break the law can be ticketed, jailed or subjected to other penalties. Fortunately, for expatriates and tourists, who may not have learnt their cross-cultural basics, enforcement in the UAE is more moderately scaled and not as rigid and/or regime-like as in some of the neighbouring or other Gulf countries.

The accompanying socialisation through laws underlining social morality and responsibility in upholding Islamic principle; however, this may sometimes result in confusion for Emiratis, including the student sojourners when outside of their country, especially when in a liberal individualistic society such as the UK. Although Islamic norms are considered the ideal toward which Muslims should strive to in all societies. For the Emirati who may travel outside of the UAE as a tourist or sojourner, taboo principles test their values, where socially accepted and even encouraged in the UK, but still subject to punishment in the UAE. Whether sojourning or repatriating, being able to differentiate between the rules of the land in either location and using the outlines of the *Sunna*, in contextualisation with social norms and practices, is likely to impact the acculturation process.

### **2.3.3 – The Holy Month of Ramadan**

The ninth month in the Lunar Calendar is the holy month of Ramadan for Emiratis. For all Islamic practitioners, this is a time for renewal, purification and increased spiritual awareness. The entire month, in the UAE, is framed through social interaction, rules and regulations, with expatriates also having to follow laws that respect local customs. These include public food courtesies, business hours of operation and work and study courtesies, for fasting and exhaustion. For those practicing Muslims, Ramadan encompasses 30 days of fasting during the day into a

series of evening and night prayers and breakfast after sunset (*Iftar*), where all are welcome to literally ‘break’ ‘fast’ until sunrise.

In the last ten days of Ramadan, there is an extensive ‘holiday’ (*Eid*) for socialising with the community, which includes the sharing of foods and gifts, a celebration for life, ending the fast and a newly acclaimed sacred alignment. Knowing the context of the month of Ramadan in the UAE and its overall importance, for Emirati spending Ramadan away from the UAE, they need to be prepared that this holy month is not officially recognised in the same way in other countries.

#### **2.3.4 – Social and Familial Relationships in the UAE**

Discussed by a number of researchers (Bierbrauer, 1992;Gogia, 2007), the modernisation and economic growth of Gulf States during the last two decades have raced far ahead of the social and psychological development and adjustment of their nationals. Even though the Emirati family has been effected, to a certain extent, by the current modernisation efforts and subsequent social transformation in the UAE, especially in regard to a higher standard of living, higher literacy rates, marginally smaller family sizes and a rise in divorce rates: ‘the nuclear family model [in the UAE] is [still] very much characterised by extended relations, which is not a feature found in western families residing in that region’ (El-Haddad, 2003, p. 224). ‘The Arab Gulf family as a basic unit that extends its cultural components from Islamic sources; and as an economic unit that performs a number of economic roles to the benefit of its own members and of society; and as a social unit where social interactions between family members occur within the context of social relations [-] [is] set by values and norms of their [Emirati] culture’ (El-Haddad, 2003, p. 224).

Emiratis retain traditional kinship ties, they are patriarchal and emphasise tribal authority in decision making (Hammad, 1999; El-Haddad, 2003). Emiratis are respectful of kin and adhere to community expectations before their own: ‘the traditional socialisation process emphasises obedience, closeness and loyalty to parents rather than self reliance and independence’ (Kamali and Al- Simadi, 2004, p. 14).

In the UK, individualistic systems encompass the opposite. Unlike western notions, where some young people emphasis values such as, ‘it’s my life and I will do what I want to’, Emiratis, live

in extensive relationships with their communities, always thinking of others first, or at least openly in public, wherever they are. Emiratis are likely to keep any individual or conflicting thoughts, decisions and/or experiences, which do not fit into local systems, hidden and/or kept private (Kamali and Al- Simadi, 2004, p. 15).

### **2.3.5 – Traditional Values**

Although Emirati nationals may reside in a social context that portrays a wide range of value systems, their codes of conduct regarding acceptable behaviour are quite conventional and clearly pronounced. ‘Social norms are conservative: disapproving of out-of-wedlock relations, homosexual relations and drug or alcohol use’ (Hammad, 1999, p. 96). Tightly held religious and traditional values are clearly expressed by elder Emiratis, who have been witness to great social and cultural change within a short time. In their lifetime, they have seen the first house of concrete blocks being built in 1950 and the first hospital established in 1954 (Heard-Bey, 2005). This is a stark contrast to only 50 years on, where we see that by 2000, 96% of the UAE citizens’ households had a car, 98% a telephone, 60% a computer and 60% internet access (Badrinath et al., 2002).

Treating Elders in any clan as a kind of extended family, respecting their experience, wisdom and opinions, is normal practice in Emirati life. Ypinazar and Margolis (2006) conducted a study looking at religion as an important variable which can affect the perception of the older Emirati nationals, regarding health services, professionals and disease. They argued that health professionals needed to understand the extent to which religious beliefs also impacted Emirati understandings of health and sickness. In their study, participants consistently answered questions through prescribed codes outlined in Islam, associating the idea of health and illness as very much a part of Allah’s predetermined fate for an individual. Researchers also found that interwoven with the belief that all health and illness comes from Allah, was the participants’ knowledge of the Qur’an’s decree for a Muslim to ‘protect his health’ (Ypinazar and Margolis, 2006). This showed that individual responsibility over health matters is also important for Emiratis. These attitudes and traditional social structures, trickling through from elders, are evident even amongst the youngest generations of locals.

Although there is insufficient research examining important psychological and social aspects related to the Emirati population, a study by Kamali and Al-Simadi (2004) highlighted the most important variables of Emirati students' value structures. The results showed that religious values came first among UAE university students, followed by cognitive, political, aesthetic and social values – with economic values, in the lowest scoring position.

### **2.3.6 – The Old and the New: Expressive Language in Cross-Generational Attitudes**

Ouis (2002) explains that the meeting of the modern with the traditional ways of life in a country, such as the UAE, is sometimes understood in terms of a clash between 'western versus Muslim cultures'. 'In popular western culture, this clash is promoted by the myth of a newly rich Bedouin, who overnight changes his camel for a brand new Cadillac' (Ouis, 2002, p. 315). Findlow (2001) argued that the effect of globalisation and modernisation should not be seen as a clash with local traditions, but rather, two forces that operate comfortably alongside one another. Given that it is preferred and more socially acceptable than western clothing, the Emirati sitting in the brand new car is likely to still be wearing his or her traditional Gulf costume (The *Kandora*, for men and a *Jalebeeya*, for women).

Traditional clothing is a good example and a very visible symbol or signifier of the way Emirati nationals are proud of and closely connected to their traditional way of life. Their traditional clothes represent an important part of their cultural and local identity also resulting in an obvious distinction from the rest of the nationalities living in the UAE. Ouis (2002) found that both men and women are seen to wear western as well as traditional types of clothing, depending on the occasion. The majority of Emiratis, however, state that for the most part, while they are in the UAE they wear traditional clothing. Even women wearing western style clothing would wear the traditional black covering (*Abaya*) on top.

Ouis (2002) summarised these main findings during field research, in exploring a wide range of issues related to the perception of nationals towards modernity in the Gulf:

These results indicate that: (i) Gulf youths are by choice exposed to western values and consumerism; (ii) they have an ambiguous attitude towards the ‘threat’ of western and other cultures’ influence over their society; (iii) they see their society as both modern and traditional; and finally (iv) they are religious and experience no problem in practising their religion (i.e. Islam) (Ouis, 2002, p. 328).

In a study focused on language in the UAE, Findlow (2006) examined the spread of English in higher education, as a kind of modern impact on the country. Interested in looking at the way the use of English by Emirati nationals increased and how bilingualism would have an impact on cultural identity; she outlined the way in which issues related to higher education were always an important priority for the UAE and part of a search for ‘national identity’. These reflections also resonate with the findings from my research.

Findlow (2006) found that Arabic languages represented the Emirati peoples’ connection to ‘cultural authenticity, localism, tradition, emotions and religion’; whereas English was more connected to ‘modernity, internationalism, business, material status and secularism’ (Findlow, 2006, p. 20).

At the same time, Emiratis also understand the necessity to operate in English, in order to ‘train the UAE youth for the world market’ (Findlow, 2006, p. 23); and therefore, modernisation and reinforcement for tertiary education abroad continues.

## **2.4 – Statistics for Tertiary Education in the UAE**

There are more than 30 universities and higher education colleges in the UAE; they provide an educational setting for approximately 23,000 students (Findlow, 2006). Still, there are those who prefer to travel to countries such as the UK for tertiary education. The rise of the numbers of Emirati students attending institutions of higher education in the UK are another indication of the way in which Emiratis have responded to the modernisation of their young country (Baalawi, 2009; Johnson, 2010).

Setting up educational opportunities, both in the UAE and abroad, has been a primary concern since the inception of the UAE. Mr. Al-Marri (Personal Communications, 2007), contributed to collection of background contextual information prior to the conducting of the study, explained that the government has been sending students abroad since the 1980s and education has since been officially compulsory for all. Formal learning opportunities have progressed greatly over the past three decades and comprehensive education is offered to all males and females from primary school to university level, which is free for all UAE nationals (UAE Embassy in London, Interview, 17 October 2008). Additionally, there are many private schools, funded by student tuition, which both nationals and expatriates utilise.

The government of the UAE has always been a great supporter of the educational process, encouraging UAE nationals to continue into higher learning after secondary school. Now that the UAE is advancing their country as a globally competitive nation, the educational focus there is to devise and implement a longer term program, in order to enable the young nationals to participate in the modernisation process and to be able to meet the difficulties that come with the UAE being a part of the world market (UAE Embassy in London, Interview, 17 October 2008; Johnson, 2010). ‘Higher education was explicitly developed to fulfil this mission. The aim of higher education in the UAE is seen more in terms of its key contribution to socio-economic growth than as contributing to the outcomes of intellectual inquiry and [the] ethical growth of society’ (Baalawi, 2009, p. 12). The UAE has an exceptionally high number of advanced education participants and during their last year of secondary school, more than 95% of Emirati females and 80% of Emirati males apply to university institutions in the UAE, or abroad (Baalawi, 2009).

#### **2.4.1 – Government Sponsorship and Emirati Students in the UK**

A significant number of the Emirati university students who choose to study abroad every year are received by the UK. Again, this has links to UAE loyalty and history, political relations and language goals. While some students are self-funded, others enjoy being sponsored by the UAE government (UAE Embassy in London, Interview, 17 October 2008). One of the main reasons the British government encourages overseas students to study in the UK is for economic reasons. In the UK, overseas students at university pay significantly more for their program and therefore,

overseas students contribute greatly to the British economy (UAE Embassy in London, Interview, 17 October 2008).

From the student point of view, English is an international language and it would be valuable to be proficient in English (Smart et al., 2000; Findlow, 2001; Liddicoat, 2002; Tseng and Newton, 2002; Yeh and Inose, 2003; Kamali and Al-Simadi, 2004; Findlow, 2006; Yoon, 2006; Khan and Khan, 2007; Baalawi, 2009; Johnson, 2010). It is also beneficial for overseas students to meet many people from different cultural backgrounds. The UAE has always had a historical link with the likewise multicultural UK. Both in terms of the UK's involvement with the creation of the federation, as well as the way in which UAE nationals have always chosen the UK as a location to visit most frequently, for holiday, shopping and/or cultural experiences (Mr. Al-Marri, Personal Communications, 2007; 2008).

Since the introduction of the higher international educational scholarship scheme, Mr. Al-Marri through interviews with me (Personal Communications, 2007; 2008), explained that hundreds of Emirati nationals have benefited from a fully paid educational experience in many parts of the world, including: Canada, India, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Singapore, the United States and the UK. 'The majority of our students who returned to the UAE have become very important contributors to the society and work force of our country at the present time. Many have become ministers; some became governmental secretaries, others major decision makers who really have brought the country to where it is and they are building the UAE' (Mr. Al-Marri, Personal Communications, 2007).

Even though the UAE government continues to invest in improving and expanding upon educational facilities nationally, they still appreciate and acknowledge the value of the experiences gained while studying abroad. Ms. Jo Pritchard (Personal Communications, 2007), student counsellor with more than 25 years experience of working with Emirati students in the UK, who was also present during my first interview at the embassy, said, 'I think for such a small country, it's amazing how forward thinking they were [Emirati leaders], sending students here, because it opened up a whole new world to other Arab countries, based on how successful it was for UAE students. No one knew who the UAE was when I first started working for the

embassy and now everyone knows who they are because of such programs. It just goes to show that the scholarship programme has reaped its own rewards' (Ms. Pritchard, Personal Communications, 2007).

Meanwhile, since the inception of the program, officials have become more stringent in regard to the selection process for studying abroad at the expense of the government. As the population of the UAE increases, their government is trying to be more selective in whom they choose for sponsorships and scholarships. Today, only student candidates who demonstrate a high grade point average upon graduation from secondary school will be offered a chance to have their entire university costs sponsored (UAE Embassy in London, Interview, 17 October 2008).

#### **2.4.2 – Reasons for Studying in the UK**

The interviews with Mr. Al Marri and Ms. Pritchard (UAE Embassy in London, Interview, 15 May 2007) helped contribute to the context to get a better idea of the background of Emirati international students. Through their extensive experience and connection with the UAE's Ministry of Education, they outlined five main reasons why UAE nationals choose to study in the UK.

(1) Knowing the importance of English as an international language – Young Emirati graduates, adept at speaking English, will have an advantage when wanting to participate in business functions in the UAE, which is gradually becoming a world economic competitor.

(2) To increase understanding of the world and broadened cultural experiences – Since Emirati nationals tend to remain more close to familial and national groups, they may not have the opportunity to interact with those from different backgrounds as much as they might while living in the UK. The global competence gained while abroad contributes greatly to an appreciation of diversity in the UAE.

(3) To increase income potential and expand employment opportunities – Companies increasingly seek leaders with an ability to work and live effectively in a variety of countries, who can more readily work with co-workers of varying cultural backgrounds. Studying abroad gives UAE nationals a competitive edge in receiving a better job and/or career position, and

income possibility. Employers understand the value and difficulties associated with earning a degree in the UK and would recognize and reward those competencies.

(4) To gain new insight and outlooks – By living in the UK, Emirati students get an insider's angle on the social, political and cultural dimensions of the host country. Such insight is rarely gained through second-hand experience, reading relevant literature or through short trips to a country. The first-hand view that students observe during their educational experience exposes them to structures, which are different to what they are used to back home, enabling the students to perhaps learn from those ways, so that they may adopt certain standards appropriate for their home country. It is more possible to understand the greater significance of life in another country when experienced personally.

(5) To expand educational opportunity and explore new interests – Even though universities in the UAE offer a wide range of subjects for students to study, still there are limitations. Consequently, many Emiratis choose to make a temporary transition to the UK just so that they may engage with a subject which is not offered in their country (see, Table 1, to follow). It is through these programs in UK universities that Emirati students are able to learn specific skills and utilise new technology that they can introduce in their own country once they return.

Table 1 presents the subjects in which the total numbers of Emirati students in the UK were registered in 2010. It should be noted that some of the subjects are not offered in the UAE. Even if they are available, they may not be of the same standard as the UK curriculum and so study is preferred abroad. These factors contribute to the motivation to study overseas and be a student sojourner.

*Table 1 – Registered Subject Areas in the UK (The Council for International Education, 2010)*

<b>Subject Area:</b>	<b># of Emiratis Registered:</b>
1 Medicine & dentistry	145
2 Subjects allied to medicine	260
3 Biological sciences	105
4 Veterinary science	0
5 Agriculture & related subjects	5
6 Physical sciences	70
7 Mathematical sciences	20
8 Computer science	165
9 Engineering & technology	565
A Architecture, building & planning	110
B Social studies	165
C Law	155
D Business & administrative studies	855
E Mass communications & documentation	43
F Languages	80
G Historical & philosophical studies	25
H Creative arts & design	67
I Education	140
J Combined	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>2995</b>

## 2.5 – Chapter Summary

This thesis focuses on the concept of cultural identity transformation in relation to sojourn and repatriation experiences, for undergraduate Emirati students from the UAE, studying or having studied in the UK. My research aims to assess whether or not there is a specific set of attributes and values that can be used to describe an Emirati cultural identity and how those may or may

not change between locations. It is important to understand the starting points in environmental contextualisation and socialisation for Emiratis; that is, before they begin their sojourn, especially since different groups were interviewed for during and after UK sojourn.

While it is true that the number of Emirati students has significantly risen in recent years (Johnson, 2010), research investigating the temporary acculturative experiences of Emiratis and also Gulf counterparts studying in a cultural setting different from their home country, has not grown in similar proportions (Constantine et al., 2004). The apparent growth for the UAE through modernisation and critical Emirati leadership was not achieved without difficulties that affected the psychosocial facade and cultural identity of the new generation of Emirati nationals who often study abroad.

The characteristics of Emirati identity as outlined in this chapter include dimensions related to family structure, religiosity and culture, which will be explored in the interviews with the student sojourners and repatriates.

Key theoretical frameworks related to cultural identity, the acculturative processes and repatriation are critically discussed in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 3: The International Student in Cultural Transition – Literature Review**

### **3.1 –Introduction**

This chapter provides an analysis, synthesis and critical discussion of relevant literature, in which key theories related to the international student sojourn cycle have been juxtaposed to explore concepts and frameworks used in this research. The review of the literature serves as a backdrop to the research, and traces how this has evolved.

The chapter is organised into three different parts, according to the key strands of identity, acculturation and repatriation supported by the theoretical framework used for the study that is based upon the work of Markus and Kityama (1991) Berry (1980) and Sussman (2002).

As a lead into these parts, I provide a brief overview of the way in which the main theoretical concepts of this study are complex, broad and multi faceted. Even though the theories have been considered comprehensively, I highlight that specific focus has been placed on features of the different theories that are most relevant to this study.

I then begin the discussion by critically reviewing literature on identity, more specifically cultural identity and how these theories have evolved and extended in order to include culture as an influencing variable on identity. This is done so that theoretical ideas and concepts contribute to setting the stage for my first research question:

1. ‘What aspects, if any, of the Emirati cultural identity are perceived by participants as being altered during their time as students in the UK?’

I then proceed, in the chapter, to explore the literature on acculturation and difficulties faced. This is closely linked to the discussion on cultural identity, since I also review the way in which the acculturation process is likely to impact identity. This is an important issue for my second research question:

2. ‘What strategies do Emirati students identify as being helpful during the acculturation process while in the UK?’

Next, this chapter explores the definitions and experience of sojourners, as international students, through existing studies, to discuss how previous research has shown that acculturative experiences as well as repatriation concerns for sojourners are different from other groups, such as immigrants or refugees in cultural transition. These differences along with strategies used by students to better adjust are explored to further answer my second research question.

The final section of this literature review discusses the concept of repatriation, explored in extant studies. Studies relevant to the Emirati international student, are used to underpin the analysis of my third and fourth research questions, regarding difficulties for Emiratis upon return to the UAE:

3. ‘What difficulties, if any, do Emirati students identify/perceive while talking of re-adjusting in their home country upon return?’
4. ‘What strategies do Emirati students use during the repatriation process after returning to the Emirates?’

### **3.2 - Overview**

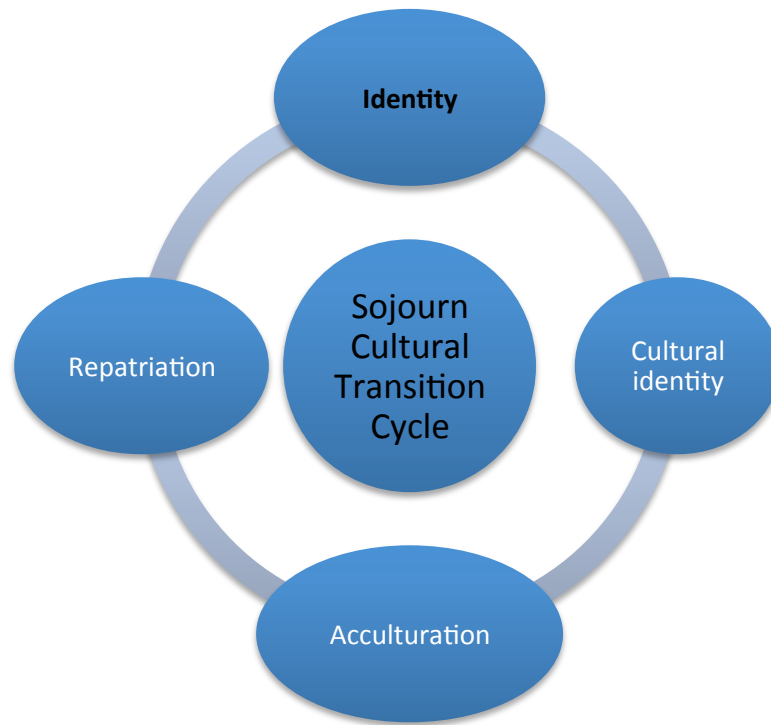
This chapter provides a critical review of the literature that has guided my research, and helps to encourage the advancement of knowledge in the inquiries about the sojourn cycle. Cultural Identity, acculturation and repatriation are matters concerning people moving from one culture or country to another, and this includes migrants, refugees, expatriate workers and international student sojourners as well.

There are opposing views as to the defining of the conceptions of identity and culture and acculturation, and repatriation. Postmodernist critiques argue that modernist conceptions of acculturation, identity and culture are incomplete. They opposed the use of normative conceptions, operational definitions and causal explanations drawn from them (Gergen, 1991; Brubaker and Cooper, 2000; Bhatia and Ram, 2001; Rudmin, 2003; Hunt et al., 2004). While a number of theories have been introduced under personal identity, including identity consistency (Dunkel, 2005), Schachter (2005) suggested that a middle ground between the modernist and postmodernist perspectives is achieved by stating clearly specified conceptions, still fluid enough across contexts. A self-knowledge can be used to negotiate social resources (Côté, 1996a;

Schwartz, 2001) and identity development can be described as a mutual venture between the individual and his/her social contexts and culture (Adams and Marshall, 1996; Baumeister and Muraven, 1996; Côté 1996a).

The exchanges, experiences and interaction an individual has with his/her particular environmental setting decides a number of key characteristics for a person, including followed norms, accepted values, beliefs and religious affiliation. Anthropologists, for example such as Margaret Mead, are referred to as cultural determinists, who through years of historical patterns and analysis, stress the way the self is influenced and shaped by a culture to create different personality types (Shankman, 2000). Cross-cultural psychologists, such as Berry (1980), Markus and Kitayama (1991) and Sussman (2002), whose works are drawn upon to check the validity of the findings of this research (in Chapter 6), extend these ideas to focus on how ‘cultural identity’ is impacted, as a result of cultural transition.

Even though acculturation studies have looked at certain aspects of adaptation, in regard to identity transformation; a sojourn between two or more overlapping cultural systems can result in a series of possible realities, those of which also need to be further explored, understood and validated (Lysgaard, 1955; Oberg, 1960; Kim, 1978; Furnham and Bochner, 1982; Chataway and Berry, 1989; Kagan, 1990; La Fromboise et al., 1993; Berry and Sam, 2006). Changes in identity can occur when one’s situational self and social structures change, in ways that do not fit with one’s original orientation of current goals, values, and beliefs (Bosma and Kunnen, 2001). Therefore, the environmental setting is a principal variable when considering cultural identity transformation and coping strategies, those settings are essential for maintaining and/or extending any identity negotiation and achievement.



**Figure 2** – *This figure depicts the main theoretical dimensions considered in this study while the student sojourner is in cultural transition abroad and upon repatriation.*

### **3.3 – Understanding Identity**

Uses of the word ‘identity’ vary within social psychology literature, where identity is multiple and overlapping (Turner, 1996). Specific dimensions of identity can include: national identity, social identity, cultural and racial identity, class identity, familial identity, gender identity and sexual identity. The scope of the identity that is a characteristic of cultural identity, is explained by Collier (1997), who pointed out that identities have individual, relational and communal properties. In social identification, there are cognitive, emotional and physical identities of self-identity, which are built upon one another (Erikson, 1968; Rosch, 1977; Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Phinney 1992; Roberts et al., 1999; Phinney et al., 2001; Padilla and Perez, 2003). These dimensions or aspects of identity interwork to affect relationships of self and social identifications. (Rosch, 1977; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Baumeister, 1986; Turner et al., 1987;

Quinn et al., 1995; Collier, 1997). Culture filters into all aspects of these identifications (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000) and ‘implications of having ‘more’ or ‘less’ social and cultural identity appear to differ from the implications of having ‘more’ or ‘less’ personal identity’ (Schwartz et al., 2006, p.8).

Identity should be conceptualised as a psychological portrayal of self (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000), so understanding the individual cognitive processes of Emirati cultural mentality helps to evaluate transformation. In assessing sojourner and repatriate self-concepts or definitions of core identity (see Chapters 5 and 6), I distinguished a thematic and distributive model of culture (Garcia, 1994; Schwartz, 1978) highlighting the relationship between culture and engrained or environmentally effected personality. While cultural aspects might include collective and/or individual identity distinctions (Hofstede, 1980; Markus and Kitayama, 2003), these ends can also be viewed on a continuum (Hofstede, 1980; Hui and Triandis, 1986; Triandis, 1989; Huda, 2006; Yoon, 2006).

Hofstede (1980) and Triandis (1989) indicated that ‘Western societies’, like the UK can be characterised into cultural contexts with a strong emphasis on personal identities and individual achievements. Collective societies such as the UAE, alternatively, have a strong emphasis toward community and group identities (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). The series of dimensions that combine to construe identity, in the fields of sojourner identity and cross-cultural interaction, include, but are not limited to: collective identity, individual identity, cultural identity, bicultural identity, the nature vs. nurture debate, and identity in terms of public and private domains. The self may refer to individual uniqueness or it may be represented in terms of group membership (Turner et al., 1987), depending on culture of origin. As Emiratis have been primarily socialised to be collective in their orientation, their individual cognitive dimensions operate within connected group awareness, regardless of location (Kamali and Al-Simadi, 2004).

A number of theorists, prior to Markus and Kitayam (1991), explored how identity is influenced by group orientation. Erickson (1975), who ‘paved the way for nearly half a century of further theorizing, exposition, and research on identity’ (Schwartz, 2011, p. 6) assessed the way in which an individual may relate to a group through his or her concept of ‘pseudo-speciation’. This refers to the way individuals separate into identifiable groups with different language, dress, religion and culture. Rosch’s ‘levels of abstraction’ (1977) and Tajfel and Turner’s subsequent

‘social identity theory’ (1986), promoted similarly, an overview that a ‘self’ is threaded inside categories and dimensions of identity, which are only retrieved through social reflection and interaction, or in comparisons of self with comparisons of what is considered the ‘other’. *Rosch’s Levels of Abstraction* (1977), in Figure 3, introduced this kind of identity stratification. Personal identity is created through group identities, in individual societies, which are positioned and created in collective human identity. In this way, identity can be assumed as ‘this is me’ vs. ‘this is not me’ in clear cohesive contexts between culture and character, and on individual and collective levels (Rosch, 1977; Turner and Giles, 1981).

### ***Rosch’s Levels of Abstraction***

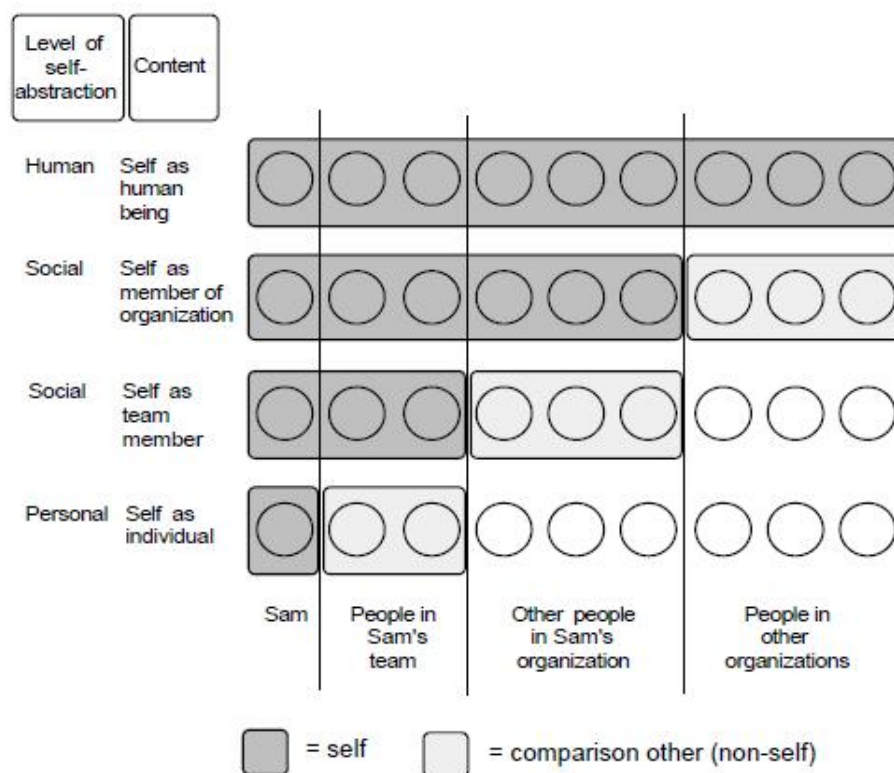


Figure 3 – Rosch’s Levels of Abstraction (Rosch, 1977 p.54)

However the extent to which identity is formed as an individual undertaking, or guided by interacting in social and cultural contexts, or whether individuals are aware and in control of the shaping that takes place, within a culture or as a result of acculturation is an important aspect of

this process which may not have been addressed adequately by some of the early findings (Schwartz et al., 2006).

Conceptual advances have moved more towards the idea that ‘identity is a synthesis of personal, social and self-conceptions’ (Schwartz, 2005, p. 6):

‘Personal and social identity are conceptually separate, in that personal identity represents the individual’s goals, values and beliefs (which may or may not be specifically related to the ideals of a particular social or cultural group), whereas social identity represents those values and beliefs that are explicitly tied to a particular in-group, as well as attitudes and behaviour toward in-group and out-group members based on these ideas. Social identity, and particularly cultural identity, is likely to change as a result of acculturation . . .’ (Schwartz et al., 2006, p. 10).

Thus people moving from one culture to another face these potential shifts in identity, attitudes and behaviour. In accessing opportunities to study abroad, student sojourners acquire a variety of cultural beliefs, norms and values both through direct learning and observation in host culture. They may adopt these ideas from a larger cultural set, which in turn influences who they are (Tajfel, 1978; Turner and Giles, 1981; Brewer and Miller, 1984; Bontempo et al., 1989; Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Dien, 2000). However the extent to which they may or may not abandon or acquire new value systems is likely to vary amongst population groups. Therefore specific culturally relative explanations would be needed to understand cultural underpinnings and modifications rather than simply generalising the findings of other groups to all sojourners (Dien, 2000).

### 3.3.1 – Self Concept and Theoretical Dimensions of Identity Development

To talk about identity in terms of a self-concept, we are essentially trying to understand ‘*who we are*’. Identity is a ‘definition or an interpretation of the self’ (Baumeister, 1986) and thereby, identity is a fundamental concept in understanding how individuals conduct themselves and relate to their surroundings, and/or changing environments.

For the Emirati student sojourners and repatriates who are the focus for this research, their ‘self’ and subsequent ‘self-concepts’ are strongly embedded in social ties and relationships, ‘marked by sensitivity to situations and social context’ (Kanagawa et al., 2001, p. 594). There are a number of variables during the acculturation processes that affect sojourner and repatriate self-concepts and cultural awareness. The way in which cultural identity dimensions are transformed, is a complex process and one that is not easily measured.

Erikson (1968) contributed to this discussion on the development and formation of identity through his seminal theory, which suggested that the self, at different junctures of one’s life, and as a result of psycho-social encounters, is shaped and moulded continuously, in identifiable stages. Each of Erikson’s developmental stages further identify a ‘crisis’ recognition for period adaptation, indicating that growth occurs through challenges. He stressed that ‘in times of tremendous change, people cling to ideas, preferences, and fears that bolster a sense of their own group’s uniqueness’ (Erikson, 1975, p. 9, cited in Schwartz et al., 2006). This specific dimension is relevant to the coping and acculturation student sojourners and repatriates may experience.

Within Erikson’s theory, there are altogether eight developmental stages comprised within an individual’s life span. The first of the stages starts from infancy and branch out into the toddler and childhood experiences, expanding then, into young adulthood. The later stages of his model merge into adulthood and the completing years of life. Two of the seminal stages align with my focus groups’ identity formation and so also coordinate with my research on cultural identity transformation.

Since student sojourners range from their late teens, when first choosing to study abroad, they are already undergoing Erickson’s developmental formation of (1) *Adolescence Identity vs. Role*

*Confusion*. Coinciding on top of any thereafter acculturation as university students, Emiratis are in movement between this stage and (2) the *Young Adulthood Intimacy vs. Isolation* stage, ranging in year 20 to year 40 of one's life (Erickson, 1968). Both stages, aligned with the age demographic of Emirati student sojourners and repatriates in this study, attribute to the most defining periods in the Emirati sojourning process. Understanding how these stages overlap transitions and acculturation is important. Processes of first and secondary socialisation intermingle for young adult sojourners and repatriates. They are meanwhile presented with a developing need to integrate and/or activate relevant cultural identity variables in context. These stages are highlighted in table 2, in a summary chart of Erickson's classifications on the following page.

As Erikson's theory is based on general developmental structures in a life-span, adding on the cultural-specific and cultural-abstract components is essential not only for the competence of existing discourse, but also for successful coherence in any sojourn and/or international student identity.

Table 2. Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development, Summary Chart (Erikson 1968, cited in 'Parent-to-Child Relationship: Emotional Development' 2012), accessed 29 April 2012, <<http://www.vtaide.com/blessing/PCR4-emote.htm>>

Age	Crisis	Central Task	Positive Outcome	Ego Quality	Definition	Developmental Task
<b>Infancy</b> Birth-18 Months	Trust vs. Mistrust	Receiving care	Trust in people and the environment	Hope	Enduring belief that one can attain one's deep and essential wishes	Social attachment; Maturation of sensory, perceptual and motor functions; Primitive causality
<b>Younger Years</b> 18 Months-3 Years	Autonomy vs. Shame & doubt	Imitation	Pride in self; Assertion of will in the face of danger	Will	Determination to exercise free choice and self-control	Locomotion; Fantasy play; Language development; Self-control
<b>Early Childhood</b> 3-6 Years	Initiative vs. Guilt	Identification	Able to initiate activities and enjoy learning	Purpose	Courage to imagine and pursue valued goals	Sex-role identification; Early moral development; Self-esteem; Group play; Egocentrism
<b>Middle Childhood</b> 6-12 Years	Industry vs. Inferiority	Education	Acquire skills for and develop competence in work; Enjoy achievement	Competence	Free exercise of skill and intelligence in completion of tasks	Friendship; Skill learning; Self-evaluation; Team play

<b>Early Adolescence</b> 12-18 Years	Group Identity vs. Alienation	Peer group	A strong group identity;  Ready to plan for the future	Loyalty	Ability to freely pledge and sustain loyalty to others	Physical maturation; Emotional development; Membership in peer group; Sexual relationships
<b>Later Adolescence</b> 18-22 Years	Individual Identity vs. Identity Confusion	Role experimentation	Strong moral identity;  Ready for intimate relationships	Fidelity	Ability to freely pledge and sustain values and ideologies	Autonomy from parents;  Sex-role identity;  Internalised morality;  Career choice
<b>Early Adulthood</b> 22-34 Years	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Care-giving	Form close relationships and share with others	Love	Capacity for mutuality that transcends childhood dependency	Stable relationships;  Child rearing;  Work, etc.
<b>Middle Adulthood</b> 34-60 Years	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Creativity	Nurturing children or helping the next generation in other ways	Care	Commitment to and concern for family and community	Nurture close relationships; Management of career and household; Parenting
<b>Later Adulthood</b> 60-75 Years	Integrity vs. Despair	Introspection	A sense of fulfilment about life; A sense of unity with self and others	Wisdom	Detached yet active concern with life in the face of death	Promote intellectual vigour; Redirect energy to new roles and activities; Develop a point of view about death
<b>Old Age</b> 75 Years-Death	Immortality vs. Extinction	Social Support	Life review;  Accept death with a sense of integrity and without fear	Confidence	Conscious trust in self and assurance about meaningfulness of life	Cope with physical changes of aging;  Develop a historical perspective;  Storytelling

Exhibited in Table 2, the ‘Adolescence Identity vs. Role Confusion’ stage, encompasses a time during which, entering the first years of tertiary education abroad, student sojourners will develop a sense of self by testing the roles of familial and community expectations, between their home countries and the UK. Gradually, students may integrate roles, which they test in the UK, into their single forming identity. This might subsequently influence their public and private behaviours in addition to their possible acculturative outcomes.

As student sojourners identify their transitional environmental settings further; they are able to reflect cultural-specifics in more detail, evolving their own core identity, relations and accordingly with and into the ‘Young Adulthood Intimacy vs. Isolation stage’. In turn, this is interconnected with effects on family relations, gender, choice of partner, developed morals and even career choice; all essential aspects of ‘self’ and ‘identity.’ Erikson maintains that ‘some

degree of identity confusion (i.e. what one does not know, or has yet to discover or create, about oneself) is adaptive [however], in part because a person with ‘too much’ certainty about his or her identity may be overtly close-minded and rigid’ (Erikson 1950, p. 8, cited in Schwartz et al., 2006).

A criticism of Erikson’s work, especially relevant to this study is that most of his case samples were white western males (Marcia, 1980). ‘Despite the plethora of research that has been conducted on the identity statuses, it is unclear how relevant this research is to identity development in non-White populations’ (Schwartz et al., 2006). His research was more grounded in Western circles and has made valuable contributions, however more culturally relative studies are needed to add to these findings and perspectives.

Of further consideration and interest here, is that present in the earlier stage of ‘Adolescence Identity vs. Role Confusion’, for the student sojourner, are developments for in-stage interactions with identified ‘authority figures’. What is interesting is that for the Emirati student sojourners, growing into adulthood does not mean separating from authority figures, parents and families, as may be the case with some people in the same stage, identified in more ‘western’ and ‘individualistic’ landscapes (Triandis, 1997; Hofstede, 2003). As Al-Suwaidi (2011) explains, Emiratis involve their inner-networks in much of their decision-making and even when they may experience a confusing aspect of his/her identity in changing situations, they may hide or shelf that component if it does not fit into accordance with UAE laws, structures and/or social dynamics (Al-Suwaidi, 2011).

Emiratis are loyal to their families and social networks, and feel obliged to honour them, independent of the developmental stage and the social identity theory argues that people are motivated to maintain a positive self-image. If the group they belong to precludes this, they may leave it and try to ‘psychologically pass’ as members of the dominant group or sojourners would publically identify with their community back home over the mainstream culture (Rhee et al., 1995, p. 144). Student sojourners are in a transition not only between countries, but also between self-identity and developmental cognitive aspects of self, roles and relations. These stages of Erikson’s theory will accordingly unfold to be more or less difficult for sojourners and repatriates with their implementation of coping strategies, outreach and levels of social interaction within the acculturation processes.

### 3.3.2 – Identity Achievement

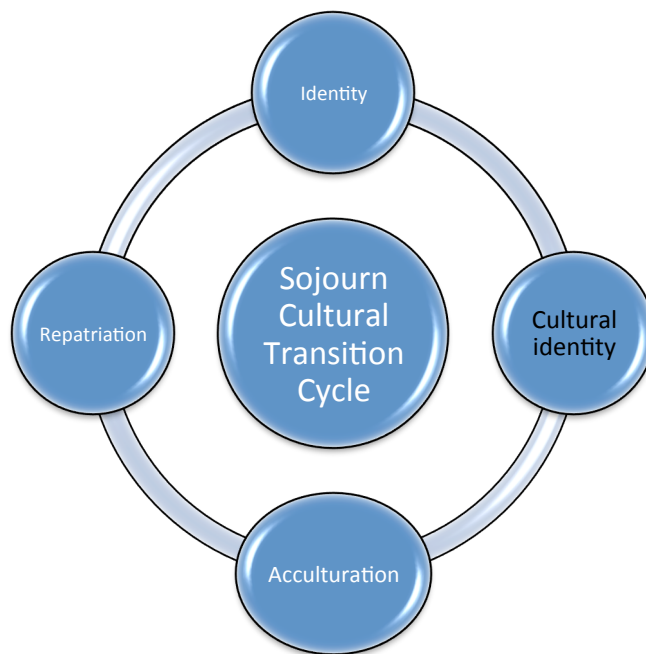
In his identity status theory, James Marcia (1980) developed and tested Erikson's theory, concluding that in any life-span there are overall four main identity positions of which a person might classify: (1) 'identity achievement', identifying individuals who have successfully passed through an identity crisis; (2) 'foreclosure', for those that show no signs of going through an identity crisis; (3) 'moratorium', for those in the midst of an identity crisis; and (4) 'identity diffusion', for those who have lost any integrated sense of 'self'.

One of the aims of this research is to understand how certain Emirati student sojourners and repatriates, regardless of which categories they have been in, reach the critical positioning of 'identity achievement'. Residential changes in sojourning can raise doubts about already existing value systems once regularly adhered to (e.g. 'home' beliefs, once having felt quite secure and solid in an original cultural context). While on the other hand, broadening ones experiences and social interactions can also result in confirmation rather than confusion or conflict about those values.

Having a support system that understands sojourn difficulties can greatly aid identity achievement, and for this study that of Emiratis. There is a value attached to the identity of a group and its close tie to self-identity, which affects self-esteem and out-group behaviour (Turner and Giles, 1981; Brewer and Miller, 1984). As Emirati sojourners grow up in their collectivist home country, as well as when they are away as international students in more individualistic settings, this attachment to the group is one that is encouraged and nurtured for both in-group and out-group situations (Kamali and Al-Simadi, 2004). Culture represents ways of thinking that are internalised from the social institutions operating within a given country or region and ' . . . within each country or region, the dominant group determines what the 'culture' is' (Shore, 2002, p. 5, cited in Schwartz et al., 2006).

Emiratis define themselves in connection to their collective social values and cultural viewpoints, and rarely as individuals separate from their association to family, religion and traditions. They define themselves in connection to a shared 'cultural space' and 'territory' (Penrose, 2002), being the UAE and/or identities and affiliations of their socialisation there. The increasing recognition of 'culture' as a psychological construct in research variables has had a

profound impact on psychology and our understanding of human behaviour (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Nisbet et al., 2001; Peng et al., 2001). As cultural psychology shares difficulties and builds upon embedded ‘assumptions’, regarding theories of personality and issues related to identity and acculturation, it is important to explore shifting cultural components on appropriate continuums.



*Figure 4 – Sojourn cycle - Focus on cultural identity*

### **3.4 – Cultural Identity**

Again, culture and self are mutually constituted and work dialectically with one another to constantly shape and form an individual (Shweder, 1990). These influences are not simply general characteristics, but rather specific influences that work towards building the many multiple layers that are to become the self. While theories describing the developmental process of cultural identity have neglected to shed light on identity development beyond formative years and/or for those in cultural transition (Erikson, 1950, 1968; Phinney, 1989; Phinney et al., 1990; Phinney and Rosenthal, 1992); Bhatia and Ram (2001) have argued that culture is difficult to define. It is not clear what makes up a ‘culture’ and moreover, it is difficult to draw clear

boundaries around where one culture ends and another begins. This research does not aim to draw a clear ending and/or beginning to Emirati culture, but rather to instead highlight pivotal points of a sojourning journey for Emiratis in transition that may be culturally influenced and/or experience shifts in their own cultural identity.

The following sub-sections serve to share important dimensions in the basic structure of cultural identity, in relation to relevant definitions, studies and theories. Language, identity achievement self concepts, cultural nationalism, religion ethics and morality gender structures, and ways of seeing oneself are important aspects contributing to the formation of cultural identity.

Gjerde (2004) says that the very notion of culture, as a fixed entity that characterises groups of people, is errant and promotes stereotyping (i.e. believing that people from a given ‘culture’ are largely the same), so it is important to remember that as such, these situations are also relative. In examining cultural identity transformation for sojourners and repatriates, issues evident in the literature include (1) language; (2) cultural nationalism; (3) religion, inherent of ethics and morals; (4) social relationships (5) gender structures; (6) ways of seeing the ‘self’, and ‘the other’; and (7) an exploration of the collectivistic-individualistic continuum. These issues have emerged from what has been explored previously in literature.

### **3.4.1 – Language**

Language is an integral part of culture and individual identity. Despite English being spoken almost everywhere in the modernised UAE, Emiratis remain true to their Arabic mother tongue in most aspects of their private lives and publically with their family and friends who they interact with. English for Emiratis is used primarily for cultivating social, academic and business relationships with non-Emiratis at home and in regard to any expatriate interaction and/or while abroad.

Because of the unique relationship between language and culture, which has been an important topic of concern for psychology and anthropology since Sapir (1970) and Whorf (1956) proposed their hypothesis that language determines, or at least influences, the way one looks at the world (Huda 2006). To speak one’s language therefore is not just a mode of communication.

It is a way to feel more closely connected to the culture and to be able to express nuances that only that language facilitates.

It is a significant point that a common language is an important clue that there is a distinct culture (Triandis, 1994). Having practical everyday accessibility to conversations in the mother tongue, means having a secure and/or comforting connection with culture. While language can unite communities and/or student sojourners with other members of their community, 'language may also serve as a barrier to identity development, in that sojourners who do not speak the receiving country's language may not have access to certain opportunities and life trajectories' (Barker et al., 2001; Phinney and Flores, 2002; cited in, Schwartz et al., 2006, p.18). Knowing that they may be judged by their use of language and also in a culturally engrained respect for community relations in any society, sojourners may predominantly speak English in UK public domains. Amongst others of their national group and in private spheres of life, the deep rooted longing to feel closer to familiar cultural nuances is satisfied by speaking their mother tongue.

Huda (2006) conducted an interesting study linking shared languages between in and out-groups, assessing whether Lebanese people with different individualistic and collectivistic (I-C) tendencies speak different languages or belong to different religious groups. 517 Lebanese college students participated in a 'twenty statements test' incorporating 'Triandis's Attitude Items' and ten of 'Schwartz's Value Items'. It revealed language as an important aspect of orientation. Religion was found to be a variable of significant impact upon each individual, whereas gender, for example, did not have any significant influence on determining whether students were individualistic or collectivist. Results showed a simple conclusion that those who spoke in Arabic were more collectivist than those who spoke in individualistic languages, such as French or English (Huda, 2006).

Huda's results echoed the findings of Kashima and Kashima (1998) that countries in which pronouns are allowed to be dropped in language show a lower level of individualism. This is unlike cultures where languages such as English and French are spoken, where the use of subject pronouns is obligatory. Individuals from such cultures are likely to be more individualistic as Huda's study implies; Arab speakers drop pronouns such as 'I'. Kashima and Kashima (1998) explain that explicit use of 'I' indicates that an individual 'is highlighted as a figure against the

speech context, whereas its absence reduces the predominance of the speaker's person, thus reducing the figure-ground differentiation' (Kashima and Kashima 1998, p. 465).

Despite English being spoken almost everywhere in the modernised UAE, Emiratis remain true to their Arabic mother tongue in most aspects of their private lives and publically with their family and friends who they interact with. English for Emiratis is used primarily for cultivating social, academic and business relationships with non-Emiratis at home and in regard to any expatriate interaction or while abroad (Kamali and Al-Simadi, 2004).

### **3.4.2 – Cultural Nationalism**

Feeling connected to a particular country, is an attachment that varies amongst people and is formed as a result of a many different variables. The relevance of this concept here is that when in cultural transition, especially for sojourners, their level of cultural nationalism is likely to steer, or at least have an influence on their acculturative experiences.

Penrose (2002) refers to nationalism or cultural nationalism and therefore a nation's language, as 'spatial organisation in the world' (p. 283). In compartmentalising that 'organisation', the nature of sojourn perception of experiences can be understood. Guibernau (1996) accentuated that 'it is through the combination of a cultural identity with a territorial identity, and the privileging of this composite identity over all others, that nationalism derives much of its appeal and resilience' (p.3).

Transformation does not only end, or begin, at feeling a sense of belonging to a group, in terms of nationality and national benefits, but additionally, is directly correlated with loyalty for cultural in-groups and moreover national pride in behaviours, values and traditions (Phinney, 1992). Herder's observation that: 'it is obvious why all sensual people, fashioned to their country, are so much attached to the soil and inseparable from it. The constitution of their body, their way of life [i.e. also, their language; and their cultural nationalism], the pleasures and occupations to which they have become accustomed from their infancy and the whole circle of their ideas are climatic' (Herder, 1968 [1784], p. 10), could be applied to the countries of the Middle East.

In relation to the modernisation of the UAE, the success of ‘nationalism as a political ideology stems from their attempts to combine elements of pre-modern territoriality with those of modernity’ (Penrose, 2002, p. 284). ‘Instead of expressing one dimension of whom a person [is], territory becomes the primary and overriding factor in defining the person’ (Penrose, 2002, p. 283).

The notion of territory and the gathering of the UAE federation are ‘transformed from a geographical expression of cultural identity into the fundamental basis for defining group and individual identities’ (Penrose 2002, p. 281). For Emiratis in the UAE, ‘the idea of a general will – as the moral personality of the state [e.g.] – was necessary before the idea of the nation (a national consciousness) could have any reality’ (Cobban, 1964, p.108). Likewise, the will to maintain culture in two countries, such as in both the UAE and UK, might be key in securing identity achievement. When someone is exposed to a second socialisation in new cultural contexts, or moves between ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’ locations ‘ . . . the emotional power of territory and relevant cultural and social systems stems from the fact that the vast majority of people who feel a bond can vary enormously in both content and scale, but such places almost always involve deep feelings of belonging; of feeling ‘at peace’ and secure. . . ‘at home’ ’ (Penrose, 2002, p. 281).

### **3.4.3 - Religion (Ethics and Morality)**

Religion is another aspect of cultural identity which may be impacted upon as part of a sojourner experience. Schwartz and Huismans, (1995), argue that the religion of a group may be indicative of the extent to which a person identifies with parts of an individualistic or collectivistic culture. Triandis (1988) indicated that changes in individualist and collectivist orientations may take place with religious changes as well and so, in theory, the self-construal can change when religious affiliation changes, since it is such a significant variable. Some researchers discuss the way in which individuals who attend a place of worship frequently tend to be more socially conservative or traditional than those who do not (Schwartz and Huismans, 1995; Verba et al., 1995).

Research particularly relevant to this study is that of Huda (2006) who indicated that Muslims appear to be a strong collectivistic group, in relation to religion. Emphasising religious sites and

activities as communal goals (Warner, 1993; Schwartz and Huisman, 1995), the religion of a group may be indicative of the extent to which a person identifies with parts of an individualistic or collectivistic culture.

Huda (2006) indicated that Muslims appear to be a strong collectivistic group, in relation to religion. Islam is integrated into all aspects of life for a Muslim, so it is not surprising that Emiratis focus significantly on religious contexts in decision-making and/or during acculturative experiences. Islam is not simply a religion; it is a way of life endorsed repeatedly by Emirati student sojourners and repatriates, that affects many aspects of their psychological functioning and determines their consequent social identification.

#### **3.4.4 – Social Relationships**

Social relationships include family relationships. Research studies exploring these in immigrant communities indicate the importance of such relationships. Birman and Taylor-Ritzler (2007) conducted a study supporting this notion with 266 Russian adolescent immigrants who had re-settled in the US. It was aimed at investigating the role of family relationships in influencing acculturative processes in host and native countries. The results revealed that positive relationships in the family correlated to reduced distress among adolescents. Schwartz et al. (2006) indicated in another study, that additionally, while parents who are familiar with an intended host country can aid their sojourning youth, ‘youths whose familiarity with the receiving culture exceeds that of their parents may be left without guidance, with respect to exploring avenues for personal identity development’ (p. 18).

While family can be a source of support and on going encouragement, their involvement on such a level may result in holding back their child from engaging in all the experiences and opportunities that may contribute to the development of their cultural identity. Constant reinforces and reminders of ‘who they ought to be’ versus ‘who they might want to be’ are powerful mechanisms that affect the sojourn cycle.

Facets of Emirati decision-making are influenced not only by their cultural values and religion, but inherently, and more extensively, by family members. ‘Bonds between people, and between people and place, are considered virtually inviolate because they are constructed as biological.

Kinship ties are commonly viewed as stronger than any other connections between people and bonds to homelands and are cemented through processes of birth and nurturing over time' (Penrose, 2002, p. 281).

Within a slightly broader 'Arab' and 'Middle-Eastern' culture, 'there is always an eye on conformity rather than individualism and traditions, hospitality and religion are all part of the social fabric. As human beings, it is natural that family and values are a common factor and part of daily lives' (Habib, 2010). Going against these forces by making independent decisions based on personal needs and objectives can have negative consequences for Emiratis, such as, they may be disowned by their family and friends. Feeling accepted, supported and loved by their community and family back home are guiding variables for sojourners and repatriates.

Birman and Taylor-Ritzler (2007) conducted a study supporting this notion with 266 Russian adolescent immigrants who had re-settled in the US. It was aimed at investigating the role of family relationships in influencing acculturative processes in host and native countries. The results revealed that positive relationships in the family correlated to reduced distress among adolescents. Schwartz et al. (2006) indicated in another study, that additionally, while parents who are familiar with an intended host country can aid their sojourning youth, 'youths whose familiarity with the receiving culture exceeds that of their parents may be left without guidance, with respect to exploring avenues for personal identity development' (p. 18).

While family can be a source of support and on going encouragement, their involvement on such a level may result in holding back their child from engaging in all the experiences and opportunities that may contribute to the development of their cultural identity. Constant reinforces and reminders of 'who they ought to be' versus 'who they might want to be' are powerful mechanisms that affect the sojourn cycle.

### 3.4.5 - Gender Structures

Gender also may impact the acculturation process of sojourners. Women, when compared to men, are more at risk during the acculturation processes of a sojourn (Paludi, 2002). Of those difficulties accentuated, pressures regarding intercultural relationships, expected social etiquette and compromised behaviours were all co-existing themes.

Female sojourners, however, appear to altogether adapt more successfully to host societies than their male sojourner counterparts (Paludi, 2002) however cultural background of these females should be considered before generalising findings. The notion of cultural variables that may help or hinder the acculturative process is a central tenant when discussing gender structures. Even though some research (McGuire et al. 1986 and Paludi, 2002) claim women may adapt ‘more successfully,’ the criteria for successful adaptation will certainly vary for people of different cultures and post sojourn objectives. While assimilating deeper in the host culture and adapting such values may be deemed as more successful for one group, another group, may perceive the same as a negative outcome of a process that is primarily meant to be about educational attainment and not about changes to cultural identity.

Camilleri and Malewska-Peyre (1997) put forward ‘identity strategies’, as a theory for understanding the development and conceptualisation of connected identities. A distinction is further made between a ‘*value identity*’ and a ‘*real identity*’. A value identity is an ideal which may be held in an individual’s mind to which he or she would like to conform to and a ‘real identity’ is what the individual, regardless of and with gender components, is like at any present time. For women perhaps, a ‘value identity’ is described in terms of gender role expectations that set the boundaries for appropriate systems of values and behaviour, which in turn, affect ‘real identity’. Value and real identity can be similar or very different. If the differences between the real self and value self are more than the similarities, than individuals may strive to reduce these differences (Camilleri and Malewska-Peyre, 1997). This becomes a dominant feature prompted for individuals and sojourners who might engage in intercultural relationships as well.

### **3.4.6 - Ways of Seeing the ‘Self’, and ‘the Other’**

Students sojourners are not only experiencing situations where they must interact with people from other cultures in the host country, something which shapes their conception of themselves and cultural identity, but they are also, as university students, in the process of being shaped as result of a new role. Young-adult minds may be in a latent suggestible state, which helps to make them more receptive to new culture, expanding their cultural lenses and/or socialised ways of seeing (Hall (ed.), 2002). Phinney’s (1989) description of ‘ethnic identity development’ presented a strong argument that not having achieved an affiliation with one’s ethnic identity becomes a risk to the sociological and psychological functioning of the individual and so reflecting and discerning between ‘this is me’ and ‘this is not me’ (Rosch, 1977) is even more important.

‘When people create territories, they create boundaries that both unite and divide space along with everything that it contains. By combining some people and certain resources, and separating them from other people and resources, the creation of territories gives physical substance and symbolic meaning to notions of ‘us’ and ‘them’, and ‘ours’ and ‘theirs’ (Penrose, 2002, p. 280). Since Emiratis are a minority in their own culture (CIA, 2011) and also account for only a small but growing number of total international students (Johnson, 2010; UAE Embassy in London, 17 October 2012), minority identity is sometimes described as someone who is marginal, separate and victimised. Some researchers have tended to homogenise those ‘belonging’ to a particular ‘cultural space’ as having generalised and stereotypical characteristics (Penrose, 2002). A fundamental difference here is that while Emiratis might be a minority in their own country, they do not see themselves at a disadvantage on any social, economic or political levels and they are not victimised by any definition. In comparison to some minority groups that may be validly disadvantaged, the Emirati minority status is merely numerical.

In regard to ways of seeing ‘self’, Hendry et al. (2007) conducted a focused study using ‘grounded theory methods’ to explore the perceptions that young people have about their developing cultural identity as a minority. The study revealed that those participants, whose sense of cultural identity was more than just a sense of affiliation, were more inclined to orient themselves globally with no particular emphasis on dominant culture. The central premise to this outcome is that when people feel more attached to their group values, especially when it is that

of a minority group, their cultural identity remains more intact, regardless of their location. It is relevant to note however that the conditions associated with being a minority, both positive and challenging, are likely to either strengthen or weaken attachment to the group.

‘Individuals who identify heavily with their ethnic, cultural or national group may regard the welfare and status of the group as more important than their own...’ (Schwartz et al., 2006, p. 9). According to Phinney and Chavira (1992), those individuals belonging to a minority culture need to examine and/or re-examine issues pertaining to their culture of origin, in order to have greater self-esteem and experience fewer problems when adjusting to any dominant culture. This is often done through a comparison of social structures with the cultural ‘other’ or unfamiliar.

While growing up in the UAE, Emiratis are encouraged and socialised to embrace Emirati cultural values that are representative of an interdependent construal of self and framed around Arab/Islamic principles. The presence of ‘other’ cultural values, however, both in the UAE and while they are abroad, creates many opportunities where sojourner cultural identity may experience selected additions and subtractions to the overall sense of an Emirati self (Phinney, 1989).

The change in enactment of individual identity over the course of one’s life is described by Collier (1997) within the interpersonal contexts of ‘avowal’ and ‘ascription’. Avowal refers to how an individual defines him or herself whilst ascription relates to others characterising an individual. An example of ascription is stereotyping, because ‘identities are co-created in relationship with others’ (Collier, 1997). Sojourning students who cross-culturally exchanging amongst ‘other’ cultural identities poses the interesting identity question: Is it the Emiratis who have not left the country who form ‘the other’ for proud and privileged sojourning Emiratis after they repatriate, or is it the host country (UK) students who, in whatever environmental context, remain ‘the other’?

‘Although perceived discrimination may be linked to personal attributes such as intergroup competence and psychological distress, experiences of discrimination can adversely affect [...] personal identity . . .’ (Schwartz, et al., 2006, p. 19). The case of constructing an identity rooted in the idea of the ‘other’ can vary depending on whether one considers only significant others, or a wider, cultural whole.

Despite identifying with a culture of origin when going through experiences in which a population or person is challenged as ‘the other’, in the host country or even at home; those involved are subject to deep personal and cultural identity evaluation (Germain, 2004). Withdrawing from racial assertions is often provoked for a sojourner in what is considered a ‘different’ host culture. Emiratis tend to evaluate their public cultural practices in ‘western societies’, in enlightened concern for misinterpretations and stereotypes existing after ‘post-terrorism’ periods. When sojourners and repatriates (also at home) feel there may be an unnecessary judgement, they sometimes withdraw from or hide activities.

As revealed in the study conducted by Germain (2004), which looks at the notion of cultural identity among American adolescents in Australia, a minority status can steer development of cultural identity, based on the processes of exploring the cultural origin in relation to ‘the other’. Although Germain’s model (2004) succeeds in predicting a racial identity for adolescents within the study, there is not necessarily a cultural or ethnic one, however. The point made here is that evaluation of one’s cultural origin, when in a varied environmental setting, is a common psychological experience for people in transition.

### **3.4.7 - The Collectivism/Individualism Continuum**

Within a specific society, individual differences depend on the predominant orientation between macro (human) and micro (societal or individual) identities. The terms ‘social individualism’ and ‘societal collectivism’ have been put forth by Dion and Dion (1993) to designate individualistic and collectivistic constructs for cultural exchange. In other words, people differ to the extent in which they see their identity as overlapping the cultural they are from or as separate and more independent of their group. Through exchange, there is also a continuum between the extreme individual level at one end and the collective at the other (Hui and Triandis, 1986; Huda, 2006 Yoon, 2006).

Where strict individualists can be more concerned with themselves than with the group (Schwartz et al., 2006); Triandis et al. (2001) claims that the West, inclusive in his definition are North America, north-western Europe and Oceania, is an ‘individual’ world. In the West, a child learns to refer to him/herself as ‘I’, he/she is asked to become independent and is actively put in circumstances to do so (Triandis, 2001). The differences between individualistic and

collectivistic families are very relevant for Emiratis between contexts, since family and social networks are an integral part of who they are.

With the presence of global media in more Middle Eastern societies, younger generations of collectivistic orientation that come into contact with regular individualist campaigns, television shows, music and all the rest are prompted to be curious and/or concerned with the similarities and differences between classifications. The infiltration of ideas can diverse populations to explore new behaviour and differences in more permitting and/or inviting environments like the UK:

‘Although there is a great deal of variability in the ways in which individualist and collectivist ideals are expressed and although such ‘within-individualist’ and ‘within-collectivist’ variability can dilute the magnitude of cross-cultural differences observed in individualism and collectivism, we contend that these cultural patterns have some utility – especially for individuals ‘in transition’ between collectivist and individualist orientations’ (Schwartz et al., 2006, p. 20).

Identity as ‘a self-regulating’ psycho-social structure processes information, manages impressions and selects behaviours. Individuals adopt identities through processes characterised by (a) ‘imitation and identification’ or (b) ‘exploration, construction and experience’ (Adams and Marshall 1996; cited in Schwartz et al., 2006, p. 6). In either process, it is the ‘consistency, coherence and harmony between values, beliefs and commitments’ which attest to strengthening an individual or collective character through . . . [social interaction]’ (Serafini and Adams 2002; cited in Schwartz et al., 2006, p. 6).

Arab cultural identity has been somewhat measured in this regard by Hofstede (2003), who conducted one of the most comprehensive analysis regarding identity, including persons from Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Hofstede (2003) gathered the data for his study from the research conducted by IBM, measuring employee attitudes, and analysed and differentiated between four different dimensions on which cultures can be distinguished: (1) power distance; (2) uncertainty-avoidance; (3) individualism-collectivism; and (4) masculinity-femininity. The measuring tool Hofstede used was referred to as the

‘Individualism Dimension’ (IDV), which is a scale used to reflect scores for countries low or high on individualism.

When considering the different nationalities of the participants, Hofstede (2003) discusses the importance of Islam to the Arab nations and how closely related religion and culture are to one another. Attributed to Islamic principles and the importance of tradition and community, participants from countries such as the UAE scored the lowest on the IDV. Hofstede (2003) substantiated that ‘this translates into [the UAE being] a collectivist society as compared to an individualist culture and is manifested in a close long-term commitment to the member 'group', that being a family, extended family or extended relationships. Loyalty in [... the Emirati] collectivist culture is paramount and over-rides most other societal rules’ (Hofstede 2003).

Hofstede (1980) conducted a prior study that likewise surveyed IBM employees, beyond the Middle East and in over 40 countries. His consistent results have indicated that the US rates highest in the score for being an individualistic nation. Next to the US, the UK ranks as one of the highest nations in regard to the IDV. Since then, cross-cultural research has mostly assumed that Europeans and Americans set the standard for individualistic cultures. East Asians and Middle Easterners, such as Arabs, are represented as a standard for adhering to collectivist norms and values.

Hofstede’s studies have paved the way for many others, including Markus and Kitayama (1991), who used the individualism-collectivism continuum as a mode of mapping cultural differences. Matsumoto (1999) studies supported objectives in my study to extract qualitative data about collectivist and individualist values within cultural identity, in criticising ‘East’ and ‘West’ assumptions and arguing that researchers have not yet adequately measured or provided ‘in-depth analysis’ in regard to the individualism/collectivism continuum. He asked, for example, why Asians are higher on the ‘interdependence scale’ (Markus and Kitayama, 1991) than Europeans and Americans (Matsumoto, 1999).

However there are researchers, such as Gudykunst et al. (1996) who point out that all people, regardless of culture, possess both an independent and interdependent self-construal, and depending on context either can be activated. Therefore people do not fit into neat categories on either end of the continuum. When international student sojourners are exposed to the

acculturation process in the host culture, even the smallest of concepts, values and/or decision-making processes reflect and between their 'Eastern' and 'Western' experiences. These experiences can (a) cause some identity confusion and/or (b) through them, re-affirm the core of sojourner identity achievement (Serafini and Adams 2002).

### **3.5 – Individual and Collective Identities**

After having juxtaposed relevant identity theories, this section begins to address more specifically the theoretical framework of individual vs. collectivist identities used in this research. Although this study has been mostly guided by the work of Markus and Kitayam (1991), researchers before them who explored the interconnectedness of culture and identity have been presented and analysed as a way to trace the evolution of such ideas.

Brewer and Pickett stated that the needs for differentiation and inclusion are 'universal human motives' rather than just cultural values (Brewer and Pickett, 1999, p. 85). For Emiratis in transition, integrating into a more individualistic social framework can merge into, or separate them from, their otherwise collective mentality. Past research on individualism-collectivism has emphasised two dimensions of the self-concept collectively and/or individually, being: (1) an 'abstract-specific' dimension and (2) an 'autonomous-social dimension' [abstract vs. concrete dimensions]' (Rhee et al., 1995). 'Highly specific self-descriptions thereby allow a person to be distinctive, but not generally different from others. Conflating the abstract-specific and autonomous-social dimensions obscures the distinction between them, and particularly, oversimplifies the characterisation of self-descriptions from collectivistic cultures' (Rhee et. al. 1995, p. 150).

When assessing identity, at an individual level, people can also be described by the terms 'idiocentric' and/or 'allocentric' (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). These definitions correspond to individualistic and collectivistic categorisation respectively. Allocentrics have an interdependent self-construal; they are concerned with social support and report low alienation in social contexts (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). While idiocentrics have an independent self-construal; they focus on achievement and partake in multiple individual-group memberships (Triandis, 1988).

The utility of this distinction across levels is the explicit realisation that people from a collectivistic culture may, on a person to person basis, be quite idiocentric and vice versa. Sampson (1977) observed that our actions take place within a carefully devised social reality of interconnected individuals. In social interaction, an individual is part of a wider group setting and whether or not a person is individualistic or collectivistic, there is always a collective identity (e.g. a macro human identity) which is difficult to ignore.

### **3.5.1 – Interdependent vs. Independent Construal of Self**

Two main types of self-construal are recognised and explored by Markus and Kitayama (1991; 1998). A ‘cultural self-construal’ is a culturally shared assumption ‘about the relationship between the self and others, and especially the degree to which identity is seen as separate or connected with others’ (Markus and Kitayama, 1991).

#### *(1) The Independent Self-Construal*

Common among European and North American Individualistic cultures (Markus and Kitayama, 1991, 1998; Singelis, 1994), an independent self-construal is defined as:

- a bounded, unitary, stable self that is separate from social context, but direct in social interaction; having individual desires, preferences, attributes and abilities;
- an autonomous ‘self’ that realises internal attributes, proud with uniqueness; having expressive ability in individuality and competitiveness with others, valued;
- a ‘self’ which exercises agency to influence other people, things and objects in pursuit of personal goals (Steptoe and Appels, 1989)

#### *(2) The Interdependent Self-Construal*

People from more collectivist cultures (e.g., Asian, Arab, African and Hispanic cultures) tend to be more interdependent (Markus and Kitayama, 1991, 1998; Singelis, 1994):

- experiencing the self as flexible and intertwined with social context;
- having strong value in maintaining group harmony;

- making effort in and concerned with, fitting in; and/or
- identifying a group, with strong attachment to other group members.

These two construal's may seem as if they are placed at opposing ends, however the distinction has been made to show variation in cultural identity orientation, rather than distinct and fixed categories. Taking into account this abstract-specific and autonomous social distinctions on a continuum, as Rhee et al. (1995) did in their study of Korean, Euro-Americans and Asian-Americans; an individual may have a self construal that is both highly independent and highly interdependent (Rhee et al., 1995; Paulhus and Trapnell, 1998; Heine et al., 1999). An American may score high on the individualistic construal scale, for example, in regard to their work and career related dimensions, because they are centred on individual ideology at 'that time'. An American may also exhibit more of an interdependent construal of self when questioned about their family, because family, in itself, is a collective unit. This critical consideration and other evaluations of measurements resulted in Markus developing the 'Self-Construal Scale', composed of dimensional sub-scales reflecting each view of the self (Markus and Kitayama, 2003).

Although Markus and Kitayama (2003) did not directly point out that an interdependent self-construal is common in the UAE, they have done so with other Islamic and Middle Eastern societies. The interdependent self-construal, common to many eastern, African and Islamic cultures is defined as a flexible, variable self that takes its cue from social context (Buda and Elsayed-Elkhouly, 1998). A person's self-construal is believed to impact (1) cognition (i.e. attention, cognitive elaboration and representation in memory), (2) emotion (i.e. expression and experience of particular emotions), and (3) motivation (i.e. psycho-individual and/or collective cognitive affiliation). It is most important to understand the varying levels and depth to which an overlapping construal can demonstrate (Markus and Kitayama, 2003) and to similarly centre a view of the self 'shared culturally' with greater emphasis, therefore, on the cultural context of character rather than individual character (Markus and Kitayama, 1991).

An interdependent view of the self derives from a belief in the individual's connectedness to and interdependence with others. This construal emphasises 'belonging' to, fulfilling and creating obligations, and becoming a part of various social units, much like the Emirati in transition. The

interdependent self-construal is a characterisation of the self, with important components of the interdependent self-construal again being one's relationships with specific others and with in-groups (Cousins, 1989; Markus and Kitayama, 1991).

Researchers such as Schwartz (2005) contest the core assumptions of Markus and Kitayama, because much of the original work relies on the fact that different levels of identity stem from different conceptualisations of 'others'. Still, the 'self' responds to independent or interdependent aspects according to varying contexts (Kiuchi, 1995) and this is a middle ground in view of the framework. Kiuchi's analysis of cultural identity (1995) is in line with researchers such as Dion and Dion (1993), stating that focus should be prioritised toward individual aspects of the independent and interdependent self. While individuals act as members of a group where social identity is prominent, this is not the case however, when individuality and personal identity is salient (Abrams and Hogg, 1990).

Heine (2001) and other researchers have also conducted studies to test the validity of Markus and Kitayama's hypothesis. As Heine (2001) concurred, human nature and identity emerge and develop from involvement in cultural worlds and adapting oneself to necessary cultural commands. As cultural beings, our 'self' view is highly influenced by the cultural influences that interact in our lives. Cousins (1989) suggested that individuals with an interdependent self-construal are more used to thinking about themselves as part of a group, specifically through a social role and in specific social situations and cultural institutions (Matsumoto, 1999).

Kiuchi (1996) compared students who had once lived in Europe or the USA with those that had not had such an experience; found that an independent and interdependent self-construal is concurrent with socio-cultural influences. Those with an interdependent self-construal value respect their group membership by being concerned and conscious of their behaviour. In support of the Self Construal Scale's validity, Singelis (1994) found that Asian Americans were both more interdependent and less independent than White Americans.

Bond and Cheung (1983), in their study on Japanese students, found that participants tended to describe themselves by abstracting features across situations in connection to others, in contrast to American participants' who tended to view themselves in terms of personal attributes. These results re-affirm the theory of Markus and Kitayama (1991; 1998). I accentuate, meanwhile, that

it is important to acknowledge that the Japanese cultural value system encourages humility, and therefore, to talk positively about one-self, might seem arrogant. This is not to say that the Japanese lack confidence (their achievements would argue otherwise). However, the self-identification of collective peoples is shaped through cultural variables that set the stage and boundaries for their self-construal.

Similarly, Kangwa et al. (2001) reported findings that Americans were more likely, than the Japanese, to describe themselves in positive terms, whereby when Americans appeared to be self-assertive, the Japanese appeared self-effacing. Again, taking into account a deeper cultural context, as I mentioned before, this would not be the case, instead 'self-effacing' would be more reliably equated with a cultural belief in humility. Investigations of 'semi-international student adaptation' have been reported in literature for over 40 years, lacking this proper contextualisation and leaving many unanswered questions due to larger-scale diversity in population.

Other researchers have examined these assumptions and results, and their position is consistent (Trafimow et al., 1991; Schwartz, 2005; Singelis, 1994; Yamaguchi, 1994). Distinction allows for a broader representation of the theoretical framework, whereby a construal of any self can be immensely difficult in locating and/or comparing between two different cultural orientations. Cultural assumptions need to be taken into account with situational variables (Hong et al., 2000). This point is most important when individuals are in cultural transition and factors in a host culture represent opportunities for transformation. Student sojourners are affected as a result of the acculturation processes operating between these variables and contexts. Students, who were once quite dependent on family members pre-sojourn, have to practice self-efficacy while in a more individualistic culture. They adopt certain individualistic values which might later become additions into their original cultural identity.

Markus and Kitayama (1991) reviewed a study by Cousins (1989) which entailed completion of the Twenty Statements Test (TST) by participants in order to describe themselves in relation to the question of 'Who am I?' The participants were asked to answer this question in two parts; one in a general way and the second within specific contexts such as at home, with friends or at school. The participants were Americans and Japanese. The results revealed that the context-free version of the TST was more prominent for the Americans who were attributed an independent

self-construal as opposed to the Japanese who were more abstract in their description of themselves within a contextual sphere. This suggested that individuals with interdependent self-construal were more used to thinking about themselves as part of the group, through a social role and in specific social situations (Matsumoto, 1999).

In the same way that it is important to consider cross-cultural categories of identity affiliation, the exceptions and the people who may not ascribe to these social groups need to also be cogitated, especially while in transition. The theoretical proposition put forth by Markus and Kitayama (1991) offers an effective base line from which cultural components may be explored. It is necessary to identify the theoretical, methodological and epistemological elements or processes that explain some of these cultural influences and differences. Even though how the self is construed may be an influential and effective theoretical element, Markus and Kitayama's theory generates important questions. For example, how deep or persistent are these cultural differences? Are the observed differences primarily a reflection of differences in styles of behavioural expression, or do they also reflect differences in the phenomenology accompanying the behaviour?

### **3.5.2 – The Self-Concept of Sojourners**

Rumbaut (1994) proposed that one's affiliation and awareness with one's cultural identity is marked by the degree of dissonance or consonance with the majority culture. This refers to the extent in which individual values and principles are either in line (consonance) or clashing (dissonance) against the culture in question. It is through these processes that sojourners begin to reflect upon the main components of their own value systems and those particular to public and private domains, whereby activating or oppressing certain behaviours and/or repertoires are required. Consequently cultural identity transformation is not an automatic or involuntary process; in fact it involves many different conscious and perhaps unconscious negotiations that may gradually result in changes in both personal and cultural attributes.

One's self concept can also be carefully managed, especially in what is portrayed in public and private domains. Bontempo et al. (1990) are known to have compared the public and private responses of individuals from a collectivist culture with those of individuals from an individualist culture. Researchers asked respondents to discuss how enjoyable it would be to

engage in a time-consuming and individually costly behaviour, such as visiting a friend in the hospital. Results indicated that only in the public sphere did individualists claim aloud that the visit would be enjoyable. Collectivists in contrast, claimed that the behaviour would be enjoyable, even when their responses were private (Bontempo et al., 1990).

The experience of travelling between cultures and countries alludes to *biculturalism*, the result of a process of integrating two cultural identities (Berry, 1997). The more international student sojourners and repatriates travel between concepts of their original identity and any imitated or explored host identity, variations may merge, however, still distinguishing themselves individually in context. This outcome will also be heavily influenced by post sojourn objectives of whether the sojourner has established roots in the host country and wishes to continue their stay or if they are expected to and have planned to return to their country of origin after graduation, as in the case of the Emirati sojourners.

Berry (1997) and other researchers argued that biculturalism is the most adaptive acculturation strategy, arising in the most favourable outcome. However, this may not be the case in different cultural contexts. Where two ‘cultures’ are similar, an individual will not need to negotiate or wrestle with important values; but where the cultures are quite different, such as when the heritage culture is primarily collectivist and the receiving culture is primarily individualist, identity achievement within biculturalism may be more difficult to attain. Rudmin (2003) emphasised that acculturation ‘occurs regardless of minority or majority status’ (p. 25). Confusion between shifting laws, ethics and morality in atmospheres, most especially for Emirati sojourners, can cause anxiety both in and out of host and/or home context, as well as adding to repatriation concerns.

Many researchers, such as LaFromboise et al. (1993) cited in Kosmitzki (1996), agreed that bicultural competence allows a sojourner to experience success and satisfaction while in a multicultural context. Researchers asserted that bicultural competence involves an acquisition of social skills and cultural knowledge of the host culture and that acquired host culture attitudes and behaviours will ultimately cause a shift in a sojourner’s cultural identity. There are a number of research paradigms and hypotheses that attempt to explain the psychological transformations involved in intercultural contact and it is both well documented and undeniable that sojourners

often undergo cognitive and behavioural changes while living abroad (Sussman, 2002; Patron, 2006).

There is a consideration of a third space with the notion of 'Hybridity' as presented by Bhabha (1996). Bhabha (1996) argued that all cultures are constantly in the process of representing a third space in which a new entity emerges a lineage of difference. He describes hybridity as a process by which an individual identifies with and through an object of 'otherness' (Bhabha 1994) – similar to the views were expressed by Markus and Kitayama (1991).

Bhabha (1996) further argued that the creation of new situations through the process of hybridity should lead to an examination of principles without the use of pre-existing representations. Hybridity, according to Bhabha (1996), is not concerned with the coming together of two cultures to give rise to a third (culture), but of a third 'space' in which other positions emerge and develop. A sojourner's changes in self-concept and cultural identity can lead to adjustment difficulties during the acculturative and repatriation processes until compartmentalisation is learned and exercised between systems for processes of (1) 'hybridity' or (2) achieved bicultural identity.

### **3.6 – The BII: Bicultural Identity Integration**

Benet-Martinez et al. (2002) proposed a construct for merging identities, known as 'Bicultural Identity Integration' (BII). Originally devised as a means to employ and measure the impact of biculturalism on an individual's self-perceived cultural identity, it was comprised to discover individual differences in the formation of dual identities. The BII examines how sojourners perceive their home cultural identities as compatible to foreign culture, which then contributes to determining difficulties in integrating. Individuals who score high on the BII tend to view themselves as part of a 'hyphenated culture' or a third, emerging culture. However, this is somewhat different to the 'hybrid' 'space' Bhabha (1994) proposes.

Benet-Martinez and Haritatos (2005) conducted a study which investigated the BII construct within (1) the context of the degree to which a bicultural individual perceives his/her two cultural identities as compatible versus oppositional and (2) the way personality and acculturation predictors can be identified within the BII. Using a sample of Chinese Americans, they discovered that differences in the BII do not represent a uniform phenomenon, but instead wove

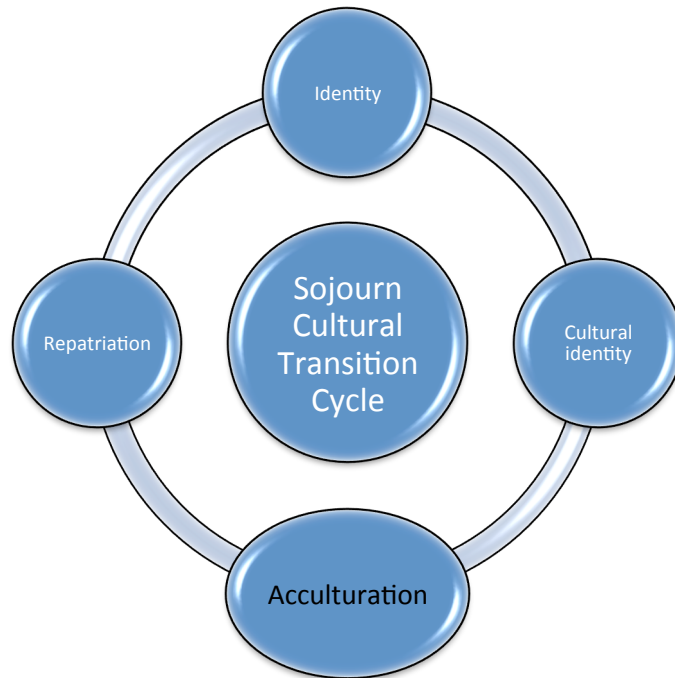
together two differing independent constructs. These are the perceptions of ‘distance’ along with perceptions of ‘conflict’ between one’s two separate cultural identities. The results revealed that cultural conflict and identity distance or diffusion, has personality, acculturation and socio-demographic antecedents (Benet-Martinez and Haritatos, 2005). Adding to this list, factors pertaining to the costs and benefits of cultural maintenance and/or neglect also need to be considered in relation to post repatriation concerns.

In the same year, Coatsworth and Maldonado-Molina (2005) shared a study which challenged the theories for a replacement of BII values. They studied 315 Hispanic youths, to understand the process of acculturation and biculturalism among minority groups. Results from the study indicated that among bicultural youths, the process of adaptation and functioning across various socio-cultural domains has an adaptive and conforming pattern. Both original values, as well as newly adopted ones, are carefully negotiated as in the case of the student sojourners.

Benet-Martinez et al. (2002) argued that the behaviour of those scoring low on the BII is influenced by media on ‘eastern/western’ cultural clashes. Inner cultural conflict is described as a resistance against cultural expectations. Ward and Kennedy (1999) regarded the culture ‘contact’ as a majorly stressful life event that influences the sojourner in many ways.

### **3.7 – Acculturation and Identity**

Identity theories essentially attempt to answer questions about who we are. However our self-concept is not static, being affected by interaction with our environment as well as other people, as discussed in the first part of this chapter. Therefore the learning and adapting to a new culture, or the acculturation process (Berry 1980), needs to be explored in order to more carefully assess identity changes. Having reviewed different themes on acculturation, in this section I critically discuss the theories of mostly Berry (1980; 1988; 1997; 1999; 2001; 2003; 2005; 2006a; 2006b; 2007; 2008; 2009; 2010), but also researchers such as Bhatia and Ram (2009) and Hunt et al., (2004) associated to this research, linking acculturation discourse both to cultural identity and later to repatriation.



***Figure 5 – Sojourn cycle - Focus on Acculturation***

This process of learning and behaviourally adapting to a new culture is labelled ‘acculturation’ (Marin and Marin, 1991). According to the social identity theory (Turner, 1996) and likewise, the ‘culture-learning paradigm’ (Kosmitzki, 1996), intercultural contact reinforces cultural identification, heightening one’s sense of cultural identity. Contact between cultural groups influences individuals to alter perceptual differences in in-groups and out-groups. When two different cultural perspectives can operate together for a sojourner, a positive perception of the out-group may ensue. The amount of contact a student sojourner has between home and host cultural groups will ultimately influence the degree to which his/her self-concept and cultural identity transform.

Acculturation outcomes and experiences for international students are influenced by many factors, ‘For example, how supportive of cultural maintenance is the culture of origin?’ (Berry and Sam, 1997, p. 307) Psychological factors include socialisation strategies, coping styles and how voluntary the expatriate’s acculturation is (Berry, 2003; 2007; 2010). ‘Another factor influencing acculturation is cultural distance or the degree of difference between the two

cultures' (Berry and Sam, 1997, p. 307). These factors, between societies, also influence the directions of outward behaviour in moral and ethical issues of judgment (Berry, 2009).

The 'physical journey from the native country to a new country often parallels a psychological journey of cross-cultural adaptation, which includes changes to the sojourner's ways of behaving, thinking and feeling' (Yang et al., 2006, p. 491). To what extent Emiratis experience changes in behaviour, values and attitudes are determined by their pre-existing ways of seeing, or their 'cultural lenses' (Berger, 1990 [1972]). The sojourner's self and cultural identity are continuously shaped and reshaped while interacting with any new environment (Bhabha, 1994; Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Hall 2002; Dunkel, 2005).

Psychological acculturation in research was written about some decades ago under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council. These early theories have been briefly referred to here to provide a backdrop to the way in which acculturative theories have evolved.

Acculturative change may be the consequence of direct transmission; it may be derived from non-cultural causes, such as ecological or demographic modifications induced by an impinging culture; it may be delayed, as with internal adjustments following upon the acceptance of alien traits or patterns; or it may be a reactive adaptation of traditional modes of life. Its dynamics can be seen as the selective adaptation of value systems, the processes of integration and differentiation, the generation of developmental sequences, and the operation of role determinants and personality factors' (Social Science Research Council, 1954, p. 974).

Long-term psychological consequences of acculturation are sometimes immeasurable 'depending on social and personal variables that reside in the society of origin, the society of settlement and phenomena that both exist prior to, and arise during, the course of acculturation' (Berry 1997, p. 5). Robert Park formed the theory that people accommodate to a new culture in order to have a smoother experience and avoid conflict (Persons, 1987). He put forth a three-stage model, of (1) initial contact, leading to (2) accommodation, before (3) assimilation; explaining the way in which immigrants learn to accommodate dominant groups and/or host culture members (Patterson, 1988).

Redfield et al. (1936) expanded upon Park's initial ideas. They explained that although changes may enter original patterns for both host and home culture groups, assimilation may not follow automatically. Their conceptions considered acculturation as a process that might affect both

individuals and groups, in different ways. Teske and Nelson (1974) went on to link acculturation to a variety of psychological processes, including: changes in material traits, behaviour patterns, norms, institutional changes and most importantly, values (Padilla and Perez, 2003). More recently, others like Cuellar et al. (1995) described the processes of acculturation as occurring at both a macro and micro-individual level. While acculturative processes influence and shape large-scale cultural incidents, such as language, food, architecture and music; they also occur on a cognitive level, affecting changes in individual behaviours, perceptions, ideologies, beliefs and values.

Berry (1980) expanded on the view of acculturation distinctly signifies changes in a person's behaviour, attitudes, cognition and varieties of adaptation. It is in his significant works on transition, which took place over more than 40 years that situational factors within a given society are seen as important variables influencing changes in peoples' cultural identity (Berry, 1974a; 1974b; 1976; 1980; 1988; 1997; 1999; 2001; 2003; 2005; 2006a; 2006b; 2007; 2008; 2009; 2010). Berry (1980) stated that acculturation can also occur at two different levels: (1) the population level and (2) the individual level. At the population level, acculturation is a change in the culture of the group; whilst on the individual level the psychology of an individual is altered. Acculturation is not seen as a strictly one-dimensional process, but as a process forced by inter-group contact with multiple outcomes.

Although field literature on acculturation has a strong psychosocial inclination, it is clear that acculturation is multi-faceted and affects not only attitudes, behaviours and norms, but also has important cognitive ramifications, such as learning, adapting to and applying a new language. Within adaptation between societies, there is the process of 'language acculturation' (Brice, 2002). Language attainment, maintenance and development is influenced by a person's willed preference, ability and socio-demographic characteristics, such as length of residence, age of arrival, contact with own cultural values, beliefs and language usage (Marín and Marín, 1991). When an individual becomes inter-related with a first-language and host-cultural-language, he or she can become bi-lingual or choose to remain monolingual, thus shifting to a new language, and/or maintaining a first-language (Berry, 1980; Padilla, 1980).

The most recent identity studies have focused on increasing globalisation and issues of change as a result of acculturative processes (Phinney, 2003). What is known is that as an individual spends

more time in a host culture, there are more opportunities for two cultures to come into contact and one way or another, the individual is influenced (Quinn et al., 1995). This is why Emirati student sojourners represent an interesting group, even though their time is limited and they may have ample contact with their country of origin, the acculturation process may affect their sense of cultural identity, values and behaviours within the host settings and thereafter.

Acculturation does not take the same form for all transient groups and host societies, however (Bhatia and Ram, 2009). One theory which attempts to explain different kinds of reactions of acculturation upon sojourners is that of Bourhis et. al (1997). They stated that the majority of receiving countries were mostly individualistic and developed, while the majority of sending countries are largely collectivist and developing. The occurrence of acculturation at its varying levels is demonstrable and to some extent measurable, but the definition of acculturation is difficult to define between societies (Berry, 2008) and should be understood relative to the people and culture in question (Rudmin, 2003). Exploring individual migrant/sojourner acculturation and existing theories within host settings, contributes to understanding the process which is sometimes downplayed in context when exclusively psychological, yet still ‘an ancient and probably universal human experience’ (Rudmin, 2003, p.8).

More literature on acculturation reaffirms that psychological outcomes vary in relation to different acculturative experiences (Yeh, 2003; Constantine et al., 2004; Nilsson and Anderson, 2004; Constantine et al., 2005). External factors, such as limited access to resources or privileged circumstances, can influence acculturation along with stress considerations (Kleinman, 1998; Hunt et al., 2004). A notion of ‘acculturative stress’, sometimes conjoining ‘culture shock’ (Yeh, 2003), has been used to account for variations and outcomes of difficult adaptations. As discussed in chapter two, Emirati citizenry benefits of financial sponsorship and privileged circumstances are likely to reduce some of the stress experienced by other population of sojourners. For example, their wealth may reduce financial difficulties and relieve Emiratis from having to worry about paying for tuition or having to work in the host society. Still, there may be increased stress for Emiratis with their privilege between population and individual levels, in a different respect. Emiratis may feel pressure and sometimes undergo ‘acculturative stress’ while having to adhere to culturally pronounced social expectations and familial responsibilities to status, even when out of the home society. This is a vital feature which has not been examined

adequately since the populations which are likely to be affected have been understudied in literature.

Yeh (2003) claimed that premises on which the acculturative theory is based, limits explanatory and predictive values with reference to sojourner experiences. The acculturation theory speculates both individual and collective responses to ‘permanent culture contact’, but sojourn transitions are merely temporary and primarily an individual encounter (Yeh, 2003). While acculturation theory examines the interplay between dominant and non-dominant groups within one society; sojourns juxtapose an individual's journey into a different socio-cultural environment, with re-entry to culture of origin (Yeh, 2003).

### **3.8 – Focused Acculturative Outcomes for Sojourners in Transition**

Berry's framework on acculturation proposed that numerous groups of people, being immigrants, sojourners and/or refugees, are all subject to an acculturation process in transition, and likewise, have an ‘acculturative outcome’. Although there are ‘variations in factors leading to acculturation, one of the conclusions that has been reached is that the basic process of adaptation appears to be common to all these groups’ (Berry, 1997, p. 9). To explore whether changes in behaviour in a host country are attributable to living in the host country, models of acculturation need to provide some idea of behaviour as an interest of original cultural identity (Hunt et al., 2004). Without distinctly putting student population groups in their original ‘cultural context’ pre-sojourn, it is difficult to make statements about behaviour change during and after-sojourn.

Acculturation as ‘a set of internal psychological outcomes including a clear sense of personal and cultural identity, good mental health and the achievement of personal satisfaction in the new cultural context’ (Berry and Sam, 1997, p. 299) is what every successful sojourning journey can hope for. Since acculturative models usually include only general acculturation options, in an ideal situation, however, the assumption that non-dominant groups and their individual members have the freedom to choose how they want to engage in intercultural relations is not always the case (Berry, 1974a).

Values adopted as a method of effective functioning in the host culture are not completely accounted for in Berry’s model of acculturative outcomes (1980), therefore this research, through participant findings and analysis aims to address this point. There is little support in acculturative

research in regard to how individuals in transition ‘talk about’ or perceive the motivating variables for attaching importance to certain adopted values. One reason for this may be that most sojourner studies, as I discuss in Chapter 4, are solely quantitative investigations. Until recently, the main emphasis of acculturation research has centred on ‘how’ individuals alter during the process (Berry, 2003); and this is apparent by the 68 acculturation theories developed between 1918 and 1984 (Rudmin, 2003), and the 33 measures of acculturation identified in a recent review of literature (Kim and Abreu, 2001).

Furthermore, how different forms of power differentials or notions of privilege may relate to the process that leads to favouring one culture over another has also not been explored in relevant research. The previous qualitative research in psychology exploring the meaning of acculturation and cultural adaptation for sojourners, along with even more permanent immigrants, has been limited to a small number of studies, especially in relation to ‘privileged students’. Literature on psychological acculturation has lacked a view from the immigrants or sojourners themselves, looking from the margin to the centre rather than from the centre to the margin (Espín, 1999).

Berry’s theory (1980) was developed primarily to explain effects of colonisation on indigenous groups through cultural contact (i.e. on the aboriginal population in Australia and native populations in Canada). It was expanded over the years to predict acculturation strategies of immigrants as one category of permanent cultural transition (Triandis, 1997, p. 57). Berry concluded that an identity shift away from native cultural identity is an acculturative outcome, which may mostly occur when individuals have ‘prolonged culture contact’:

‘Cultural transitions for the traditional immigrant, who has few or infrequent contacts with their country of origin, transform one cultural identity (e.g. Irish) into a new one (i.e. Canadian or Irish Canadian). Sustained contact with the new culture may result in strengthening native culture identity, resulting in a separated or marginal identity relative to the dominant culture. Each of these psychological responses is linked to attitudinal and behavioural changes’ (Berry cited in Triandis 1997, p. 55–58).

A ‘unidimensional model’ of acculturation states that cultural identity changes over the period of time in which acculturating individuals relinquish attitudes, values and behaviours from their culture of origin while simultaneously adopting those in their host society (Dion and Dion, 1996). This might be more often applied to an immigrant case than a sojourn case. Even though the linear approach has the benefit of easy implementation, it gives an incomplete and often

misleading depiction of the acculturation process (Ryder et al., 2000). I have not utilised this model in my work because it limits acculturative outcomes, stating that acculturation is inevitably accompanied by a weakening of ethnic identity (Gordon, 1964). It cannot be assumed that a strong ethnic identity is not possible among those who become involved in a mainstream society.

Conversely, a 'bi-dimensional model' of acculturation describes situations whereby an individual's identity can be preserved; that is, while adding and/or adapting the values and behaviours of a mainstream culture (Dion and Dion, 1996). Bi-dimensional models are more open-ended and perhaps less bias in results. The bi-dimensional definitions, increasingly used by Berry (2010), suggest that the relationship with traditional or ethnic culture and the relationship with the new or dominant culture, both play important roles in acculturative processes. Ryder et al. (2000) also recognised that the bi-dimensional model of acculturation is a 'more valid and useful operationalisation of acculturation' (p. 49).

### 3.9 – Integrative Acculturative Framework

A ‘bi-directional’ conceptualisation of acculturation, like Berry’s approach, shows that acculturative results for sojourners do not always have to indicate a broad change of perspective driven by a contact culture (Ramirez, 1983; Mendoza, 1984). Therefore new values of a host culture can complement existing ones. Berry in his assessment of possible acculturative outcomes (1974a; 1974b; 1976; 1980; 1988; 1997; 1999; 2001; 2003; 2005; 2006a; 2006b; 2007; 2008; 2009; 2010) provided empirical evidence in a ‘bi-dimensional’ model, for four general but distinctive acculturation strategies (i.e. ‘integration’, ‘assimilation’, ‘separation’ and ‘marginalisation’ by a person or group in transition).

	Relinquish Home Culture	Maintain Home Culture
Accept Host Culture	<i>Assimilators</i>	<i>Integrationists</i>
Reject Host Culture	<i>Marginals</i>	<i>Separatists</i>

**Figure 6 – Berry’s (1980) Acculturative Outcomes**

#### **Assimilation**

Assimilation is an acculturative outcome, which often applies to those who mainly socialise and communicate with individuals from a host culture when settling. Berry and Sam (2006) called the strategy of ‘relatively high contact’ and ‘relatively low cultural maintenance’, ‘assimilation’. Individuals in this category adopt values of a host country and do not always embrace original cultural identity. At the extreme end of the assimilation strategy, the new culture is adopted totally, and the values and traditions from the culture of origin are discarded.

## **Integration**

For people who adopt an integration strategy, original culture is retained while the host cultural values are adopted. 'Evidence strongly supports a positive correlation between the use of this strategy and good psychological adaptation' (Berry and Sam, 1997, p. 298). A study conducted with 107 Iranian college students, in the United States, found that integrative and more 'western' acculturated students were less likely to have depressive or stressful symptoms as well (Ghaffarian, 1987).

## **Separation**

'Relatively high cultural maintenance' and 'relatively low contact' along with participation with a host country describes a separation strategy. Individuals place value in holding onto their original culture and prefer to avoid contact with others, while socialisation and communication are primarily with ethnic peers.

## **Marginalisation**

Marginalisation is the most problematic acculturation outcome, comprised of low identification within both host and home cultures. There is little interest in holding onto one's cultural values, as well as learning or adopting the values of the new culture. Sometimes this may be a temporary strategy, for example, when people move to a new culture and give up their culture of origin before they attempt to adopt the new culture. This 'marginalisation' may also constitute an enduring state of alienation or a failure of attempts at other strategies (Berry 2003). Stonequist (1937) who created the term 'identity purgatory', proposed that marginality occurs when individuals are caught between two cultures and are not able to merge both cultures together in order to form a new cultural identity. This in turn leads to a rejection of both original and host culture, and a withdrawal to identify with the new culture, for example. Horowitz and Kraus (1984) stated that this did not apply to adolescent student sojourners, as ambivalence is part of development in teenagers and as such, both cultures may result in rejection.

Although inclusive, informative and valid, the bi-dimensional approach is complicated, demanding and limited in other ways (Ryder et al., 2000). Some features of Berry's acculturative outcome model needs to be more adequately explored, or as I example in my analysis, contextualised. Another possible limitation in Berry's theory of acculturation is that it seems as if

people within a culture have the same values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. This means that the mainstream culture is viewed as a monolithic construct (Lazarus, 1993). Although the model is not aimed to be linear in any way, it does not adequately account for subgroups within a culture.

In actuality, societies are more complex than is inferred by a simple heritage-mainstream dichotomy (Horenczyk, 1997). Across most of the literature on identity formation, acculturation needs to be understood as a process that does not follow a single sequence (Hunt et al., 2004). Studies using the bi-dimensional approach should account for the multiple components of both acculturation and cultural identity. According to Horenczyk (1997), not enough focus has been given to the acculturation options adopted or available to the sojourner; there may be more acculturation alternatives ideally preferred by contact groups for each of the areas, for example, that Berry (1980) considers. While the experience of sojourners is usually measured through certain behavioural indicators, including linguistic practices, membership in associations and friendships, it is important to ask the cultural guests themselves what acculturation options they are actually using in order to try to deepen and broaden our understanding.

For Berry (1997), differences are rendered as a relative preference for cultural continuity: (1) maintaining one's heritage culture and identity or contact; and (2) a relative preference for having contact with and participating in the larger society along with other ethno-cultural groups. Each strategy in his four dimensional model of acculturative outcomes comprises of a continuum of behaviours, therefore, it is not necessarily attributing in the long-term to any concrete, limited and unidimensional understandings. While these strategies vary across individuals, groups, circumstances and societies, this research attempts to go beyond the complexity of simple cultural identity and instead touches upon ideas of cultural identity negotiations, dilemmas and comparisons, which are far less transparent and should be analysed through qualitative investigation.

Berry's acculturative model (1980), when used in a broader methodological system, has nevertheless proven to be an effective theoretical tool for the measurement of transformation in this study and with my chosen demographic. Exploring these various acculturative experiences

and outcomes Berry proposed (1980; 1997), in relation to changes in cultural identity for sojourners that it was a significant way of validating findings and making up for the criticisms qualitative research sometimes receives. Other acculturative models formulated specifically for sojourn purposes, largely assess the students' acculturation experience through positive adjustment only. Perhaps studies concerned with looking at the way sojourn cultural identity is impacted should utilise a theoretical proposition that takes into account negotiations between aspects of original and host cultural values.

### **3.10 – Strategies for Successful Integration**

There are many similarities in the overall acculturation process between immigrants and sojourners, however, there are more differences in acculturative outcomes (i.e. mainly due to time, perspectives and qualifications for truer or further unravelled integration). 'In western societies, acculturation may be a more difficult and distress-inducing process for non-white, non-western, non-European immigrant people, because of greater cultural and phenotypic differences between immigrant people and members of the receiving society's dominant cultural group' (Schwartz et al., 2006, p. 12). Immigrants know that they have to adapt to their new society, leading to some assimilation, more socio-cultural integration and an increased level of identification with the new society (Berry, 2007). Sojourners, because of their temporary position in the host culture, are not required to assimilate or identify with the values of the host culture in the same way (Yohanan and Rosenthal-Sokolov, 2000) and more often, focus on immediate goals and strategies for well-being (Tseng and Newton, 2002).

As an individual undergoes changes in ethno-cultural orientation, a significant amount of stress can occur and if precaution and strategies are not taken, further difficulties arise (Portes, 1996). In one of qualitatively approached studies on acculturation, Tseng and Newton (2002) interviewed two Chinese international students to find out their perception of strategies for well-being. The participants mentioned a series in achievements, including: completing school work, planning for the future, becoming clearer about future career goals, pursuing and achieving success in academic studies, and experiencing a world which is different from their own. The first participant said, 'Well-being is to define my personal future. It is to decide how I plan for

my future and how I can achieve one...' (Tseng and Newton, 2002, p. 593). The second participant explained that studying abroad expands worldly knowledge and professional potentials, while additionally, instigating a new consciousness for life (Tseng and Newton, 2002, p.596).

The strategies for well-being for these two students were based on their various coping skills, becoming more aware of self and others, and developing an understanding of one's self and others. To understand the similarities and differences between ones' own culture and host culture, is a significant step toward making acculturative adjustments. 'I knew what I'd like to do here' a student continued, 'so I tried to overcome every difficulty I met . . .' (Tseng and Newton, 2002, p. 596). Both students in particular stated that establishing contact with the host culture and learning new things about it enabled them to understand and even enjoy American culture better (Tseng and Newton, 2002).

These students accentuated that making friends and building friendships was also an essential strategy for success. Their relationship with faculty (especially with one's major academic advisor) was also seen to have a significant effect on their learning and adjustment. One respondent commented, 'To have good relationships with your instructors, helps your learning, helps you achieve your goal and gain familiarity with a profession' (Tseng and Newton, 2002, p. 597). The participants stressed motivation for becoming fluent in the English language as a strategy to assimilate with the host culture, which leads to stronger ties with locals and helps in turn, to manifest coping for acculturative stress (Tseng and Newton, 2002). Thus coping strategies need to be critically explored both on an individual and group level. The usage of particular strategies depend not only on how useful it will be during acculturation in the host culture but also dependant on how culturally appropriate that strategy is according to original value systems.

Not all cultural adaptation is positive nor successful. The 'Cultural Adaptation Pain Scale' has been used in various studies to measure the degree of subjective pain, social distance and discouragement that may be related to cultural adaptation. Sandhu et al., (1996) conducted a study exploring the psychometric properties of the scale, identifying fifteen major areas of psychological pain and ten constructs (e.g. the dimensions of alienation to acculturation) for each area. Within their findings, on 192 American student participants, it was exhibited that while

transitioning into a second culture, an individual might experience threats to ethno-cultural identity; have feelings of powerlessness, inferiority or alienation; a sense of marginality and/or hostility. These feelings and perceptions, however negative or positive in areas, are likely to impact the amount of involvement a cultural guest has with a host culture, thereby influencing the degree and direction of transformation of cultural identity.

Although many students report feeling homesickness during the onset of their acculturative experience (Sandhu et al., 1996), the level of emotional distress experienced by different cultural groups is likely to vary. This may be due to a number of variables including their amount of pre-sojourn travel, regular communication and contact with family members back home, sojourning with friends or relatives and exercising of cross-cultural knowledge. Reminding oneself of the oncoming and predictable changes they may experience abroad can help aid sojourners prepare for their journeys and may be the first step in a series of preventative measures against distress.

### **3.10.1 – Culture Shock, Coping and Comprehension during Acculturation**

If the sojourner becomes critical and resentful toward the host culture during the beginning stages of a cultural transition process, ‘culture shock’ is said to occur (Bikos et al., 2007). Oberg (1960) stated culture shock implies a negative period, which can entail a form of mental illness due to feelings of anxiety, problems coping with the new culture and/or mourning the loss of familiarity (Church, 1982; Zapf, 1991). Church (1982) suggested that culture shock refers to a perfectly normal way of adapting and adjusting to stress induced by a new culture while Garza-Guerrero (1974) defined two elements of culture shock to be: (1) one which revolves around mourning the loss of the old culture; and (2) the fluctuations in identity when faced with a new culture.

Adler (1975) shaped the perceived definition of culture shock by referring to it further as a form of alienation. Levy-Warren (1987) then, along with all of the former definitions (which still stand and are debated today), argued that culture shock is analogous to Freud’s process of ‘melancholia’. What this refers to, on a more unconscious level, is that the person experiences a psychological loss of one’s own culture and a resistance of accepting the new culture, hence resulting in feeling unhappy and disconnected.

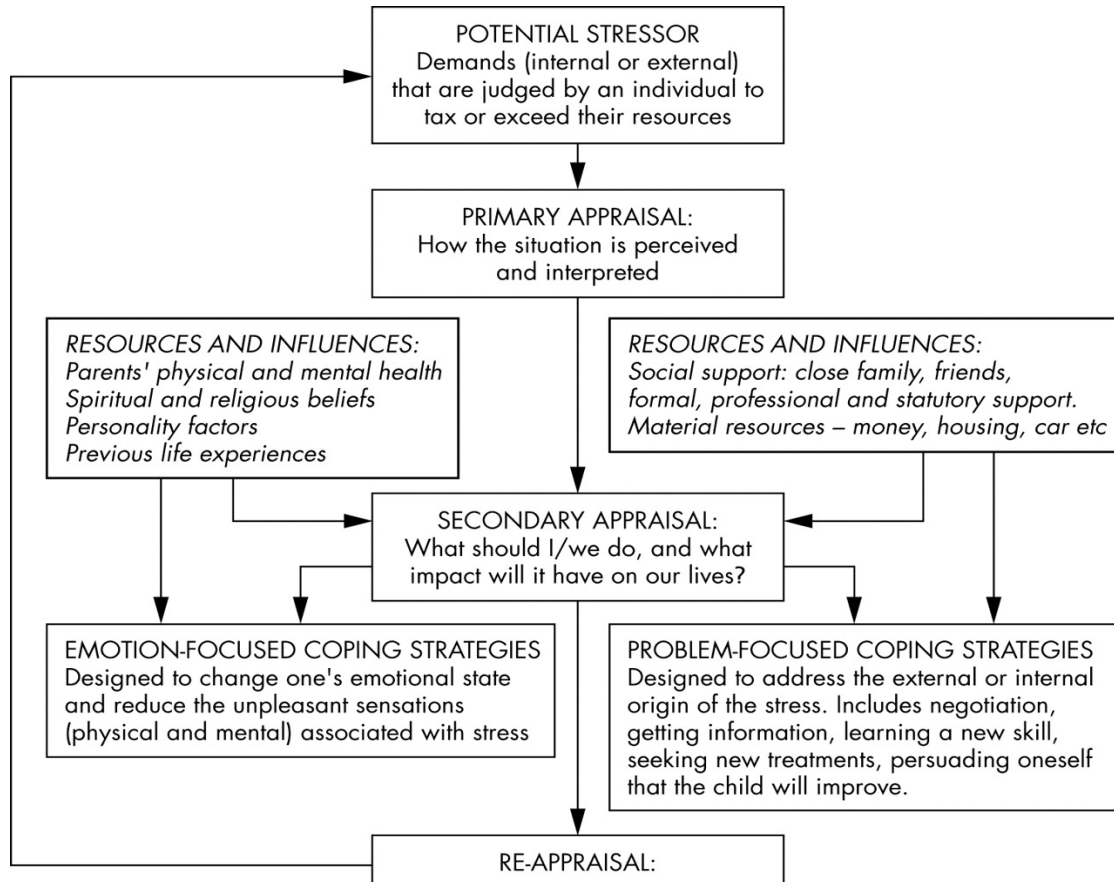
Brien and David (1971) criticised the different approaches that describe sojourner adjustment. They stated that because the patterns of adjustment vary greatly, intelligent comparisons cannot be made between them. Those who assess sojourner resentment should acknowledge and carefully discern between what may be simple processes of adjustment and light or serious culture shock. Aversive stimuli such as confusing city streets, language difficulties and unfamiliar social interactions can initiate anticipated shock for a sojourner. Learning about the new environment rather than turning it into something more negative than it has to be can help to prevent serious culture shock.

Bochner (1972) suggested that student sojourners face various problems by virtue of being 'overseas students' living in receiving societies. This is again in line with Erickson's psycho-social stages: by being a student and by being an adolescent – that is a testing developmental stage, even when not in cultural transition. As young sojourners negotiate between primary socialised values and behaviours learned at home, and secondary values and behaviours adopted through social interaction, they are also forming more intimate relationships, personally and socially. To experience continuity between the self (as perceived by others) and the conception of one's self, the 'normative identity crisis' is noted (Erikson 1975). Any kind of conflicting 'appraisal' during social interactions can induce stress on the sojourner. As I consider further in Chapter 6, 'strategic interventions' can play a role in addressing the difficult impacts of international students on local students, educational institutions and the host community (Smart et al., 2000).

Berry (1976) further identified three particular strategies for coping and adaptation in a host country: (1) adjustment, (2) reaction and (3) withdrawal. These three strategies, present in continuums within his four dimensional model, seemed incomplete and quite limited, and therefore Lazarus and Folkman (1984) identified eight more such strategies. Lazarus and Folkman's list included: (1) problem-solving, (2) wishful thinking, (3) detachment, (4) social support, (5) positive thinking, (6) self-blame, (7) tension reduction and (8) withdrawal.

Figure 7 similarly identifies the process of stress and coping based on their explanations:

'Stress and Coping Model based on Lazarus and Folkman', J Child Psychiatry, cited in Archives of Disease in Childhood, accessed 14 March 2012, <<http://adc.bmj.com/content/90/10/1053.full>>



Through a 42-item Ways of Coping Questionnaire, the strategies of coping were studied by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), with a Chinese student population. Amongst strategies employed were tension reduction, seeking informational support and less self-blame. As in Figure 7, potential stressors and developmental forces shaping identity can be quite different for people studying at home versus those who go overseas. As self-concept is affected by intra-psychic structures, as well as the beliefs and values defined by socio-cultural groups (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). Taking on the ideas, attitudes and cognitive schemata of a host culture allows sojourners to establish a strong identification and sense of group belonging, which can strengthen their identity achievement.

Yeh and Inose (2003) found that students experience less acculturative stress if they are satisfied with their social support networks. Many international students in the US have been recorded, meanwhile, to perceive social relationships in the host culture as superficial, prompting them to feel unsatisfied with their interpersonal connections (Bulthis, 1986; Cross, 1995) and furthermore remain exclusively in groups of fellow nationals. Siu (1952) further suggested that such cultural groups, ‘. . . share their pride and aspirations, hopes and dreams, prejudices and dilemmas and express their opinions about the country of their sojourn’ (Sui, 1952, p. 36); and ‘...on the basis of common interests and cultural heritage the sojourner tends to associate with people of his [or her] own ethnic group . . .’ (Sui 1952, p. 36). Although a more public life may exist, in which the sojourner is committed to and involved in the relevant community at large, the private life of the sojourner tends to be separate from the host culture.

The sojourner will always have a job and an ultimate goal of which he/she is consciously aware of. This job is often linked to increasing social status and prestige at home. The sojourner seldom organises his/her life beyond this end. Siu suggested that the sojourner will interact with the host culture to the extent that this will assist with getting the job done (Siu, 1952, p.36). Thus for many student sojourners from collectivist backgrounds, their goal is to complete their degree, remain committed to their cultural values and to return home in order to effectively contribute to their community and developing society. However, this is quite a positivist position as the reality of the sojourn experience, regardless of how explicit and clear their objective is, does not always unravel in such a linear and orderly manner. Siu’s theory may allude more to the intentions of the students, especially those from a collectivist background, rather than the actual events that occur during their time abroad.

As noted by Berry, studies on coping strategies among international student sojourners conclude that successful adaptation is achieved through a strong networking of social support (Berry, 1997). Social support networks aid in providing the students with a sense of security and well-being, coupled with knowledge about moral, aesthetic and emotional sensibilities of the host culture. Ward and Kennedy (1999) also supported Berry’s findings, that sojourners who are integrated and assimilated into host cultures show lower levels of socio-cultural difficulties than ones who are marginalised. They found that sojourners who maintain close relationships with others from the original culture or similar cultural background tend to depict lower levels of

acculturative stress (Ward and Kennedy, 1999). Bang (1998) recommended students should speak to their families and friends in regard to psychological problems experienced while adjusting so that this process is managed consistently rather than only when serious problems arise.

### **3.10.2 –Variations in Coping Studies**

According to Kim (2001), cross-cultural adaptation has been a focus of study for decades and international students need to adapt with the cultural patterns of their host environment, in order to overcome the difficulties encountered. Students from collectivist cultures tend to be more willing to sacrifice and cope with distress without letting on or sharing their difficulty, for fear of burdening others. These students tend to spend more time by themselves at times when they feel distressed or low (Lee, 1997). African, Asian and Latin-American international students, meanwhile, tend to accept their roles and their relationships with others as an act of fate, luck or God's will; and therefore, react in a more passive way rather than acting on their environment (Morling and Fiske, 1999).

Research has repeatedly emphasised that having local friends is associated with decrements in psychological distress. Pandian (2008) conducted a study to evaluate Middle-Eastern student sojourners and perceptions in Malaysia, exploring the quality of contact and friendship patterns in interactions between international and local students. The study demonstrated that Middle-Eastern students possess the desire to establish greater contacts with local students and seek positive social, psychological and academic support.

Frequent social contact with host nationals relates to general adjustment and sojourn satisfaction. Friendship is also associated with communication competence, fewer academic problems and fewer social difficulties in student sojourners (Redmond and Bunyi, 1993). The cultural values of many African, Asian and Latin-American international students, similar to Emirati international sojourners, may affect the use of coping strategies in a host country. These cultures place a high importance on peer and familial relationships, and therefore, may develop 'collectivist coping strategies' (Simoni and Perez, 1995).

As per the larger group of international sojourners, there are students who have a hard time interacting with others due to confusions of acculturation. A study conducted at Queen's

University in Canada revealed that Asian students, who preferred to isolate themselves socially, experienced a higher degree of problems when compared to their friends who were more sociable with Canadians (Chataway and Berry, 1989). Berry (2006b) similarly studied psychological adaptation of Chinese sojourners in Canada, through questionnaires and found that sojourners who experienced problems with language had difficulty in establishing friendships. Communicative complications exhibited a lower adaptation rate. The notion of interacting with people of a similar background and language has also been supported by research looking at people with an interdependent construal of self (Markus and Kitayama, 1991).

Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) found that international student sojourners who were unsatisfied with their interpersonal communications tended to use the internet as an alternative. Turner et al. (2001) shared a corresponding study which revealed that people are more likely to participate in an online community when the support they received virtually, is greater than that received in their life.

Wei et al. (2008) conducted a study to measure coping strategies in International Asian students in the US as well. They used *The Problem-Focused Style of Coping* (Heppner et al., 1995), a measure which is an 18 item self-report analysis that assesses the extent to which individuals believe they are able to effectively resolve and cope with their problems. Each question asks participants to indicate how often they engage in a particular coping activity on a 5 point scale that ranges from 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always). Within the number scaling, there are then three categories in measure:

- (1) Reflective – concerned with activities like planning and exploring causal relationships in systematic steps of coping;
- (2) Suppressive – representative of a tendency to avoid coping activities and to deny problems; and

(3) Reactive – showing a tendency of strong emotional responses, distortion and impulsivity. Students who classified as reactive by Wei et. al (2008) had a more difficult time adjusting to their new environment.

Further addressing expatriate adjustment strategies, McClure (2007) conducted a study in Singapore with Chinese international graduates between their first 6-18 months of time there. Coping strategies identified in the results consisted of (1) self-determination, (2) collegial support and (3) examination strategies. Amongst these strategies were memorising language expressions and committing long hours to academic work. One student voiced her willingness to commit to long hours of studying, stating, ‘this is just a place for study and not a place for living.’ Self-determination was characterised by a determination to succeed and to develop a high level of independence in both social and career choices.

Students in McClure’s study (2007) developed a deeper level of self-awareness, identifying a need to be independent learners. Seeking emotional, academic and supervisory support from colleges also aided in enabling students to cope in a better fashion with the host culture. McClure (2007) found that both negative and positive academic results contributed greatly to the students’ motivation to adjust to their new environment.

Kuo and Roysircar (2004) studied coping among East-Asian and South-Asian students and found that obtaining guidance and support from family, and maintaining and observing cultural norms, were primary strategies employed in a host country in managing stress. Vohra and Broots (1996) supported the results in their comparison of South-Asian graduate students attending college in their native countries to South-Asian graduate student immigrants. They found that immigrant participants rated highly in religion, superstition and perceived control, in order to cope with stress. Luke and Bond (1992) found that among Asian students, in whom a collectivist worldview is predominant, internal attributions including self-responsibility are utilised as ways of problem solving.

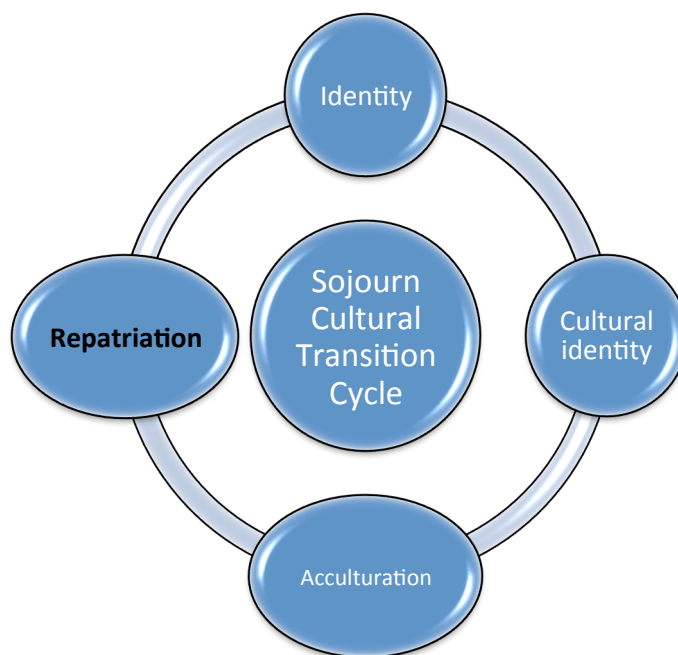
Kosic (2004) also conducted a study measuring acculturation strategies, the coping process and acculturative stress among two groups of immigrants in Rome: Croatians and Poles. Using *The Coping Scale*, a 41-item scale, Kosic (2004) measured coping strategies, which included avoidance coping, decisiveness, emotional coping, problem-oriented coping and more. These

were seen as having a substantial impact on acculturation with both host group relationships and maintaining original culture.

The reason coping strategies are of interest to researchers examining the sojourn cycle and this dissertation, is because they are not just actions take to ease their acculturative challenges. Copying strategies are forces, when utilised even temporarily, are additions to our self-concept that may have a lasting impact on our cultural identity. These changes are most notably felt once the sojourner returns to their country of origin.

### **3.11 – Repatriation and Re-integration**

The final section of this chapter addresses the last phase of the sojourn cycle, which is repatriation to country of origin. Theories related to identity and acculturation have been critically discussed thus far, showing the major influences relevant variables have on cultural identity. Any transformation is more directly felt and observed once the sojourner has returned home.



***Figure 8 – Sojourn cycle - Focus on Repatriation***

Cross-cultural researchers are increasingly interested in the psychological stressors associated with the process of repatriation. According to Patton (2006), researchers claimed, however, that sojourner repatriation literature has not yet received enough attention. When Sussman (2002) explored cultural identity and the experience of repatriation amongst US teachers in Japan, the results quantitatively indicated that the expatriate adjustment process in the host culture is not necessarily directly associated with the experience of repatriation. An inverse relationship exists between repatriation distress and native cultural identity strength. Repatriates who experience high amounts of psychological distress upon return usually exhibit a weakening of original cultural identity; whereas repatriates who report a low degree of psychological disturbances are likely to report having a strong cultural identity. This kind of finding aligns with Berry's assumptions about acculturation and repatriation. Other preliminary studies suggested that changes in cultural identity are also directly related to the experience of repatriation.

However, as Storti (1997) argues, due to diversity among sojourners, it is difficult to assume that two student sojourners will have the same or similar experiences of repatriation. He splits the repatriation process into four main categories: (1) leave taking and departure, (2) the honeymoon, (3) reverse culture shock and (4) readjustment (Storti, 1997, p.46). The reason for any difficulty in returning home, Storti (1997) stated, is that the culture of origin sometimes becomes unfamiliar to the sojourner in his/her absence. Certainly this is the case with the rapid growth of infrastructure in the UAE as you can note in chapter 2 and in the findings.

As cultural identity is in many ways, proactive through (1) familiar places, (2) familiar people and (3) a certain level of environmental predictability regarding routines and interaction; when an academic sojourner does return home, elements which have altered can initiate further problems of re-adjustment (Storti, 1997).

Newly acquired dimensions of any bicultural identity have to be carefully managed and negotiated in order for the repatriation process to run smoothly without serious re-adjustment consequences. Studies of this nature need to be conducted more frequently in the future, in order to better understand the psychological phenomena associated with repatriation distress. When people come from a distinct cultural background where behaviours and attitudes are quite clearly expressed, practiced and understood, a repatriate who exhibits a varying value system to the rest

of their cultural group can most often, experience varying degrees of rejection from their social network.

### **3.11.1 – Repatriation Framework**

Sussman (2002) argued that when expatriate sojourners go through a cultural adjustment process, they tend to incorporate cognitive and behavioural aspects of the host culture into their own repertoires, in order to reduce negative experiences of feeling ostracised from a cultural in-group. In many cases the new repertoire becomes ingrained in the sojourner affecting self-concept and cultural identity components. Sussman (2002) further noted that this is one of the primary reasons repatriates often experience adjustment difficulties when returning to their home country; disturbances in self-concept and shifts in cultural identity are thought to be the mediating factors in predicting repatriation adjustment difficulties (Sussman, 2000). Adjustment difficulties are associated with mental and/or physical stress related to feeling disconnected to and/or unfamiliar with the native social group. Although most international students do not complain about serious mental disturbances after returning home (Sorti, 1997), they are aware, to varying degrees, of the way in which they have changed and how sometimes those changes could not be negotiated into acceptable cultural spaces back home.

In critically reviewing the empirical and theoretical literature on cultural transitions within the context and experience of a sojourner's repatriation, Sussman (2000), through the identity salience model, also identified intercultural contact as having a great impact on cultural identity. Research suggested that individuals are not necessarily cognisant of their cultural identity before a sojourner experience. This substantiates and collaborates with field studies that indicate sojourning processes increase self and worldly awareness.

For many repatriates, it is difficult to reconcile a newly transformed repertoire with an old cultural identity and self-concept. While abroad, a sojourner tends to modify his/her behaviour in order to fit in with the local cultural in-group. If these newly inveterate values and behaviours are drastically different from the native culture, the sojourner's friends and family may feel discomfort or confusion. Sussman (2002) referred to the case in which a sojourner begins to feel more similar to a host culture's way of life than that of the home country as an 'additive identity response'. When a repatriate subtracts and/or adds cultural identity components, in 'subtractive'

or ‘additive’ responses, levels of psychological distress are increased for both the repatriate and his/her home community. Upon returning home, the repatriate may feel a decrease in his/her positive self-concept because he/she no longer identifies in the same way within the native culture group.

Another type of identity shift is referred to as ‘affirmative’ (identity), characterised as a re-affirmation of native cultural identity (Sussman, 2002). A sojourner who experiences an affirmative identity shift will maintain, as well as strengthen his/her native cultural identity throughout the cultural transition process. This type of sojourner ignores cultural distance and while in the UK, strategically focuses on keeping original cultural identity dominant. The result may be a minimal amount of repatriation distress and easier adjustment upon repatriation.

The last type of cultural identity shift described by Sussman (2002) is ‘intercultural’ or ‘global’ [identity]. This type of sojourner has a multi-faceted self-concept and tends to result in high cultural adaptation while residing in the host culture. This sojourner has the ability to relate with a multitude of different cultural backgrounds and is usually one who has travelled around the world his/her entire life. The global sojourner may also include students who have regularly visited the UK for different purposes. Repatriation distress is minimal for the global identity because they class themselves as world travellers and are adept at assimilating into heterogeneous environments.

### **3.11.2 – Repatriation across Cultures**

Taking into account a diverse group, involving 106 graduate students from Asia, Latin-America, the Middle-East and Africa, Church (1982) conducted one of the first repatriation studies and it is reviewed here, due to the culture commonality of its population sample. The study revealed that those who had received little support from their home cultures often chose to reject their home culture and in repeating case are likely to become expatriates continually. Sussman’s theoretical model (2002) was used later to explore the relationship between cultural identity and the repatriation experience, tested among 113 American teachers, who sojourned to Japan. Results were unexpected and demonstrated that for the teachers, overseas adaptation and repatriation experiences did not directly correlate.

Original culture identity for the American teachers was strengthened, on the basis of being away from home. Distress was most noted among those who had a weaker 'home cultural identity' than those who had a strong one. Results affirmed that the repatriation experience is related to varying direct and in-direct shifts in cultural identity and as predicted by the Cultural Identity Model, ratings of increased estrangement from American culture related to teachers feeling 'more' Japanese at times (Sussman, 2002).

It is however important to highlight, as Kidder (1992) did, an important study on Japanese identity transformation for sojourners, emphasising the importance of home cultural and societal attitudes towards learning and foreign language acquisition when repatriating. Kidder's study demonstrated, like a wide range of studies, that lack of social support factors contribute to a high level of distress. Expectations of conformity during repatriation led many sojourners, upon return, to hide and/or alter behavioural, linguistic and physical characteristics acquired while studying abroad. Kidder referred to this as the 'chameleon-like technique' (Kidder, 1992, p.390). This is a technique also used by other students from collectivists cultures who talked about knowing how to behave in front of people when back home.

### **3.11.3 – Deculturation and Reverse Culture Shock**

Reverse culture shock is an expression that is used in cross-cultural literature to refer to the experience of re-entering the home country after living abroad. Uehara (1983) defined reverse culture shock as 'the temporal psychological difficulties returnees experience in the initial stage of the adjustment process at home after having lived abroad for some time' (Uehara, 1983, p. 420). Having been integrated into a more individualistic society, the sojourner may experience cultural complications returning to a different and more collective culture. Aside from the aimed achievements for education and return, family members and friends do not always enthusiastically express interest in what some of the students have experienced abroad or identify as additionally (more individual) valued achievements.

What usually happens, as a strategy to deal with this dampened enthusiasm is the repatriate chooses succinct accounts to reflect upon, instead of incessantly expounding on numerous cultural tales from overseas. Many repatriating students realise that their family and friends may not fully comprehend or be intrigued by all the adventures they have each experienced while

living abroad. Sojourning students found that interacting with other repatriates upon return, or even individuals who are interested in sojourning, along with other international relations, enabled them to discuss their stories and passions with like minds (Kim, 2001).

Kim (2001) argued that simultaneous to acculturation, in this regard, is 'deculturation', as academic sojourners inhabit a new culture, new codes of behaviour and values challenge pre-existing behaviour and values. This implies a learning of new habits and unlearning or deculturation of old ones. Sojourners become unsettled and experience a state of disequilibrium, which usually manifests itself in low moods, confusion and anxiety (Kim, 1994). This state plays a part in culture shock and reverse culture shock, whereby the changes that an individual goes through may precipitate them in feelings of disintegration, often leading to emotional concerns.

Similar to these findings, Christofi and Thompson (2007) conducted a study to describe the experience of individuals who returned home after studying abroad, who then became disillusioned with their home country and returned to their sojourn country. The study was conducted using a phenomenological approach to interview 25 candidates. The analysis of interviews suggested that the participants spoke more about the culture shock experienced when returning to their home cultures, as opposed to the transition experienced in the sojourn country, which finally led to their move back to the sojourn country.

One important result of this is the idea of a self-esteem hypothesis (Abrams and Hogg, 1990), which stated that 'in-group dynamics' play a major role in shaping how identity is formed. Not all repatriates experience distress upon re-entry, though both anecdotal evidence and empirical research it indicated that most repatriates, do report some degree of concern and apprehension when returning to their native country. Since expatriates tend to interweave the characteristics of the host culture into their cognitive and behavioural repertoires, they often experience a salient difference in their own cultural identity upon returning home. Positive aspects associated with repatriation are brought forth by Adler (1975) and cited in Patron (2006), who distinctly added a positive dimension to the very definition of culture shock. Adler claimed that the experience of reverse culture shock stimulates personal growth because the repatriate learns to use new coping mechanisms as well as new perspectives that are incorporated into his/her cognitions and behaviours.

#### **3.11.4 – Techniques for Re-Integration / Re-settling**

According to Suda (1999), sojourners who experience reoccurring repatriation report that each subsequent repatriation is more distressing than the first. It is likewise not easy to identify why some repatriates experience reverse culture shock more strongly than an initial overseas culture shock. Some repatriates are able to transfer coping skills but according to existing literature the majority of international sojourners, in general, are not (Dahlberg, 1998). ‘Social comparison theory’ (Festinger, 1954) stated that people strive to confirm certain aspects of their own self-definition, so expectations of daily systems should be realistic between cultures. If repatriation and acculturative studies continue to be conducted across cultures by employing additional and new methods of exploration, we will be able to gain a more comprehensive understanding of this particular phenomenon. Empirical studies refute the culture-learning theory because it has been documented that repatriates are unable to transfer the coping skills they acquired abroad to the native cultural context.

Sojourners can help to minimise distress associated with repatriation adjustment by mentally preparing for the return home. Sussman (2002) believed that any distress associated with repatriate adjustment tends to dissipate within one year. When students are able to focus on their sojourn and identify the changes in their cognitions, behaviours and values, this type of introspection brings about and encourages more clarity, allowing the sojourner to understand that the experience abroad has seasoned his/her cultural understanding.

Maintaining contact with the sojourn country via social media, email and telephone enables the repatriate to feel a sense of connection with the host culture and/or friends and networks there. Sussman (2002) suggested that when a repatriate feels anxious or overwhelmed from adjustment difficulties, he/she should try to avoid attributing negative feelings to outside sources such as family, friends, school or work.

### 3.12– Shifting Attitudes in Acculturation

A significant number of researchers presented in this chapter, across the social science disciplines, have discussed topics related to cultural identity, acculturation and repatriation. Studies highlight how different cultures and the experience of acculturation impact individual cultural identity and repatriation concerns upon return to country of origin. With the social identity theory in mind, it can be said that the notion of the self is closely linked to the location one occupies, which therefore causes a self-construct to vary from culture to culture (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000). Motives for shaping an identity are understood to stem from reasons of continuity, efficacy and self-esteem (Breakwell, 1993; Vignoles et al., 2000) in fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion within groups and cultivating similarity to others (Snyder and Fromkin, 1980; Brewer, 1993)

The notion of selfhood is closely linked to location and ‘*where we are* – the place we occupy, however briefly – has everything to do with *what* and *who we are* (and finally *that we are*)’ (Benson 2001, p.12 emphasis added). A self between two or more locations may develop a bicultural identity. As Collier (1997) and social psychologists argued, individual identity and the way it is enacted differs not only among each individual, but also over one individual’s life time. Sojourner transitions in cultural identity may be temporary and strategic or more permanently embraced. Methods by which individuals take in a cultural identity and the role played by a second culture exposure in shaping identity should receive more theoretical attention to perhaps enlighten the processes of identity achievement.

Empirical investigation has demonstrated that ethnic and cultural identity plays a central role, in regard to various aspects of the acculturation process (Clement and Noles, 1992). Many of these findings report a loss of the original cultural identity and have a more unidirectional perspective on the process. People confronted by new environmental settings, such as international student sojourners, are seen as surrendering identification with aspects of their original cultural identity and moving towards identification with a new culture by adopting host cultural traits, values and behaviours (Olmeda, 1979). There is support for mentally sound individuals with positive psychosocial adaptation becoming more assimilated or bicultural, whilst also maintaining a clear sense of original beliefs and values. These individuals possess the ability to perform adequately

within expected norms and standards of the dominant society (Szapocznik et al., 1980; Berry et al., 1987; Krishnan and Berry, 1992; Furnham and Sheikh, 1993).

Living in a location for a longer period of time, sojourn settings can initiate cultural identity transformations. There can be great psychological consequences on identity as it is exposed to novel and unfamiliar settings (Furnham, 2001, p. 23) and the extensive presence of different nationalities living and working in the UAE can aid Emirati student sojourners who are open to learning and experiencing new host cultural values, yet still do not feel strained to conform to those ideals. Research consistently indicates that the construal of the self is not necessarily fixed or permanent (Markus and Kitayama, 1991), but that selfhood is flexible and at times fragmented, susceptible to being formed and shaped as various environmental forces come into contact with an individual (Elliot, 2001). Erikson (1976) pointed out toward acculturation difficulties, that through any developmental stage or 'crisis', people grow.

Points of confusion and contradictions during an acculturative experience are referred to, in this study, as cultural identity dilemmas. In order to reduce negative effects and psychological distress during the cultural adjustment process, expatriate sojourns interweave the host cultures' behaviours and values into their own repertoire (Sussman, 2002). The self is operational on a culture continuum, however (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1989; Markus and Kitayama, 1991). If the sojourner cannot relate to, or identify with, the ideological, behavioural and cognitive aspects of the host culture, he/she may begin to critically analyse his/her selfhood and cultural identity. This can result in self-concept and cultural identity confusion that can cause psychological distress and sometimes even physical ailments (Sussman, 2002).

This chapter has traced the most significant aspects of the sojourn cycle by critically exploring and discussing concepts of cultural identity, acculturation and repatriation. Markus and Kitayama (1991) claimed that it is possible to try to predict and explain cultural differences in cognition, communication, behaviour and motivation through the concepts of a cultural self-construal and that those construals are likely to transform as a result of changing cultures or environments. However, the extent to which those changes occur, how much control sojourners have over additions and subtractions and situational factors associated with triggering varying cultural selves still need to be explored further. Berry's (1980) four-dimensional model of acculturation offers insights into the multifaceted and dialectic interactions between sojourners and the host

culture which is a necessary framework in this research when attempting to understand the acculturative experiences of Emirati international sojourners in the UK. The very nature of the sojourn experience is that the cultural travel returns home therefore Sussman's (2002) work highlighted the complexity of this last stage of the sojourn cycle. The changes that help sojourns adapt in the host culture, may be the same additions and subtractions that could be identified as repatriation difficulties. Therefore these concepts will be cross-checked with the findings of this study in hopes of furthering understanding and adding to the relevant literature.

Directly applying these theories and frameworks into a context of Emirati experiences and UAE culture aims to bridge a distance between the sometimes opposing theoretical positions, by deriving operational definitions critically discussed to point out, most specifically, flexibility. While conventional methodologies, being mostly quantitative measurements, have their strengths and weaknesses, innovative ways to identifying a more comprehensive evaluation of the acculturative and repatriation experience of sojourners is increasingly needed (Heine, 2001). My research investigates cultural identity transformation for Emirati sojourners in transition through the qualitative approach, deductive thematic analysis, as discussed in Chapter 4.

## **Chapter 4: Methodology**

### **4.1 – Appropriating Analysis**

The main focus of this research is on acculturative experiences of Emirati student sojourners and repatriates. This chapter discusses the methodology considered and used for exploring these variables. It is intended to provide a theoretical justification for using a qualitative paradigm namely thematic analysis, described as specific theme centered analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), which will be further discussed in coming sections.

One of the benefits of this type of analysis is its theoretical flexibility (Braun and Clarke, 2006) since thematic analysis can be either theory-driven or explorative. The methodology in this study was primarily driven by research questions and the theoretical framework, which is known as deductive thematic analysis, still also interested in and did not ignore other potential discoveries within the data collected. Therefore it is important to acknowledge, as this study has done, the interconnectedness and dialectic relationship of deductive and inductive analysis (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009) between both data analysis and discussion of findings. The deductive aspect of this research was inspired by the aim to contribute to existing literature on acculturation and sojourn studied through a qualitative methodology based on research questions and theoretical framework.

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes in data. It establishes categories and explains data in depth. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic (Boyatzis, 1998) therefore this method is used in order to identify and analyse facets of the Emirati sojourn experience, which might have otherwise been overlooked. Thematic analysis enabled a consideration of what Emirati students said, as well as offering an opportunity to organize how they talked about their cultural identity, acculturative experiences and repatriation.

This methodology, with application of the theory and findings are cross-checked in Chapter 6 to compare for validity and reliability in study results. Inside areas of cross-cultural psychology and previous works investigating international student sojourners, quantitative methodology, has been more predominantly used. The methodology for this study was chosen through an

investigation of existing research and tools, which led to furthering an explorative focus on quantitative and qualitative methods, before assessing resistance and/or re-affirmation for such techniques, to finally, outlining the design for analysis.

As the suitability of any research methodology is based upon its ability to fulfil the objectives of a project, it is useful to contextualise this section with the aims of this research.

The key research questions providing this framework are:

- What aspects, if at all, of the Emirati cultural identity are perceived by participants as being altered during their time as students in the UK?
- What strategies do Emirati students identify as being helpful during the acculturation process while in the UK?
- What challenges, if at all, Emirati students identify/perceive while talking of readjusting in their home country upon return?
- What strategies do Emirati students use during the repatriation process after returning to the Emirates?

#### **4.1.1 – Consideration of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods**

The prevalent use of quantitative methods in cross-cultural investigations is exemplified in the majority of supporting and cross-referenced sojourn and/or immigrant studies that are discussed in Chapter 3. Sussman's (2002) repatriation theory, for example, is one of the main contemporary research pieces reinforcing this work. It is derived from several quantitative experiments, whereby the relationship between cultural identity transformation and correlating repatriate experiences is considered through internet questionnaires, given to a sample of 113 US teachers who sojourned in Japan. While such quantitative research is useful in addressing mediating variables associated with repatriation psychological phenomena, being that Sussman's results indicated that expatriate adaptation and repatriation experiences are indirectly related, I argue that descriptive methods involving deeper analysis of personal narratives might prove more useful in a study of transformation (Kim and Abreu, 2001; Nilsson and Anderson 2004; Ong and Ward, 2005). As acknowledged by Patton (1987), 'the choice of research design must be appropriate to the subject under investigation and more specifically suitable to the objectives'.

Writers, such as Patton (2002) and Eisner (1991), proclaimed advantages in utilising more qualitative research approaches. Within the realm of psychology, researchers may opt for qualitative techniques of inquiry in order to fully understand and investigate a person's grasp and view of the world. Experimental psychology, another branch of psychology which delves into scientific inquiry of psychological constructs, was defined in its' introduction as the science of experience. Hence, the choice for qualitative methods of inquiry in psychological research sometimes selected in order to construct, categorise and interpret different experiences (Ashworth, 2008).

However, these same researchers also agree that the two methods should not be seen as opposing tools, rather as methods that assist a researcher according to what is relevant and appropriate for a particular inquiry. There are many ways of presenting our understanding of the world. By focusing themes and questions to answer research questions, the interview process meanwhile embraces subjective and open responses that can surface new points of qualitative 'truths and falsities' (Foucault, 1972).

There is a 'play on multiplicity of interpretation and open-endedness that ambiguity signifies' in qualitative research however, and often questioned in terms of validity (Graham, 2005, p.5). Researchers express difficulties in replicating qualitatively approached studies with 'deep' and 'particular phenomenon'; quantitative designs meanwhile, are known, even valued for having good test and re-test validity (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994; McDowell and MacLean, 1998). Quantitative measures, having been so far more common in acculturative studies, appear to offer clearer, more concise and calculative research models (Firestone, 1987), because results can be checked and scrutinised more easily. Research is coded and indicated with a numerical value. Overall quantitative results are more explanatorily inductive in nature (McDowell and MacLean, 1998). With regard to questioning the authentication for qualitative studies in psychological and educational fields, I also reflect on, much like Graham (2005) who rhetorically asks, 'Does this mean in the current education research climate beset by questions of 'quality' and 'rigour' that researchers of a *post*-persuasion must resign to playing education research according to the quasi-scientific rules of others?' (p. 5)

In becoming more familiar with variations of methodology, I found that in academic research, more specifically in relation to acculturation studies, qualitative methods have been less frequently used (Church, 1982; Sandhu and Asrabadi, 1994; Berry, 1997; Ward and Kennedy, 1999; McInnes et al., 2001; Sussman, 2002; Ong and Ward, 2005). Questioning whether or not qualitative methods are then given an authentic voice the same as in academia, Graham (2005) observed that, ‘. . . tensions . . . arise . . . when one attempts to engage in post structural work, particularly in the current climate privileging ‘scientific’, ‘evidence-based’ paradigms. The problem becomes: how can one remain open to post structural ‘undecidability’ [or i.e. ‘qualitative open-endedness’] without being accused of unsystematised speculation?’ (Allan, 2004; Lather, 2004, cited in Graham, 2005, p. 4). Although quantitative research is valuable in examining a wide range of variables associated with identity, acculturation or repatriation, more descriptive and detailed methods involving the analysis of personal experiences are more useful for a study of this kind.

#### **4.1.2 – Moving Towards Qualitative Analysis**

Quantitative methods provide statistical data in answering the questions ‘how often’ and ‘how many’; they may not directly answer questions of ‘why’ or ‘how’. This means quantitative approaches, may actually be limiting in exposing uncovered subjective experiences. Qualitative paradigms, by contrast, attempt to increase understanding through ‘... the use of interviews and observations to provide a deep, rather than broad, set of knowledge about a particular phenomenon, and the appropriateness to investigate cognitive and affective aspects of fandom’ (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p. 81). As Maykut and Morehouse (1994) explained, a qualitative aspect of ‘depth’, in turn, allows the researcher to achieve ‘*Verstehen*’ or ‘empathetic understanding’. This qualitative aspect of investigative identity has been missing in relevant acculturative literature (Gutmann, 1999; Hunt et al., 2004).

Application of qualitative methodologies is also more important to my study because it has been further argued, for instance, that members of some Eastern and Middle Eastern cultures are likely to show their emotional problems through other means, communicating indirectly and resisting straightforwardness (Cheng and Hamid, 1996). Certain reactions, experiences and practices of a particular population may need more sensitive and detailed methods (through a qualitative

approach) to help formulate clearer findings. I argue that without qualitative analysis, roots of identity confusion and/or sojourner displacement may not be as thoroughly extracted, highlighted or understood. Wetherell (2001) furthers this regard, in his claim that ‘there can be no universal truths or absolute ethical positions . . . belief in social scientific investigation [and more so on the end of quantitative studies] as a detached, historical, utopian, truth-seeking process becomes difficult to sustain’ (p. 384). Aligning the qualitative processes as well as the supportive theories and framework discussed in Chapters 3 and 6, this study attempts to expand research potentialities and discussions relating to reliability and validity arguments against qualitative practice.

Any concerns in regard to replication for this study, seeming secondary to retrieving information for a truer construction of reality, have been minimised through the use of ‘thematic analysis.’ My analysis, as approached from detailed analytic and broad thematic levels, pinpoint identity on a cultural-specific continuum and allow for deeper reflection in findings. Repeat results, therefore can be more easily accessed and re-evaluated with this methodological system, through other Emirati sojourners and/or repatriate population.

#### **4.2 – Understanding Thematic Analysis**

The choice of methodology here is largely driven by a need to personalise the phenomenon of the Emirati sojourn experience that may be difficult to uncover quantitatively. In order to explore the cultural transformation of Emirati students, it was necessary to understand their social world and therefore, allowing them to talk about that world, in accordance to how they see it. Moreover, since the main focus of this research has been to study the Emirati acculturative and repatriation process through their perceptions and narratives, the qualitative methodology chosen was thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a search for themes that emerge out of the data, which are as important as the phenomena being studied. The term thematic is interpreted as the analysis of verbal material through the analysis of themes that emerge from the verbal story (Holsti, 1969). According to researchers such as Braun and Clark (2006), even though thematic analysis can be described as a foundational method for qualitative analysis, it is not just a tool used across other methodologies, and due to the benefits of this approach, it ‘should be considered a method in its own right’ (Braun and Clark, 2006).

As mentioned, there are different approaches of analysing data thematically and two of these methods are the inductive and the deductive approach. Whilst the inductive approach uses the collected data to initiate ideas and theories, the deductive style of thematic analysis begins with an idea or framework for a theory and then uses the data to prove or disprove the theoretical concept (Holloway, 1997).

‘There are methods that are essentially independent of theory and epistemology, and can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches. Although often (implicitly) framed as a realist/experiential method (Aronson, 1994; Roulston, 2001), thematic analysis is actually firmly in this camp, and is compatible with both essentialist and constructionist paradigms within psychology’ (Braun and Clark, 2006).

The advantages of using a primarily deductive thematic analysis, however also considering inductive principles is that not only was the data searched for answers to questions being asked, but also entirely analysed for any other themes that may emerge out participant responses.

It is thought that in order to comprehend complex elements, such as a sense of cultural identity of a group of people with a common language, carefully examining what participants say and the patterns of those responses contributes to both a deeper and broader understanding of the questions being asked.

The label of ‘themes emerging’ can be misleading to mean that themes exist in the data and all the researcher has to do is to tease them out. This idea incorrectly simplifies the thematic analysis process and takes away from the role of the researcher. An interpretation of themes being discovered is a passive account of the process of thematic analysis, and it ignores the active role the researcher plays in identifying and selecting relevant patterns (Taylor and Ussher, 2001). Themes reside as part of the analytical process and are located in the way a researcher thinks about the data, not in the data alone (Ely et al., 1997, p. 205).

As Fine (2002) explains, “we do not subscribe to a naïve realist view of qualitative research where the researcher can simply give voice to their participants. Even a giving voice approach involves carving out unacknowledged pieces of narrative evidence that we select, edit, and deploy to border our arguments.” Nor is there one ideal theoretical framework for conducting

qualitative research, or indeed one ideal method. What is important is that the theoretical framework and methods match what the researcher wants to know, and that they acknowledge these decisions, and recognise them as decisions.

Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes within data” (p. 82). The definition of this research method can also be extended to include interpretation of the topic of research and its’ ability to organise and describe data in extensive detail. This form of analysis enables researchers to systematically interpret various forms of data in order to enhance understanding of phenomenon (Boyatzis, 1998).

While thematic analysis is used widely within the field of psychology, a clear and common definition is lacking (Tuckett, 2005). There is not a clear name for this type of analysis and it does not fall under any of the wider categories such as grounded theory or narrative analysis.

As thematic refers to themes, it is important to understand the concept of themes and its significance in the analysis. A theme may be defined as a “pattern in the information that at minimum describes and organises the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon” (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 161). A theme may be comprised of latent content which are implicit references to a certain aspect for instance, stigma may be referenced by keeping social distance from specific people or groups. A theme may also consist of manifest content which is a direct indication of observable aspects such as the term stigma mentioned in the dialogue. Thematic analysis focuses on both the implicit and explicit content of themes. There is another significant distinction made between the themes and this differentiation results from whether the researcher is generating the theme from a theoretical concept which is also known as deductive analysis or whether the theory is derived from the data, also known as inductive analysis (Harper and Thompson, 2012).

A deductive thematic analysis focuses upon the researcher’s hypothesis or aims and is driven by the theory used by the researcher. This approach draws attention to certain aspects of the data rather than a general overall analysis of the entire data. The method of coding used will also be varied if a deductive approach is used and the coding will then be for a specific question of

research (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Themes are identified pertaining to the research topic or question and is guided by the interests of the researcher and focuses on a specific aspect of the data collected.

This research did analyse interviews looking for answers to research questions (deductive) but did not ignore other interesting and relevant facets of the data. Taking a more pragmatic method, rather than a particular epistemological stance, after realising the importance of emerging themes while looking holistically at responses, rather than just answers to questions being asked.

Thematic analysis consists of four main steps. The first one requires the researcher to become familiar with the data collected and to identify and recognise patterns in the information. The second step involves encoding data in order to elicit themes that may be found. The third step revolves around the development of a code to be used to analyse the data. Finally, the researcher interprets the findings from the data by allocating meaning to the emergent themes (Boyatzis, 1998).

The first step in extracting themes, in thematic analysis, is for the researcher to have data familiarisation. This would involve re-reading the data and reading it in a way that the researcher is seeking patterns and themes and meanings. Data familiarisation requires a close partnership with data collected throughout the analytic processes, interview processes and transcription (Hong et al., 2000; Gee, 2005; Harper, 2004 Starks and Trinidad, 2007). As the actual methodological plan can manifest into hundreds of hours of step-by-step analysis, it is important to be ready for each stage accordingly, through a most personalised understanding of the data (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). To allow a theme to emerge naturally, an analyst will deconstruct entirely the work in evaluating text, making codes every couple of sentences to align psychological associations with reliably presented realities, such as in this research, about Emirati culture, identity and acculturation experiences (Leininger, 1985).

Regardless of whether a deductive or inductive approach or a search for latent or manifest content is aimed for, familiarising oneself with the data is the first step and needs to be done thoroughly. Once this is done the data needs to be transcribed and this is seen by many as another way of becoming acquainted with the data (Reissman, 1993). The transcribed data

should be true to its original form in terms of meaning and retain the information that is required by the researcher.

The second step of the analysis revolves around the initiation of codes from the data. These codes are “the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon” (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 63). If a deductive approach or a theory-driven approach is used, as in the case of this study, then the data is dependent on the themes that have emerged. The data is also approached with particular questions and aims and the coding revolves around these goals. For instance, if the researcher is aiming to code a specific feature of the data which falls in line with his or her research question and theoretical framework then the researcher will primarily focus on the relevant themes and codes which apply (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The third step centres on the search for themes from the data. Through the codes initiated, themes are sorted and the codes are then categorised according to the emergent themes. For instance, a researcher using the deductive approach in their research about feelings of loss of control among depressed individuals may interpret a participant saying “I feel I can’t have fun anymore” which may be similar to other participant’s description of their experience of depression and the codes originating from these would include unhappiness, lack of fun and helpless feelings. Themes emerging from these codes could include feelings surrounding lack of control or powerlessness. This approach utilises the researcher’s aims in a manner that elicits codes and themes from the data set in line with the research question (Halland, 2007).

As Nikander (1995) contributed that ‘a researcher looks for patterns and order in how text and talk are organised and for how inter-subjective understanding, social life and a variety of institutional practices are accomplished, constructed and reproduced in the process.’ Thematic analysis is referred to as a type of trial and error process, operating in its own similar layers. However, adjustments are continuously made in extraction for growth and clearer understanding (Leininger, 1985). The researcher throughout the process, forms theme ‘statements’ in recognition of pre-emerging ideas in a field’s literature (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984).

Generally, there are no rules or ultimately perfected ways of conducting a thematic analysis. The researcher looks for recurring themes, inconsistencies and particular dilemmas presented in responses that can be extracted, collated and reported on (Cutcliffe and McKenna, 2002).

Close examination of responses and meaning infers unique elements of underlying phenomena. Liddicoat (2002) substantiated my aims in methodological intention, arguing that language and culture are inseparable. As culture greatly influences the content of one's speech, this highlights many facets of culture through communicated responses, and moreover through the specific and engrained use of language that presents itself. I took keen note of this in my study. All interviews were conducted in English, which was the language in common between myself, as the researcher, and the participants. Also, it should be noted that English is the lingua franca of the UAE.

Nevertheless, for the Emiratis, Arabic is essentially their first language and cultural mindset. Thematic analysis proved to be significantly valuable here, since Emirati students presented their answers in English, their second language. I was sensitive to cultural nuances evident in their responses. In Arabic, for instance, there are certain vocabulary and expressions that highlight key cultural and religious characteristics, which Emiratis use, even when speaking English. The word 'Insha'Allah' meaning 'God willing' was used repeatedly by most participants throughout their statements in this study: emphasising (1) respect for 'God's will' in different aspects of their lives and (2) through the speech implementation of it, itself, also a cultural practice and reflection of religiosity in daily routines.

A fourth step of thematic analysis consists of reviewing the themes. In this phase, it will also become apparent which themes are relevant and which need to be discarded and a final list of themes are created. The inclusion criteria of themes need to be based upon Patton's (1990) criteria for judging themes, which is dual in nature and consists of "internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity". This means that data should be related to each other in meaning and should be able to be linked together to form a coherent analysis. In this phase, additional codes which may have been missed earlier are also created as well as a review of the initial data set is conducted in order to ascertain that the chosen themes fit in well with the data. This stage is followed by naming and defining the themes which are chosen and then an analysis of each

theme is conducted in which the essence of the theme is revealed as well as the uncovering the meaning behind each theme in relation to the research question. And finally, the last phase deals with the production of the final report based on the themes and also consist of a concluding analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

It is important to note that at every stage of conducting thematic analysis, the researcher needs to assess the data and alter the analysis within the context of the data and, in the case of a deductive approach, within the light of the research question and researcher's aims as ideas take shape. One of the aims of the analysis is to get the coding to be as close a fit to the initial data as possible, hence, the need for continuous review and modification of the analysis (Howitt and Cramer, 2007).

#### **4.2.1 Comparison with other Qualitative Approaches**

There are other qualitative methods of research that utilise the process of analysing themes which emerge from the information collected. Some of these methods include grounded theory, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), hermeneutic analysis and discourse analysis.

Thematic analysis, much akin to grounded theory, centres on the researcher's involvement and interpretation of the data. Both implicit and explicit words and phrases are focused upon in developing themes and these are analysed by developing codes. These codes link the theme to the initial data collected and are then used for analysis. The analysis may consist of recording the frequency of the occurrence of some codes and comparing them to the occurrence of other codes or code co-occurrence and identifying the relationship between the codes and the data set (Guest, 2005).

Hermeneutic analysis is described as "the dialectic between the understanding of the text as a whole and the interpretation of its parts, in which descriptions are guided by anticipated explanations (Myers, 2004, p. 107). Both hermeneutic and inductive thematic analysis are useful to formulate or generate theory as they focus on the interpretation of the data (Bryman, 2008). They differ in that hermeneutic analysis seeks to understand the whole information collected through the interpretation of a specific aspect of the data while thematic analysis focuses on the

frequency of the occurrence of a theme in order to gain an understanding of the whole rather than just its interpretation.

Grounded theory and thematic analysis are considered similar in many ways including the manner in which data is collected and to some degree, the way in which the data is analysed. Both research methods tend to begin their analysis of the data simultaneously with the collection of the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). However, grounded theory, discourse analysis and IPA are bound to a theory. The IPA is based on phenomenological epistemology (Smith and Osborn, 2003), which seeks to understand individuals' experiences, and these experiences are held as the central focus of the analysis. On the other hand, grounded theory can take many forms but its main purpose is to formulate a theory which is based on the data. Thematic analysis differs from other qualitative methods such as grounded theory or discourse analysis in a way that it does not adhere to one particular theoretical framework and may be used with different theories and can be manipulated to fit the framework of the theory used (Braun and Clarke, 2006). There is also some confusion between content analysis and thematic analysis. Content analysis is mainly used to focus upon and highlights the validity and reliability of a recurring theme through the use of categories (Bryman, 2001).

The way language is used in thematic analysis is different from some other qualitative methods like discourse analysis and conversational analysis. Thematic analysis treats responses as they are expressed. This is similar to the way IPA and grounded theory use responses as well. On the other hand, discourse and conversational analysis tend to strip down the responses, looking at language in different ways in order to deconstruct the account given. This may be due to the fact that discourse and conversational analysis arose from the linguistic field whereas thematic analysis grew out of the need to use language as a way of understanding human experience (Ryan and Bernard, 2000).

IPA and thematic analysis are similar in an epistemological sense as both of them use research in order to describe and interpret the subjective experiences of individuals. The main difference between the two is in the area of coding whereby IPA uses a wide-range of codes which are not focused upon any one aspect whilst both grounded theory and thematic analysis have a system of open coding.

Discourse and conversational analysis uses a very complex method of transcribing data as opposed to the simple transcription used in thematic analysis. The former methods of analysis have various categories for the text like phonetic, prosodic and paralinguistic and transcription in these methods is extremely time-consuming (Cole, 1995).

Thematic analysis also differs from other qualitative approaches, as it can be a realist, constructionist or an essentialist method. The realist aspect emerges in the participants' reality of experience and the meanings ascribed to them. A constructionist approach in thematic analysis centres on the influences various discourse in society upon experiences, realities and their meanings. In this way, thematic analysis may be termed as a method which focuses on context in which individuals make sense of their experiences bearing in mind influencing factors from the environment (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

#### **4.2.2 Advantages and Limitations of Thematic Analysis**

One of the main advantages of using thematic analysis in research is the ease in which this process can be utilized. This type of method is suitable for analysing large data sets as it is able to provide a broad analysis and can give an overall description of the analysis. Not only does thematic analysis generates useful insights through the identification of patterns and themes but it can also be useful for pinpointing the similarities and differences within the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Another valuable function of thematic analysis is that it encourages the analyst to explore the occurrence of similarity and variability in responses. This qualitative tool of this study allows for Emirati voices to share social experiences, beyond their immediate answers to interview questions and into a secondary cultural text of symbolically layered inferences (Boyatzis, 1998).

The limitations of thematic analysis stem from the researcher's ability to conduct the analysis appropriately rather than the method itself. A poorly formed research question or not conducting the analysis properly can make the analysis disadvantageous to the research. Whilst the flexibility offered by thematic analysis is a clear advantage, it can also go against its purpose due to the wide range of options regarding analysis which are available. This can cause problems in formulating a rigid framework or guidelines of analysis rendering it nearly impossible to follow

set rules or patterns. This in turn makes it very difficult for the researcher to pinpoint significant aspects of the data which require focus and attention. Another limitation of thematic analysis lies in the interpretation of the data. The interpretation is mostly descriptive in nature which limits its power of understanding and grasping the phenomenon being studied and without the framework of an existing theory; it may be very difficult to bracket the analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Unlike other qualitative approaches, namely narrative or biographical approaches, thematic analysis does not allow for the interpretation of inconsistencies or contradictions within the content which may be significant or revealing to the research question (Howitt and Cramer, 2007). The thematic analysis used here, as an active methodological approach, acknowledges that both I as researcher and Emirati student sojourners, as informants, subjectively contribute to the results, relevant to the field of cultural identity transformation. The rationale, moreover, for using thematic analysis is that this research, similar to other qualitative research methods, more precisely aims to explore how recurring themes assist in gaining a deeper understanding of the subjective experiences of Emirati sojourners. Understanding this is central to understanding the overall framework of this study.

My methodological approach is therefore recommended and may be beneficial for future repatriation and acculturative studies, because descriptive data that is rich with meaning can be extracted from in-depth interviews and examined toward a more comprehensive understanding of topics. Although Humes and Bryce (2003) argued ‘the search for clarity and simplicity of meaning is seen as because there will always be other perspectives from which to interpret the material under review’ (Humes and Bryce, 2003, p. 180).

### 4.2.3 – Methodological Framework

The methodological framework and approach involves a process of identifying patterns of meaning across the data and providing answers to the research question. Patterns are identified through a method of data familiarisation, data coding, and theme development and revision. A clear demarcation of this method is necessary to outline the active choices made throughout the analysis process. Deductive thematic analysis consists of 8 steps outlined by researchers such as Braun and Clark (2006, p. 87).

- Step (1): Researcher questions were formatted in line with relevant theoretical concepts and dimensions wanting to be explored.
- Step (2): I identified two groups as representative samples to focus on being: (a) Emirati sojourners studying in the UK and (b) Emirati repatriates, having studied in the UK, re-integrating into the UAE.
- Step (3): Exploring previous research, my work focused on relevant domains of research into identity, acculturative and repatriation literature, assessing pre-emerging possibilities for Emirati themes.
- Step (4): I formatted interviews in relation to exploring the sojourn cycle and considering cultural and ethical factors. Interviews were semi-structured, recorded on tape and stored safely.
- Step (5): The data collected from participants was carefully transcribed and checked for accuracy. Transcripts were read repeatedly and actively as meaning about what respondents were saying began to take shape. Initial codes were produced to draw out participants' responses to the research questions from the raw data.
- Step (6): Analysis of the data involved constantly moving back and forward between the entire data set, the coded extracts of themes and the analysis of the data produced. I applied and noted provisional, qualitative codings looking for a deeper understanding of the Emirati sojourner's experience of reality, through the relationship between ideas, in order to gain an understanding of the phenomenon in question. Themes were not generated from a few examples, but instead the coding process has been thorough, inclusive and comprehensive.

- Step (7): Writing down ideas and potential coding schemes started shortly after reading and re-reading of data and continued right through the entire coding and analysis procedure. I extended my analysis in layers continuously between coding, amongst individual responses as well as thematically derived categories. Through the process of reviewing and refining, many possible themes were identified initially, however not all were retained. Once selected, the story of each theme was defined and named.
- Step (8): With the use of vivid examples and extracts that effectively captured the points being made, full results from my study in accordance with my data collection and cross-check interpretation were recorded through the write-up of this work and can be found in Chapters 5 and 6.

### **4.3 – Researcher Considerations and Ethical Guidelines**

In conducting this research, ethical considerations and stipulations were of paramount importance. This included being aware of and implementing relevant ethical guidelines throughout the methodological process, from selection of participants, as well as the way I interacted with those people who took part in the study. Stake (2003) explained the necessity and importance of observing ethical practices, especially when conducting qualitative research. He said, ‘Qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world. Their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict’ (Stake, 2003).

To begin with, throughout the research process, the ethical guidelines of the University were adhered to. After reviewing the details of my methodology, the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) granted permission to begin fieldwork. In doing so, the following steps had to be implemented:

- Participants should receive an information sheet and be asked to sign a consent form.
- Transcripts should be safely stored.
- Data should be confidentially destroyed.
- No compensation would be paid to participants, since it was not culturally appropriate nor financially possible.

Informed consent was received from participants before taking part in the interview. Their agreement to participate came about after the main aims and premise of this research were fully explained to them, as well as a brief summary about the methodological tool of analysis, so that they understood the different dimensions of the research both in terms of overall objectives as well as procedural steps. Participants were all informed that they may stop answering questions at any point of the interviewing process or withdraw from taking part if they should change their mind or feel uncomfortable, without having to justify their decision to me.

The issue of confidentiality was very significant here, due to the cultural sensitivity of discussing certain issues relevant to this research. With this in mind, participants were repeatedly ensured about confidentiality and anonymity. I went on to assure them that their voice recordings as well as transcripts would be stored safely on a password protected computer and folder, where no one other than myself would have access to them. I acknowledged social matters may be discussed and recorded during interviews, which can culturally bring shame to Emirati participants. In respect for the realities of Emirati family relations and social practices, and in accordance to university rules and guidelines, as well as in adherence to the Data Protection Act, all personal information collected during my research has been kept strictly confidential. Transcripts of the interviews I conducted are anonymous and all specific or identifying details have been removed. I asked only some broad demographic questions, including birth city and university major, for example, to aid in contextualising a relevant point and/or to contribute to interpretation. Recordings and transcripts are stored in a wall safe in a secure location and after final submission, audio recordings will all be destroyed. Transcripts will be stored in a password-protected folder on my computer for approximately 5 years from project completion.

The atmosphere throughout my interview processes were controlled to eliminate privacy discomforts and also acknowledge issues of respect, regarding cultural contexts of social interaction between each participant and myself (i.e. regarding: authority and age status, gender conditions, time flexibility and notions of comfort – all culturally). Emirati student sojourners and repatriates knew their conversation would be analysed and during the interviews I conducted, there was strong cultural consideration in respectfully and ethically extracting data through participant statements. I did not completely ignore or leave behind themes in dialogue that were culturally sensitive, but visited them cautiously. Sensitive matters discussed, such as

changes in the intricately-rooted value systems of Emiratis, also required interpretive scrutiny, during analysis, suitable to ethics.

#### **4.4 – The Sample**

To enable a professional and formal introduction, which would be more culturally appropriate in the context of Emirati social structures, I enlisted the help of the UAE Embassy, in London. The embassy, which therefore, became an agent of social interaction and/or a cultural chaperone, introduced participants and me, and throughout the processes of my interaction with the Emirati student sojourners and repatriates, assigned a figurehead to help address any cultural concerns and/or questions for participants and also myself. Accordingly, with visits to the embassy and in discussions with Mr. Al Marri (Personal Communications, 2007; 2008), approximately 200 invitations to participate in my study was sent to an embassy list of the majority of first year Emirati students in the UK. In that email, students were informed of the steps they could take to participate, as well as a brief description of this research.

Those interested in participating emailed me back. I scheduled an interview with each Emirati student and/or repatriate. Due to the relatively small number of Emiratis in the UK, and even smaller pool of those interested to take part, approximately 40 students emailed me back and a total of 25 students participated in this study. Different sets of Emirati students were interviewed for (1) acculturative concerns and (2) repatriation issues and/or relating experiences. These two groups, sojourners studying in the UK and repatriates having studied in the UK (re-settling in the UAE) are representative of a continuum for Emirati identity transformation, between beginning processes of acculturation to re-integration and final processes of a sojourn journey.

For the main study, between 2008-2010, I collected 21-recorded semi-structured interviews, which were conducted in English. The remaining 4 calculated interviews, making a study of 25, are those from the pilot study, conducted with students at the university where I was based, in London. The Emirati students, both male and female, were selected to cover a variety of personal backgrounds and regions, throughout the UAE. A central consideration for both groups, sojourners and repatriates, was that they should have only been in the UK or back in the UAE for

less than a year. This is because their perception of their difficulties and reflections would still be new in comparison to someone who had been there longer.

All students are from the four main regions in the UAE, as discussed in Chapter 2, that are modernising, and considered economically and socially prosperous: (1) Abu Dhabi, (2) Al-Ayn, (3) Dubai and (4) Sharjah. When the students were in the UK for study, they were located in: (1) London – 6 participants, (2) Liverpool – 4 participants, (3) Surrey – 3 participants, (4) Bournemouth – 3 participants, (5) Edinburgh – 3 participants, and (6) Wales – 2 participants. From the pilot, there were 3 additional London participants and 1 from Scotland (equalling the 25 interviews I listed).

The following tables highlight the two participant groups for this research:

**Table 3: Group #1: Emirati Sojourners in the UK – (UK Interviews).** This table provides an overview of the sojourner sample. Additionally, *Table 3* includes a background of attendance of national verses international schools for new sojourners.

Participants	Age	Gender	Attendance of international v/s national schools	Time in the UK (at time of interview)	Living arrangements	Previous Sojourn	Length of Study
1.	21	M	National	8 months	Dorms (roommate)	NONE	App 4 yrs
2.	19	M	International	10 months	Dorms (alone)	NONE	App 4 yrs
3.	19	F	National	7 months	Dorms (alone)	NONE	App 4 yrs
4.	20	M	International	8 months	Private residence (alone)	NONE	App 4 yrs
5.	18	M	International	6 months	Private residence (w/ cousin)	NONE	App 4 yrs
6.	21	M	International	7 months	Dorms (roommate)	NONE	App 4 yrs
7.	19	F	International	6 months	Private residence (w/ sister)	NONE	App 4 yrs
8.	20	M	International	9 months	Dorms (roommate)	NONE	App 4 yrs
9.	20	M	National	9 months	Private residence (alone)	NONE	App 4 yrs
10.	22	M	International	9 months	Private residence (alone)	Boarding School	App 4 yrs
11.	18	F	International	7 months	Dorms (roommate)	NONE	App 4 yrs
12.	19	M	International	8 months	Dorms (roommate)	NONE	App 4 yrs

13.	19	M	International	9 months	Private residence (w/ cousin)	NONE	App 4 yrs
-----	----	---	---------------	----------	----------------------------------	------	-----------

**Table 4: Group #2: Emirati Repatriates – (UAE Interviews)**– This table, the repatriate sample, presents demographic factors as: (1) age, (2) gender, (3) time in the UK, (4) living arrangements, (5) previous sojourn and (6) length of study variables.

<b>Participant s</b> (Numbering continued from <i>Table</i> 3)	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Time in the UK</b> (at time of interview)	<b>Living Arrangements</b>	<b>Previous Sojourn</b>	<b>Length of Time Back in the UAE</b>
14.	24	F	5 years	Back at Family home	ONLY UK	8 months
15.	23	M	41/2 years	Back at Family home	ONLY UK	1 year
16.	24	M	4 years	Back at Family home	ONLY UK	7 months
17.	24	M	6 years	(alone)	ONLY UK	14 months
18.	22	F	4 years	Back at Family home	ONLY UK	1 year
19.	23	M	5 years	Back at Family home	ONLY UK	6 months
20.	23	M	41/2 years	(alone)	ONLY UK	5 months
21.	25	F	5 years	Back at Family home	ONLY UK	7 months
22.	24	F	5 years	Back at Family home	ONLY UK	8 months
23.	23	M	41/2 years	Back at Family home	ONLY UK	1 year
24.	24	M	4 years	Back at Family home	ONLY UK	7 months
25.	24	M	6 years	(alone)	ONLY UK	5 months

In total, whether in the UK or at home, their socio-economic demographics are more or less consistent with one another. Most of them have elite benefits, perhaps with some differences mainly, in familial status-positions. Both groups, as per their categories of classification, are ‘privileged Emiratis’ and studies in the UK were through the financial support of the UAE government. Emiratis from both groups shared similar study interests for subjects in the UK, such as finance, business, psychology, engineering, medicine and/or graphic design.

As previously mentioned, follow-up samples were not used in my study. Even though the research questions asked may lend to a follow up investigation, this research chose not to interview the same students, in regard to repatriation concerns, who were first acculturating to the host country. Different sets of Emirati students were interviewed for acculturative concerns and later repatriation issues. The shortcomings of using a follow up method have mostly to do with coverage problems. After the first set of recruitment, the study is restricted to the members of that sample. The design of follow up studies is particularly suited for fixed populations, which Emirati students’ sojourners may not be.

Other reasons why a follow up study was not chosen was because of the already relatively small population, running the risk of student attrition or interviewee drop-out before all the data was collected. The loss of subjects, therefore, may have undermined the interpretability or credibility of the results.

#### **4.5 Limitations**

The comparatively low sample numbers often encountered through the use of qualitative measures, such as thematic analysis, may lead to claims or findings being unrepresentative of a population (Jones, 1997). While larger sample sizes may contribute to a more accurate representation of the entire population, this point is not entirely substantiated for this research. Having fewer interviews is a positive in extracting thematic narratives, allowing the kinds of deep interpretations that are possible. The smaller sample enabled a close focus on detail, as well as stepping out of them in finding emerging collective themes. The methodology processes, thematic analysis, allows for this, also shaping greater reliability and validity in relation to questions being asked. Other studies considering groups, such as the Chinese, Japanese and

Mexicans, which have been investigated in acculturative studies (Berry, 2006b), lend themselves to be looked at more deeply rather than reaching large numbers of participants. While traditional approaches to sampling in research emphasise the use of a large representative sample, within thematic analysis when interview material is used as a source of data then it is not required to sample responses from a large number of participants (Wooffitt, 2005). Interestingly, larger samples of data might add to the analytic task without adding significantly or effectively to the analytical outcome. Even a few interviews may be sufficient to signify the kinds of interpretations that are possible.

Another bias related limitation was also contemplated and this was regarding the UAE Embassy assisting me in recruiting interviewees. Initially I was apprehensive about whether they would actually send a blanket email to all students or just a selected group. This concern was discussed with the relevant people and I was assured that all students on their database would receive the research invitation. I therefore proceeded after being reassured along with other variables that are relevant and worthy of mention. The participants for this study needed to be from the different Emirates and not just from Dubai or Abu Dhabi for example. I also wanted to take into account those studying throughout the UK, not just London. Therefore this was the best way to reach students from and in these locations. Furthermore, the embassy reminded me that the Emirati people are quite reserved and shy, valuing their privacy, especially while abroad. Therefore, they would feel safer and perhaps more willing to participate after being invited through their embassy.

#### **4.6 – The Pilot**

The pilot study was particularly useful in providing ideas and approaches that were not considered before. It was carried out with four student sojourners: three male and one female, studying at the American International University in London. Three of the pilot students were living in London and the other in Glasgow. All four students had been in the UK for less than a year. Outlining the main purpose of my study, in a personal email, I emailed seven Emirati students in the London area. Of the small number of potential participants four replied and agreed to meet me individually in the student common room. I encouraged this location on campus to establish a comfortable setting; that is, when privacy was available. When disturbed

by distractions, as in the case of the interviews with two participants, the session was moved to my office, on the third floor of the same building. These students attended the university where I was a lecturer however none of them were enrolled in any of my classes; therefore, there were no conflict of interest or hierarchy concerns. As a lecturer at the university, office space and the common rooms were available for interviews. I recorded all interviews on tape and transcribed them after each meeting.

The opportunity to refine my methodology and interview questions (Appendix 1) in the pilot study was especially helpful, providing me with ideas and approaches that were not considered before. Some of the questions seemed appropriate when they were being formulated, however, those same questions did not prove very effective when being asked. This common finding was in line with Breakwell et al. (2006), they warned that ‘there are traps lurking for you when you formulate questions, however, there are also traps waiting for you when you ask them.’

Other pilot learning included post-pilot changes to my study’s formalities: clarifying interview structures, setting up specific atmospheric conditions (e.g. presentation of ‘compensation’ to students), and/or similarly, adjusting to Emirati cultural standards, preferences and comfort. Questions that only prompted a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer, were changed to encourage greater cultural commentary, limit short-answers and encourage depth; ‘Do you like living in the UK?’ as a question, for example, was changed into ‘What do you like about living in the UK?’

Certain peripheral behaviours were observed during the pilot were worthy of consideration in order to more effectively conduct the main interviews for the study. This was evidenced in the relationship with time, compensation and mixed gender interaction.

The interviewees’ relationship with time in both the pilot and later in the main study was one of the first cultural patterns I observed while conducting the interviews. Emirati sojourners consistently arrived late for the meeting and were not overly apologetic about their lack of punctuality. The students were further not particularly concerned with any other time restraints. To allow for tardiness, therefore, I allocated more time during each interview than initially intended or foreseen. I noticed that the participants did not like to be restricted with a time limit and when informing the interviewees of the length of the scheduled interview at the beginning of

the session, a few asked ‘Why are you in a hurry?’ One reason for the dissatisfaction of timing concerns exhibited by participants is likely due to the sense of pride Emirati students expressed about being an Emirati and welcoming the opportunity to talk about who they are and where they have come from. Culturally, Emiratis also have a ‘relaxed’ relationship with time, being more concerned with the process and experience rather than the outcome or dictated deadline.

Interestingly when interviewing sojourners, there seemed to be little concern about time, whereas further into my repatriate interviews, ‘time’ was an issue and a somewhat expected yet unanticipated theme with bicultural speculations. When back in the UAE, repatriates expressed and exhibited having gained a sense of ‘UK structured time’ approaches, such as ‘being on time’. These ideas are further elaborated upon in *Chapter 5*. In an attempt to try to address scheduling for main interviews, I told interviewees that the time for the interview would take approximately one hour, rather than specifying, as in the pilot, that 45 minutes should be allocated. This slight variation in the announcement of time keeping may have encouraged a more relaxed and culturally-considerate atmosphere in the main interviews.

Another interesting cultural pattern that emerged during the pilot was the participants’ resistance to accept any kind of compensation for their time. This was meant to be only in the form of a coffee or beverage, as a gesture of good will for the time that students put aside to participate in this research. Even this small offering seemed to be ‘too much’, further raising the issue of Emirati student privileges and status, and their values towards accepting assistance. The men were particularly offended when suggested ideas of compensation and would not entertain any other options other than sometimes accepting a coffee during the interview process.

The last and only female participant in my pilot study also rejected the offer for compensation. However, she showed less obvious signs of feeling offended. After the pilot and in the main study, the students were not offered any form of ‘time compensation’. Instead, in the email that the embassy finalised and sent out, inviting the major list of Emiratis to participate in the officialised interviews, I politely directed that it should be mentioned that students would be ‘invited for an afternoon beverage and snack’ while answering some questions about studying in the UK. This refined approach in relaying the atmosphere seemed more culturally accommodating to the Emirati student sojourners, whereby I, as the researcher, could be seen as

socially 'hosting' and being hospitable, more than 'compensating'. Still, only some students accepted this offer.

#### **4.7 –Main Study Design**

Through applying the methodological plan, construction for a reliable interview process proceeded so that participants responses could be: (1) encoded and transcribed; (2) deconstructed for analysis, themes and ideas; and (3) put into statements with correlating cultural commentary, whereby shared social realities were categorised into relevant sections of the sojourn cycle. To answer the research questions, this study aimed to capture the varying expression and experiences constructed by Emiratis, as well as their modes and underlying meaning of expression during interviews; that is, furthermore, within varying themes and sub-themes brought forth. Substantiating this angle, Kvale (1996) defined qualitative research interviews as 'attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations' (Kvale, 1996, p. 1). At the same time, however, interviews that are completely open-ended and/or unstructured can be too intensive and demanding (Creswell, 1994).

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted so that the respondents were offered the time and scope to talk about their opinions and experiences. In designing an interview suitable for the research aims and objectives, I felt that semi-structured interviewing was preferable to structured interviewing, since the variability that thematic analysis hosts, is often stifled by too many pre-set questions (Potter, 1998). This too was observed in my pilot study, whereby during a fluid and flexible conversation, where tangents are encouraged to reveal unexpected parts of identity, participants felt more relaxed and open to elaborate. Likewise, in qualitative research, random talk or going off on tangents is encouraged and necessary, giving insight into what the interviewee might not have found to be relevant or important before the interview (Patton, 2002).

Having the privilege of the UAE embassy aiding in my sample acquirement allowed easy access to interviewees. Ideally, a population sample of research should be made up of individuals who are representative of the population under investigation. Emirati students from the four UAE regions, as discussed in Chapter 2, not only share Emirati-specific cultural identity, but also are

reflective of the modernisation in the country's infrastructure, formulating government sponsorship and community encouragement for studying abroad. Interviews were conducted to fulfil the aim of my direct research, exploring ways in which Emirati students perceived and talk about their acculturative process while in the UK and upon return to their country of origin.

Interviews with participants in the UK drew out specific factors related to the acculturative process of the Emirati student sojourner experience. Interviews conducted in the UAE, explored repatriation issues for Emirati graduates, upon returning to their country of origin from the UK, along with strategies they spoke about, used to minimise the challenges of re-entry. In line with the nature of qualitative interview methods, the interview schedule responded to the direction in which the interviewees, fluidly shared. At times, even adjusting the semi-focused questions were required for the conversation to be steered into a new specific focus, resulting in related, but previously unvisited issues emerging.

The sojourner group was interviewed using the first two research questions as the main focus:

- (1) What aspects, if any, of the Emirati cultural identity are perceived by participants as being altered during their time as students in the UK?
- (2) What strategies do Emirati students identify as being helpful during the acculturation process while in the UK?

The repatriate group was interviewed using the last two researcher questions as the main focus:

- (3) What challenges, if any, Emirati students identify/perceive while talking of readjusting in their home country upon return?
- (4) What strategies do Emirati students use during the repatriation process after returning to the Emirates?

Rather than conducting interviews in the university common room, as in the pilot study, I invited the students to my London office, so as not to be distracted and mainly to assure a safe, private and comfortable atmosphere. As I shared an office with 2 other colleagues, it was only during those times the room was occupied that we then sat in an empty common room, or selected another on or off site premise similarly suitable. Overall, the meeting places of the interview were negotiated and depended on the location of the student and the selection of a convenient setting, in both London and the UAE. Sometimes they took place in a quiet and comfortable café. Whether in the UK or the UAE, the main environmental condition was to create a feeling of ‘majles’, an Arab understanding for a traditional family room in which people gather to commune. Weiss (1994) substantiates this environmental and participant focus, accentuating that a positive relationship is vital to the success of any interview because if the respondent is tense, his/her responses might be affected.

At the same time, formality and objectivity were considered, as well as comfort. I kept in mind that we were not there to exchange information, but I was there to extract it. However, the Emirati culture is one that is collective and prides itself on generosity, hospitality and social graces; therefore, it was very important to establish trust and comfort with small talk and coffee or tea before beginning. Diving straight into a dispassionate setting might have intimidated the Emirati participants. While I allocated on average, an hour of time for each of the interviews, again, some discussions took longer due to personal and external interruptions, such as students answering their phones or some, having more to share.

#### **4.8 – Processes for Transcription and Analysis**

All interviews were transcribed between 2008-2010. Since Emirati participants spoke in English, although from time to time inserting Arabic words and phrases, transcription of text was quite a straightforward process. In accordance to the requirements presented by a number of thematic analysts (Potter and Wetherell, 1994; Curtis, 1997; Silverman, 2001; Braun and Clarke, 2006), my transcription procedures of the full interviews involved close scrutiny of data, through repeated listening to the recordings. A more structured account of the analytical process is presented earlier in this chapter in section 4.2.3.

Since I am familiar with the Emirati accent, I rarely came across any inaudible or incomprehensible words. In any areas of confusion regarding what respondents said, I asked for clarification at the time of the interview. Recordings were clear and of good quality. The more I listened, the more familiar I became with the data. All the questions were significant, so I paid close attention to what was being said, how it was being said and how it was also being described, rather than just listening for answers to the questions asked. Through meticulous analysis, and also in my encoding and decoding, I was able to gradually hear the ideas, themes and sub-themes emerging.

I recorded the interviews on a portable recording machine. Any explanation that repeated through narratives added to my study's immediate reliability in larger framework (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). The data collected was transcribed directly after examining all the content with a keen eye for underlying thematic meaning and construction. In the time frame that the total interviews were being conducted, I was transcribing audiotapes in order to try to facilitate the analytic process. Original transcribing was done in sets of four (interviews), as soon as the interviews were recorded. My basic transcribing, through repetitive listening, resulted in an initial 4 hours per every 1 hour of talk. During encoding, decoding and analysis steps further, I revisited the transcripts throughout many hours to meet the requirements of thematic analysis.

Transcribing the interviews during the same period as the interviewing process (as opposed to transcribing them once all interviews had been completed) was helpful in further determining the usefulness of my research questions both before and after proceeding interviews having certified an assessment of response types, first produced in sets of prior data. In this way, I could make and also apply any necessary and additional changes, where applicable, in future sets. I found listening on multiple levels immensely important during the interview processes. I did not write too many notes, instead I listened to dialogue and stayed focused and engaged with the main interview processes.

I noticed that the use of the phrase 'I don't know/ dunno' in talk, for example, was frequently spoken by Emirati participants in this study. As I acknowledged from previous research, the phrase can mean different things in changing contexts and cultural settings. When this is a recurrent pattern, the thematic view does not accept that this is a simple claim that the

participants lack knowledge regarding a particular matter, but instead, infers that it may be an indication, a cultural commentary that the speaker does not want to answer a question, feels ashamed or uncertain about the topic, or may require more encouragement to elaborate. Emirati participants may be more cautious and using what I refer to as a speech 'seat belt' when describing their experiences. What comes before and follows the 'I don't know' was therefore connected and listened to carefully, first during interviews and again on recordings, to help in constructing its meaning.

During re-listening of tapes and re-reading transcription of interviews, all following and connecting notes were kept in a nearby file. Multiple copies of the transcripts were made so that I could highlight and code them as they were being analysed.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, deductive thematic analysis was chosen for this study to remain in line with epistemological approach and theoretical framework. Deductive thematic analysis requires as the first step to keep the research questions in mind, so that the data could be checked for relevant answers and descriptions. I used a different highlighter colour to pick out text applicable for each question. Next, the different colours were cut and pasted into their own categories. For example, a blue highlighter was designated to underline parts in the text where Emirati student sojourners talk about the main features of their cultural identity or sub-themes. Then, the blue parts of the text from all participants were cut and pasted under the heading of 'Emirati Cultural Identity.'

Themes were not selected only based on research questions. Interesting findings through the content of data and information shared by participants, relevant to the questions being asked, deserved to also be considered and classified. During my analysis, I noted that there were parts, in the transcripts, of information that were not relevant thematically or did not have any particular significance. My analysis processes extended simultaneously between wider themes and individual responses. A multitude of these thematic analysis processes were repeated throughout the data analysis. Re-reading the original text, without the highlighted parts, was a useful way of picking up parts that may have had been previously overlooked. I constantly returned to the thematic categories, re-evaluated headings, changed them, inserted more

information and removed irrelevant texts in order to try to ensure clarity, applicability and genuineness.

Themes were identified, named and used as the main analytic tool. I extracted words and themes manually by continual questioning the texts to determine variation in a text and among texts, seeking emphasis and detail. I then sifted through the data, looking at what emerged as to what matched together, what was fitting and which points stood out. The selected texts, I share in my thesis, come mostly from those who elaborated and provided longer answers and descriptions, which could further be more deeply analysed and brought forth from statements into cultural commentary. Perhaps those students, who provided greater detail, felt their English was slightly better and, therefore, felt more comfortable elaborating on their responses and thoughts. As Seale (1999) supports, in regard to text selection, it is good research practice to be faithful to a text's overall meaning; there is no necessity to account for every text on a particular subject.

I did not use programs or other types of technological software, such as NVivo, as an analytic tool for this research because I wanted to be more personally and manually involved in the data, as well as the procedural stages. Even though a technologically processed and thorough audit of data would have added another dimension of rigour to my analysis, and the value of such tools is acknowledged, it may have subtracted from the more manual method I engaged in, scrutinising both themes and variability more broadly.

This final step was to weave together the analytic findings and data extracts, and contextualising the analysis in relation to existing literature, which was done in chapters 5 and 6.

#### **4.9 – Courtesies for Participant Review**

During the interview debriefing, all students were informed that upon completion of this study, a summary of the research would be sent to them, if requested. One of the students asked whether or not she could also have a copy of the transcribed interview. Exploring the different dimensions of the semi-structured interview approaches in the literature, I had encountered McNiff's (1988) suggestion that to return transcripts to participants is a sound research practice. It increases the validity of the findings, also encouraging participants to verify that they have said what they meant, or not. It also gives them the opportunity to extract statements with which they

are not comfortable. It is an approach based on the philosophy of participation, transparency, cooperation and openness and therefore, appeared to be suitable for my research and also in line with my ethical guidelines.

Although I did not offer the opportunity for correction or resubmission of answers, since this would be problematic on a number of levels. To begin with, correction of testimony cannot be offered for some and not others. Returning verbatim interview transcripts to participants, in my study, did not prove to be an effective option at all. Due to the transcription symbols I used along with my personalised analytic codes, the participant who received a transcription as requested was quite confused. She assumed her linguistic expression was inaccurate and full of correction, causing an unnecessary moment of insecurity. Kvale (1996) spoke about likely problems with returning transcripts, such as the one similar to what I encountered, when he cautions that participants may experience disbelief when reading their own interview, specifically due to transcribing. He also warns that if oral language, when transcribed, appears as incoherent or confused speech, participants may feel that they are being portrayed as having a lower level of intellectual functioning and that they may sound incomprehensible.

Therefore, for the rest of the my study's participants I decided on one of the alternative approaches discussed by Kvale (1996) in this regard: (1) translation of the spoken word into an acceptable written format while maintaining the participant's general modes of expression, or (2) summarising the main points of the interview and returning these only, for authentication. For the first participant who requested and questioned the coding, I did the latter and she immediately found clarification and was put at ease. Dearnley (2005) agreed that some participants find it embarrassing, like she seemed to at first, but are not always particularly distressed by it. When two additional participants requested the full document when completed, I then agreed, also as per Kvale's first alternative. I reiterate that the style of transcription selected in any study should be given careful consideration, relevant to the study being conducted and suitable for the participants involved, also for their review and reflection, cross-culturally. These issues were addressed at the planning stages and I revisited them throughout the study to ensure appropriateness.

#### **4.10 – The Role of the Researcher**

It was important for me to consider that the potential of bias was a possibility in my study arising from the time I lived in the UAE. Finlay (1998) argued the word 'bias' implies that an unequivocal reality exists, which can be distorted by subjective interpretation. The alternative view is that multiple realities exist, rather than a single, unequivocal reality and endorses the positive impact of subjectivity, rather than rejecting it as bias. This is founded in social constructionist theories and I speculate that my time spent in the UAE and the interviewees' awareness of my experience with their culture might have had some effect on my research. However, engaging in reflexive activity directly makes it possible to turn the issue of subjectivity into an opportunity (Finlay, 1998); and in this view, it is supposed that personal reflection allows a researcher like myself, to identify with the participants, allowing to more readily understand the views of the Emirati student sojourners.

From a methodological point of view, reflectivity of the researcher goes beyond research dialogue or development, since the interpretations of the transcripts by the researcher are as important, as the responses presented (Potter and Wetherell, 1994). The way in which Emirati participants reacted to aspects of my identity (Middle-Eastern, Iranian Muslim) was first identified through the pilot study, however, noted throughout all interviews. Within Emirati culture, there is a high degree of power distance between people in society (Hofstede, 2003). Students have a great respect for professors and are quite formal in the way they communicate with them, often weighing their thoughts, words and answers quite carefully before speaking. Emirati Students do not always question authority because they are taught to trust the experience of their elders and those in social status positions. This does not mean that the students did not share true accounts of their opinions, thoughts or experiences. On the contrary, many Emirati student sojourners and repatriates were more than eager to talk about their somewhat 'English' lifestyles. However, the way in which they presented that information was formal and with respect, for example, seen through complete avoidance of profanities.

I must further acknowledge, however, the Emirati sojourners still may have been inclined to hold back even the simplest of revealing statements which (a) they do not think of explaining in-depth naturally and/or assumed was too obvious, or (b) may have considered sharing any taboo and/or

religiously inappropriate experience, in depth, as socially risky. Detection of the dissolution of some content in my interviews came about after the first participant repeated the phrase, ‘well, you know what I mean,’ or ‘you know what it’s like (there).’ I had to be careful extracting concrete and fuller data and so, simply stated that although I may have an inclination about what is being said, I would be more interested to hear the details from the Emirati student. Doing so reinforced the main aim of the session, which was again, about obtaining information rather than exchanging information. I also believe that when I informed the students during the interview, that I myself had been living in the UK for 15 years, any reason for them to ‘save face’ and/or cover taboo situations up, may have been eliminated.

Another interesting connection between researcher, participant and shared cultural awareness, is in regard to my gender. It was clearly observed by male participants who, in Islamic cultural practice and UAE culture, respectfully, at times, took a long while to make direct eye contact (despite again, being that we were in the UK). There was specifically the distinction that their lack of eye contact was not because they were nervous or uncomfortable, but because perhaps a female was in their presence.

#### **4.11 - Research, Reliability, Validity and Results**

When considering the reliability and validity of the chosen methodology for this research, the criteria for deductive thematic analysis may be different than other qualitative tools (Clarke and Kitinger, 2004; Braun and Clark, 2006). The central focus here is placed upon the deciding which aspects of the data should count as a theme. In other words, how prevalent should a particular response be before it can be considered as a significant pattern? Since there is no specific formula in regards to proportion of data or number of responses, the researchers needs to constantly refer to the research questions as well as objective of the study in order to ascertain the importance and necessity of a particular theme to determine whether something important is being captured and discussed.

Reality is thereby constantly changing and thus should be checked, and/or cross-checked with existing field frameworks, however contextualised, as I do in Chapter 6. This point, as Nikander (1995) supported, further claims, ‘explicating the dynamics and dilemmas of people’s active

sense making, the detail of people's practices of categorisation, accounting and explaining, all lie at the heart of this analytic task'.

Subjective interpretations by both the participants and the researcher should achieve the initial goal set by this research, of trying to explore the culture identity dynamics of the Emirati international student sojourner and to demonstrate that findings can be generalised and may have meaning and relevance if linked to other individuals, contexts and situations. Since thematic analysis is more involved in relativist intent, different interpretations and levels of meaning only add to the inquiry rather than reduce its reliability.

The question of reliability also raises the issue of whether different researchers would interpret the text in similar ways. According to Stratton (1997), there is no guarantee that such reliability is possible, given that researchers are likely to differ in their 'motivational factors, expectations, familiarity, avoidance of discomfort' (p.116). For that reason it is acknowledged that the interpretations of the data for this study are subjective and another researcher may interpret the data differently. Since this method is more involved in relativist intent, different interpretations and levels of meaning only add to the inquiry, rather than reduce its reliability. Text extracts are a necessary basis for the researcher's argumentation in the research report and they also provide the linguistic evidence for the researcher's interpretations (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). What Emirati students said was examined as their intention to convey a particular message and, therefore, reliability and validity should be assessed based on the depth of analysis.

My sample of Emirati participants categorised between the two groups (i.e. sojourners and repatriates), were given an opportunity through interviews to describe what cultural identity means to them, what its main components are and how that aspect of their identity is impacted when they have placed themselves in a different social setting. Within these narratives, in each stage throughout the methodological plan, a different story emerged; the significance of that story and its value should be considered irrespective of consistent stipulations (Potter, 1998). I often examined what Emirati students said, and reflect on what their intention was in conveying a particular message.

As the demographic sample populations in this study are small and focused, a re-sampling and mimicked interview process would likely textualise similar cultural commentary, validating research and also re-focusing reliability. Through employment of deductive thematic analysis, it was predicted that this study would be able to capture richer information from both the bigger picture and its participants through some of the ways in which they talked about their sojourn experience. Themes therefore contribute to allowing greater clarity and structure and provided a stronger glimpse into descriptions of intertwining complex social worlds. Full results of the analysis of the data on the Emirati sojourn cycle, with systematic decoding for theme emergence, detailed interpretation and insight, are considered and discussed in Chapter 5.

## **Chapter 5: Findings**

### **5.1 - Emerging Themes**

This chapter presents the exegesis of the Emirati responses made throughout the interview process, which are necessary to gain insight into aspects of their cultural identity, acculturative experiences and repatriation concerns after graduation. This critical interpretation and explanation of the data were guided by deductive thematic analysis, carefully postulating why certain ideas recurred in order to connect the most significant themes relevant to the research questions and those themes that developed through the content of the data.

Chapter 5 shares and reflects on sojourner and/or repatriate dialogue from the interviews, highlighting researcher analysis. When a response was echoed by a proportion of other participants, an exploration of the point and how this could be supported by what was in the text is explained.

The examples I have chosen to incorporate are displays sampled in representing re-occurring themes and/or dialogue in data collection. In other words, what one sojourner and/or repatriate vocalised was often echoed by ten or more of the participants by both groups, and so accordingly only one, sometimes two, clear extracts are shown in this chapter, reflecting that particular perspective.

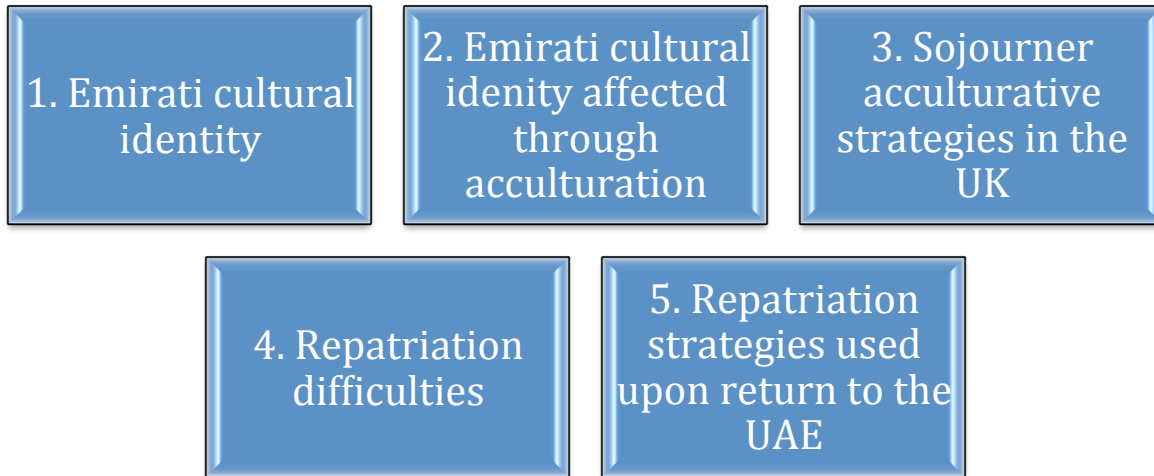
I analysed participant responses to identify answers to the research questions being asked as guided by deductive thematic analysis, as well as look for other significant emergent themes in order to deeply explore the responses and bring to light some of the more underlying components. I extracted words and themes manually by continual questioning the transcripts from the interviews to determine variation in a text and among texts, seeking emphasis and detail. I then sifted through the data, looking at what emerged as to what matched together, what was fitting and which points stood out. These findings were then reviewed, categorised according to named themes and evaluated. The selected responses, I share in my thesis, come

mostly from those who elaborated and provided longer answers and descriptions, which could further be more deeply analysed and brought forth from statements into cultural commentary.

These results have been categorised into five different themes:

- **1<sup>st</sup> Theme** - ‘Emirati Cultural Identity.’ I analyse Emirati student sojourner data relevant to the exploration of significant characteristics in Emirati cultural identity. Both Emirati international student sojourners in the UK and those repatriated provided responses linked to their cultural identity.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Theme** – ‘Emirati Cultural Identity, Affected through Acculturation.’ I explore changes in Emirati cultural identity, linked to the acculturative experience, through both direct reference and layered analysis. These are mostly responses from the Emirati international student sojourners in the UK.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Theme** - ‘Sojourner Acculturative Strategies, in the UK.’ I go on further to reflect strategies that Emirati student sojourners spoke about using, during their time acculturating to the host country, the UK. These are mostly responses from the Emirati international student sojourners in the UK.
- **4<sup>th</sup> Theme** - ‘Difficulties Encountered in Returning Home.’ I noted difficulties Emiratis described, regarding the repatriation process when they returned to the UAE
- **5<sup>th</sup> Theme** - ‘Repatriation Strategies used upon Return to the UAE.’ Finally, I address strategies that the Emirati repatriates identify as being helpful in re-adjusting to their country of origin. These are responses from the Emirati international student repatriates in the UAE.

*Figure 9 – Five main emergent themes in relation to the sojourn cycle*

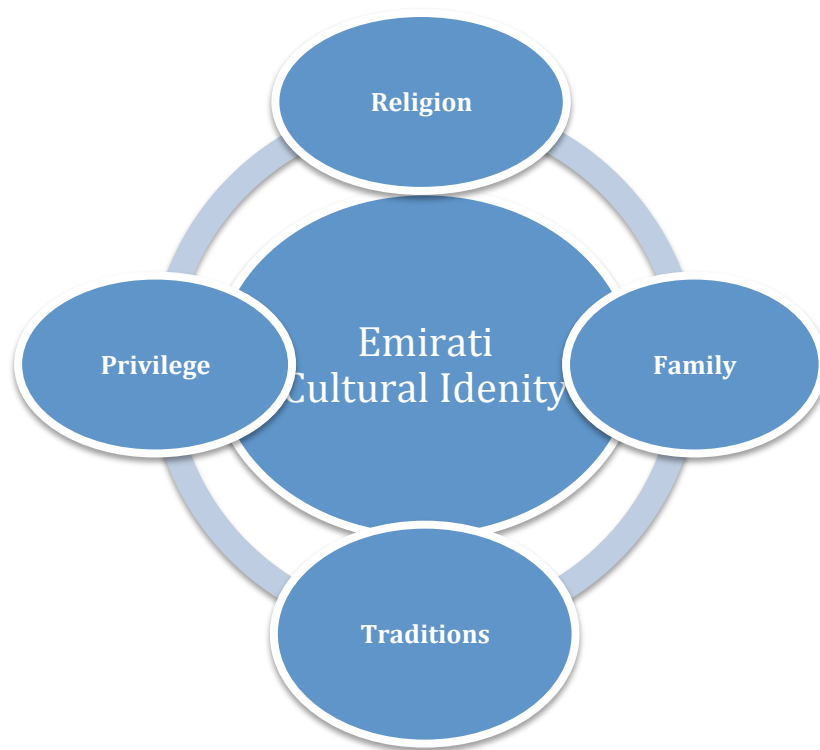


## **5.2 – Theme #1**

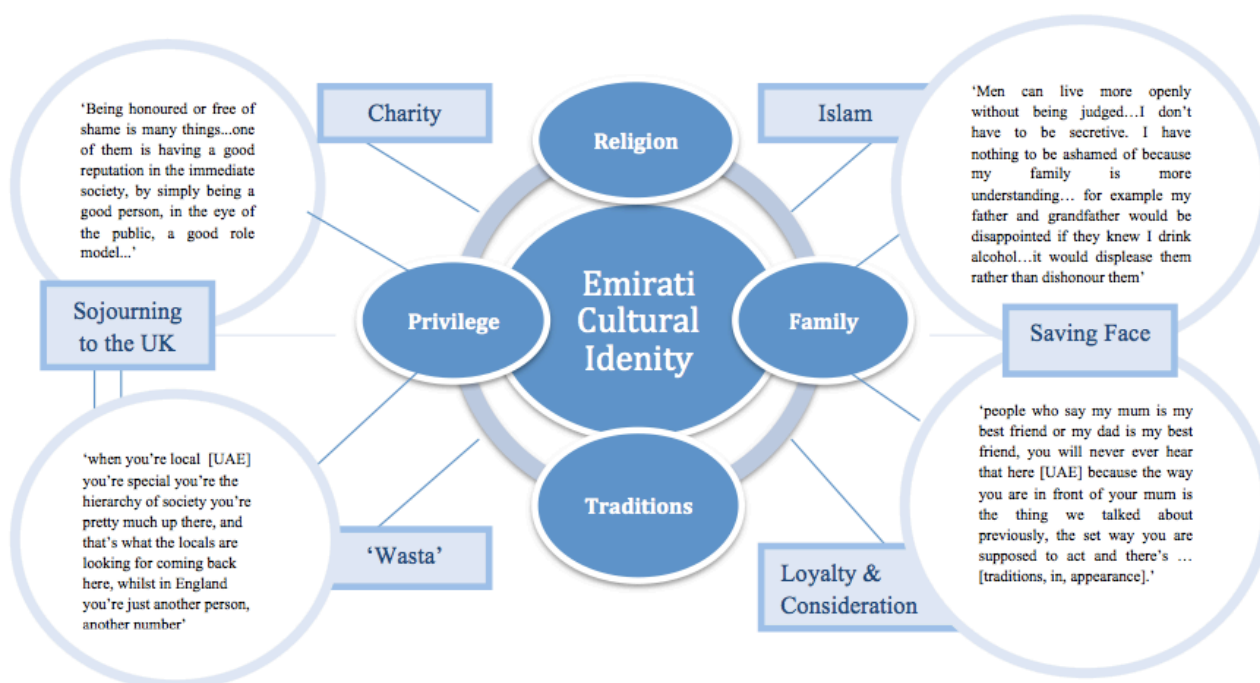
### **Emirati Cultural Identity**

After careful inspection of the responses from Emirati sojourners, four key sub-themes of their cultural identity emerged. These are: (1) religion, (2) traditions and values, (3) family and (4) privilege. The two diagrams display (1) the four main sub-themes accentuated as underlying components to Emirati cultural identity (*Figure 10a*); and (2) an example of threaded themes, responses and extended links, around Emirati identity and sojourner responses which emerged from analysis of the interviews which I also found in data (*Figure 10b*):

***Figure 10a: Four Main Sub-themes of Emirati Cultural Identity.***



**Figure 10b: Schematic View of the main emergent components of Emirati Cultural Identity**



### 5.2.1 –Sub-theme #1: Focus on Religion

While the UAE may be a flourishing modern multi-cultural society, it is still a society framed around the laws and practices of Islam. As noted by Hammad (1989), Islam is not a religion that has certain prescribed principles that its followers might adhere to occasionally: Islam is a way of life for the majority of the people from the Gulf, including Emiratis. To begin with, Islamic principles affect dietary habits, modesty and clothing, prayer rituals, good will, charity and various festivals and occasions. For the Emirati student sojourners and repatriates, religion is a core moulding mechanism of one's self-concept and interdependent self-construal, both individually and socially within the cultural context.

Throughout the interviews, (Emirati sojourner and repatriate participants were Sunni Muslims, reflecting the majority of the Emirati population) signalled to religion as one of the most prominent aspects of their Emirati cultural identity. Not only do they associate Islam with social, public and private practices, they also see it as a way of being, not just living. Although many principles of Islam are adhered to through Shari'a (divine law) in the UAE, it is not forced by the government as in neighbouring countries like Saudi Arabia, which participants also commented on. They denoted that Islam for Emiratis is a proud birthright and choice:

#### ***Extract 1.1A***

*Islam isn't just our religion. I am a Muslim so it's who I am. From all the different ways, mmm my religion has shaped me.*

A sojourner here states that Islam is a fundamental part of identity (i.e. 'it's who I am'). There is a contextualisation within this excerpt that Islam is not 'just' a religion, but being 'Muslim' is also a clear authentication of Emirati identity. The participant states religion has 'shaped me'; alluding to finding that religion is an inherent architect of the interviewee, affecting him holistically. This is an important distinction in the case of the cultural identity for the Emirati student, substantiating that even whilst Emirati sojourners may not as actively practice their religion in the UK at times, 'Islam' and being 'Muslim', as this participant stated, is a central important part of the student's identity.

In sojourner responses, emphasis was laid on the term ‘Muslim’, as opposed to the word ‘Arab’ when labelling themselves. This suggests further, that religion may be used as an ethnic marker for Emiratis, also more so than nationality (i.e. or ‘being Emirati’) to some degree, especially while abroad. By distinguishing between the terms ‘Islam’ (as a religion) and ‘Muslim’ (as an identity), the participant furthers conversation that religion is something private, not public; and that religion is not gained through attending a mosque, but is rather perhaps, a direct and chosen extension of identity.

Although Dobbelaere (1999) and Lambert (1998) argued that a binding force of national selfhood and ethnic identity is lost with religion becoming increasingly ‘privatised’ in the western world: this study, however, confirms that Emiratis do not abandon their habits and beliefs in religiosity and/or cultural nationalism, when leaving the UAE to the UK, but rather strengthen their faith. As Brink (1993) further supported by stating, private boundaries of religiosity signify various aspects of beliefs, dedication and religious activity. For Emiratis religion is both private and public, whereby it is congruent with their daily and most intimate lives.

In discussing how their religiosity remained intact regardless of place, many Emirati students and repatriates compared their affiliation to Islam with neighbouring nations such as Saudi Arabia, Iran and Bahrain:

***Extract 1.1B***

*We’re not like Saudi or Iran. We love our religion and we don’t think it is forced, on us anyway so even if we are in hmmm Hawaii (laughs) or somewhere, still we are Muslim.*

Accordingly, with extract 1.1b, the use of the word ‘force’ (in regard to variability of religious practices), suggested a comparison in that Emiratis may not agree with nationally regimented and sometimes regime-like religiosity in neighbouring and nearby countries in the Gulf. As a significant occurring theme point, Emiratis, identified with Gulf counterparts in being ‘Muslim’;

however, repeatedly established differentiation for their religiosity and religious identity components, valuing Islam as a choice.

Noting an awareness and caution for current stereotypes existing in association to Islam and the Gulf (often perpetuated by the few regimes that implement forceful tactics on national populations), most Emiratis, especially whilst in the UK, considered how to appropriately display religious elements in their identity. What this also emphasised is that Emiratis are more independent of thought, in their responses, than Iranians or Saudis where certain Islamic practices, such as wearing the veil is governmentally enforced and this undoubtedly has a major impact on wider identity forming. For example, if they are more secure in their faith, then they will be more willing to take social risks, which might challenge their Islamic beliefs, happier in the knowledge that they will remain Muslim.

As the participant in extract 1.1b states, whether in ‘Hawaii’ or ‘somewhere’, religion is engrained in Emirati identity. Both the modernisation process, as well as the time spent in the UK brings about a certain amount of transformation to the cultural identity of the people of this young country. The exchanges between sojourner and home-country structures and/or re-integration processes might also attribute to some cases of identity confusion or ‘dilemmas’, a point explored throughout this study, which can later enhance displacement and/or trigger adaptation concerns (Bhatia and Ram, 2001; Bosma and Kunnen, 2001; Kanagawa et al., 2001; Benet-Martinez et al., 2002; Brice, 2002; Del Pilar and Udasco, 2004; Kosic, 2004; Benet-Martinez and Haritatos, 2005; Constantine et al., 2004; Coatsworth et al., 2005; Constantine et al., 2005; Berry, 2006a; Tadmor, 2006; Bikos et al., 2007; Christofi and Thompson, 2007; Hendry et al., 2007).

How to maintain Islamic practices, without being judged is one of the first cultural dilemmas that emerged:

***Extract 1.1C***

*The impression I get from people is that they all think we are very close-minded and all of us are extremely conservative. I see it like even the most conservative people here are more open minded than the people in England. I mean most people here have gone to England they have travelled and they have experienced their culture and said 'you know I like our culture better' they've been exposed to both and then and they said 'no I like our culture, I like the way I live' whereas in England they haven't experienced that, they haven't come here and seen what is like and still they have judgement. We have a choice and at the end of the day I'm very proud of our religion.*

The participant in extract 1.1c further conveyed that Emiratis are socialised to celebrate their cultural identity, inherent to these larger social frameworks focused in collective practices. At the same time, by 'psychologically filtering' experience in social-interaction and social-preferences, the Emirati sojourner who temporarily adheres to UK social systems, is actually abiding to points of core Emirati cultural identity; that is, thinking for and/or in terms of the in-group of variance.

There may be a temporary or maintained change between primary and secondary socialisations and exploring through acculturative experiences, but regardless, Emirati sojourners behave in accordance with the majority they respect. So long as the core Islamic principles are followed, then the Emirati student sojourners are more open to making compromises with smaller hierarchical Islamic standards for dietary habits and/or drinking practices, for example. These are perceived as minor, in other words in comparison with the body of beliefs in Islamic structure, therefore, they are filtered as sometimes acceptable.

There seems to be a strong feeling amongst Emiratis of identification with religion and the religious community, signified by the use of the word 'we' instead of 'I', denoting a distinct cultural identity marked by religion. De Fina (1995) conducted a study which found that the predominance of use of the word 'we' as self-reference shows that the speaker is not speaking as

an individual, but that his/her words point to a principle, that is the group or organisation that he has come to represent. On the other hand, when self-referencing is realised mostly with the pronoun, I, the speaker is expressing high commitment to the words that he is saying and, therefore, stressing the dimension of authorship as the most relevant in his speech. This was one of the most common recurring themes where sojourners and repatriate participants would answer in the plural form, with pronouns like 'we' or 'us'.

Confident in knowledge that the sojourn is a learning experience, Emirati students and graduates explain that as they were born Muslim, they remain a proud Muslim, even when sampling western systems and lifestyles. Emiratis willing to 'explore' while abroad feel empowered to sometimes discern surface religiosity from acts of deep devotion.

***Extract 1.1D***

***(Researcher Question) You said devotion but you also said religious, so is devotion to religion part of the Emirati character?***

*(Participant Answer)*

*Yes it's much more here than it is in a lot of the other Gulf States...it's a lot more, it's a lot more than Bahrain Kuwait Qatar. In Saudi it's almost forced down there cuz the girls leave Saudi they take off their hijabs, they take off their abaya and these things but the girls here when they travel they keep it, ya they keep it but at the same time, my sisters when they go out of UAE, they'll take it off. When I was on the plane going back I saw a lot of girls with hijabs on the shoulders and when they came in the airport they put it on.*

***(Researcher Question) – So, have things changed slightly?***

*(Participant Answer, Dialogue Continued)*

*Yes very much, I mean 5 years ago you would never see that, my sisters did it because they are rebels!*

As extract 1.1d also substantiated, in comparing Emirati women to other Gulf nationalities, Emiratis maintain core aspects or similar key ‘points’ of Islam. For example, the shifting of the ‘abaya’ (the silk black covering women wear in the Gulf to cover their head and body) to the shoulders rather than regimentally covering the head and hair at all times.

Sometimes worried about anti Islamic sentiment, structural religious sacrifices and small adjustments are essential considerations for Emirati sojourners who live in a western country, whereby any still existing negative stereotypes associated with unique identity religious components can activate unnecessary fear and/or anger locally. In my collection of student statements, references included dialogue such as *‘being abroad gives you a better idea of how others perceive Islam...I feel sometimes more vulnerable and insecure [due to stereotypes]’*. For the Emirati sojourner, even ‘others’ can be ‘objects of relation.’ This means that Emiratis who highlight differences and even sometimes still marginalise, in a broader sense of Emirati cultural identity, see extensions of people, even varying groups, as connected.

Yet there is still the distinction of difference. Another participant claimed, *‘being in a mosque back home I feel protected and more close to my community’*. In regard to making acculturative adjustments and contextualising religious identity components, one sojourner further explained:

***Extract 1.1E***

*I like to research it [religion] and find answers you know, to all my questions that is what makes me more committed, but I like to be flexible regarding the rules and everything and not extreme. We are not extreme.*

This extract is interesting, especially because of certain words used which were echoed by other participants. These are ‘answers’, ‘questions’, ‘committed’, ‘flexible’ and ‘extreme.’ In just a few sentences the student has expressed opposing sides of these ideas, remaining ‘committed’ to the spectrum in a balanced and flexible manner. Most of the interviewees talked about respecting these differences and also trying to strike a balance.

For student sojourners, religious and cultural identity components seem to transcend geographical boundaries, as one student said: ‘our core norms and values have never actually changed . . . such as very basic values from Islam, since the days of Prophet Mohammed.’ Cultural identity is again seen to be a tapestry, which weaves between points of religion, collective identities and cultural nationalism.

### **5.2.2 –Sub-theme #2: Focus on Family**

Interviewee responses indicted considerable overlap regarding the importance of family within the framework of the Emirati cultural identity. They highlighted the paramount presence of the family and the level of influence they have on each other. Expressions such as ‘we are no one without our family’ and ‘they ask us who is your father before asking who you are,’ were commonly noted in the responses of the students, which demonstrated the importance of familial ties.

#### ***Extract 1.2A***

*I mean, I really am not anybody unless I mention my father’s name. Then the people will say, oh you are so and so’s SON, now we know. After this they will better know how to talk to me or what to say to me. Without knowing my connection to the family, how else, I mean, can they understand who they are talking to?*

In the UAE, family identity, relationships and status are inseparable from personal identity. Emiratis again, have an interdependent self-construal, whereby formalities are groupconstructed. In the above extract, the participant explained, ‘without knowing . . . connection to the family, how else . . . can they understand whom they are talking to?’ In my assessment through thematic patterns of similar dialogue and accompanying statements, the Emirati individual, sojourning and/or repatriating in the UAE, becomes an object in motion between acceptable social practices, cultural expectation and collective family structures.

The above extract denotes an emphasis on the notion of identity firmly rooted in belonging and adherence to a group (in this particular instance, family), in keeping with the ideology of

collectivism. When the interviewee states that ‘I really am not anybody unless...’ a condition is put forth when defining the self and this condition seems to be based on belonging to a group. Similarly in extract 1.1a, the participant referred to her religion and stated it is ‘who I am’; while in this extract the focus is on the family and its contribution to one’s identity. It is important to note that in both extracts, the common theme is the totality of attribution of identification to any particular group (familial or religious) in defining self or identity. The ‘who’ is defined in relation to the group one belongs to within a specified context.

There were commonalities in responses regarding the significance of familial recognition amongst Emirati students. Through the expression of terms, such as ‘they need to know who I am’ and ‘I represent my family’, they once again highlight the interconnectedness of the Emirati to his or her wider network of influence. While most of the Emirati students expressed this connection and recognition to be a positive point, there were incidents where varying opinions surfaced as ‘feelings of constraint.’ The difference in discussion regarding this matter was that a few of the students did not always support this recognition, especially when they preferred not to be known or judged based on their family name. This was either for reasons of wanting to remain anonymous, for fears of engaging in an activity which may not be suitable or appropriate for an Emirati, or when being judged against the bench mark of their familial ranking. Nevertheless, this point actually further substantiates the importance of family, even if it is about evading it.

#### ***Extract 1.2B***

*Umm, sometimes, this isn't a good thing you know. I mean if they know your, father then maybe, they expect more for you. So it is not easy thing (laughs) but I mean sometimes. Like when I want to go to a bar. I don't know, like it's better for me if they don't say. This is Mr so and so's son. I just say my first name if I meet someone.*

In extract 1.2B, there is an apparent desire to escape from group affiliation. The interviewee in the above extract seemed to express a desire to be removed from the familial constraints and the resultant expectations, by wishing to remain anonymous, by not disclosing the influential and recognisable family name (i.e. ‘they expect more from you’). Caught between two notions of respect and the ensuing social expectations, the interviewee is perhaps more deeply wishing to

hide an important aspect of what shapes their identity, like a protective shell, in order to develop a new one. A parallel and more integrative social self in contextualised prohibited behaviour may, therefore, form in addition to the one inherent, but still be felt to be separate. These bicultural identities further extend and present themselves in public and private spaces, simultaneously opening doors and setting the stage for cultural identity dilemmas.

Culturally ‘saving face’ as Emiratis do and as also referenced and exemplified in *figure 4b*, by switching modes of identity and therefore not disclosing names in prohibited activities (overlapping acceptable activities for a more bicultural mind-set perhaps) was central to each person’s identity narrative. Even though there were times when students wanted more individual recognition, the majority of Emirati answers, in regard to family especially, had an undertone of acknowledging a connectivity that is bound with familial obligation and respect for the group.

In the cultural context of Emirati lifestyles, family is moreover an influence exercised upon financial matters. The father is respected as the primary earner and also given a more prominent voice, whereby defying customs and family can lead to being disowned and cut off from family and/or social allowances. Understanding this is integral in understanding why many Emiratis who engage in drinking abroad, for example, still keep it secret from their UAE connections. Family is also involved, in matters of choosing life partners, what line of work Emiratis choose, subjects to study, and deciding where the Emirati sojourner should live (while abroad). Kamali and Al-Simadi (2004) supported this analysis, in explaining that it is evident Emiratis have very close interpersonal relationships and/or close ties with family, relatives and neighbours.

Extract 1.2c highlights further, how ‘the traditional [Emirati] socialisation process emphasises obedience, closeness, and loyalty to parents rather than self-reliance and independence’ (Kamali and Al-Simadi, 2004, p. 20).

### ***Extract 1.2C***

*Family is very important. It is...uhh. One of the pillars of the culture. When the union between your family. Umm it would often be the difference between life and death particularly. Hmm...going back before the time of oil and the modernisation of the area. Your family is your backbone. Whether you got along with them, or whether you didn't get along with them, you*

*would have to somehow depend on them. The closer possibly outer family, like our cousins, cousins and second cousins are, I mean, a big thing in our culture, as distant as it might seem, when someone says I know my second cousin. It's very normal to know them and be close to them, at least in my ethnicity of a UAE national so extremely important. Back then and still today.*

When describing attitudes, values and opinions, as previously discussed, almost all of the Emirati student sojourners frequently used the pronoun 'you' or 'we'. This demonstrates a deeper belief that certain idea should be held, practiced and embraced by everyone, perhaps as absolute realities, not just the Emirati population (e.g. 'you' too). While Emiratis respect diversity and also exercise flexibility in social interactions, their beliefs may be to a high degree valued to be good for everyone, perhaps also in relation to broader frameworks of religion and family group-identity contexts, where a sense of greater community should be extended, universally. In extract 1.2c, and common to other responses, loyalty to family is expressed using powerful viewpoints such as being the difference between life and death, highlighting the sort of 'social death' that could occur if an Emirati were to completely separate themselves from the collective orientation of inner family circles. This indicates that their family is their lifeline because so much of who they are and what their cultural identity is composed of is linked to their familial background. Even though the Emirati family has been affected, to a certain extent, by social transformation, especially in regard to a higher standard of living, higher literacy rates, marginally smaller family sizes and rises in divorce rates, the nuclear family model is still very much characterised by extended relations which is not a feature found in western families residing in that region (El-Haddad, 2003). In contrast, Hall and Du Gay (1996) described the way in which their British colleagues claimed that they do not understand 'what all the fuss is with these familial relationships'. Their family, they said, is a family founded on choice and they are not bound by familial obligations. This is quite a different perception regarding the way in which family influences the individual in the Emirati context.

The Emirati self is greatly embedded in social ties, most especially, family and additional relationships, and 'is marked by sensitivity to situations and social context' (Kanagawa et al., 2001). The students in my study value and respect their membership in Emirati in-groups, by

being concerned with behaving in accordance (1) to what is socially acceptable; (2) to expressly promote harmony and (3) to conforming to the expectations of others. Emirati cultural identity can be described as having an interdependent self-construal (common to many eastern and Islamic cultures); defined as a flexible, variable self that is connected to cultural context (Buda and Elsayed-Elkhoully, 1998). The important components of this self-construal are one's relationships with specific 'others' and with 'in-groups' (Cousins 1989; Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Being accepted by co-members of the Emirati culture is of great importance, also affecting the feeling of belonging (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). When Emiratis change behaviours to fit more independent and socially-interactive structures in the UK, they are integrating with (a) their Emirati community in mind, or (b) the host culture community in mind.

For Emiratis, similar to other studies groups, following advice of social ties and acting in accordance with expectations is usually chosen over fulfilling personal wishes and/or qualities (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994).

### ***Extract 1.2D***

*I am the youngest in the family and the youngest is always the baby in the parents' eyes. Such families in the UAE care very much about their kids. For example, the children here [meaning the UK] leave when they are 18. They have their own life, their own freedom and that's not the way it is for us. Never. (Laughs).*

In comparing family dynamics in the UK and meanwhile stating that the families in the UAE 'care very much about their kids', an implication or social comparison is made suggesting an internal attitude from the sojourner that perhaps western families donot care as much about their children. A sense of superiority in the familial functioning of collectivist cultures is apparent and a very clear distinction is made, emphasised through the statement 'that's not the way it is for us'.

There seems to be an undertone that perhaps this Emirati, not able to leave at 18, or have that particular UK freedom, struggles with some internal desire for more independence from the family. Emiratis during a sojourn (a) exhibit increased appreciation for UAE inner-family

dynamics, and/or (b) while learning independence in the UK, fluctuate in how they feel about their 'own' particular role in the family. Both modes of existence operating together, again, discursively present evidence of managing these two orientations.

Overall, and in a broader framework, the majority of my response analysis thematically imply that sojourners do not lose sight of inner-family values while in the UK.

***Extract 1.2E***

*Maybe it's because they hmm. They want me to succeed and they do this so that they can see their sons and daughters graduating. My parents supported me all my life. Financially and emotionally (and) education. They are there for me. Even when troubled...even if I make a decision, the last word has to be my parents' word. They get involved and decide if it is right or wrong.*

The above vignette suggests again a high level of dependence on parents, including financial and emotional dependence. Yet at the same time when the interviewee states '...even if I make a decision, the last word has to be my parents' word they get involved and decide...' a suggestion seems to be implied that striving for a certain level of independence in decision making is difficult or not possible in keeping with the importance placed on obedience and reverence on parents in the UAE family dynamic. It seems therefore that many of the Emirati students reflect the points discussed by Hammad (1991) saying that 'the Arab family is the centre of all loyalty, obligation and status of its members. The social, psychological and economic security of the Arab individual stems from membership in the extended family and this membership is the primary motivating factor for the decision making of the individual' (Hammad, 1999, p.21).

From all of the interviews conducted, only one student, outspoken about these ideas differed in response about familial ties. Even so, she was selective about her words and was careful in the way she unpacked her answer.

### ***Extract 1.2F***

*Aahh family. I die for them BUT sometimes they kill me! (Laughs). I mean. Aahh how to say, I don't know this so you understand sometimes, ok, I said sometimes ya? I wiiiish maybe I could just be me, not (states her name). But that is me too. But I wonder if I could be just ME, maybe, I might be [a] little different...maybe.*

While the desire to carve out more independence for herself is clear in the participant's statement, she uses *speech seatbelts* to demonstrate more caution in what is being said. This was quite common amongst Emirati participants and therefore I coined the phrase 'speech seatbelts' as a way to refer to their frequent hesitance when responding. The term 'sometimes' is used three times in the short extract, along with other words, such as 'might,' 'maybe' and 'could be'; softening the dialogue, and also limiting prospects of, perhaps, saying something which might be seen as inappropriate in the Emirati culture. To speak directly against one's family in Emirati culture would be counteracting primary socialisation, which would therefore be attributed, perhaps, to exposure to secondary socialisation or UK social understandings over-riding original systems. The interviewee perhaps realises this and is relaxed through her expression in balancing a bicultural identity. In understanding that not everyone is accustomed to the interdependent frameworks Emiratis are captured in, she interestingly 'lifts face', in order to share a less known, yet nevertheless interesting cultural commentary. However, she clearly knows her limitations, as for anything any riskier, in terms of family relations, could have social ramification.

It is also important to note that the interviewee is female. Alnajjar's (1996) study found males' perception of their families and their functioning is more positive than that of females. He concluded that UAE is a male oriented society and therefore, males may be the centre of the family structure. This may be explained in relation to the social context of the UAE, in which people regard males as head of the families, receiving more attention than females and perhaps as a consequence, some females may view the family functioning more negatively. Furthermore, females may feel somewhat controlled or guided by the male members of their family, so wanting to carve out some independence as a way of even momentarily seeming independent, might be the underlying reasons this participant chose to, very carefully, express her views about the significant and sometimes stifling influence of family.

On the other hand, many of the participants talked about the way women in the UAE are honoured, respected and given equal rights through Islam and societal/economic opportunities. ‘We are told that heaven is at the feet of women’ one student explained when highlighting his respect for his mother and other female members of the family. Therefore, Emirati families are immensely protected, preserved and celebrated not only from an earthly perspective, but also one that is divine.

### **5.2.3 –Sub-theme #3: Focus on Traditions and Values**

The following two opening accounts begin to paint the deep-rooted influence that traditions and values have on Emiratis. Emiratis perceive their cultural identity as inseparable from traditions.

#### ***Extract 1.3A***

*Um, I guess to me being an Emirati, it means I have a loyalty not only [to] the geographic area of what makes up the United Arab Emirates, but also a loyalty and connection to the indigenous population, and our traditions and values of this country that existed before the time of oil. And that stay with us even if we are not in our country, that to me is what, what I consider myself, uh to be in regards to being an Emirati...so the very soil, the land, its mountains its rivers, uh the customs of the people, touch everything we do.*

#### ***Extract 1.3B***

*First of all I'd like to talk about tradition; we're very closely attached and bonded to our traditions. Even though they are, even though there are outside factors likely changes but we're still very closely connected to our tradition. Such as accepted behaviour, unacceptable behaviour, norms and expectations of, how to behave is controlled by traditions. Maybe, sometimes even more than religion, I don't know, maybe I am saying.*

Emirati identity extends through history to encompass regional contour, pre-oil and ancestral traditions that existed even before the outlines of Islam. The first participant expresses this unity through identifying with the land of the UAE, ‘so the very soil, the land, its mountains its rivers . . . the customs of the people touch everything . . .’ (lines 14 and 15). This particular notion,

also exemplifying the sometimes more prolific and poetic use of language by Emiratis, usually in Arabic, but also when speaking English. The participant in *excerpt 1.3* was able to fluently carry the depth of interconnectivity of identity and culture in language, even through translation into the English dialogue.

This excerpt further shows that Emiratis hold on to their values firmly, regardless of location. During sojourn and acculturative experiences, they embrace it and share it. However, as previously revealed, as a result of exploring and residing in host cultures, there is at the same time, an individualistic influence on their collective cultural identity.

In almost all of the sojourn interviews I conducted, Emiratis remained close to cultural considerations in their experiences. Some of them, revealing strategies to cultivate strength in value and identity within local contexts, again, explained how they have accommodated to some UK customs. One participant discusses the duality in respect of the UK and UAE contexts:

***Extract 1.3C***

*We still wear our ‘sheilas’ and ‘abayas’ even though when we travel to European countries, we take off our abayas but we keep our veils on. Even if we have our latest fashion on, jeans, our latest clothes, but we still hang on to part of it, which is covering up and being very conservative.*

On the one hand, while Emiratis might follow fashion trends, they are still sure to keep a central aspect of traditional identity in the forefront and as a main signifier of who they are (i.e. despite the compromise or modernistic transitions). The participant explains in this extract that, ‘we keep our veils on’. Although this is a simple statement signifying maintenance of cultural identity, it is interesting that there is a switch from ‘sheilas’ and ‘abayas’ in the previous line, to this signifier (i.e. ‘veils’). When understanding the symbolism and importance of the veil in Islam, there is much respect for it, in covering and protecting that which is sacred. In the context of this participant statement, the phrase acts within deeper extensions of Emirati psychosocial mentality. By keeping the veil on, regardless of location, Emiratis may not simply be covering or protecting their hair, but also protecting their cultural identity.

The inference of 'being very conservative' is linked to presentation of 'clothing' and/or appearances in social-interaction. Meanwhile, the tonal emphasis in stating, 'we still hang on', suggests that the participant also feels as though there have been many compromises, that perhaps whatever is left through processes of acculturation and modernisation, must be clung tightly to (i.e. respectively associated with discursive word use, so that, Emirati culture, does not 'drop', or is not completely 'let go of').

What I also found interesting, during my analysis, is the continued Emirati sojourner and repatriate references of conservativeness and how they are unfixed and more blurred along areas of tradition, being true to religion and modernisation. Before leaving to go to the UK, what seemed evident from interviewee responses regarding Emirati values and traditions is that although the country has changed considerably in such a short time Emiratis are selective in regard to which aspects of modernity they embrace and which aspects of modernity they reject. Speaking English in educational and work type settings, for example, is acceptable to Emirati sojourners and repatriates. With the exception of all but a few of the participants, however, Arabic was the engrained, continued and preserved language for anything culturally connected to home for Emirati participants, also within of course the practice of religion and Emirati-specific traditions.

In Emirati-specific traditions, values are as important and sometimes even more closely adhered to than some of the contradictory Islamic principles:

***Extract 1.3F***

*This is what I call one or as one of the down sides of our tribal system. When it becomes when it overrides the moral codes brought down by God almighty Allah when a human being is saying I know better than God Almighty, that's when I believe the person has overstepped their boundaries as a human being. But it happens a lot. And in essence lots of times our Emirati cultural values even supersede religious codes, and they come from times before Islam or things that we understand the Islamic argument but we push it to one side and we do our own things, everyone has to follow? How? (exhales).*

**(Researcher Question) Can you give me an example of when this might happen?**

(Participant Answer)

*Yes, Umm, for example, our national dance where the girls sway their hair from one side to the other. But it is forbidden in Islam for women to show her hair in public, but this is our national dance but it's a dance that existed before Islam and it's a key part of our culture so it's acceptable, you see, it doesn't make sense (laughs).*

The participant's response in extract 1.3f were carefully chosen and presented without many speech seatbelts. It was evident to me that the topic is close to his heart, one he has thought and/or talked about before, and thus is more fluid in delivering. His clear, distinct and passionately quick answer, which, nonetheless, also exhibits that it is a topic which has caused him a certain amount of frustration in identity growth and value, perhaps expresses discontent with less than logical cultural and/or religious practices that reform and/or diffuse other values. In the above extract, the sometimesconfusing contradictions about acceptable behaviour, when in contrast between ancestral traditions, national standards and Islamic teachings, are undeniable.

Perhaps because such religious and cultural negotiations are somewhat common, it is understandable on another level as to why sojourners are more readily able to adjust in a parallel way between their Emirati cultural identity and UK social practices. The participant response performed the task of underlining the way Emiratis are flexible in their cultural identity and can adhere to multiple systems at once. This balancing between modernity and traditionalism, described in Chapter 2 and as is shared in various excerpts, is an ongoing effort for both the Emirati people and their government.

In regard to acculturation and modernisation, some students talked about, even when out of traditional contexts they had chosen not to conform exactly to Islamic codes of practice. They went on to say that they would never admit or share such 'stories' with other Emiratis; for fear that they may shame themselves or their family. The obvious cultural dilemma here is that Emirati students express the way in which they are happily moving forward in regard to

modernisation, yet many also expressed concerns about maintaining cultural identity through such shifts. Ouis (2002) explained that the meeting of the modern with the traditional ways of life, in a country such as the UAE, is sometimes understood in terms of a clash between ‘western’ versus Muslim cultures. The results of my study concur with Findlow’s argument (2001) that the effect of globalisation and modernisation should not be seen as a total clash with local traditions, however, rather these forces operate comfortably alongside one another (the dialectic already having been referenced).

Attaching importance to cultural values for Emiratis seems unique to their group. The student in extract 1.3d verifies this identification by beginning his statement with the phrase, ‘So to us, our values are very important.’

***Extract 1.3D***

*So to us, our values are very important. Like being respectable, not bringing shame for the family, hmm, being generous, hospitable to our guests. You know being like a clean person.*

This also may indicate that these ideological values are not just theoretical guidelines, but actual prescribed codes of behaviour that Emiratis have been taught to incorporate into the behavioural schemes. Accordingly with extract 1.3e, as another interviewee explains; families are inclusive of extended members and together within them traditions are respected, explored, carried on and discussed, in immensely sacred and close-knit (ancestral-traditional) Emirati-specific ways.

***Extract 1.3E***

*My grandfather invites people, maybe it’s related to poetry or religion, where people gather and discuss these things. About once a month, and it’s part of the culture for people to attend. They have regular contact with one another, we see all our family members every weekend, that’s about 45 people (laughs) and if someone doesn’t come, they are called and check why they are not there (laughs).*

#### 5.2.4 – Sub-theme #4: Focus on Emirati Privilege

Enjoying the benefits of their country's oil wealth, in every area of life, including improved living standards in health care, housing, utilities, education and other services; UAE nationals are among the most privileged people in the world. The growth in the UAE economy has been phenomenal, forecasted to boom even more so as a growing international and regional trade hub that attracts an increasing number of foreign investors, expatriate business people and travellers. Beyond surface views of economic privilege, Emirati students have realised and expressed privilege (in being Emirati) as more personal and personable cultural associations, especially in in-group settings.

Understanding *wasta* is integral in understanding interactions in the UAE. *Wasta* touches the culture of all Arab countries and is a significant force affecting their way of life. This word that seems to have so much of an influence in Gulf countries, as in the UAE, is Arabic for ‘connections’, ‘pull’ even ‘nepotism’. However, those connections and ‘forces’ are an integral part of the foundation that allows UAE nationals to live a privileged way of life.

##### ***Extract 1.4A***

*And we could get things done quicker and easier. We don't have to stand in queues. We call it a WASTA, which means a connection or that would cut the long process down so we have a big Wasta factor in our culture and it is very tribal. We call it vitamin W (laughs).*

The interviewees referred to the way in which they felt they were privileged to be UAE nationals because of all the comforts and benefits entitled to them as well as the privilege to the opportunity for the Emirati student to study overseas with financial support from the government. Not only through the government, but also through the close ties they have with each other, rooted in the tribal mentality that almost guarantees them emotional and financial security. *Wasta*, for Emiratis, as economically enhanced as it may be, begins with Emirati identity, Emirati community, family ties, favours and connections in direct relationship with traditions, history and loyalty, between them. *Wasta* as mediation has a long and honourable history. In a tribal setting, *wasta* mediation binds families' and communities for peace and

well-being. This face of *wasta* benefits society as a whole, as well as the involved individuals (Cunningham and Sarayrah, 1993).

Expatriates in the UAE, however, have a limited understanding into the cultural system of *wasta*, considering it unfair, especially in regard to the job sector, ‘Emiratisation’ and acquisition of public or private sector positions (Dubai Eye, 2012). After having sojourned, as I discuss in Chapter 2, some repatriates are more understanding of those concerns after living in the UK and might even share them, finding some cases of *wasta* unfair because they value performance over privilege, especially at the workplace.

Emirati student sojourners and repatriates shared stories, in different contexts about using their *wasta* before departure, even in relation to their educational journey.

***Extract 1.4B***

*I was excited to come abroad, so I used WASTA (laughs) spoke to my aunt who helped convince my father, and another uncle who has his masters from the US, convinced my father to let me go (laughs). It was sudden, at the last moment but dad got enough pressure from different sides to give in! (Laughs) My father realises the importance of education (yaaney) but he was afraid to let me go, because of the attacks on Muslims.*

In this excerpt, it is clear that *wasta* is a privilege in both social and familial matters, especially in regard to career options and financial matters. In extract 1.4b, the interviewee explains that through *wasta*, she convinced her aunt, to influence her uncle and subsequently to influence her father, to give her permission to study abroad. Although we do not know how intricate the details of *wasta* are in the participant’s family dynamic, the father and uncle clearly have a relationship that could visit the discussion points she could not.

According to Cunningham and Sarayrah (1993), *wasta* has changed over time:

In Middle Eastern countries the family is the primary *Wasta* channel. *Wasta*-based recruitment and allocation of benefits reinforce family ties, thereby connecting the individual to the economy and polity. Family as the basis for obtaining benefits from the socio-political system enhances societal stability by providing a link between individual and nation. Originally based upon family loyalty, *Wasta* relationships have expanded to include friends and acquaintances, as well as private agreements whereby services are provided in exchange for gifts or specific fees (Cunningham and Sarayrah, 1993).

With modernisation in the UAE, *wasta* seems to have shifted emphasis from community and social privilege, to direct correlation of socio-economic enhancements. Its main goal has changed from defusing tribal conflict, seemingly, to acquiring economic benefits, 'Wasta evolved from conflict resolution as a means of survival to intercession to maintain one's place of honour. Wasta has a positive side (humanising the bureaucracy) but also serves as an 'affirmative action for the advantaged' which has the effect of entrenching the haves and excluding the have-nots; it makes life miserable for conscientious officials trying to live by the law but called on by family obligations to help their own' (Cunningham and Sarayrah, 1993).

Ensuring that Emiratis are not excluded from the total workforce of the country and are gradually assimilated into the mainstream industries of the UAE, so that they can be active participants in the development of their country, interviewees often commented on 'Emiratisation' with *wasta*. Perhaps exaggerating as though to emphasise his statement, one interviewee said, 'I swear 85% of the locals should be made redundant'. His statement signifies, in the context of 'Emiratisation', that many of the Emiratis that are quickly placed in job sectors due to the privilege of being born an Emirati national are, most of the time, not suitable for the positions or interested in them.

#### ***Extract 1.4C***

*There's a stereotype that locals are very lazy (laughs) they are only very lazy if they are not interested in something, if they are interested in something they will...they will really really really excel in it, cuz I play a lot of pool and some of the local guys I've seen play pool are almost at the stage of being professional pool players, but they're not, they're just playing pool, and it's just the locals you see some of the cars that they modify, if they find that interesting they can make a Nissan or a Toyota land cruiser go faster than a Ferrari!*

In this interview the student suggested counteracting concerns of laziness in ‘Emiratisation’, as often heard in social discussions within the UAE, that Emiratis should align themselves with interests. He exemplifies through the entire excerpt that there is dedication, cause to excel and a greater likelihood for innovation and invention in business for those Emiratis who, beyond Emiratisation, can find an area more motivating to focus their energies. He accentuates that ‘here’ (i.e. in the UAE) there is a lot of potential in Emiratis, which can turn unlikely situations into everyday realities of success. Primary to his statement may also be his Emirati loyalty to the Emirati community.

***Extract 1.4D***

*In the sense, that here [in the UK] you see that if you work hard, you get rewarded where as in the UAE nepotism exists. Local people work hard but in some ways they have WASTA, so they get further. One more thing Sheikh Zayed said was that I conquered everything except WASTA.*

In negative associations with *wasta*, the ethnic marker can objectify Emiratis into modes of otherness. Extract 1.4d describes a situation where even the rulers of the UAE would prefer their people to be able to prove themselves through their education, skills and hard work, rather than be judged by their sometimes misunderstood and/or misconstrued tribal relations. As many expatriates and nationals misinterpret the systems as unfair, there are also internal tensions, causing Emirati repatriates to be judged and seen as in the former extract 1.4c, spoiled and/or ‘lazy’.

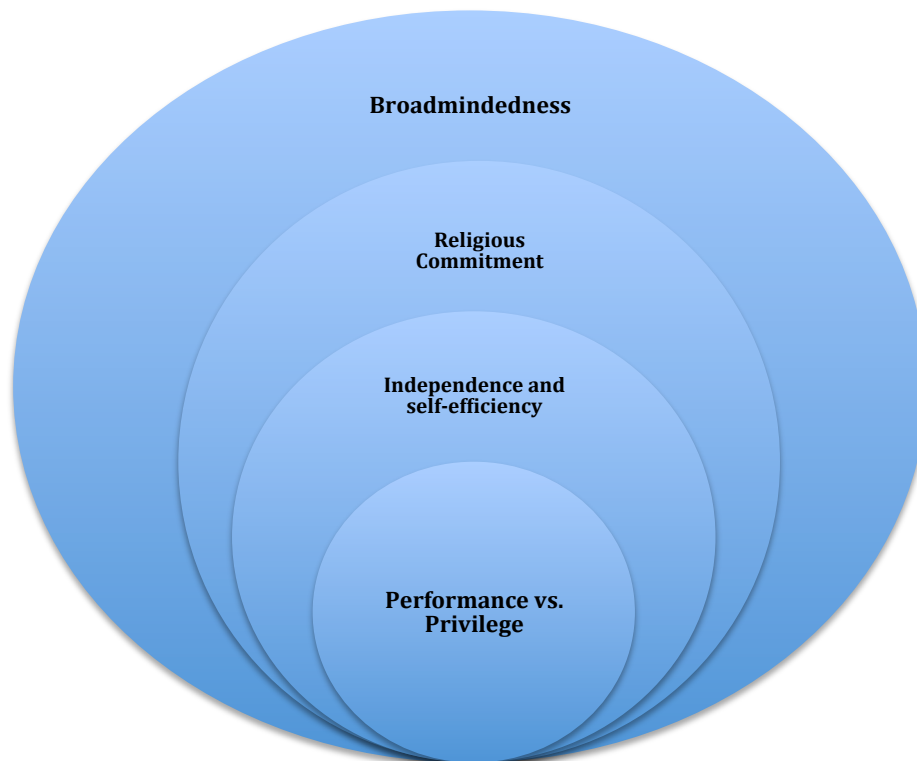
This contention lies in the heart of the dominance of societal forces in modernisation. The participant in extract 1.4d expressed the desire and dream of a former president of the UAE (along with current leaders of course) to ‘conquer’ the negative aspects of privilege, so that Emirati nationals are recognised for their efforts and skills rather than their ‘Emiratiness’. The whole concept of ‘Emiratisation’ after all, was implemented to integrate the Emirati community into the business world and social spaces that expats mostly occupy. This cultural phenomenon will once again be visited and explored in the next section of discussion, as the forces of acculturation seem to also affect the student’s perception of *wasta*, post sojourn.

### 5.3 – Theme #2

#### Emirati Cultural Identity Affected Through Acculturation

While student sojourners distinctly highlighted a clear maintenance of core identity values and traditions (Muslim and Emirati-specific), acculturative experiences in the UK prompted them to ‘explore’ and or ‘adjust’ to the host culture social systems. Through the participants’ answers, four sub-themes in relation to transformations emerged. As displayed in *Figure 11*, these are: (1) self-efficiency and independence; (2) religious commitment; (3) broadmindedness; and (4) performance rather than privilege.

*Figure 11 - Four Main Sub-themes of Emirati Cultural Identity Acculturatively Affected*



### 5.3.1 – Transformative sub-theme #1: Self-Efficiency and Independence

Markus and Kitayama (1991) purported that a cultural self-construal is a shared assumption concerning the relationship between the self and others. The self is more autonomous and independent of context, in a country like the UK (Singelis, 1994), where individualistic culture is defined in a bounded, unitary, stable self, separate from social context and focused on desires, preferences, attributes, and abilities. As will be re-affirmed for validity with my crosschecks overlapping such framework in Chapter 6, Emiratis with an interdependent self-construal, feel that a sense of belonging, that respecting and being accepted by members of the home culture is of great importance (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994).

Meanwhile, this research noted that through acculturation, Emirati sojourners in the UK attained a rise in independence while in transition. In regard to daily activities, obligations and tasks, independence was as a result of (1) being physically distant from their family, (2) exploring and adjusting to UK culture in social-interaction contexts, and (3) objects of acculturative forces, in public and private domains. Therefore, the independence achieved seems to be more as a result of the practical functions they were required to engage in, rather than becoming less interdependent to variables such as family and culture.

Emiratis, in the UK, were also positioned to take charge of short-term and immediate decision making, sometimes for the first time ever (e.g. buying groceries, doing laundry, etc. which they otherwise would not do in the UAE).

#### ***Extract 2.1A***

*It was very frustrating. Simple things like opening my own bank account, we don't have bank accounts there [in the UAE] till later in life, registering for my matriculation number at university, you would think you just follow others, it was very weird to have to ask people for help.*

The student in this extract, like the majority of the other sojourners, talks about how difficult it was to have to do things for themselves. At the same time, there is an acknowledgment that the

tasks by themselves are not difficult; however, they were new and unfamiliar to the student. The underlying meaning here can point to the way that back home, Emiratis have family, hired employees or *wasta* connections to do things for them, so the difficulty in accommodating an individualistic system of social-interaction is verified in another testimony.

***Extract 2.1B***

*We're kind of spoiled with our family, they're always there for us, with them maids being there. The maids' presence, travelling for education (exhales) umm usually he or she would be sent alone and would have to take responsibility for everything from A-Z. By their own, from apartments, to cooking, to paying bills, to taking care about a lot of things. This was hard! (Laughs).*

Privilege is one aspect of the Emirati cultural identity that is highlighted in the sojourn experience. Almost all the students mentioned, or implied, that the ease of life they experienced in the UAE could not be maintained whilst studying in London.

After living in the UK, Emiratis were humbled by the generosity and connectivity of their own culture. Some of the sojourners expressed to me that even within the UK, they felt privileged, amongst intra-host groups, due to their accessible and accommodating 'wealth(s)', both financially and in UAE social support. Almost all of the students mentioned, or implied, an ease of life experienced in the UAE that could not be attained, maintained, or nearly come close to their UK experiences. This was regardless of personal values and accounts, and due to the wider framework of how they perceived the UK culture, institutions and social structures.

One participant explicitly stated:

***Extract 2.1 C***

*In UAE, everything is so much easier for us. Getting by day to day, umm was tough, cleaning after myself eating alone, cleaning my toilets, wallah I never did these things I was actually fed with a golden spoon when I was born! And wrapped in a silk cloth, wallah I'm not joking! (Laughs) if you don't call that privilege, I don't know what is. (Exhales) I will feed my son with a shovel so that he toughens up, so he doesn't have to get the same reality check as I had (exhales).*

In light-heartedly joking that he would feed his son with a 'shovel', this participant's response suggested that his acculturative experience was sometimes so difficult that it began to shift his understanding of life and perception of 'privilege' altogether. Through discussion about how his two lives, pre and post sojourn, varied, this student's growth could almost be captured through the way he answered. Although he claims, in addressing standards of wealth and security, 'if you don't call that privilege, I don't know what is', referring to gold and silk with the word selection may suggest on deeper levels that despite his tough journey, after living and eventually acculturating in the UK, the student may now comprehend a new dimension of 'privilege' as having more 'independence' and succeeding as a sojourner. In other words, that is an earned and achieved privilege rather than a birthright.

As more participant narratives unfolded, I learnt that although Emiratis may initially view the process of acculturation as tough, the resulting outcome of independence from it, however, is distinctively valued by sojourners. In unravelling the stories of what was presented by the students, it is evident that life is not only easier in the UAE for Emiratis, due to the luxuries and privileges available to them, but also because they are not challenged to be different or transform on individualised levels there. Even with the frequent travel experiences most Emiratis have, it is only when sojourning that students compared differences with life back home. It is further important to again and/or more clearly distinguish, however, that Emiratis who become more independent during their sojourn do not become less interdependent (most especially in relation to variables, such as family and culture). This point will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

### **5.3.2 – Transformative sub-theme #2: Religious Commitment**

While adjusting to life in the UK, Emirati students felt more exposed and open to learning about religions different to that of Islam, but still firmly acknowledge Islam as their belief system. They expressed that while living in the UK, being on their own, brought them closer to ‘Allah’ (the Arabic word for God), in (1) faith in their journey (e.g. as in God’s will) and (2) through comparison with other religions, thereby validating their personal and private beliefs in new ways. Emirati sojourners also learnt how to ‘agree, to disagree’, and discuss, an emotionally charged subject, such as religion, in an objective manner. This was more in regard to having to engage in individualised discussions with UK host people more frequently than they ever would in the UAE. Particularly with a premise for strong, religious overtone, the main effect of these discussions, the students explained, were that they contributed to their education processes, even though in informal settings or outside of the classroom. When exploring with the Emirati students how much those discussions might have transformed their views regarding Islam, Emiratis reiterated that an expansion of their religious knowledge actually brought them closer to their own religion, helping and/or encouraging them to appreciate aspects of Islam that they had perhaps taken for granted before. Rather than abandoning faith during challenging times, Emiratis found ways to renew it.

Most students I interviewed saw an opportunity in cross-religious interactions, for them to explain to others, as objectively as possible, the values and true character of Islam, especially during times when negative stereotypes and prejudice prevailed. They explained how their religion assisted them in adapting to life in the UK, by reading verses from the Koran and listening to religious audio tapes and programs encouraged them to feel connected to their original cultural identity rather than in any anticipatory distance from it. These same students, as a result of the positive connectivity to their religion, explained how Ramadan is a period of renewed pride in their religious beliefs.

Ramadan, to the Emirati national is an important pillar of Islam; the others being prayer, faith, charity and pilgrimage. Emirati students expressed how they have been raised to understand that Ramadan is a time for restraint, fasting from dawn until dusk, refraining from sexual activity and

fasting not only in terms of food, but also from lies, greed, slander and gossiping. It is a time for reflecting on one's life and relationship with God as well as a time for giving, not taking).

Emiratis welcome Ramadan, especially since it is a holy month and a time when they can talk more openly and frequently about all the positive aspects of their creeds and doctrines to their non-Muslim friends, classmates and university faculty. Since Islam (to the Emirati) is a way of life, not just a belief system, Emirati student sojourners and repatriates often talked about how they were pleased to be able to adhere to their religious stipulations while living in a diverse country like the UK. They were thankful also, that many of the resources needed for Islamic practices such as *halal* foods (foods and drinks permitted in Islam), religious books, audio recordings and the presence of mosques were available in the UK. Having access to these tools of religiosity and sacred symbols of faith further eased the process adjustment and of retaining religious practices.

***Extract 2.2A***

*In the holy month of Ramadan, there are many Islamic lectures and activities that are around the religion, also many public umm holidays have religious affiliation. Whether it is the story of prophet Mohamed or his birthday. Many of our women wearing the veil is an important part of our culture, purely coming from Islam, our diet what we eat, what we don't eat, how well cooked it is. We don't eat pork you know. How the meat is slaughtered. When we go abroad, we're very picky what and where we eat. So especially Ramadan, there are many aspects of religion in our life.*

Students like this participant, who are more careful about adhering to closely prescribed codes of religious etiquette during Ramadan, stay closer to standards in preserving cultural identity while abroad. This is done by trying to only consume foods that are *halal* (foods and drinks permitted in Islam), not eating alone and spending time with friends or perhaps relatives after the break of fast, praying at the appropriate times and attending extra night prayers (*Taraweeh*) which are held at mosques around the city. It was interesting to find that issues related to questions of religious identity and traditional practices surface more predominantly for Emirati students during holy festivals, such as Ramadan.

During interviews, students shared accounts about local programs and groups that they organised for Ramadan, at their university and/or with international friends of varying cultural and religious backgrounds in the host environment. One sojourner seemed clearly nostalgic about being away from family and the UAE during this time. He explained that remaining positive and in faith, was correlated with involving others during the time of giving and tolerance.

***Extract 2.2B***

*Well Ramadan, was hard this year because we are never away from our family or country in this time. So it was a first time, ya it was hard, but you know what was great? Me and my friends organised like an Iftar every evening, we invited everyone who wants to come eat with us, so many people came we were surprised but very happy (laughs).*

The Emirati sojourner, unlike when at home in the UAE, compromises with study hours, classes, public food habits and sacrificed and/or forbidden activities. The reverse of what Emiratis are used to during Ramadan in the UAE, will occur publically in the UK by most and all non-Islamic populations in the host environment. This Islamic occasion maybe one of the most pivotal times of the year, where student sojourners find challenging and face grounds for cultural identity achievement, transformation and retention.

I found during my analysis, however, that for just as many sojourners in the UK, Ramadan can also be a lonely time (when feelings of isolation and homesickness can reach a peak). While in the UK, maintenance of positive feelings during Ramadan is dependent on variables of sojourner social-initiatives in the host-culture. The significance of the Emirati religious identity component, in regard to acculturative experiences while in the UK has to do with (a) either real or perceived notions of acceptance or rejection by people of the host culture and/or (b) how much religiosity actually helped or hindered their acculturation process.

Ramadan related activities are forces of religious ideology that Emiratis affect in terms of practice and presentation to better suit social context in the UK. While efforts to preserve traditions and share pride are predominant, some Emiratis, due to the change of environment,

described compromises. Integrating into the UK environmental conditions during Ramadan can lead to (1) academic difficulties and/or difficulties with peer relations and colleagues during that time, (2) overall identity compromises, both in religion and culture, (3) extended vigour in tradition, with improvised religious celebrations (e.g. inviting new acquaintances and international friends to join for 'Eid'); and/or (4) coping strategies, intertwined with parallel religious activities and social interactions that occur throughout the year.

***Extract 2.2C***

*It's not that we ever miss prayer, or miss a day of fasting. But what we might do is that we find ways of practicing to our religious obligations, which also doesn't bother anyone else, also fits into the routine of the city we live in, even Islam says we must be flexible.*

In the above extract, there is substantiation once again for broader frameworks of religious and/or Emirati cultural identity, which allow for flexibility in private and social practices. For example, breaking fast quietly and unobtrusively, at times, perhaps while still at a lecture (with some water), is preferred by some Emirati sojourners to asking professors for special permissions (e.g. to take time out of an evening class in order to join a group of friends at a nearby restaurant). This does not mean Emiratis are any less faithful in their personal and private devotion.

Emiratis may not always go out of their way to make sure the food they are consuming is *halal* (even with easy access to availability), or, break their academic schedule to ensure that they pray at the correct times, five times throughout the day/evening/dawn. This is in greater respect for long-term objectives of sojourning, in also adhering to UK social structures to finish stud, and meanwhile integrate appropriately as to allow some ease for the acculturation processes. So Emirati respect for cultural values and structures did not end at their own; rather it extended to the host country they lived in. Students described how some combine the five daily prayers into one or two lots, throughout a UK routine, where timing is conceptualised quite differently and not as relaxed as when in the UAE. Although students may adopt alterations to Emirati practices while in the UK, they consider how to adjust so that transformations are in alliance or at least not against core Emirati values.

Some Emirati students may maintain their initial assumptions that were formulated regarding their perceived religious identity during their educational period. Others, due to both positive and/or negative experiences, and contact with the host culture, might see things through renewed lenses. Students expressed that their religious identity continued to take different forms as they learnt and grew in an environment different than their own. Emirati students who entered the UK feeling nervous and insecure about how they may be received by UK nationals and people from different cultures, reported feeling more anxiety and helplessness during the initial phase of adaptation. Often drawing on faith, but not wanting to draw attention to their religious identity for fear of being discriminated against or judged negatively, those students sometimes temporarily diffused aspects of their religious character, at least publicly, to better integrate into the educational environment.

***Extract 2.2D***

*Fasting in London can be much harder than when we are back home, because we have to prepare food ourselves, family may not be present, there's no one to encourage and express the whole fasting spirit, so we have to continue life in the same way as we do the rest of the year. So in a way, our fasting and other religious duty might be rewarded more by Allah than those back home who have things easier for them, like shorter working hours and food which is prepared by maids.*

Within my analysis, Emirati students repetitively counterbalanced any diffusion of cultural identity practices with the infusion of internal religious strength, acceptance and understanding: that is 'we have to continue live'.

Additionally, through thematic analysis, I have identified two sub-groups, overlapping within and between my sojourner and repatriate groups, that can be described and placed within Berry's theoretical framework, in accordance to 'Ramadan contextuality' and 'UK religious experience'. These are: (1) Sojourners who integrated; and (2) sojourners who separated. Religious experiences in integration included Emirati sojourners accepting the larger society's culture (host UK systems) while at the same time, maintaining Emirati cultural identity as well. This again

poses, that for the majority of Emiratis, bicultural identity components are can be activated according to the contexts of social-interaction.

Both of these religious sub-groups identified, shared in trying to replicate a theme and spirit of home-like hospitality during Ramadan while in the UK. The holiday seemed to activate practices in participants, more than throughout the rest of each academic year. Emiratis who integrated with UK populations to share their religious rituals had more positive sentiments. While those few that separated religiously, did so because they felt a need to connect more closely with what felt like home, to make it through the month, rather than focus on sharing their passion about Ramadan externally.

The students also talked about how technology helped in encouraging togetherness and social gatherings, either with local Emirati in-groups and/or with UK and international intra-groups. Satellite television programs, created and aired only during the month of Ramadan throughout the Islamic world were a common reason for students to gather together in evenings. Familiar actors and actresses kept Emirati students company in times of cultural loneliness.

In regard to the presence of different Islamic groups in the UK, that were sometimes interacted with when visiting mosques and/or trying to maintain religious rituals while abroad, Emirati sojourners noted strong differences (with regard to their own beliefs and practices) with that which they observed and acknowledged in UK experiences and/or religious groups.

### ***Extract 2.2E***

*We were born Muslims, and grown up as Muslims. All our norms and values are based on Islam. But being abroad gives you an idea of how others perceive Islam. When I go to a mosque in London it's different than back home. They seem to be a lot more angered and radical. Back home they preach peace and peace is what you see. Here they might preach sometimes, about peace but what you see is anger and retaliation. I didn't like that.*

***Extract 2.2F***

*Being in a mosque back home I feel protected and feel more close to my community. (Exhales) here I feel more vulnerable, maybe insecure. Here the Sheikh, religious clergy was sometimes preaching hate and negative and anger towards the west, the governments. And I never heard these things, back home. This is not how it is.*

In the UK, Emirati students found themselves in a location where certain religious ideologies were questioned and debated through a political voice, rather than just the ‘purely religious tone’ they are accustomed to. In these cases, Emiratis also categorised supposed inter-religious groups as ‘others’ (therefore, also out-groups): ‘They seem to be a lot more angered and radical’ (extract 2.2E) [in the UK]. Emirati statements signify collectively, that an Emirati religious upbringing is primarily rooted in learning about Islam as a sacred way of life, without judgment and/or political prejudice. In both excerpts, there is an indication of confusion and disappointment that can be felt as these participants spoke about visiting UK mosques and hearing non-religious dialogue at times.

Emirati students’ pride and devotion to their religion was expressed in an almost utopic, unquestioned and non-complex manner. As our conversations continued and my questions were presented with regards to different habits, activities and social events that Emiratis engaged in while in the UK, it soon became apparent that more of the students (like the participant in extract 1.2b, in the previous section) would privately explore ‘forbidden worlds’, where sexes mix freely and alcohol may be available. This was mostly true for the Emirati men. The women showed some, however, less curiosity for such places as bars and clubs. They commented that they would not dare visit such places in the UAE, but might just feel able to do so while in the UK.

Rejecting clear aspects of cultural identity and accepting the host society’s culture was expressed by perhaps two participants in particular, during the interview process. Rejection, was almost entirely on a private level, whereby those Emirati sojourners who had adopted and accepted, rather than just strategized and/or respected host systems of social-interaction in the UK, went to great lengths to keep choices and prohibited experiences hidden from family and/or other Emirati students. Both students explained that they felt they could never, publically, be ‘themselves’, not

in the UK or in the UAE. As with the two brave students who directly approached the subject referencing their own experiences, many examples of similar expression were indirectly spoken by other participants, mirroring the extract below.

***Extract 2.2G***

*I'm sure some locals [Emiratis] go to nightclubs, but it's definitely (laughs) not advertised or discussed, with their parents or anybody, socially it's wrong and it's wrong and you know, we don't go. Some of locals might drink or go to those places, but very secretly, not open about it.*

When it came to taking social or cultural risks, the majority of Emirati students talked about it in the third person, or told stories about others perhaps as a way to distance themselves from the religiously inappropriate behaviour. The above excerpt demonstrates this finding, supporting the notion that engaging in such host cultural activities was quite uncommon and when it did occur, it was kept private to avoid being judged or rejected by other Emiratis.

Nevertheless, as Emirati students gradually adjusted to a different way of life in the UK, certain aspects of identity, such as religiosity, were shaped and reshaped. Such experiences naturally involve questions of self-identity and changes in values, attitudes, and behaviours in cultural and religious contexts (Berry, 1992). These statements and perceptions played an integral role in Emirati sojourners and repatriates developing 'broad-mindedness'.

**5.3.3 – Transformative sub-theme #3: Broadmindedness**

A developed sense of tolerance towards people from other cultures and backgrounds, as well as exploration of new and/or additional values and behaviours in the UK (sometimes also prohibited), resulted in Emiratis noting changes in cultural perspectives.

***Extract 2.3A:***

*I feel I have become much more patient of peoples' differences and their religions. I love my religion, but now I understand that there are others who feel the same about their own religions. I even have Jewish friends, from Israel here and like them a lot. This would not happen back home. I have become so much more independent. More reliant of myself, very confident in my abilities, like ability to grasp knowledge, spiritually and physically evolved in many ways. Overall my whole experience in London has been amazing. Even though I will go back for sure to the Emirates. (Laughs) But I won't go back as the same person who left a few years ago*

UAE student sojourners in the UK, having come from a nation that is diverse, experience diversity in a more personal way than they did in the UAE (i.e. since Emiratis typically marginalise in their communities back home). In the extract 2.3A, the emphasis on ideas such as being more 'patient' suggests that while this student is more understanding of various religions and devotions, after their experiences in the UK, the student still feels that Islam is the 'certain' and 'right' religion. The interviewee states that, 'I even have Jewish friends, from Israel here and like them a lot, this would be unheard of back home.' The use of the word 'even' highlights the uniqueness of this association and the extent to which the student has stretched above and beyond his previous experiences.

On the basis of common interests and cultural heritage, a sojourner may associate with people of his own ethnic group; however, for many Emiratis, as the above extract corroborates, the opposite has occurred. The interviewee is expanding his circle of friends and choosing not to separate from the other host populations. Indicative of this critical research on identity transformation, is the last statement conveyed: 'I won't go back [to the UAE] as the same person who left.' Almost all respondents agreed that in coming into contact with the UK culture, they have inevitably experienced, in some format, various changes in behaviour, values and attitudes. Acculturation has seemingly resulted in conscious integration for Emiratis, filtering individual and social values of the host culture, whilst maintaining the values of their heritage simultaneously. As a result, some Emiratis evidence bicultural transformations.

Positive aspects of expanding religious and culture experience seemed to dominate acculturative experiences and outweigh accumulative difficulties. At the same time, there were many instances of self-reminding, as I earlier addressed, whereby in boasting enthusiastically about any UK experiences, or perhaps also in addressing valid criticism for an Emirati and/or sojourn experience, Emirati student sojourners and repatriates quickly strapped on a 'speech seatbelt'. In the following narrative a participant critiques local Emiratis in the UK, for clinging together, thus also, indirectly showing his own support for UK social-interaction and acceptance of host-groups. The participant, then, for example, through a subtle shift in dialogue, quickly identifies a positive of being with Emirati in-groups in the UK. This is a reminder not only for the interviewer, but also for himself that, in newly acquired broadmindedness and personally chosen, extended interactions, their loyalty, still belongs to the Emirates.

***Extract 2.3B***

*I have learnt so much more from my foreigner friends than my Emirati friends. Umm, most of my Emirati friends just hang out together and that's not really good because they wouldn't learn much from their experience because they are surrounded by the same people, talk about the exact same things as back home. So why even be here in London if that's the case right? But (exhales), it's good when I miss talking Arabic (laughs) wallah sometimes I get tired of talking English all the time!*

As with a number of other respondents, it is clear that the student feels sometimes confined and limited by Emirati friends while in the UK (i.e. the comparison 'than' and criticism that follows), just as much as liberated perhaps (i.e. in expressing when he needs the in-group network to share cultural-specific experiences). This was a common cultural dilemma experienced by many students where on the one hand Emirati students need the comfort of what is familiar however at the same time, they acknowledge the importance of stepping out of that arena in order to learn and grow. Language was repeatedly described as being an integral part of the Emirati cultural identity. Not only is Arabic the language of the Quran but likewise, Emirati Arabic has its own dialect, which is different from other Arab speaking nations. Thus, speaking amongst Emirati nationals, if possible in the UK, is important for Emirati student sojourners to feel less homesick.

Even though the student in extract 2.3B accepts the benefits of interacting with non-Emirati nationals, she also expresses a sense of unfamiliarity or loss of enthusiasm when having to communicate only in English. ‘I get tired of talking English all the time!’ more specifically, indicates that the student may be exhausted, not only of speaking English, but more so, in her whole acculturative experience in the UK. When she expresses that she is missing Arabic, she hints that she may also miss the UAE, and accordingly, Arabic, refers to all the cultural nuances that are linked in the UAE, with religion, culture, language-specific-humour and national pride.

Particularly relevant to the discussion about broadmindedness is extract 2.3C:

***Extract 2.3C***

*Also women in the UK, are much more open. I have done things with women here which I wouldn't have dreamed of back home. They are open umm behaviour and talking and their sexuality and that sometimes can be uncomfortable for us. We're used to women being more conservative. I don't mean to generalise, I'm sorry but I mean on the whole. There is a difference so I might do things with the women here, which I wouldn't dared even mention to my girlfriend back home.*

Describing certain attitudes towards new experiences of an intimate nature, the student hesitates, like many interviewees I recorded, to talk about such issues in depth. Student statements therefore, resulted in (a) either completely avoiding related questions topically, or (b) answering them briefly without elaborating. This of course was in part due to embarrassment or shame, since by and large, Emiratis believe that sex is an activity which should only happen in the respectable confines of a marital union. Intimacy is pure and sacred in religion, and accordingly, they could have kept answers only for the most private domains in their lives.

Amongst the Emirati participants that did indicate some reference to sexual activities and/or sexuality in a theme of broadmindedness (such as the participant in extract 2.3C alluding to more under-the-surface truths), it was interesting to see how Emirati men compared women in the UK to Emirati women back in the UAE. Both hesitation and temptation can be felt in extract 2.3C. On one level, the participant boasts about ‘doing things with women he wouldn't have dreamed

of back home’ and on another level, he clearly understood his declaration cross-culturally and perhaps with embarrassment, putting also a ‘speech seatbelt’ in place. He pulls back, shifting the direction of his account, using the word ‘uncomfortable’, also detaching from his role and responsibility in temptation, that is, suddenly presenting a feeling of experiences being pushed on him, perhaps by westernised forces and standards for intimacy, that is, by ‘western women’.

In the same way that Emirati student sojourners developed a broader sense of cultural value systems, they too sometimes expected others to understand indiscriminately some of their public habits, especially in regard to greetings while in the UK.

### ***Extract 2.3D***

*When Emirati students meet each other, I mean when they greet each other. Of course, they don't just say 'Hello [name omitted for privacy], how are you?' They mostly shake hands but also kiss on the cheek sometimes the foreigners look at us weird (laughs) when we do this. But this is us.*

Aware of the culturally variant methods of greeting, Emiratis maintain their style of greeting with a handshake and a kiss on both cheeks, even though they have noticed it is not customary for heterosexual men to kiss each other in public in the UK. This student expresses that even though they may be judged by this action, being looked at as peculiar, gay or ‘weird’, the maintenance of this habit is an important part of being an Emirati and therefore, it is not abandoned even though others may negatively receive it. Within varying dimensions of broad-mindedness, students also include allowance for specialising thoughts on their own cultural standards and practices as Emiratis. Likewise, as the previous excerpts have shown, they can do the same for UK standards, which they themselves may have initially considered ‘frustrating’ and ‘weird’ in the acculturative process and/or otherwise.

### **5.3.4 – Transformative sub-theme #4: Performance Rather Than Privilege**

As described earlier in this chapter, one of the main features of Emirati cultural identity is the level of privilege that Emiratis enjoy while living in the UAE. The advantages of being a local in the UAE are many. Most of the time it is perceived as a normal way of life to be given certain

rights due to nationality or familial ties. This particular dimension of Emirati identity was often re-evaluated by sojourners in the UK. According to respondent results, performance rather than (or over) privilege has a direct correlation with new values and perspectives in independence.

***Extract 2.4A***

*I have learnt responsibility, before usually what we are offered back home, everything is taken care of by parents and the government, but here, you are on your own to succeed right? (Laughs) You can't cry about it when you are alone, you have to manage it, take care of it, living here alone is not easy. (Exhales) It's not easy for us to succeed. In UAE everything is so much easier for us. But we make our family proud when we graduate and that is a good feeling (laughs).*

The participant here echoes many of the other sojourner voices by describing that on one hand, he appreciates the comforts of back home, however, being able to 'manage it' and succeed in the UK provokes a 'good feeling'. The variation in both costs and benefits seemed to mirror the equally turbulent experience he sometimes had whilst living in the UK. Perhaps through the acculturative experience, and the changing social and economic status of Emiratis as the population grows, the concept of *wasta* is no longer favoured as it used to be before the modernisation process.

***Extract 2.4B***

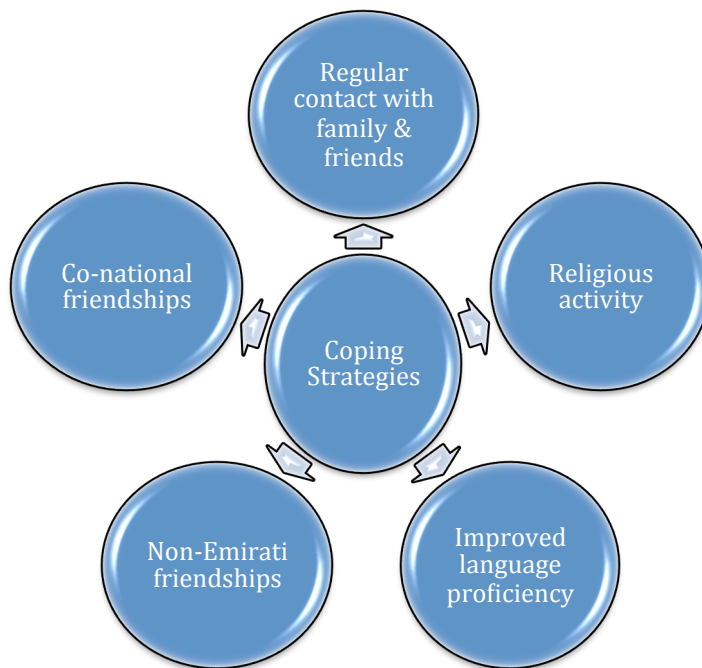
*Here [in the UK] if you perform well, umm, you will get the return without needing to be so and so's son. This is different for us.*

In the fact that this participant interviewed questions some of the norms of his own culture during the process of acculturation, where previously he would have accepted a 'patriarchal nepotism based social-setup', he now might prefer a different system as per his experiences in the UK. Changes like these verify the on-going difficulty for Emirati sojourners who transfer these attitudes, but later repatriate and feel a need to re-assimilate back into Emirati culture. This is something that is discussed further in Chapter 6.

### 5.4– Theme #3

#### Acculturative Coping Strategies Used While in the UK

Emirati student sojourners talked about several coping strategies used during the early phases of the acculturative process while in the UK. These included: (1) regular contact with family and friends; (2) religious activity; (3) improved language proficiency; (4) making non-Emirati friends and (5) building co-national friendships.



*Figure 12 - The different coping strategies used by sojourners that emerged recurrently through Emirati responses*

#### **5.4.1 – Coping Strategy #1: Regular Contact with Family and Friends**

Respondents were explicit in emphasising home visits and staying in touch with family and friends through a variation of technological, travel and personal means. Maintaining a sense of connection with the UAE and interdependent social ties, by e-mail, phone and family visits, aids the acculturative process and helps in keeping Emiratis in touch with their culture.

##### ***Extract 3.1A***

*Going home helped as well. It makes you remember who you are and, not to forget your culture and nationality and country.*

This student emphasises the point twice, using both a positive and negative orientation, that is (1) ‘remembering who you are’ and (2) ‘not forgetting your culture.’ Not only do regular contact and visits home ease feelings of homesickness or cultural unfamiliarity, but they also proactively reinforce Emirati identity and values. Students often recounted the types of questions and comments their parents would convey, such as ‘are you praying on time?’, ‘be careful not to come home too late,’ ‘don’t eat too much junk food,’ ‘remember who you are and why you are there.’ Regular contact with family back in the UAE has two main purposes for coping through an acculturative process: (a) to help ease the emotional strains of living away from family and (b) to act as a cultural protective vest that remains with the student, even when he/she is living abroad. Stepping outside of the acculturative specifics, I also note from another angle, that regular communication is integral in Emirati culture and community, and therefore, regular contact, beyond coping, is more so just a way of life.

#### **5.4.2 – Coping Strategy #2: Religious Activity and Prayer**

Prayers and connectivity to Allah, many students affirmed, gave them strength during uncertain and occasionally isolating times, especially during Ramadan. Religious activity and prayer is another strategy that the majority of the respondents in this study talked about using.

### **Extract 3.2A**

*I went to a British school, sooo I didn't learn anything (religion) in school, it all came from my family, so it didn't matter where I was studying or where I was. This was already put into me, still is through my family. So even when I'm away from family when I pray, I feel better about everything. Makes me feel close to my mom and dad and Dubai (exhales).*

Extract 3.2a shows once again the importance of the convergence of the family unit with social and religious perspectives. An interesting expression used by the participant: 'put into me', was found to be a significant pointer of again, religion as a shaper of the Emirati, and not vice versa. The participant says, 'this was already put into me', referring to religious teachings and practices that were taught and engrained whilst growing up, further expressing a boundless relationship with religion. Diluting religion or abandoning it would perhaps bring about negative results, depending on the student, since the interconnectivity between religious values of 'self' is socialised into Emiratis to be inseparable. Saying it was 'put in to me' also revisits the important role family play in this context. The family therefore, bestows the Emirati student with one of the most fundamental 'treasures' or tenants of their cultural identity.

Furthermore, this response could indicate the way religion is part of the student's vital biological, psychological and socialised composition. It is 'in me', therefore, regardless of location or experiences; that value is part of the student, such as one of their limbs.

### **Extract 3.2B**

*So even while I am here [in the UK]. I want to even pray more or practice my religion more. Because I am away from my family (exhales) and I feel my religion protects me. The only thing that can protect me here is Allah so I continue praying here. It's very private. My connection with Allah.*

The respondent in extract 3.2b, mentions the word Allah (God), 3 times, emphasising the familiarity and closeness to her saviour. Religious words and phrases were the most recurring aspects of interviewee responses. Not just on a religious level, but also as a source of comfort and clarity during the first phase of the acculturative process that can be unfamiliar and

challenging. The fact that she has mentioned it in Arabic and not in English may denote a perceived difference between using the English word versus the Arabic title, or perhaps it is of nature, her first language, her first intimacy, her first homage to God (her way) and as such, engrained within her.

### **5.4.3 – Coping Strategy #3: Improving Language Proficiency**

Improving language proficiency was important to Emirati students in the UK, both on a personal and professional level. Although students prefer Arabic in relation to preference for home culture, they expressed that fluency in English aided their acculturation as well as prepared them for job sectors. Many students talked about first learning to speak English in the UAE, also pointing out that due to the diverse population the English spoken there is a combination of different languages, being a variation of interpretations and resulting dialects. This means the English that Emiratis spoke back in the UAE could be mixed in with many Arabic words, whereas in the UK, they had to expand upon their vocabulary so that the non-Arabic speaking listener would not be confused by the foreign words often woven into the conversation by the Emirati speakers.

**INTERVIEWER:** *Your English is very good; did it improve while in the UK?*

#### ***Extract 3.3A***

*Thank you, you see there are those of us who went to international schools and those who went to local schools, where only Arabic is taught. My school had a British curriculum and we had British teachers and mostly locals who went. Ya, there were some children of expats there as well. The government thought these schools are important to have for the hope that we could get leadership positions in the future, to help build our country and speaking English fluently is a big part of that.*

The fact that this respondent had British teachers and interacted with children from other cultures shows that the UAE, in comparison with some of its Arab neighbours, is a relatively cosmopolitan place where social interactions between cultures are common. This prepares

students for their sojourn experience and makes them more amenable to absorbing new norms and values. Extract 3.3a further solidifies the processes of the sojourn experience and resulting language proficiencies, through contextualised efforts of modernisation in the UAE. Those who have cross-culture exposure and encouragement to become students in the UK, with English language experience, state that they had a smoother transition when initially residing in the UK.

The underlying meaning of this passage does not end at language acquisition or educational opportunities. As this student and many others expressed, it is very much connected to the way in which speaking English fluently can be a gateway towards leadership positions.

Extract 3.3b meanwhile highlights the fact that Arabic forms a key part of the identity-forming norms in the UAE.

***Extract 3.3B***

*I don't speak English, not with my mom and dad for sure. Umm even with my siblings we speak Arabic, I mean we might use a few English words in between but mostly is Arabic. Even with friends, mainly Arabic is spoken, we only speak English to people who don't speak Arabic.*

Emiratis maintain their identity while strategising for integration both with (a) UK residency, and (b) future job positions in coherence with the UAE's modernising efforts. Arabic, being an important component of Emirati identity, especially in the private sectors of life, is reserved for family, friends and those who are linguistically and culturally interconnected. English is used in the public spheres of life, with those who are further away and not in regular contact with close-knit circles of the Emiratis and/or those who come from 'other' backgrounds.

Understanding the language of a host culture allows for a better understanding and integration into the social-interactions and comforts of that culture. Improving their English in the UK (1) places Emirati students at an advantage of utilising a language, that also (2) helps them process social and cultural systems enabling them to (3) work and be social in alternative systems and (4) helps them through their acculturation process throughout.

#### 5.4.4 – Coping Strategy #4: Making non-Emirati Friends

In verification with the previous sub-section, the three main reasons Emirati students' English proficiency improves while in the UK is because of their lessons at university, public interaction with the host population as well as the friendships they strike with people from a wide range of backgrounds, who do not speak Arabic. Hence, my analysis also re-affirmed that making non-Emirati friends (a) helps promote the success of English language proficiency (also as another coping strategy), (b) allows for cross-cultural education and unique broadening of perspectives, and (c) extends a local social network of support.

##### **Extract 3.4A**

*No its alot more, its English people and people from the EU. That's my basic friends. Most of the international lots are there to study and leave, that's not what I've come here to do, I wanted to experience the culture so ya you can't, like the international lot there they stick together, they do their own thing, then they go back home. I mean like the people from China stick with the Chinese people, the people from Japan stick with the Japanese people, and of course the Emiratis and Arabs go there and they just stick together (laughs). I mean you could do that if you just stayed home, I am happy my friends are very very very international. Not boring all the same (laughs).*

This respondent regarded himself as distinct from 'Arabs', which is in fact his ethnicity. This indicates that whilst the student may speak Arabic, especially at home with family, he sometimes regards himself as differentiated from most Arabs present in his local host community, for wanting to form friendships with people from other countries, regions and backgrounds. Emiratis who learn about differing cultures and value systems maximise their sojourn experience: 'I am happy my friends are very, very, very international' and 'not boring'. His usage of the word 'very' and repeated emphasis of it denotes that 'very international' (i.e. not Emirati) is what is interesting and Emirati to this participant seems tedious and dull. A number of other participants voiced similar dialogue in feeling attracted or drawn to people from a wide range of nationalities and since they are unfamiliar they may also seem more interesting and exotic.

The level of UK cultural participation for Emiratis is at the same time for some sojourners, is one that is controlled, limited and often takes place only when they are required to, not perhaps out of choice or preference. The following interviewee adapts to the new culture by befriending people from the host culture, in order to make life easier and more adaptable (i.e. ‘...networking with people...it is important to do that...it can be hard . . .’).

***Extract 3.4A***

*At first mixing with people from similar backgrounds, makes you feel comfortable, going to Arabic restaurants, eating the food, or the sweets, listening to Arabic music, so they are in their comfort zone (laughs). At the same time, making friends with people from London, so you get to know the people and place better, networking with people so that they can help you with things such as how to pay your bills or where to buy things, it's important to do that because it can be hard to find out for yourself and these things can frustrate you.*

The interviewee explains here that having decided to aid acculturative adjustment, certain techniques or strategies to alleviate feelings of negativity and isolation from the host culture were adopted, also to help as such in understanding the ways of the new culture. This is in line with Sussman (2002) who argued that when expatriate sojourners go through a cultural adjustment process they tend to incorporate cognitive and behavioural aspects of the host culture into their own repertoires in order to reduce negative experiences of feeling ostracised from the cultural in-group. Meanwhile, the student also expresses one of the most important outcomes of staying in touch with family and friends as a co-existence example of identity maintenance. Emiratis viewed making non-Emirati friends as a coping strategy and an effective way to help get better acquainted with their new environment, also allowing them to reap the cultural benefits of being in the UK as well.

**5.4.5 – Coping Strategy #5: Co-national Friendships**

Choosing co-national friends are also selected by student sojourners as an acculturative strategy, having a positive effect on their overall adjustment. The conveyed message from the Emirati student respondents was that frequent and satisfying contact with people from the same

background helped students overcome feelings of loneliness, homesickness and cultural isolations. When students did not have to struggle with such emotional issues, they could easily focus on their studies and perform better academically.

***Extract 3.4B***

*Yes, yes for sure, we have many Emirati friends, not only friends, they are our cousins and brothers, especially when we are not in the UAE. We came here together to be together, why would I leave them alone and go with a stranger? (laughs). That's not how we been raised.*

The respondent in extract 3.4b begins answering my questions about co-national friendships by repeating the word 'yes' twice, to emphasise the strong opinion he has in this matter. This response only grows further in strength as the student describes these friendships not only as platonic relationships, but more as familial bonds between countrymen when away from their own biological families. What is most interesting here is the rhetorical question she asked both herself and me, 'why would I leave them alone and go with a stranger?' This question seems to act both as a reminder and reinforce of such values. There is a slight sarcasm in her voice that might point to a judgmental attitude towards those who choose to befriend people from other nationalities. Here the student refers to 'those' people as 'strangers' and again there is a notion of 'otherness', in compartmentalisation. Non-Emiratis might represent a cultural outsider that, some Emirati student sojourners feel should be kept on the 'outside' (i.e. just as many of them, had also marginalised together in the UAE, away from expatriate communities).

Therefore both co-national and non-Emirati friends were selected as a way to more effectively adapt. There were times when co nationals helped ease feelings of culture shock and homesickness while other times, in order to integrate more effectively, they socialised with non Emirati friends.

## **5.5– Theme #4**

### **Difficulties Encountered in Returning Home**

A number of research paradigms and hypotheses attempt to explain the psychological transformation involved in intercultural contact for sojourners, having also cognitive and behavioural changes while living abroad (Sussman, 2002; Patron, 2006). Therefore, it was not surprising that many Emirati students sojourner's changes in self-concept and cultural identity led to some adjustment difficulties during acculturation and even more so during the repatriation processes. Re-integration uncertainties and stresses occurred in two main sub-themes: (1) engaging in bicultural experiences and (2) feeling, 'misunderstood'.

#### **5.5.1 – Repatriation Difficulty #1: Having Bicultural Experiences (in the UAE)**

What I found interesting is that even though the Emiratis seem very proud and connected with their traditions, there is evidence, in my data collection and analysis, that there is a 'bending' of some values in both private and public settings. After having integrated into the UK setting, how Emiratis may behave in public, in accordance to acceptable behaviour, might be different to some social risks they take in private.

In relation to the Emirati returnee, some shifts in cultural identity were perceived as too strong or inappropriate for the UAE. One of these was a noticeable change in attire by the home community. The repatriated Emirati, most especially males, accustomed to wearing western style clothing for a number of years in the UK, would mix traditional Arabic clothes with western clothing. The result would be an amalgamation of a kandora/thobe or Arabic white dress, with perhaps a baseball cap instead of the ghutra and agal, the traditional headgear. The slightly transformed traditional attire is an interesting symbol of the cultural additives Emirati students maintained even after moving back.

Nearly half of the interviewees talked about how it is unacceptable to go to nightclubs or bars, but that they may do so when they are with friends from different cultural backgrounds (and even upon return to the UAE, in secret). One female interviewee described how dating was not an

acceptable part of Emirati culture or tradition, however, she had a secret boyfriend whom she was very fond.

The venturing into unacceptable cultural territory that Emirati students have been taught not to do, seemed to take place in the UAE, that is, after being explored in the UK. Bold endeavours are undertaken with, as their cultural identity adds, new layers to it. Cultural assessments and negotiations or ‘cultural identity dilemmas’ are felt as a result of conflicting forces; the struggle between UAE traditions, and biculturalism and/or modernity where behaviours might differ in public or private settings.

For the repatriates I interviewed, one of the reasons dilemmas most likely arose is because of the great importance Emiratis place on notions of honour, shame and reputation. In response to the interview questions, one repatriated participant referred to the local UAE population, in re-settling, as ‘them’ and not as ‘us’. This is a change in the way participants spoke in the beginning of the interview. The participant was slightly surprised himself. When asked why he didn’t include himself in the population, after a brief pause, he said:

***Extract 4.1A***

*Because I’m like trying to merge the two together. The two meaning...the west and the local culture. I consider myself local, yes. But I don’t have a local psyche...like, 100 %. I don’t always think like them. And I don’t want to be exactly like them, I’m back in Dubai after I finish my education to improve them. In what I see or think as an improvement.*

When some of the students spoke to me about engaging in what they perceived as ‘English’ or ‘western’ type practices back home, such as drinking and pre-marital sex, they would distance themselves from the discussion by using sentences such as, ‘I know some Emiratis do these things,’ or ‘there are some people from my country who have become really open now.’ Using a third person format in descriptions, seemed to be a safe way for participants to de-associate from such behaviour or circles of behaviour, while also recognising such experiences, in UAE contextualisation, as ‘morally-void behaviours’. While in the UAE, the decision not to adopt certain contradictory values or practices is much easier, since Emirati cultural identity is

constantly reinforced and exercised. If discovered, the consequences of punishment for bringing shame onto the family are much more feared in the UAE environment.

In spite of these consequences, cultural identity dilemmas in the UK seem to cause more intrigue, inviting students to, even if only in private, try on some cultural principles encountered while studying abroad. One repatriate openly and daringly revealed his bicultural attitude, believing these experiences to be acceptable when in and/or travelling to the UK. He however, did not admit to engaging in such activities in the UAE.

***Extract 4.1B***

*I mean. So what if we are in London. Once in a while we want to have some fun? I mean, I don't let everyone know about it...but also I don't want to lie and say, oh no I never go out, or do anything wrong. Come on...we are in London. We want to have some fun, its ok as long as you remember when you should stop...like this, it's ok.*

As the participant emphasises, there is a mentality that in engaging in prohibited activities, 'as long as you remember when you should stop . . . like this, it's ok'. This is also some of the benefit repatriates explained to me, as having outsidecultural affiliations. Emirati students are able to engage in, or participate in, social activities frowned upon by other Emiratis, and/or can further talk about their repatriation difficulties with international friends, and in some cases, expats they befriend when returning after their UK experiences.

***Extract 4.1C***

*Umm like, for example, you can't go party here with Emiratis. It's just not done amongst the locals, ahhh... (laughs) you tend to have a split personality cuz I've got quite a few **very very** local friends here and the way I am with them is completely different to the way I am with the people I party with. My foreign friends are just completely different people.*

The social risk aspect of extract 4.1c is important. It shows a clear cultural divergence between Emirati culture and biculturalism. It shows that the participant is perhaps midway on the continuum between UAE and UK social systems (as expected following a period of

acculturation), where the respondent is clearly having to guard himself with his Emirati friends. This cultural divide is expressed by the student as saying he now has a 'split personality'. This can indicate the ability for the student, who has been through the acculturative process adopted new behaviours, to activate the necessary set of cultural values in accordance to the context in which he may be part of. There is a reverse inference, in that he does not perceive himself as 'very very' Emirati, however he is Emirati. When he said that he is 'completely different' in the way he exists between social networks and friends, he also accentuates the word completely, as in highlighting, in my analytic interpretation, that his 'self-completion' or identity is also between two systems. Therefore, in social comparison, he can be less Emirati amongst people from other backgrounds and when wanting to participate in host cultural activities, more Emirati amongst co-nationals.

### **5.5.2 – Repatriation Difficulty #2: Feeling Misunderstood**

For Emirati students, relationships that were once vital are expected to continue to be the way they were before their sojourn period; but sometimes, upon repatriation, the Emiratis in my study, conveyed feeling lonely and/or misunderstood in the UAE. According to the Emirati students I interviewed, they envisage feeling relaxed, at ease and 'at home' after returning to the UAE, because they think they are once again in a familiar cultural environment. Returning home however, means re-integrating into an unpredictable and less recognisable setting, as many of the students learnt that there is sometimes, reverse culture shock.

#### ***Extract 4.2A***

*I was so excited to go back to Dubai. And it was really fun when I used to go for visits. But when I moved back, again, it was good for some time. But after my family and friends I felt, even the city (oh my God) had changed not like before. Like my cousins looked different, some had grown up others I didn't recognise! But more like maybe I thought I had only changed and when I got back I realised everyone changed!*

The word 'changed' is used three times in the above extract and repeatedly by respondents when talking about their repatriation experience. Like this participant, many Emirati repatriates in my

study also described a feeling of unfamiliarity, like ‘everyone changed!’ Among obvious changes, such as family members growing up, in my interpretations it is possible that the interviewee’s own, ‘then’ bicultural perception, has additional influence. As extract 4.2a (...continued...) depicts, there is a struggle in re-adjusting to the home environment.

***Extract 4.2A (...Continued...)***

*One of the hardest things were trying to get used to home again. I mean my family laughed at me, even made fun of me. They said what do you mean you’re not used to us anymore, ‘what did UK change you so much?’ Sometimes I wouldn’t even talk about it because they got upset, and already I felt a little strange so I didn’t want to lose them more.*

Changes in perception and experience can alter values and opinions; it seems as if the family and the repatriate (of extract 4.2a continued) are having a hard time adjusting through the re-integration processes. A lack of familiarity is suggested by the words ‘not used to’ and feeling a ‘little strange’. In this extract, the family does not want to blame their child for the noticeable changes in her cultural identity, nor do they want to blame themselves by regretting the decision to send her for a tertiary education. The use of the question and phraseology, ‘did UK change you’, is described as an object for familial coping in expression. It provides a safe element to hold responsible for the (sometimes unwarranted) change. The interviewee states that she does not wish to ‘lose them [family] more’, expressing that she already feels a cultural identity distance in her most intimate surroundings and due to the unfamiliarity, the interviewee does not want to create more distance. Her interdependence to both family and culture is maintained to a large degree while studying in the UK, however, even slight changes towards becoming more independent seems to be met with criticism.

The majority of respondents explained that when they returned from the UK, they also felt elements of rejection in being misunderstood.

***Extract 4.2B***

*My mother said 'ok we know you had a nice time, but you're back now. Instead of talking too much here, go visit your grandmother.' Maybe they don't want to know even, maybe they are afraid.*

The participant in extract 4.2b described the disappointment felt when her mother's response shows no interest in hearing stories about her sojourn experience. What the student should be focusing on, according to her mother, is returning to her familial obligation, such as visiting her grandmother. Perhaps the mother is worried, or even afraid as the participant describes, of her daughter remaining absorbed in those memories instead of slipping right back into her Emirati cultural self. Parental apprehension for children becoming less Emirati was an evidenced concern that almost all Emirati student participants touched upon.

Reactions, such as the ones described above, often resulted in Emirati students missing those whom they shared many interesting exchanges with in the UK. Just as when Emirati students missed family and friends back home, when they initially transitioned, they 'then' described a similar sentiment when they returned to the UAE. Many of the participants who spoke to me seemed often surprised and taken aback by the strength of emotion felt for new people and places they had formed bonds with during their period of study.

***Extract 4.1C***

*I didn't make too many friends, and we always used to hang out in a few of the same restaurants, near the college. But when I moved back home I thought, maybe we will lose touch or even forget about my foreigner friends. (Exhales) but this wasn't what happened, we kept in touch, and I really sometimes wish I packed them with me in my suitcase! Maybe because I changed now in some way, I feel like we have jokes or stories. Funny ones (laughs) which my old friends will not understand or laugh about really.*

The interviewee in *excerpt 4.1c* expressed feelings of missing the life left behind. As many sojourners felt homesick or missed home when they first went abroad to study, upon returning home, they also felt a reversal in the situation, missing their friends and the life they had lived whilst sojourning in the UK. Again, there is an acknowledgement of ‘change’, which creates a distance between herself and ‘old [UAE] friends’, also suggesting she is new. The interviewee believes that she may not be able to relate to her friends at home as much as she was able to with the friends she had made while studying in the UK. This was perhaps in accordance with the high percentage of returnees who often expressed the way people misinterpret their words and/or actions while back in the UAE. Communication, rather in English, or Arabic, was slightly tricky and a bit sensitive at times.

Some Emirati graduates also described using English words interwoven in their sentences, which diluted their ability to communicate purely in Arabic. Family members, especially elders, would often criticise the returnee for ‘losing their language’ when communicating in such a manner. Sometimes, local people back home focused on small changes in the returnee’s behaviour or ideas and seemed offended by them. Interviewees I recorded often described feeling quite uncomfortable for being criticised for talking or behaving in a way that they had been accustomed to, for some time, in the UK (i.e. also, behaviours of their total ‘self’ identity formation). What is unanswered accordingly, is how long a transitional stage in language acquisition is and to what degree, permanent or diffusing through re-integration. When the repatriate is fully re-integrated, I argue, it is likely, even with a bicultural ability, to shift between modes of existence; he or she will no longer have a habitual practice of switching between languages, that is, in a single context.

Family and even some friends would describe transformed behaviours exhibited by the returnees as inappropriate and unacceptable. The way Emirati graduates spoke, or expressed themselves, the tone they used, the amount they agreed or disagreed in conversation, and their overall level of individuality versus the amount they conformed, were all issues that were addressed.

***Extract 4.1C (Continued)***

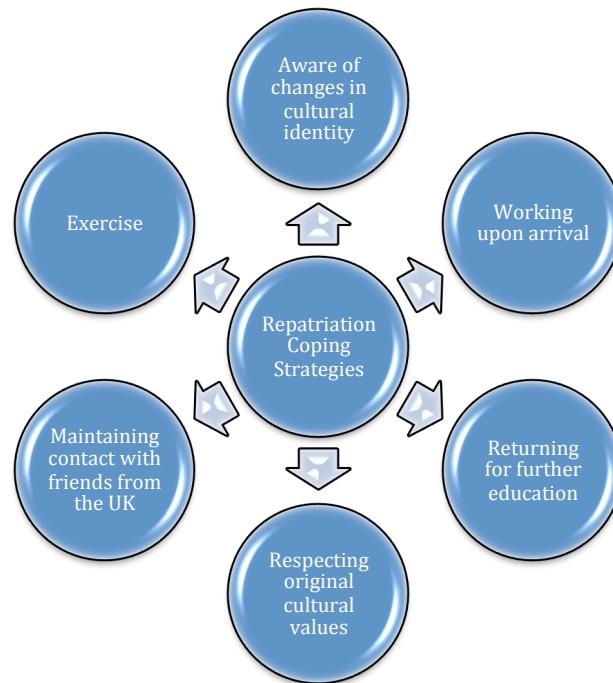
*When I lived at home again, I really didn't know why my parents were angry so much. I mean they would keep saying you changed you changed, and I say ok but is it bad or good? They told me I don't respect them like before, I have my own opinion, that I talk differently, they don't understand what I am saying sometimes! I told them wallah believe me I am the same son you know! (Laughs).*

The sojourner insisted that there is no serious change, by saying he is the 'same son you know!'. The family seems to have a hard time coping with what is perceived as a lack of 'respect', in accordance with cultural expectations and daily social practices. Due to education, experiences and cultural differences, and mainly the UK being more individualistic than the collectivistic UAE, the sojourner has picked up some habits, opinions or mannerisms that are not in line with those his family members are accustomed to and/or approving of. In the Emirati cultural value system, this conversation substantiates that trying to deviate from familial principles or opinions, signifies, a lack of respect and is not a sign of independence or varying belief. Re-assessing expectations about returning home is a main strategy Emirati students learnt, to re-adjust after returning to the Emirates.

## 5.6– Theme #5

### Emirati Re-Integration and Post-Repatriation Coping Strategies

Negotiating newly acquired cultural nuances was an interesting step, which I analysed and re-analysed again, in the Emirati sojourn cycle. The common occurrence of repatriation strategies included: (1) being aware of changes in cultural identity; (2) working upon arrival; (3) respecting original cultural values; (4) maintaining contact with friends from the UK; (5) returning to the UK for further education; (6) incorporating learnt value systems from host culture into their country of origin; and (7) physical exercise.



***Figure 13 - The different coping strategies used by repatriates that emerged recurrently through Emirati returnee responses***

### 5.6.1 – Post-Repatriation Strategy #1: Being Aware of Changes in Cultural Identity

For repatriate participants in my study, being aware, to some degree, of cultural identity transformations and anticipating changes seemed to ease some of the tension and confusion of re-settling.

#### ***Extract 5.1A***

*At first it was a little tough because I think, maybe I had changed a little. I was a little more independent because I lived alone for 4 years and had to make decisions by myself. So it was tough when family wanted to tell me what to do.*

Extract 5.1a as I have included, shows the hesitation the student portrays when talking about semi-controversial changes, as many of my subject participants did. After all, being less Emirati post-sojourn may have consequences for the individual. ‘Speech seatbelts’ are once again employed as the participant uses the word ‘little’ to express the level of toughness when returning home, without offending. This respondent is trying to weigh out the repatriation situation, highlighting awareness in independence and also awareness in Emirati family dynamic.

Being exposed to a new culture, especially one that is quite different from the home culture, initiated participants to pinpoint certain aspects and behaviours of their Emirati culture that may have escaped notice before they travelled to study.

#### ***Extract 5.1B***

*One of the first things I noticed was with punctuality. I couldn’t believe how late people were here (UAE). I mean when you say let’s meet at 8 and they show up like 9 sometimes! And they wouldn’t understand why I was angry if they came late! I’m so British now right? (Laughs).*

This participant pointed out a shortcoming in habitual lateness, which he had not experienced in the UK. The repatriate, in this way, has again exhibited an account of ‘otherness’ for the UAE community. The participant acknowledges the lack of understanding of other Emiratis about his anger and agitation (at their lateness, which they are unaware). His response underlines a

disconnection and lack of understanding for relaxed timing, which the student feels after sojourning. Interestingly, many of the participants and people around them used communicated sentiments such as ‘I’m so British now right?’ He declares that he has transformed in assimilating, perhaps to the UK structures of time.

Most of the respondents acknowledged changes in regard to being exposed to and accepting different cultures, religions and races due to being a sojourner.

***Extract 5.1C***

*You know one of the best things I learned when I was at uni was that people come from all different parts of the world, and they have their own culture or religion. I was able to accept their differences without judging them or thinking my way was the only way or even the right way. Before I left maybe I wasn't so patient or tolerant of differences. So sometimes my family is a little bit surprised when I mix with someone from a different cultural background. They don't understand and get scared maybe I will become more like them or lose my Emirati traditions (laughs). Of course, that doesn't happen, but they are just not used to it.*

Parts of the above extract are integral to the interrelating repatriate experience I have analysed. The student explained the difficulty in her family's lack of understanding when she associated with people from different cultures. She understands the fears that her family demonstrates, slightly helping her to cope and process situations, though still challenged. The result of losing values indicates a deeper and more complex issue of the family fear that their daughter will, as so, behave in a way, which is inappropriate, socially, religiously and/or culturally. If the latter were to happen, there would not only be a shameful reflection upon the family, who would feel responsible for not being able to ensure the maintenance of core cultural values in their daughter, but it may also affect her chances of future opportunities in work and marriage.

### 5.6.2 – Post-Repatriation Strategy #2: Working Upon Return

Returning home to a slower pace of life in the UAE, after being abroad in the busy UK, can be frustrating for returnees, especially for those without a potential job opportunity. Although a job is guaranteed as an eventuality through the government implementation of ‘Emiratisation’, and/or *wasta*, there is not always an immediate placement or acceptance. While some periods of rest and relaxation upon repatriation are welcomed, extensive periods of inactivity may be counter-productive to re-adjustment.

#### ***Extract 5.2A***

*I am sleeping till noon and staying up most of the night! I thought I didn't even do this when I was in college, so my routine is terrible because I'm not working yet. (Exhales) Inshallah (God willing) soon I will find a job before I get crazy! The first job I got after moving back home wasn't exactly what I wanted but Hamdellah (thank God) I took it because I met so many people. It was good experience and I found out that I really enjoyed working in advertising when before I thought I will work only in a bank, I didn't feel bored anymore because when I first came back most of my friends were working so I had nothing to do except create problems for myself, get into trouble, you know (laughs)! Now the job I have is because of a contact I met at this other place, so Hamdellah (thank God) it's good.*

I have identified through my analysis, a complex set of adjustment issues intertwined with this repatriate's experience, similar to the responses of others. Being idle meant that repatriates felt suddenly quite bored after their busy sojourn. The problems, although not elaborated upon, could have been actual inappropriate behaviours that the student might have been involved in, or emotional turmoil experienced as a result of the difficulties of readjusting to life back home. The student implies that, had she been more occupied, perhaps these areas of conflict may not have arisen.

### 5.6.3 – Post-Repatriation Strategy #3: Respecting Home Norms and Values

Respecting and appreciating Emirati culture upon re-entry, is a significant factor in identity achievement, after repatriation. The implication of Emirati tradition upon identity and therefore, integrating successfully, is demonstrated by the following excerpt, in which an interviewee highlights, in conversation with me the word ‘tradition’ repeatedly. So this is not only a recurrent word here, but also throughout all dialogues transcribed.

#### ***Extract 5.3A***

*We’re moving forward but still maintaining your own sense of identity, tradition and culture, that to me is what it means to be an Emirati. Yes, yes it is. We don’t do many things because of respect for the cultural values, and more so respect for the family name.*

The particular relationship between Emirati culture and modernisation in the UAE is noted here. The repatriate seems to be attempting to rationalise and balance the two.

One Emirati student study explained to me that she would wear her traditional Arabic covering before leaving the house, but when socialising with a group of her French friends in a café in Dubai, she would take it off, so that she could better fit in with the others. This ‘subtraction’ (as Sussman would refer), of a particular cultural practice did not occur when the same student socialised with her Emirati friends. Kidder referred to this as the ‘chameleon-like technique’ (Kidder, 1992, p.390). This is a technique also used by other students from collectivist cultures who talked about knowing how to behave in front of people when back home.

Regardless of the repatriation difficulties experienced, the privileged position of the Emirati student in my study is expressed as being an adequate motivator and force for re-integrating successfully.

### ***Extract 5.3A***

*We believe when it's time to come back home, they start realising and comparing their experiences abroad and at home, and that's when they really stick to their traditions. Even more and try to maintain it because they prefer it. They prefer it. They say 'I don't want to live like that', 'I don't want to get married like that, raise my children like that'. No, yes, it's a lot of things that add to it, whether it's the life there or the families. We have a lot of good points about our traditions which I'm very pleased and I'm very proud of, starting off with the extended family. The support we get is more than enough. Hamdellah (thank God).*

This participant, uses 'we', signifying as mentioned before that there is social identity and 'belonging' with the Emirati in-group when maintaining and respecting traditions. At the same time, the repatriate addressed Emiratis who returned with reminding thoughts to appreciate culture, as 'they' are, suggesting again, a distance in the group and only once, briefly integrating 'I' (i.e. in 'I don't want to get married like that'). So many respondents are in favour of the Emirati lifestyle, but also still weighing or in between stances (i.e. repatriate viewpoints on integration and 'leaving behind' the UK. Also in regard to, where to fit newly acquired habits not accepted in the UAE, the repatriate also not wanting to permanently consider living anywhere else).

As students became more familiar with aspects of host cultural values, they compare and contrast those with their own. This is most prevalent when considering the benefits of moving back to the UAE. In extract 5.3a, the student said, 'I don't want to live like that', suggesting perhaps to tougher lifestyles observed in the UK. Emiratis prefer their secure lifestyles in national privileges.

### ***Extract 5.3B***

*More than any other nationality in the world, we feel privilege, we have free education, health care, interest free loans, gifted land and if I didn't have money to build my house the government would pay for it interest free and no taxes! Where else can you live like this? (Laughs) Also our passport and nationality is well regarded, we are welcomed in many other countries (Hamdellah) because of our longstanding ties with UK and US.*

#### **5.6.4 – Post-Repatriation Strategy # 4: Maintaining Contact with Friends**

One of the main strategies returnees described, as used for adjusting to living back in the UAE, is keeping in touch with friends they made in the UK. Staying in touch provided a comfortable bridge between two value systems (UK and UAE), and therefore, maintenance for their somewhat bicultural identities.

##### ***Extract 5.4A***

*Thank God we have Facebook, Skype and Twitter and email so we can keep in touch with my friends in the UK. I think of my friends back at university a lot and I wonder what they are doing or where they went to live after they graduated. Many of them stayed in the UK and were so surprised that I wanted to move back I mean I love my country and people here but it was nice to keep in touch, hear about their new jobs and also to hear them complaining from time to time, so I felt I wasn't alone and they were also going through some things like me.*

The participant in extract 5.4a demonstrated reverse homesickness upon return to the UAE. Contact with friends abroad, in the other culture, helps restrict feelings of loneliness and/or inner-cultural isolation (i.e. for the 'misunderstood' repatriate). He misses his friends and is grateful for social networking sites so that he can keep in touch with those he left behind. Once again, the student here uses 'speech seatbelts', by making sure his love and appreciation for his country is also expressed and understood, even though he is talking about the need to remain in contact with those in the UK.

As a way to further maintain bonds and friendships formed during period of education, Emirati graduates also talked about how it is important to invite close friends to the UAE.

##### ***Extract 5.4B***

*I always invited them (friends) to come visit me but it didn't happen till after I moved back. You know we are very hospitable in the UAE so I wanted to show them how we live, the food we eat, take them camping in the desert! Some of British friends said that there is no nature in the UAE but our nature is the desert, I love it and we go every year with my family, camping for a few*

*days, so I took my friends who came to visit and they really enjoyed. At first I didn't want to go visit my friends' home country but we planned it and they insisted and we had such a nice time! Of course, I knew they are from Argentina and I learned a little about their culture, but it was something else when we went there. So the next time I wanted to invite them to Abu Dhabi to visit me and my family. They came in December when the weather was so good and we had a great time. You know it made me feel like we were back in college again (exhales). One of them had such a good time that they now live here and got a job!*

Not only did the majority of Emiratis look forward to returning home, but they also wanted to bring back their close friends. This was even more predominant in my data collection and analysis during re-integration and/or post-repatriation. Repatriates invited friends so that the main features of another culture they missed, and/or missed memories and interactions could also be temporarily imported, through the friend, 'You know it made me feel like we were back in college again'. The enthusiasm of the respondent also vibrates in excitement for being able to show off the Emirates. One of the respondents' friends even decided to remain in the UAE for work, also showing again the cosmopolitan and inviting atmosphere for expatriates.

This is clear evidence that while Emirati repatriates may not always flaunt or highlight their transformed cultural identity, during their time as sojourners, they have acquired a new layer to their self-concept. This addition is one that is acknowledged through contextual opportunities to once again be who they were in the UK, even when back in the UAE.

#### **5.6.5 – Post-Repatriation Strategy #5: Returning to the UK for Further Education**

For some Emirati graduates, living back home after their bachelor's degree was obtained, did not feel as satisfying as they expected. This was either due to cultural adjustment difficulties or perhaps they were not able to fall into the career path they had settled their mind on. Others expressed views about returning to the UK, because they felt they wanted to build on what they had already obtained or they did not really feel ready to live back in the UAE.

**Extract 5.5A**

*I'm not sure which one was more a culture shock, when I went to Manchester or when I came back home! Even though I was excited and looking forward to it, after some time I thought no I am not ready to live here yet I missed everything, even my small bathroom! (laughs).*

Despite the relatively modest living arrangements in the UK, this interviewee along with a number of others, was still willing to postpone her luxurious living standard in the UAE (the best of home style and transportation), for returning to the UK.

Some Emiratis said that after working in a particular position in the UAE, they realised that a higher degree would guarantee them the opportunity of a promotion. This is likely to have correlation to initial job placements with Emiratisation in some cases as well.

**Extract 5.5B**

*I worked for this MNC [multi-national corporation] for a few months and felt like I was the youngest there, it affected my confidence and I wasn't sure really if I was going to do a good job or not. Thank God my parents were really supportive, and I was afraid at first to talk to them because I had just come back really, and I was the first one of the family to go study abroad, so I thought they would be angry and not let me go do my masters. Hamdellah, I spoke to them and explained that it was better for me so I decided I will go back to live there again for 1 year, I am really happy, but I didn't miss the rain (laughs).*

Expressing concern about his family being 'angry' about returning, the participant may have already experienced dissatisfaction conveyed by the family, perhaps in post-repatriation. However, with a newly acquired sense of independence and self-reliance, the student was able to negotiate an agreement where the benefits of returning for further education was recognised by the family, not only for the student, but also as being a more competent and qualified member of the community.

### 5.6.6 – Post-Repatriation Strategy # 6: Integrating Learnt UK Value Systems

As the Emirati students have grown and experienced a wide range of both academic and social systems, their goals and needs have become more diverse. One of the greatest lessons learnt, which Emirati student sojourners and repatriates both expressed through, were the opportunities to broaden their worldviews. Most Emirati graduates expressed enthusiasm about trying to import some of those values into the UAE, while others were more careful with trying to negotiate or carve out a place for varying value systems learnt in the UK. This is especially true in regard to performance rather than privilege, and exhibited in the following two extracts (extract 5.6a and extract 5.6b).

#### **Extract 5.6A**

*You see in the UK it didn't matter what who you are or what family you were from, so you had to work hard and prove yourself. That was really important for me to do. Even as working in HR [human resources], I tried to do the same, to hire people who were right for the job and mostly this would work and I would be successful, but many times I would see people being promoted or even hired because they are manager's cousin or family and that was bad.*

#### **Extract 5.6B**

*When I first started working, I really wanted to use many of the things which I learned at uni at my father's company. Many things like time management, team building or training seminars, communication strategies. But this didn't go down very well with the management or even with my father, (exhales) they told me to relax and back off a little because what I was suggesting was nice it won't work here! It was shocking; I thought that's why they sent me to uni to learn these things.*

In extract 5.6a, the interviewee discusses an Emirati sense of *wasta* as 'bad' and working 'hard' to 'prove yourself' as 'important'. In extract 5.6b, the respondent says efforts to implement newly acquired skills and knowledge from the UK, 'didn't go down very well'. The resistance to change or following recommendations from graduates is a generational struggle, which is prevalent in the UAE. Most of the older generation learnt skills through experience rather than

academic training and therefore, would not automatically be open to new ways of conducting business functions, especially from the outside or from those younger, with less, local, industry experience. Traditions, experience and *wasta* are preferred, even though modernisation encourages alternative paths.

Participants in my study suggest a desire to incorporate learnt skills from studying abroad and applying them to the workplace. However, this is not really welcomed and repatriates exhibit shock at not being able to employ things or share new learnt values. There is a certain reticence in the extracts that show perhaps a reverse embarrassment or at least a reflection that the UAE is somewhat out-dated in some of its values. This was common among the interviewed repatriated students. In those places that Emiratis could share values and knowledge learnt, repatriates had re-affirmation for identity achievement.

#### **5.6.7 – Post-Repatriation Strategy #7: Physical Activities**

Being involved in the community is a simultaneous coping mechanism, entwined with manifestations of actualised activity, physical activity and further shaping of ‘self’ for Emirati sojourners and repatriates.

##### ***Extract 5.7A***

*At first when I got back, I had so much time, not like in the UK when I was so busy so I felt bored and sad sometimes. Like everyone else was doing something and I was left out. So I joined the gym and I felt so much better. In London, we walked everywhere or we used the public transportation, in Dubai it's not like that, we drive everywhere so the worst part about coming back was that I gained so much weight in the first few months. (Exhales) it was so bad, I felt fat and didn't have confidence, and everyone would say oh my God, you gained so much weight! But my cousin asked me to start going to the gym with her, it helped me a lot. I needed this in my routine or I else I felt useless and didn't have confidence.*

Comparisons between host country and country of origin were quite common amongst repatriates. This not is an indication of readjustment difficulties, but also of the impact of the acculturation process and acquisition of habits and behaviours as a sojourner. This respondent's physical environment had changed and as a result, her physical appearance was also affected. Not only was she required to reassess her position back as a graduate, but she also had to struggle with changes in her physical appearance, which contributed to even more confusion in regard to her self-confidence. The collectivist spirit of the Emiratis (as her cousin steps in) however, with physical activity inevitably helps her through her initial rocky adjustment period.

Extract 5.7b explains how re-integration not only with family, but also with friends can sometimes, however, alter comfort zones and create difficulties. For the next participant however, physical activity reduced stresses and also led to more revitalising community interaction.

***Extract 5.7b***

*I really found it difficult to mix with my old friends, like I was different or they were different or maybe we didn't understand each other anymore so I decided to join a salsa class (laughs), it was so embarrassing at first because I didn't even know how to dance but after I made some really cool friends, and now we meet every week with people from all over the place and just dance and sweat! It's a good exercise as well (laughs).*

Within the domain of repatriation, coping strategies offer interesting insights about the way individuals actively seek ways to reorient themselves into their country of origin. To conclude, in the context of repatriation, significant variables defining adjustment for the Emirati graduate is the relationship between the repatriate, their social network, cultural values and environment.

## **5.7 – Hearing Their Story – Summary**

In this chapter, through emerging themes and sub-themes, I have critically and thematically analysed the Emirati student sojourner accounts of their time in the UK as well as repatriated graduates. Issues related to this study, have been explored and classified, such as the different components of cultural identity, acculturation and repatriation. The research questions have been answered through data collection, deductive thematic analysis and subsequently formed researcher statements, which I have discussed throughout this chapter. During the processes of my analysis, transcription encoding was used as a tool to reveal a deeper understanding of the Emirati sojourn experience.

Emiratis who study in the UK experience a cultural identity transformation, to varying degrees, both during their time in the UK as well as during their post-repatriation. After analysing the repatriated responses, it was observed that one indication of being influenced by the sojourn cycle was that the participant responses were more forthright and shared with greater confidence. The change did not always point towards becoming less Emirati in my interpretations, but on the contrary, many of the students actually have become more ‘Emirati’ since their original cultural values were used as tools of adjustment both during the sojourn and after repatriation. The themes identified in this analysis are considered in relation to the integrated theoretical framework of this study in the final chapter, Chapter 6, the conclusion.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

### **6.1 – ‘Still Emirati, but maybe more Emiratish’**

After having lived in the UK for five years, the word ‘Emiatish’ was shared by one of the repatriated participants to describe his newly adopted layer of cultural identity. Whether as sojourners or in their own country, the shift in Emirati cultural identity has transpired with shifts in modernisation and continuing plans for development, carried out by expatriates as well as Emiratis, some of whom have acquired skills abroad and/or have studied overseas, to then return to strengthen the UAE. This research has explored the cultural identity transformation of Emirati student sojourners in the UK during an acculturative process, as well as identity dilemmas and repatriation concerns upon return to the UAE.

Participants in my study have shared narratives on collective, individual and cultural identities between the UAE and the UK. The two different groups of (1) Emirati student sojourners and (2) Emirati repatriates based in the UAE, enabled me to: (a) highlight and research an understudied population, (b) explore shifts between collectivistic and individualised identity components, and (c) contribute to research on sojourners in cultural transition.

By using deductive thematic analysis, I have studied and categorised how (1) Emirati sojourners perceive their cultural identity; (2) how those cultural dimensions of their collectively socialised self may, or may not, be transformed as a result of an acculturation process in the UK, and/or in an individualistic society; (3) what perceivable risks and dilemmas might exist for such sojourners; and (4) what strategies were used for coping and adjustment during these processes, both in the UK and UAE.

Through the collection of interview data, I explored these topics in a thematic review closely aligned to the semi-structured research questions (discussed in detail in Chapter 5).

## 6.2 - Overview and Discussion of Findings

An overview of the findings, which link the theoretical framework, epistemological approach, themes and analysis are as follows:

(1) In response to the first question: *‘What aspects, if any, of the Emirati cultural identity are perceived by participants as being altered during their time as students in the UK?’*

Most of the students interviewed added new host cultural values onto their already existing cultural schemes, without necessarily abandoning those they possessed pre-sojourn. Some of the students stated that during their time in the UK they were free to engage in behaviours that they would not do if they had remained in the UAE. In a sense, therefore, they viewed their time in the UK as ‘private time’, or time in which they were free to engage in a variety of cultural or social risks. Even though they knew they had the opportunity to do so, many talked about not wanting or needing to.

On the other hand, some of the respondents interviewed were curious to go to nightclubs and bars when they were with a group that was drawn from a variety of social backgrounds. This is something that may suggest that some Emirati students were free to experiment socially whilst in the UK, allowing their cultural identity to take shape through such experiences. This does not necessarily run counter to the Emirati identity, but simply suggests that at a personal level, many Emirati sojourners were able to stretch their value system by engaging in certain culturally unfamiliar activities.

(2) In response to the second question: *‘What strategies do Emirati students identify as being helpful during the acculturation process while in the UK?’*

Central to coping, is religion for Emirati student sojourners. Other strategies included a sense of shared identity with co-sojourning Emiratis, a pro-active effort to make host national friends and be more open-minded about the UK value systems. Emirati participants saw religion as being more personal, compared to the practices of Iranians or Saudis, who have a more public and

sometimes forced sense of religion. In addition, interacting with other Emirati students allowed participants to create a common identity, which was halfway between their native Emirati culture and that of their host country. This indicates the public/private dichotomy once again, as well as a sense of cultural isolation and the idea that Emirati sojourners are distinct from the Emiratis they left behind. Likewise, many of the Emirati sojourners interviewed chose to embrace diversity with respect and broadmindedness while also cherishing home values.

(3) In response to the third question: *‘What difficulties, if any, do Emirati students identify or perceive while talking of readjusting in their home country upon return?’*

As was heard in responses and moreover, emerged through deductive thematic analysis, many of the sojourners who repatriated initially had difficulty reconnecting with their fellow Emiratis at home. Sometimes they would prefer, when possible, to meet their friends who had also sojourned and returned, some even interacting more with expatriates after their experiences. Acculturation is a process that modifies aspects of identity for a sojourner, especially in relation to cultural values. Even if slight, changing perceptions posed challenges for the returning students who felt an initial disconnection before reconnection. It is difficult to reconcile this with the identity of someone who has remained in the UAE during the same period. What this indicated, is the complexity and depth of change that occurs during a sojourning experience and acculturation process.

(4) In response to the forth question: *‘What strategies do Emirati students use during the repatriation process after returning to the Emirates?’*

Many sojourners face at least some readjustment difficulties during the repatriation process. For many, the inability to slide right back into their Emirati lifestyle proved challenging and causes a sense of confusion. One of the coping strategies for reverse homesickness, as participants expressed, was to remain in contact with friends made during the sojourn experience. These friends may be Emiratis who were also in the UK, or may be non-Emirati friends from different cultural backgrounds. The rest of the strategies included practical procedures, such as working upon arrival, incorporating physical activity into the everyday routine and discerning between

cultural systems whereby exercising appropriation of behaviour and feelings, in the proper environmental context, leads to successful identity achievement.

### **6.3 – Overview of Findings Guided by the Theoretical Framework**

To draw these reflections and elements together, therefore, suggests that Emirati students who have sojourned in the UK are witness to and experienced a range of cultures. As discussed, although Emiratis come from a culturally diverse country, within the UAE, they do not often interact with the expatriate population, at least before a departure. For the Emiratis I interviewed culturally inappropriate behaviour and conflicting values seemed more difficult to control and consolidate in the UK. Ouis's UAE contextualised work, acknowledging opportunities for similar behaviour, however, in modernised expatriate settings; Emiratis did not exhibit those same experiences. When in the home country, Emiratis again, tend to marginalise and feel more comfortable with Emirati cultural orientation, interacting mostly with people from the Emirates or other Arab nations. Some of the sojourners take social risks and engage in behaviours that they would not, were they back home. Sometimes, upon return, they reach out to other communities and individuals who may understand those aspects explored (but not always heard or accepted). These value system changes can sometimes be difficult to recognise and reconcile.

In many respects, the initial struggle to re-adjust by repatriates shows the power of the acculturation process and the extent to which the sharing of cultures, naturally transforms norms. It also highlights differences in values, between sojourning Emiratis and Emiratis who remain in the UAE. While some researchers have questioned factors that affect the adaptation process between two cultures, that is, in dimensions of cultural distance, language and age demographics over generational changes, for example (Furnham and Bochner, 1982), other researchers have documented patterns of adjustment over time, for example, U-curve (Lysgaard, 1955). In exploring culture shock theories (Oberg, 1960), researchers also continue to study how different populations, such as immigrants, refugees, ethnic groups and sojourners, are influenced and affected by migration and international transition (Kim, 1978; Berry, 1988; Kagan, 1990; Black et al., 1991; LaFromboise et al., 1993; Bhatia and Ram, 2009).

The fact that two of the coping strategies identified are (1) to remain in touch with international friends; and (2) to also, in some cases, return to the UK for further education, suggests that Emiratis sometimes struggle, in a kind of cultural limbo, and after a sojourn still needs a connection with the host country in order to feel comfortable with the transformative aspects of identity. At the same time, it is they, these Emiratis, who are the acculturated ones, and it is they who form the vanguard of a globalised UAE.

As a result of the acculturative experience, participants in this study confirmed that they had adopted behaviours that helped them function more successfully in the UK. Which later, they sometimes found difficult to negotiate or carve out an appropriate cultural space for that newly adopted value. While sojourning, however, it is clear that Emirati students (1) improved their English language proficiency, (2) developed a greater tolerance for differences, (3) acquired further broadmindedness, (4) provided examples of a more noticeable sense of self-sufficiency and (5) showed a renewed appreciation of their Emirati cultural identity and religiosity.

Many of the adaptive behaviours discussed and exhibited throughout this analysis and direct data sampling are consistent with previous theoretical propositions and empirical findings that describe how individuals experience an acculturation process. By situating an individual's identity in a social context, early contributions of researchers, such as Etzioni (1968) and Geertz (1973) have helped shape the recent work of cross-cultural psychologists and reviews on cultural identity. Etzioni, argued that, 'Man is nothing unless he is social; what he is depends on his social being, and what he makes of his social being is irrevocably bound to what he makes of himself (Etzioni, 1968, p. 2). Here, this element of mastering social acts is imperative for successful integrations during transformative transitions. Emirati student sojourners and repatriates had to learn how to draw from first and secondary socialisation to master surroundings and also 'self'.

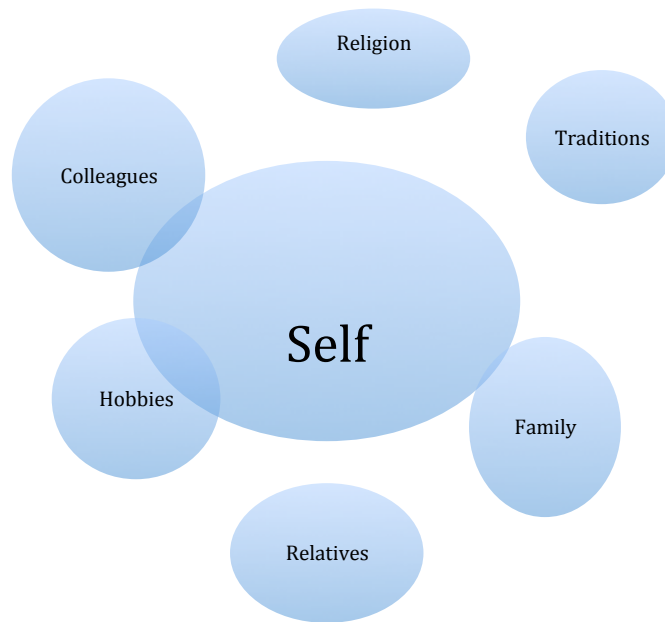
Therefore, this work has aimed to utilise and build upon relevant empirical research and makes a contribution to literature on acculturation and identity of student sojourners from the Gulf region. Emirati contextualisation of responses in this work, aims to increase accuracy through a crosscheck with existing study results in aspects of cross-cultural interpretations and investigations in the field, for future processes and affected peoples, respectively.

The next section crosschecks those theories with this study's results to further discussion as well as validate findings. To recapture focus, the main theoretical framework here includes: (1) Markus and Kitayama (1991) who explain 'western versus eastern' integrations of individualism and collectivism, by theorising the core structure of self-construals, (2) Berry (1980) proposed a main framework and model which were fundamental in applying as a measure for acculturation and cultural identity transformation after a sojourn, in addition to (3) assessing my findings alongside Sussman's (2002) theory on repatriation outcomes.

#### **6.4– Cultural Identity Transformation**

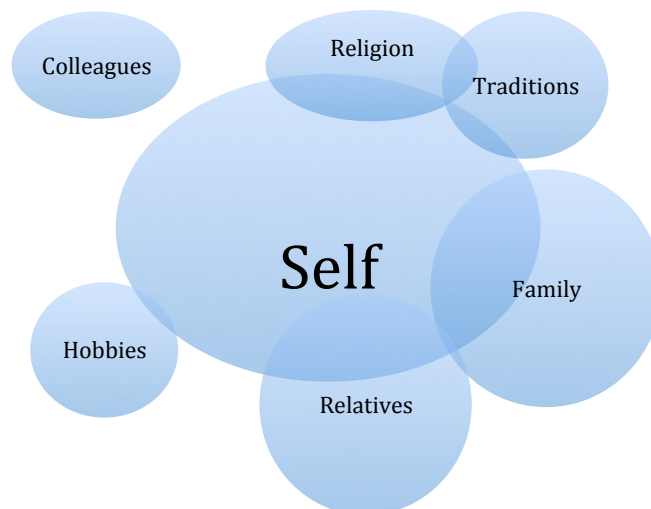
Markus and Kitayama's (1991) comparative study of the sense of self in Western and Eastern cultures is consistent with the findings of this research with the exception of certain variants. Their study found that Western cultures, and individuals there, tend to construct an identity, or sense of self independent of the social context in which they find themselves. This leads to a greater autonomy within Western cultures, as distinct from Eastern (or to be more accurate, non-Western) cultures, where the sense of self is more entwined with the wider societal whole. Figure 14a and Figure 14b, exhibiting firstly, their original theory from which this study applies and also Figures 15a and 15b respectively, depicting the Emirati cultural identity changes.

***Figure 14a – Original Paradigm Placement of Independent Self Construal.***



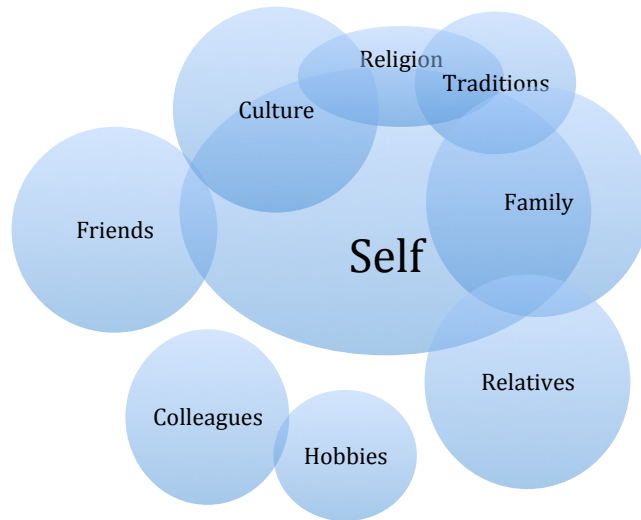
(Markus and Kitayama, 1991, p. 226)

***Figure 14b – Original Paradigm Placement of Interdependent Self Construal.***

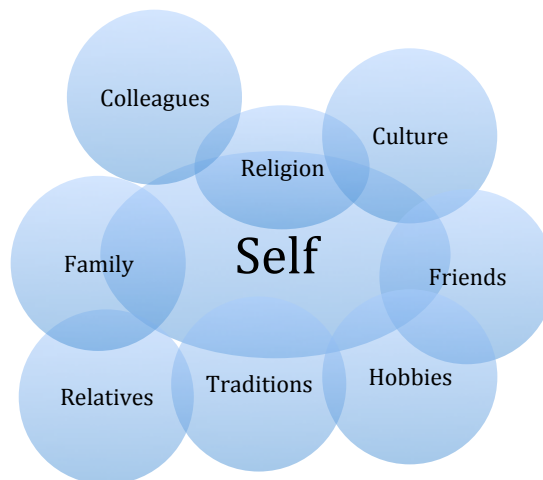


(Markus and Kitayama, 1991, p. 226)

***Figure 15a – Emirati Self Construal Pre-Sojourn***



***Figure 15b – Emirati Self Construal Post-Sojourn.***



Figures 15a and 15b, of the Emirati cultural identity pre and post-sojourn have been depicted utilising Markus and Kitayama's diagrammatic representation. It can be seen from Figure 15a, that Emirati cultural identity is aligned and representative with Figures 14a and 14b, highlighting that results shown through the diagrams, do corroborate with how Markus and Kitayama (1991) describe an individual from a collectivist society. Therefore, the main features of the Emirati self-construal overlap with variables, such as family, religion, traditions, culture and relatives. This connected and cultural 'self' has an interdependent construal of self, as discussed throughout this thesis.

In Figure 15b, the sojourned cultural identity of the Emirati student, shows that the original features are retained, while expanding and threading more closely to previously more distanced points, such as hobbies, colleagues and friends. Colleagues and friends may include expatriates whom may have been kept at a comfortable distance, pre sojourn, since Emiratis are not regular company amongst the diverse population.

Emirati students interviewed often talked about the fast pace in which the infrastructure of the UAE continues to change while they are away, accounting for a sometimes even higher probability of unfamiliarity upon return; new roads, buildings, bridges and malls are constantly mushrooming in the Emirates. One student expressed how the route to her house from the airport was different every time she returned to the UAE for a visit. She described a sensation of not going to a home she remembered; the new road rather, taking her there, resembled a different perception about what she used to know and understand.

Although there is a chance of cultural identity transformation towards host cultural values as proposed in the paradigm, in this study, however, even with their acquired individualistic traits, Emiratis remain more 'Emiratish'. There was a collective Emirati orientation of will that is carried through such aspects with selection and appropriation of identity in the public and private domains, with strong consideration of social and cultural standards.

The difference between Emiratis and other cultural groups, studied by Markus and Kitayama (1991), is that this research has found that despite cultural differences, Emirati students do not

become less interdependent while in the UK, although they could be described as becoming more independent in practical or public matters. Thus, they maintained what they arrived with and added to that already existing cultural scheme. In order to feel connected to what was not readily available to them, the Emirati participants gravitated closer to cultural hubs, habits and practices, so that the anxiety of the unfamiliar could be somewhat reduced. Similarly, when new behaviours were adapted they were usually of strategy or respect for the host culture, in alignment with larger Emirati cultural collectivism and beliefs.

Therefore findings here add a new trajectory and question previous notions that when a person from a collectivist background moves into an individualistic host country, they are likely to experience a transformation towards host cultural values. Although Emiratis acquired new dimensions of independence in the UK, students maintained central features of their cultural heritage. Furthermore, they often reminded themselves of and embraced their original values, also as coping mechanisms to better adapt in the host country.

Consequently there are interesting and perhaps somewhat unique features and conditions to Emirati cultural transformation, overlapping the entire sojourn cycle, which are:

- The extent to which Emirati students adopted host cultural values were more in line with issues of self-reliance and practical independence, rather than becoming more independent and/or separate from family, religion and culture.
- The transformed cultural identity of Emirati students activated mostly on a public level rather than a private level.
- The selection of host cultural values to be adopted, were closely checked against existing values, demonstrating an ability to control rather than be controlled by cultural forces.
- Reflections on new behaviours/values that posed a threat to existing cultural dimensions were rarely chosen, mostly only temporarily experimented with and usually ‘shelved’ especially when back in the UAE

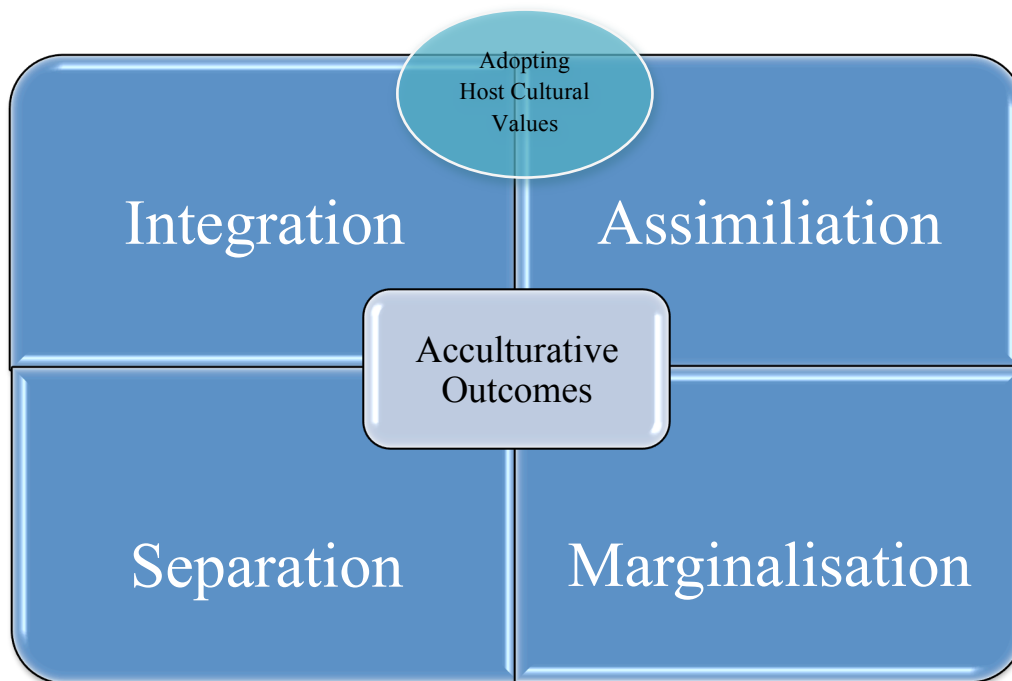
- The loss of group affiliation or rejection from other Emirati nationals seemed far greater in strength than any risky allowance of behaviour or transformations in cultural identity (mostly on a public level).

Indeed, Markus and Kitayama (1991) showed that the significant changes in construal of the self is something that is only possible when one identifies with the majority culture, which is not the case for Emirati students in the UK. One student said, ‘it’s not like you can’t see a person from England being a best friend with someone from the Emirates...it’s just the things that the person from England finds fun, the local (meaning Emirati) doesn’t. It’s just not...it’s looked down upon...so you...you know.’ At the same time, Emiratis appreciate, respect and embrace diversity. They network to succeed and exercise strategy to cope with changing surroundings. Furthermore, there exists a kind of paradox, where a lack of individualism becomes a kind of individualism in itself and a lack of personal autonomy becomes something of an identity.

## **6.5– Acculturative Outcomes**

In order to measure the extent to which Emirati students have engaged and transformed within the UK culture, I chose Berry’s model of acculturation (1980). This theoretical framework has been particularly discussed in Chapter 3. Again, Berry (1980) hypothesised that cultural adjustment challenges are one of the major shapers of behaviour of a given group. This is something that is supported by and also reconfirms my work, both anecdotally, as well as being borne out by the results. He created a four-fold model, which allows for a broad grouping of cultural interaction and classification, which I have integrated and explored for Emiratis.

**Figure 16 – Berry's Acculturative Outcomes**



(Berry, 1980, p.214)

Berry's four section model creates two different axes in the quadrant. The first shows cultural maintenance and whether the culture has been maintained. The second shows contact participation, or the extent to which the minority culture has interacted with or adopted host cultural values. This provides four possible sections into which behaviour can be labelled. Where cultural maintenance and interaction are present, there is *integration*. Where cultural maintenance is present, but interaction is low, there is *segregation*. Where cultural maintenance is low and interaction is present, it is *assimilation* and where cultural maintenance and interaction are both low, there is *marginalisation*. Whilst these are naturally broad labels, they adequately reflect the processes that occur when one culture is displaced within another, even in the case of Emirati sojourners.

### **Assimilation**

The assimilation outcome often applies to those who mainly socialise and communicate with individuals from a host culture when settling. In my analysis of Emirati cultural identity transformation, none of the participants expressed a desire to primarily adopt and practice values from the UK; nor did they describe situations where their original cultural values were completely abandoned or ignored.

### **Integration**

For people who adopt an integration strategy, original culture is retained while the host cultural values are adopted. Most of the Emirati students I interviewed can be described as having ‘integrated’, whereby both sojourners and repatriates appreciated and respected UK values while abroad, which in turn allowed for more successful daily interaction. Significant components of the Emirati cultural value system were not only maintained by students, but also utilised to help during and/or after the adjustment phases of relocation.

### **Separation**

Relatively high cultural maintenance and relatively low contact along with participation with a host country describes a separation strategy. A small minority of Emirati students, not exclusively yet fitting into this category, are those that highlight changes in a more culturally defined seasonal manner, such as during the month of Ramadan where religiosity and cultural values dictate and have a significant influence on actions, behaviours and daily functions.

### **Marginalisation**

Marginalisation is the most problematic acculturation outcome, comprised of low identification within both host and home cultures. Second to assimilation, this dimension is perhaps the next least applicable to the Emirati student population, since they tended to add on to their already maintained cultural value system rather than subtract or neglect features.

Therefore, in the UK, the majority of Emiratis in this study conveyed an integrative process; meaning values from the home culture were retained although certain cultural standards of the host culture were also adopted. This can be shown in terms of everyday religiosity, language,

traditions as well as other social indicators. The integrative dimension appears to be the most effective acculturation strategy (Berry and Sam, 1997; Berry, 2003) both in terms of adjustment concerns (during their time as sojourners), as well as in how effectively Emirati students are able to, once again, adapt after repatriating. The guiding force behind my crosschecked result seems to be the fact that a large majority of Emirati students, if not all of them, intend to return to the UAE after graduating and therefore, they are already aware of and influenced by a need to retain early cultural identity characteristics so that the transition back into Emirati life is not too difficult.

More specific to the Emirati students and the contribution of this research to an already recognised theoretical framework, is that the level of integration for Emiratis varied when looking at acculturative outcomes from a private or public perspective. An interesting feature of their acculturative outcome is that Emirati students seemed to be able to effectively balance and separate their private beliefs from their public life and local system conformities (and/or compromises). In other words, when in the privacy of their own home, the dominant aspects of Emirati sojourner and repatriate behaviour, language-spoken, religious practices and food eaten, for example, were highly influenced and resembled their original cultural identity. It was as if this private space was reserved for the engagement and reinforcement of those strong and substantial aspects of their cultural identity. It was their opportunity to create a 'home away from home', which they talked about being very proud of and wanting to share with others from various backgrounds. Maintaining original cultural values was highest in private domains, becoming less visible in public space. Similarly, host cultural values were more expressly practiced in public domains.

Publically, Emirati students spoke about understanding the importance of not standing out too much, by using phrases such as 'we want to be like others', 'we don't want to show we are too different', 'we respect where we live and the rules there'. When discussing their initial experiences in the UK, the phrase in the below extract pointed to an interesting set of psychological influences, which can be discussed as significant underlying indicators as to how Emirati students view their public position whilst in the UK.

***Extract***

*We like to have respect, not stand out too much. We are here to study so that is important.*

The phrase can be scrutinised in terms of a desire to fit in and adopt host cultural values, to avoid attracting negative attention. In light of stereotypes about Arabs and Muslims in the West, as well as random acts of discrimination, which many of the participants expressed being concerned with. They described that they chose to be more discreet in public spaces, for example, with greetings and/or sacred religious practices and customs, so that they would not be perceived as a negative or ‘alien’ presence.

Since Emirati students have more of a collective mentality, ‘standing out’ separate or apart from a group is an unfamiliar psychological orientation for them. Therefore, a pull towards trying to fit in exists and would also be encouraged through their identification with group affiliation and a comfortable sense of belonging.

***Extract***

*You know, I like London because you are different but all the same because every body is different here. I mean like from different cultures so we feel at home, no problem.*

This extract can be read to exemplify the integrative acculturative outcome, where on one hand, the student understands that there is cultural difference, but also finds a commonality through the diverse population of the host culture by saying, ‘everybody is different here’. The final line clearly highlights the ability for this student, in particular, to juggle the values of the host country as well as their own. It is an important outcome as he tries to complete his sentence by saying ‘no problem.’ This phrase signifies a motivation to make it work, to succeed in living in a country other than their own, to be able to fit in without abandoning who they are, with little or ‘no problem’, also while making reference to the UAE as a diverse country (which they already have learnt some similar adjustments with expats, however, not on the same levels).

For the majority of the Emirati students in the UK, I found in my thematic analysis that the particular dimension involving family overlaps along the ‘separation level’ of Berry’s

acculturative model. This refers to where ‘individuals place a value on holding onto their original culture and at the same time wish to avoid adopting those different values noticed by the host culture’ (Berry, 2003, p. 24). These students still believe in their family’s authority over their lives by accepting their family’s control over all of their decisions, even while they are abroad.

Students often talked about how shocked they were at learning about the relationship of some of their colleagues or friends with their parents or family members. They could not understand how some students did not talk to their parents everyday or were not really in touch with their extended family members. If anything, Emirati students described a situation where their familial ties were actually strengthened and continuously reinforced through regular contact with family back home. Berry (2003) proposed that people who fall into a separation stage might show a low level of acculturation because they refuse the host culture’s values and beliefs. However, I noted that perhaps this might be the result of studies, which have only used quantitative methods and scales to try to understand such complex psychological experiences that cannot be generalised to different populations and acculturative experiences. What this study found was that when measuring acculturation grouping, all variables of adjustment together may not be an accurate assessment. Instead, different dimensions, such as family, attitudes or social etiquette, for example, need to be looked at separately to see along which acculturative outcome they may fall.

In regard to the Emirati participants, the choice of separating themselves from certain familial host cultural values, for maintenance of the interdependent relationship with family and friends back home, proved to be a strong support system during their acculturative process. These ties and familial bonds provided answers and clarity, in a consistent, predictable and readily available manner, offering the student a much needed transparency and predictability during a time when everything new might seem ambiguous.

Acculturative outcomes are closely linked the level of emotional distress or comfort sojourners feel when adapting and utilising coping strategies as outlined in Chapter 3 through the work of researchers such as Wei et al. (2008). Emirati student sojourners and repatriates reported experiences on a continuum between ‘reflective’ (concerned with activities like planning and exploring causal relationships in systematic steps of coping) and ‘suppressive’ (representative of

a tendency to avoid coping activities and to deny problems) tendencies. None of the students would be considered 'reactive' (showing a tendency of strong emotional responses, distortion and impulsivity) based on their narratives, however it is possible that they chose not to disclose such strong sentiments, exhibit extreme emotional distress or even impulsivity in what they said or how they said it. Taking into consideration cultural aspects, this may have been in line with their aspiration to present a more socially acceptable, balanced description rather than lose face or show weakness when talking about their sojourn.

As proposed by Rumbaut (1994) this research through the experience of Emirati sojourners also showed that they are not simply passive observers in the acculturative process, but rather they are able to guide how far they want to participate and/or transform. Since acculturative models usually include only general acculturation options, in an ideal situation, however, the assumption that non-dominant groups and their individual members have the freedom to choose how they want to engage in intercultural relations is not always the case (Berry, 1974a).

A unique feature of the Emirati students is the almost unanimous decision to return to the UAE, to enjoy the privileged position that they are born into, upon completion of their degree. Factors that either attract or negate international student sojourners to leave or remain in the host country are significant and need to be more closely studied in relation to acculturative outcomes. In regard to the Emirati students, there was ample evidence that Emirati students maintained key features of their original cultural identity. In helping to clarify points, not only in relation to Emiratis and sojourners wanting and deserving a more functional acculturative experience (resulting in integration), my work also listens to and distributes a cultural consciousness whereby anything that would not be to their benefit, socially and/or psychologically, would otherwise predict gravitation towards other acculturative outcomes.

In my results, central to the theoretical theories incorporated and applied for crosschecking, as well, the findings indicated that acculturative outcomes are also guided and chosen by the cultural traveller, rather than a process that they are not in control of. That choice is greatly influenced by the decision to later remain in the host country or return to a student's country of origin.

## 6.6– Repatriation

The sojourn cycle would seem incomplete if issues pertaining to repatriation were not addressed. Sussman's repatriation model (2002), stated sojourners often form an identity related to both home culture, as well as that of the host culture. This is similarly something that has been exhibited throughout the course of my work where Emirati students are more likely to create an identity as both an Emirati as well as someone who has lived in the UK for a period of time. Although Sussman's repatriation theory is one that perhaps creates an unnecessary dichotomy where a blend is more appropriate, what is certainly the case in a globalising world, is national identity, and the extent to which it forms a complete identity (however consistently challenged).

Cultural national identity, aligned with strong loyalty to home, family and collective values are a dominant and penetrating force in (1) Emirati decision-making, (2) attained and retained social positions, and (3) psychological support. Diaspora studies have shown that micro-local factors affect the identity of a displaced person, as well as the historical, cultural, ethnic and religious origin of that person. What Sussman's theory effectively argued, and what has been shown by my study, is that the bond between geography and identity is becoming more fluid. Repeatedly, student travellers could be found in a third dimension in their merging experiences, between the cultural commentary and expectations of first and secondary socialisations (Penrose, 2002). Although cultures are often assumed bound by geography, the data and analysis that I have shared shows that culture is engrained in self-identity, especially in the case of Emirati international student sojourners. Emirati traditions, values and beliefs are present and carved at the core of an Emirati sojourners and repatriates, even within and through transformation.

Knowing when to draw upon certain cultural values or behaviours, as discussed by Kidder who calls this the 'chameleon-like technique' (Kidder, 1992, p.390) is a technique also used by other students from collectivists cultures who talked about knowing how to behave in front of people when back home. Similarly, Emirati students who talked about knowing how to behave in front of people when back in the UAE. One Emirati student in this study explained to me that she would wear her traditional Arabic covering before leaving the house, but when socialising with a group of her French friends in a café in Dubai, she would take it off, so that she could better 'fit

in' with the others. This 'subtraction' (as Sussman would refer), of a particular cultural practice did not occur when the same student socialised with her Emirati friends.

Emirati students exposed to varying cultural systems through technology and first-hand contact, in their own country as well as while in the UK, adopt certain cultural traits and in some cases, abort others as a result of this exposure. While trying to adapt to a new environment, acculturative forces play a measurable role in shaping aspects of any one person's cultural identity, sometimes resulting in a bicultural orientation. Although the transition to the Emirates was difficult for many of the student sojourners, the fact remains that they are recognisably proud of their national and cultural orientation. Moreover, the UAE offers many societal and economical privileges, which are motivating factors for Emiratis to return and then also to remain. As the UAE develops, Emiratis repatriates are best placed to face the challenges of a globalising world and increasingly they may even share more cultural norms with other student sojourners than they might do with nationals who did not study outside of the UAE.

## **6.7– Limitations and Advantages**

Utilising a relatively small number of participants was primarily due to an overall small Emirati population and an even smaller number of Emirati students studying in the UK. My study focused to constrain the number of subjects that it was possible to interview in the given time frame allotted for this research, particularly of a qualitative nature. My research and methodologies accordingly lend themselves to a qualitative small-n study rather than a quantitative Large-N study. Many of the findings were formed with emerging patterns that were identified through thematic analysis. Of course, a follow up study using more participants could widen the scope of analysis and topics explored, however, keeping the same, if not more, focus.

The two different sets of students, post-sojourn and post-repatriation were chosen since the logistics of a follow up study were not practically possible. I was mindful about the question of whether it was better to choose a broader, less specific study that covered the entire gamut of Emirati students, or one that was more focused. While a follow up study would have surely provided insight into the possible transformation of cultural identity of the same participants, both during their time in the UK and upon return to the UAE, early in the research it was decided

that different groups should be used due to possible attrition in participant rates and time constraints.

Another limitation of the study is the nature of the sample. My sample was composed of students from different parts of the UAE, which vary in terms of cultural diversity and conservatism. This can be perceived as both strength and a weakness, since it was important to account for a range of backgrounds in order to give a broad representation of the cultural values of Emiratis. Future research may choose to consider an even narrower or 'Emirate'-specific case study for one of the Emirates within the UAE.

### **6.8– Significance of the Study**

This study makes both theoretical and applied contributions. The significance of my research extends beyond the field of academic research and theory. The findings from this research raise issues as disparate as identity-forming, immigration, education policy, as well as emotional well being research. With the increasing numbers of foreign students, who study at universities in the United Kingdom and other locations, it is important for people and institutions to have a deeper understanding about sojourning students, along with the psychosocial pressures upon them when they arrive from another culture. What this study has wanted to achieve is not only to map many of the issues, which relate to this process, but also show ways in which acculturation can be more effectively managed, becoming equally beneficial to the host culture as well as the culture of origin.

This research may open the door to further research exploring the experience of Emirati students in other cultures than that of the United Kingdom and provide an expanded cross-cultural analysis of interactions. Evolving theories rely on shared experiences between Emirati students in a common culture, were it to take into account Emiratis of different demographic slices, such as different age, family status, and/or location, new developments in discourse could also continue to proceed. Future work may choose to become more or less specific.

One of the purposes of my work, as discussed in Chapter 1, was to add to the existing field of research, as well as provide a basis for future studies. These findings may also smooth the sojourning process for students between locations. From another, however interconnected angle, researchers implementing new techniques from here onward may want to further investigate any kind of ripple effect a repatriate has on his/her home community within social relations, by individually, re-integrating, with a bicultural identity. It has been made clear from findings in my study and excerpts shared, that the community extensions of sojourners and repatriates are also affected by their experience. Studying more into those affects would likely prove helpful for all involved in the acculturative processes.

To have an understanding of the acculturation process is important for improving pastoral care within British institutions for universities, professors and other groups within a faculty. Furthermore, since the majority of the Emirati students return to the UAE, the insight into how they may have been transformed is useful information for family members and their future employers, as well as contributing to the overall understanding of the future generation of Emiratis.

My work can further be used to create a bridge for people to cross into a broader psychological understanding of the acculturation processes that affect foreign students and communities around the globe. Using Berry's (1980) model it becomes clear that the UK is one of those countries that allows and (indirectly) assists people to maintain their own cultural values. This links in with the idea of the UK as a 'community of communities,' resulting in people experiencing more of an integrative acculturative outcome. The divergence between values from a home culture and those of a host country is something that clearly impacts upon the experiences of foreign people living across societies.

## **6.9– Implications for Future Research**

Geertz (1973) emphasised, that 'we all begin with the natural equipment to live a thousand kinds of lives but end in the end having lived only one' (Geertz, 1973, p. 45). Our nature, for that reason, is ultimately that of a cultural being. Some of the implications for future research I have already discussed above, such as the capacity for studying more specifically the experience of

sub-groups within the Emirati label. Indeed a future researcher may wish to expand this to consider other specific areas of the United Kingdom, particularly non-London areas as many of the participants in this research lived in London.

In addition, there is also the possibility of expanding the study to compare the experience of Emirati students throughout Europe, Canada, the USA and/or Australia. From a methodological perspective, future research could attempt different methodologies, in order to explore different aspects of the processes involved. For example, a researcher might be able to gain a greater number of respondents in order to determine whether the results are truly expandable. However, aside from simply changing the parameters of my study to be more, or less focused, there are also peripheral questions that have been raised, as a result of my work. A follow-up to and prompted by this research, would be to consider a supportive study on whether Emirati culture naturally lends itself towards this process of acculturation or whether this is something that is driven by young Emiratis.

Finally, further investigation into repatriate accounts of their experiences while as sojourners in host country would also be an interesting subject of follow up research. Through this, participants who are slightly older, more mature and able to reflect back on their sojourn experience, once it has ended, might result in a different perspective rather than from those people who are still part of the sojourn transition cycle or new exists.

The UAE is a rapidly growing society, with the presence of many different nationalities living and working there. Exploring the way in which Emiratis in the UAE and different countries are affected by the sojourn process, will not only be an important area of investigation for Emiratis, placing them beyond the privileged systems they are often labelled for, but also has implications for the socio-cultural changes taking place throughout the Gulf countries. More studies conducted in the region would increase understanding concepts, such as identity, acculturation and repatriation from a cross-cultural perspective at the same time dispelling myths, generalisations and stereotypes. The findings of studies conducted with other populations cannot always be generalised to other countries therefore research such as this one is both culturally relative as well as understanding to this communities unique elements.

In terms of a comparative study, in expanding from my work one could compare the experience of Emirati students with that of those from other areas of the Arab or Muslim world. This too would stabilise the focus of my findings onto the aspects of ethnicity and religion and also allow for a deeper exploration of why Emirati students experienced the acculturation processes that they did.

In the meantime, the three key theories, models and/or integrative framework which I have crosschecked my findings against (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Berry, 1980; Sussman, 2002) all help to reflect and reveal interesting findings in the main areas of focus throughout my work. In particular, the work of Berry (1980) has been essential in allowing for appreciation not only of the processes involved in cultural interactions, but also in providing a means of labelling different phenomena. Each of the three theories and models (also identified in early parts of my thesis), have helped to better structure and underpin the empirical value of my research.

## **6.10 - Final Thoughts**

In conclusion, this research has provided insights into the experience of a group of international students as sojourners in the country where they are studying and the issues they face upon return to their country. Such findings and analysis make a contribution to those working within the international education sector and to the students themselves.

The exploration of people choosing to study in countries different than their own is both important and fascinating. Through this research, it became evident that students cope with many cultural changes and face a variety of social encounters while in a host country. It also became clear that students develop behaviours and new attitudes to cope with the demands of their new cultural environment. This research accentuates the importance of continuing to scientifically consider the acculturation process in applied research. Better understanding of those difficulties and strategies to overcome dilemmas associated with cultural changes would be beneficial both theoretically, as well as practically. I have utilised relevant theories in my analysis of the phenomena of sojourner acculturation and repatriation and also offer some suggestions for building upon existing frameworks.

The Emirati international student sojourners are somewhat unique to other nationalities. While, like other populations they will experience changes to their cultural identity and sense of self as a result of living in a host country and being impacted by the acculturation process, however those transformations will be closely guided and bounded by their original cultural identity, sense of heritage, religious values and consistent reinforcement of such principles through regular contact with family.

Upon their return to the UAE, Emirati repatriates experience some resettlement difficulties, especially in relation to their efforts to merge newly acquired habits, behaviors and values into existing cultural systems in the UAE. After living abroad and being more independent in the UK, this shift in their cultural identity was most pronounced and difficult to maintain and weave into their way of life in the Emirates, where collectivism, group harmony and dependence on family is encouraged and promoted.

The Emirati repatriate, for example, may be able to resolve internal conflict sometimes felt more intricately upon return to the UAE by staying attuned to Emirati values and traditions during sojourn and meanwhile learning to draw from existing and newly learned UK systems and/or identity influences. The same can also be initiated early on by the Emirati student sojourner, to maintain important cultural pride that boosts self-esteem and experiences, while also effectively and respectfully integrating to study in the UK.

As a whole, a stronger connectivity to the cultural dimensions of Emirati identity resulted in a more successful acculturative outcome, with fewer repatriation challenges for Emirati students.

Nevertheless, as Emirati students negotiated ways to adopt and retain cultural behaviors in the UK during their sojourn, knowing when (public vs. private contexts) to draw upon appropriate values, the same was done after repatriating to the UAE. It is interesting to see how their sense of broadmindedness and development of a broader acceptance of cultural differences was an additive to their cultural identity that actually assists Emirati repatriates due to the fact they are a minority in their own country and they will live and work amongst a diverse population of expatriates.

Such insights and reflections hope to make a contribution to those working within the international education sector and to the students themselves. Universities and educators may assist international students during their academic journeys, as well as their transition back to their countries of origin. It is through such efforts that our understanding of people in cultural transition can be furthered so that they may have a smoother and more positive experience.

## References

Abrams, D. and Hogg, M.A. (1990) 'Social identification, self-categorisation, and social influence', *European Review of Social Psychology*, 1(1), pp. 195-228.

Adams, G.R. and Marshall, S. (1996) 'A developmental social psychology of identity: understanding the person in context'. *Journal of Adolescence*, 19(5), pp. 429-442.

Adler, P.S. (1975) 'The transitional experience: an alternative view of culture shock', *Journal of Humanist Psychology*, 15(4), pp. 13-23.

Alasuutari, P. (1995) *Researching culture: qualitative method and cultural studies*. London: Sage.

Al-Darmaki, F.R. (2012) 'Relationships between career counselling attitudes and self-esteem and self-efficacy among Emirati university students', *Journal of Career Development*, 39(2), pp. 143-161.

Allan, J. (2004) 'Deterritorializations: putting postmodernism to work on teacher education and inclusion', *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 36(4), pp. 417-432.

Al-Marri, M., *Head of Cultural Affairs and Educational Department at the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in London*. Interviewed by: Shaheem, S. (15 May 2007).

Al-Marri, M., *Head of Cultural Affairs and Educational Department at the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in London*. Interviewed by: Shaheem, S. (17 October 2008).

Al-Najjar, A.A. (1996) 'Adolescents' perceptions of family functioning in the United Arab Emirates', *Adolescence*, 31(122), pp. 433- 442.

Al-Saloom, A. (2010) *A guide to: Abu Dhabi. Ask-Ali* [online]. Available at: <http://www.ask-ali.com/ask-ali-mini-guide.html> (Accessed: 13 May 2012).

Al-Suwaidi, A. (2011) 'A balance sheet', *Middle East Policy*, 18(4), pp. 44-58.

Al-Wraikat, A. and Simadi, F. (2001) 'The Arabian modern man', *The International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 21(11-12), pp. 41-56.

Alvesson, M., & Sköldbberg, K. (2009). *Reflexive methodology: new vistas for qualitative research*. London: Sage.

Appadurai, A. (1996) *Modernity at large: cultural dimensions of globalisation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Aronson, J. 1994: A pragmatic view of thematic analysis. *Qualitative Report* 2(1).
- Ashworth, P. (2008). Conceptual foundations of qualitative psychology In *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods*. Jonathan, A. Smith (ed.). London: Sage.
- Baalawi, Z. S. S. (2009) *Investigating the provision of academic development initiatives: a case study of a tertiary institution in the United Arab Emirates*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Leicester.
- Badrinath, P., Al-Shboul, Q.A., Zoubeidi, T., Gargoum, A.S., Ghubash, R., and El-Rufaie, O.E. (eds) (2002) *United Arab Emirates health and lifestyle survey 2000*. Al-Ayn: UAE University, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences and College of Business and Economics.
- Bang, C. (1998) 'Self-revealing in Korean American adolescents as a function of their degree of acculturation and depression', *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 59(4), p. 1911.
- Barker, C. and Galasinski, D. (2001) 'Cultural studies and discourse analysis: a dialogue on language and identity', in Barker, C. and Galasinski, D. (eds) *Language, culture, discourse*. London: Sage Publications, pp. 1-27.
- Barker, C., Pistrang, N., and Elliot, R. (2002) *Front matter, research methods in clinical and counselling psychology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons
- Barnard, P.J. (1983) 'Experiments on learning interactive dialogues', in Elphick, M.J. (ed) *Man-Machine Interaction*. Newcastle: University of Newcastle, pp. 1-9.
- Barthes, R. (1977). *Image, music, text*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Barthes, R. (2006). 'From work to text', in Hale, D. (ed.) *The novel: an anthology of criticism and theory, 1900-2000*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 235-241.
- Baumeister, R.F. (1986) *Identity: cultural change and the struggle for self*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Baumeister, R.F. and Muraven, M. (1996) 'Identity as adaptation to social, cultural and historical context', *Journal of Adolescence*, 19(5), pp. 405-416.
- Benet-Martinez, V. and Haritatos, J. (2005) 'Bicultural identity integration (BII): components and psychosocial antecedents', *Journal of Personality*, 73(4), pp. 1015-1050.
- Benet-Martinez, V., Leu, J., Lee, F. and Morris, M. (2002). 'Negotiating biculturalism: cultural frame-switching in biculturals with oppositional versus compatible cultural identities', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 33(5), pp. 492-516.
- Benson, C. (2001). *The cultural psychology of self: place, morality and art in human worlds*. London: Routledge.

- Berger, J. (1972). *Ways of seeing*. Reprint, London: Penguin Books, 1990.
- Berger, P. and Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: a treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books.
- Berry, J.W. (1974a). 'Psychological aspects of cultural pluralism: unity and identity reconsidered', in Brislin, R.W. (ed.) *Topics in culture learning*, vol. 2. Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, Culture Learning Institute, pp. 17-22.
- Berry, J.W. (1974b). 'Possession of typical cognitive and personality traits and resistance to acculturative stress', *Prepared for the proceedings of the International Congress of Psychology*. Tokyo: Sci. Council of Japan.
- Berry, J.W. (1976). *Human ecology and cognitive style: comparative studies in cultural and psychological adaptation*. New York: Sage.
- Berry, J.W. (1980). 'Acculturation as varieties of adaptation', in Padilla, A.M. (ed.) *Acculturation: theory, models and some new findings*. Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 9-25.
- Berry, J.W. (1988) 'Acculturation and psychological adaptation a conceptual overview', in Berry, J.W. and Annis, R.C. (eds) *Ethnic psychology*. Lisse: Swets and Zeitlinger, pp. 41-52.
- Berry, J.W. (1990) 'The role of psychology in ethnic studies', *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 22(1), pp. 8-21.
- Berry, J.W. (1992) 'Acculturation and adaptation in a new society', *International Migration*, 30(1), pp.69-85.
- Berry, J.W. (1997) 'Immigration, acculturation and adaptation', *Applied Psychology*, 46(1), pp. 1-30.
- Berry, JW (1999) 'Intercultural relations in plural societies', *Canadian Psychology*, 40(1), pp. 12-21.
- Berry, J.W. (2001) 'A psychology of immigration', *Journal of Social Sciences*, 57(3), pp. 615-631.
- Berry, J.W. (2003) 'Conceptual approaches to acculturation', in Chun, K.M., Organista, P.B. and Marin, G. (eds) *Acculturation: advances in theory, measurement and applied research*. Maryland: American Psychological Association, pp. 17-37.
- Berry, J. W. (2005) 'Acculturation: living successfully in two cultures', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29(6), pp. 697–712.

Berry, J.W. (2006a) 'Acculturative stress', in Wong, P.T.P. and Wong, L.C.J. (eds) *Handbook of multicultural perspectives on stress and coping*. New York: Springer Publishing Company, pp. 287-298.

Berry, J.W. (2006b) 'Attitudes towards immigrants and ethnocultural groups in Canada', *International Journal of Intercultural Research*, 30(6), pp. 719-734.

Berry, J.W. (2007) 'Acculturation and Identity', in Bhugra, D. and Bhui, K. (eds) *Textbook of cultural psychiatry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 169-178.

Berry, J.W. (2008) 'Globalization and acculturation', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 32(4), pp. 328-336.

Berry, J.W. (2009) 'A critique of critical acculturation', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 33(5), pp. 361-371.

Berry, J.W. (2010) 'Mobility and acculturation', in Carr, S. (ed) *The psychology of mobility in a global era*. New York: Springer, pp. 193-210.

Berry, J.W. and Kalin, R. (2000) 'Multicultural policy and social psychology: the Canadian experience,' in Renshon, S. and Duckitt, J. (eds) *Political psychology in cross-cultural perspective*. New York: MacMillan, pp. 263-284.

Berry, J.W., Kim, U., Minde, T. and Mok, D. (1987) 'Comparative studies of acculturative stress', *International Migration Review*, 21(3), pp. 491-511.

Berry, J.W., Phinney, J.S., Sam, D.L. and Vedder, P. (2006) 'Immigrant youth: acculturation, identity and adaptation', *Applied Psychology*, 55(3), pp. 303-332.

Berry, J.W. and Sam, D.L. (1997) 'Acculturation and adaptation', in Berry, J.W., Segall, M.H. and Kagitcibasi, C. (eds) *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. London: Allyn and Bacon, vol. 3.

Berry, J.W. and Sam, D.L. (eds) (2006) *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Berry, J.W. and Sam, D.L. (2007) 'Culture and ethnic factors in health', in Ayers, S., Baum, A., McManus, C., Newman, S., Wallston, K., Weinman, J. and West, R. (eds) *The Cambridge handbook of psychology, health and medicine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 64-79.

Bhabha, H.K. (1994) *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

Bhabha, H.K. (1996), 'Cultures in-between', in Hall, S. and DuGay, P. (eds) *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage. pp. 53-60.

Bhatia, S. and Ram, A. (2001) 'Rethinking acculturation in relation to diasporic cultures and postcolonial identities', *Human Development*, 44(3), pp. 1-18.

Bhatia S. and Ram A. (2009) 'Theorizing identity in transnational and diaspora cultures: a critical approach to acculturation', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 33(2), pp. 140-149.

Bierbrauer, G. (1992) 'Reactions to violation of normative standards: a cross-cultural analysis of shame and guilt', *International Journal of Psychology*, 27(2), pp. 181-194.

Bikos, L.H., Ciftci, A., Guneri, O.Y., Demir, C.E., Sumer, Z.H., Danielson, S., DeVries, S. and Bilgen, W.A. (2007) 'A longitudinal, naturalistic inquiry of the adaptation experiences of the female expatriate spouse living in Turkey', *Journal of Career Development*, 34(1), pp. 34-58.

Birman, D. and Taylor-Ritzler T. (2007), 'Acculturation and psychological distress among adolescent immigrants from the former Soviet Union: exploring the mediating effect of family relationships', *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 13(4), pp. 337-346.

Black, J.S., Mendenhall, M.E. and Oddou, G. (1991) 'Toward a comprehensive model of international adjustment: an integration of multiple theoretical perspectives', *Academy of Management Review*, 16(2), pp. 291-317.

Bochner, S. (1972) 'Problems in culture learning', in Bochner, S. and Wicks, P.P. (eds) *Overseas students in Australia*. Sydney: New South Wales University Press, pp. 65-81.

Bochner, S. (1994) 'Cross-cultural differences in the self concept: a test of Hofstede's individualism/collectivism distinction', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 25(2), pp. 273-283.

Bond, M. H. and Cheung, T. S. (1983) 'College students' spontaneous self-concept: the effect of culture among respondents in Hong Kong, Japan and the United States', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 14(2), pp. 153-171.

Bontempo, R., Lobel, S. A., & Triandis, H. C. (1989). Compliance and value internalization among Brazilian and U.S. students.

Bontempo, R., Lobel, S. and Triandis, H. (1990) 'Compliance and value internalization in Brazil and the U.S.', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 20(3), pp. 200-213.

Bosma, H.A. and Kunnen, E.S. (2001) 'Determinants and mechanisms in ego identity development: a review and synthesis', *Developmental Review*, 21(1), pp. 39-66.

Bourhis, R.Y., Moise, L.C., Perreault, S. and Senecal, S. (1997) 'Towards an interactive acculturation model: social psychological approach', *International Journal of Psychology*, 32(6), pp. 369-386.

- Boyatzis, R.E. 1998: Transforming qualitative information: thematic analysis and code development. Sage.
- Braun, V., and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2), p. 77-101.
- Breakwell, G.M. (1993) 'Social representations and social identity', *Papers on Social Representations*, 2(3), pp. 198-217.
- Breakwell, G.M., Hammond, S., Fife-Schaw, C. and Smith, J.A. (eds) (2006) *Research Methods in Psychology*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. London: Sage.
- Brewer, M.B. (1993) 'The role of distinctiveness in social identity and group behaviour', in Hogg, M.A. and Abrams, D. (eds) *Group motivation: social psychological perspectives*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, pp. 1-16.
- Brewer, M.B. and Miller, N. (1984) 'Beyond the contact hypothesis: theoretical perspectives on desegregation', in Miller, N. and Brewer, M. (eds) *Groups in contact: the psychology of desegregation*. New York: Academic Press, pp. 281-302.
- Brewer, M.B. and Pickett, C.L. (1999) 'Distinctiveness motives as a source of the social self', in Tyler, T.R., Kramer, R.M. and John O.P. (eds), *The Psychology of the Social Self*, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 71-87.
- Brice, A.E. (2002) *The Hispanic child: speech, language, culture and education*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Brien, M. and David, K.H. (1971) 'Intercultural communication and the adjustment of the sojourner', *Psychological Bulletin*, 76(3), pp. 215-230.
- Brink, T.L. (1993) 'Religiosity: measurement', in Magill, F.N. (ed) *Survey of social science: Psychology*. Pasadena: Salem Press, pp. 2096-2102.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979) *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Brubaker, R. and Cooper, F. (2000) 'Beyond "identity"', *Theory and Society*, 29(1), pp. 1-47.
- Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Buda, R. and Elsayed-Elkhouly, S.M. (1998) 'Cultural differences between Arabs and Americans: individualism-collectivism revisited', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 29(3), pp. 487-492.
- Bulthis, J.D. (1986) 'The foreign student today: a profile', in Pyle, K.R. (ed) *Guiding the Development of Foreign Students*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., pp. 19-27.

Burman, E. and Parker, I. (1993), *Discourse Analytic Research: repertoires and readings of texts in action*. London: Routledge.

Camilleri, C. and Malewska-Peyre, H. (1997) 'Socialization and identity strategies', in Berry, J.W., Dasen, P.R. and Saraswathi, T.S. (eds) *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Allyn and Bacon, vol. 3, pp. 41-68

Campbell, A. (2004) 'Words, words, words', *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 22(4), pp. 509–513.

Chataway, C.J. and Berry, J.W. (1989) 'Acculturation experiences, appraisal, coping and adaptation: a comparison of Hong Kong Chinese, French and English students in Canada', *Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science*, 21(3), pp. 295-301.

Cheng, S.T. and Hamid, P.N. (1996) 'The development and validation of an index of emotional disposition and mood state: The Chinese Affect Scale', *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 56(6), pp. 995-1014.

Christofi, V. and Thompson, C.L. (2007) 'You cannot go home again: a phenomenological investigation of returning to the sojourn country after studying abroad', *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 85(1), pp. 53-63.

Church, A.T. (1982) 'Sojourner adjustment', *Psychological Bulletin*, 91(3), pp. 540–572.

CIA (2011) '*Middle East: United Arab Emirates. The World Fact Book*' [online]. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ae.html> (Accessed: 23 August 2011).

Clark, M. (1990) *Nietzsche on truth and philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Clement, R. and Noles, K.A. (1992) 'Towards a situated approach to ethnolinguistic identity: the effects of status on individuals and groups', *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 11(4), pp. 203-232.

Coatsworth, D., Maldonado-Molina, M.M., Pantin, H. and Szapocznik, J. (2005) 'A person-centered and ecological investigation of acculturation strategies in Hispanic immigrants', *Journal of Community Psychology*, 33(2), pp. 157-174.

Cobban, A. (1964) *Rosseau and the Modern State*. Michigan: University of Michigan.

Cole, A. (1995). Discourse analysis In Breakwell, G., Hammond, S., and Fife-Schaw, C. (eds.) (1995). *Research Methods in Psychology*, 27-49. London: Sage.

Collier, M.J. (1997) 'Cultural identity and intercultural communication', in Samovar, L.A. and Porter, R.E. (eds) *Intercultural Communication: a reader*. 8<sup>th</sup> edn. Belmont: Wadsworth Press, pp. 36-44.

Constantine, M.G., Anderson, G.M., Berkel, L.A., Caldwell, L.D. and Utsey, S.O. (2005) 'Examining the cultural adjustment experiences of African international college students: a qualitative analysis', *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 52(1), pp. 57-66.

Constantine, M.G., Okazaki, S. and Utsey, S.O. (2004) 'Self-concealment, social self-efficacy, acculturative stress and depression in African, Asian and Latin American international college students', *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 74(3), pp. 230-241.

Constantine, M. G., Anderson, G. M., Berkel, L. A., Cadwell, L. D., & Utsey, S. O. (2005). Examining the cultural adjustment experiences of African international college students: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(1), 57-66

Côté, JE 1996a, 'Identity: A multidimensional analysis'. In: Adams, G.R., Montemayor, R. and Gullotta, T. (eds) *Psychosocial Development in Adolescence: advances in adolescent development*. Newbury Park: Sage, pp. 130-180.

Côté, JE 1996b, 'Sociological perspectives on identity formation: the culture-identity link and identity capital', *Journal of Adolescence*, 19(5), pp. 419-430.

Council (the) for International Education (2009) *Annual report 2009-2010*.

Cousins, S.D. (1989) 'Culture and self-perception in Japan and the United States', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 56(1), pp.124-131.

Coyle, A. (2006) 'Discourse analysis', in Breakwell, G.M., Fife-Schaw, C., Hammond, S. and Smith, J. (eds) *Research methods in psychology*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Creswell, J. (1994) *Research design: qualitative and quantitative approaches*. London: Sage.

Cross, S.E. (1995) 'Self-construals, coping, and stress in cross-cultural adaptation', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 26(6), pp. 673-697.

Cuellar, I. Arnold, B. and Maldonado, R. (1995) 'Acculturation rating scale for Mexican Americans-II: a revision of the original ARMSA scale', *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 17(3), pp. 275-304.

Cunningham, R.B. and Sarayrah, Y.K. (1993) *Wasta: the hidden force in Middle Eastern society*. Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press.

Curtis, A. (1997) 'Discourse analysis: the search for meanings', *Psychology Review*, 4(1), pp. 23-25.

Cutcliffe, J., & McKenna, H. (2002). When do we know that we know? Considering the truth of research findings and the craft of qualitative research. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 39(6), 611-618.

Dahlberg, L.L. (1998) 'Youth violence in the United States: major trends, risk factors and prevention approaches', *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 14(4), pp. 259-272.

De Fina, A. (1995) 'Pronominal choice, identity and solidarity in political discourse', *Text*, 15(3), pp. 379-410.

Dearnley, C. (2005) 'A reflection on the use of semi-structured interviews', *Nurse Researcher*, 13(1), pp. 19-28.

Del Pilar, J.A. and Udasco, J.O. (2004) 'Deculturation: its lack of validity', *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 10(2), pp. 169-176.

Dien, D.S. (2000) 'The evolving nature of self-identity across four levels of history,' *Human Development*, 43(1), pp. 1-18.

Dion, K.K. and Dion, K.L. (1993) 'Individualistic and collectivistic perspectives on gender and the cultural context of love and intimacy', *Journal of Social Issues*, 49(3), pp. 53-69.

Dion, K.K. and Dion, K.L. (1996) 'Chinese adaptation to foreign cultures', in Bond, M.H. (ed), *The Handbook of Chinese Psychology*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, pp. 457-478.

Dobbelaere, K. (1999) 'Towards an integrated perspective of the processes related to the descriptive concept of secularization', *Sociology of Religion*, 60(3), pp. 229-247.

Dubai Eye (2012) 'Psyched Sundays'. *Radio*. Radford, S. and Shaheem, S. UAE: 103.8, 1 April 2012.

Dunkel, C.S. (2005) 'The relationship between self-continuity and measures of identity', *Identity: an international journal of theory and research*, 5(1), pp. 21-34.

Edwards, D. (1997) *Discourse and cognition*. London: Sage.

Edwards, R. and Nicoll, K. (2001) 'Researching the rhetoric of lifelong learning', *Journal of Education Policy*, 16(2), pp. 103-112.

Eisner, E.W. (1991) *The Enlightened Eye: qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. New York: Macmillan.

El-Haddad, Y. (2003) *Major trends affecting families in the gulf Countries*. Bahrain: Bahrain University, College of Arts, Social Science Department.

Elliot, A. (2001) *Concept of the self*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Ely, M., Vinz, R., Downing, M., & Anzul, M. (1997). *On Writing Qualitative Research: Living by words*. London: Routledge/Falmer.

‘Erik Erikson’s stages of psychosocial development, summary chart’ (2012) [online image]. Available at: < <http://www.vtaide.com/blessing/PCR4-emote.htm>> (Accessed: 29 April 2012).

Erikson, E.H. (1950) *Childhood and society*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. New York: W. W. Norton.

Erikson, E.H. (1968) *Identity: youth and crisis*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Erikson, E.H. (1975) *Life history and the historical moment*. New York: Norton.

Erikson, E.H. (1976) *Reflections on Dr. Borg’s lifestyle*. New York: Norton.

Espín, O.M. (1999) *Women crossing boundaries: a psychology of immigration and transformation of sexuality*. New York: Routledge.

Etzioni, A. (1968) *The active society: a theory of societal and political processes*, New York: Free Press.

Festinger, L. (1954) ‘A theory of social comparison process’, *Human Relations*, 7(2), pp. 117-140.

Findlow, S. (2001) *Higher education and national identity in the United Arab Emirate*. Unpublished PhD thesis. Cambridge University.

Findlow, S. (2006) ‘Higher education and linguistic dualism in the Arab Gulf’, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 27(1), pp. 19-36.

Findlow, S. (2008). ‘Islam, modernity and education in the Arab states’, *Intercultural Education*, 19(4), pp. 337-352.

Fine, M. (2002). *Disruptive Voices: The Possibilities for Feminist Research*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Finlay, L. (1998) ‘Reflexivity: an essential component for all research?’, *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 61(10), pp. 453-456.

Firestone, W. (1987) ‘Meaning in method: the rhetoric of quantitative and qualitative research’, *Educational Researcher*, 16(7), pp. 16-21.

Flick, U. (2006) *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. London: Sage.

Foucault, M. (1972) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon.

Foucault, M. (1977) ‘What is an author’, in Bouchard, D. (ed.) *Language, counter-memory, practice*. New York: Cornell University Press, pp. 124-127.

Foucault, M. (1980a) 'Questions of method', in Faubion, J.D. (ed.) *Michel Foucault: Power*. New York: The New Press, pp. 223-238, vol. 3.

Foucault, M. (1980b) 'Two lectures', in Gordon, C. (ed.), *Power/knowledge: selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977*. London: Harvester Press, pp. 78-108.

Foucault, M. (1981) 'The order of discourse', in Young, R. (ed) *Untying the text: a post-structural anthology*. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp. 48-78.

Furnham, A. (2001) 'Self-estimates of intelligence', *Personality and individual differences*, 31(8), pp. 1381-1405.

Furnham, A. and Bochner, S. (1982) 'Social difficulty in a foreign culture: an empirical analysis of culture shock', in Bochner, S. (ed.) *Cultures in contact: studies in cross-cultural interaction*. Oxford: Pergamon Press, pp. 161-198.

Furnham, A. and Bochner, S. (1986) *Culture shock: psychological reactions to unfamiliar environments*. London: Methuen.

Furnham, A. and Sheikh, S. (1993) 'Gender, generational, and social support correlates of mental health in Asian immigrants', *The International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 39(1), pp. 22-33.

Garcia, E. (1994) *Understanding and meeting the challenge of student diversity*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Garza-Guerrero, A.C. (1974) 'Culture shock: its mourning and the vicissitudes of identity', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 22(2), pp. 408-429.

Gee, J.P. (2005) *Introduction to discourse analysis: theory and method*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. London: Routledge.

Geertz, C. (1973) 'Thick description: toward an interpretive theory of culture', in Geertz, C. (ed) *The Interpretation of Cultures: selected essays*. New York: Basic Books, pp. 3-30.

Gergen, K.J. (1991) *The saturated self: dilemmas of identity in contemporary life*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. New York: Basic Books.

Germain, E.R. (2004) 'Culture or race? Phenotype and cultural identity development in minority Australian adolescents', *Australian Psychologist*, 39(2), pp. 134-142.

Ghaffarian, S. (1987) 'The acculturation of Iranians in the United States', *Journal of Social Psychology*, 127(6), pp.565-571.

Ghanem, S. (1997) 'Filling in the tapestry: the second level of agenda setting', in McCombs, M., Shaw, D.L. and Weaver, D. (eds) *Communication and Democracy: exploring the intellectual frontier in agenda-setting theory*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 3-14.

Gibson, M.A. (2001) 'Immigration, adaptation and patterns of acculturation', *Human Development*, 44(1), pp. 19-23.

Giddens, A. (1990) *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Gjerde, F. (2004) 'Culture, power and experience: toward a person-centred cultural psychology', *Human Development*, 47(3), pp. 138-157.

Gogia, N. (2007) *Investing in the future: the Arab Gulf states adapt to the challenge of modernization*. [online]. Available at: <http://www.stimson.org/summaries/investing-in-the-future-the-arab-gulf-states-adapt-to-the-challenge-of-modernization/> (Accessed: 29 May 2011).

Gordon, M.M. (1964) *Assimilation in American Life*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Graham, L.J. (2005) 'Discourse analysis and the critical use of Foucault', *The Australian Association of Research in Education annual conference*. Queensland University of Technology, Parramatta, 27th November - 1st December 2005, Unpublished. [online]. Available at: <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/2689/1/2689.pdf> (Accessed: 27 May 2012).

Gudykunst, W.B., Matsumoto, Y., Ting-Toomey, S., Nishida, T., Kim, K. and Heyman, S. (1996) 'The influence of cultural individualism-collectivism, self-construals and individual values on communication styles across culture', *Human Communication Research*, 22(4), pp. 510-543.

Guest, G. (2005). The range of qualitative research. *Journal of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care*, 31 (2), 165.

Guibernau, M. (1996) *The nation-state and nationalism in the twentieth century*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Gutmann, M.C. (1999) 'Ethnicity, alcohol and acculturation', *Social Science and Medicine*, 48(2), pp. 173-184.

Habib, T. (2010) *Observations from the Arab world and beyond* [online]. Available at: [www.habibtoumi.com](http://www.habibtoumi.com) (Accessed: 2 January 2011).

Hacker, A. (1992) *Two Nations: black and white, separate, hostile, unequal*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Halamandaris, K.F. (1995) *Correlates of adjustment to university life among students*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Stirling.

Hall, S. (ed.) 2002 *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Reprint, London: Sage, 1997.

- Hall, S. and Du Gay, P. (eds) (1996) *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage.
- Halland, J. (2007). *A Thematic Analysis of Narratives of Depression*. South Africa: University of Cape Town.
- Hammad, A. (1989) *Effectiveness and efficiency in the management of Palestinian health services*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Manchester.
- Hammad, A. (1999) *Guide to Arab culture: health care delivery to the Arab American community*. Dearborn: ACCESS Community Health Center.
- Harper, D.J. (2004) 'Delusions and discourse: moving beyond the constraints of the modernist paradigm', *Philosophy, Psychiatry and Psychology*, 11(1), pp. 54-64.
- Harper, D., and Thompson, A. R. (2012). *Qualitative Research Methods in Mental Health and Psychotherapy: A Guide for Students and Practitioners*. London: John Wiley & Sons.
- Heard-Bey, F. (2005) 'The United Arab Emirates: statehood and nation-building in a traditional society', *The Middle East Journal*, 59(3), pp. 357-375.
- Heine, S.J. (2001) 'Self as cultural product: an examination of East Asian and North American selves', *Journal of Personality*, 69(6), pp. 881-906.
- Heine, S.J., Lehman, D.R., Markus, H.R., and Kitayama, S. (1999) 'Is there a universal need for positive self-regard?', *Psychological Review*, 106(4), pp. 766-794.
- Hendry, L.B., Mayer, P. and Kloep, M. (2007) 'Belonging or opposing? A grounded theory approach to young people's cultural identity in a majority/minority societal context', *Identity: an international journal of theory and research*, 7(3), pp. 181-204.
- Heppner, P.P., Cook, S.W., Wright, D.M. and Johnson, C. (1995) 'Progress in resolving problems: a problem-focused style of coping', *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 42(3), pp. 279-293.
- Herder, J.G. (1968) *Reflections on the philosophy and history of mankind*. Reprint, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1784.
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Report 2009/10 HESA Student Record - received Thursday June 2nd 2011 at 6:32 pm
- Hofstede, G. (1980) *Culture's consequences: international differences in work-related values*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Hofstede, G. (2003) *VSM 94. Values Survey Module 1994*. Educational Institute for Research on Intercultural Cooperation.

Holloway, I. (1997). *Basic Concepts for Qualitative Research*. Oxford: Blackwell Science.

Holsti, O. (1969). *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities*. Don Mills: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company. Hong, Y., Morris, M. W., Chiu, C. and Benet-Martinez, V. (2000) 'Multicultural minds: a dynamic constructivist approach to culture and cognition', *American Psychologist*, 55(7), pp. 705-720.

Hook, D. (2001) 'Discourse, knowledge, materiality, history: Foucault and discourse publications', *Theory and Psychology*, 11(4), pp. 521-547.

Horenczyk, G. (1997) 'Immigrants' perception of host attitudes and their reconstruction of cultural groups', *Applied Psychology*, 46(1), pp. 34-38.

Horowitz, T.R. and Kraus, V. (1984) 'Patterns of cultural transition: Soviet and American children in a new environment', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 15(4). pp. 399-416.

Howitt, D., and Cramer, D. (2007). *Introduction to Research Methods in Psychology*. Loughborough: Prentice Hall.

Huda, Q. (2006) *The diversity of Muslims in the United States*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace.

Hui, C.H. and Triandis, H.C. (1986) 'Individualism-collectivism: a study of cross-cultural researchers', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 17(2), pp. 225-248.

Humes, W. and Bryce, T. (2003) 'Post-structuralism and policy research in education', *Journal of Education Policy*, 18(2), pp. 175-187.

Hunt, M.L., Schneider, S. and Comer, B. (2004) 'Should "acculturation" be a variable in health research? A critical review of research on U.S. Hispanics', *Social Science and Medicine*, 59(5), pp. 973-986.

Hussey, J. and Hussey, R. (1997) *Business research: a practical guide for undergraduate and postgraduate students*. London: Macmillan.

Johnson, A. (2010) 'Helping UAE students prepare for life in the UK', *Education [Gulf News]*. [online]. Available at: <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/uae/education/helping-students-prepare-for-life-in-the-uk-1.660791> (Accessed: 14 September 2011).

Jones, I. (1997). *Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods in sports fan research. The Qualitative Report*. [On-line]. Available at: <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR3-4/jones.html> (Accessed: 25 January 2009).

Kagan, S.L. (1990) 'Readiness 2000: rethinking rhetoric and responsibility', *Phi Delta Kappan*, 72(4), pp. 272-279.

Kamali, M.A. and Al-Simadi, F. (2004) 'Assessing the value structure among United Arab Emirates university students', *Social Behaviour and Personality: an international journal*, 32(1), pp. 19-30.

Kanagawa, C., Cross, S.E. and Markus, H.R. (2001). 'Who am I? The cultural psychology of the conceptual self', *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27(1), pp. 90-103.

Kashima, S.E. and Kashima, Y. (1998) 'Culture and language: the case of cultural dimensions and personal pronoun use', *Journal of Cross Cultural Psychology*, 29(3), pp. 461-486.

Khalaf, S. (1998) 'Globalisation and cultural identity: a theoretical conceptualization for the study of Gulf and Arabian Peninsula societies', *Arab Journal for the Humanities*, 61(1), pp. 52-93.

Khalaf, S. and Al-Kobaisi, S. (1999) 'Migrants' strategies of coping and patterns of accommodation in the oil-rich Gulf societies: evidence from the UAE', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 26(2), pp. 271-298.

Khan, M.R. and Khan, M.A. (2007) 'Academic sojourners, culture shock and intercultural adaptation: a trend analysis', *Studies about Languages*, 1(10), pp. 38-46.

Kidder, L.H. (1992) 'Requirements for being "Japanese": stories of returnees', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 16(4), pp. 383-393.

Kim, B.S.K. and Abreu, J.M. (2001) 'Acculturation measurement: theory, current instruments, and future directions', in Ponterotto, J.G., Casas, J.M., Suzuki, L.A. and Alexander, C.M. (eds) *Handbook of multicultural counselling*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 394-424.

Kim, M.S. (2001) 'Perspectives on human communication: implications for transcultural theory', in Asante, M., Millhouse, V. and Nwoso, P.O. (eds) *Transcultural realities: interdisciplinary perspectives on cross-cultural relations*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 3-31.

Kim, Y. (1978) 'A communication approach to acculturation processes: Korean immigrants in Chicago', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 2(2), pp. 197-224.

Kim, Y. (2001) *Becoming intercultural: an integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Kim, Y.Y. (1994) 'Beyond cultural identity', *Intercultural Communication Studies*, 4(1), pp. 1-25.

Kiuchi, A. (1995) 'Construction of a scale for independent and interdependent construals of self and its reliability and validity', *Japanese Journal of Psychology*, 66(2), pp. 100-106.

Kiuchi, A. (1996) 'Independent and interdependent construals of the self: The cultural influence and the relations to personality traits', *Japanese Journal of Psychology*, 67(4), pp. 308-313.

Kleinman, A. (1998) *Rethinking Psychiatry*. New York: The Free Press.

Kosic, A. (2004) 'Acculturation strategies, coping process and acculturative stress', *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 45(4), pp. 269-278.

Kosmitzki, C. (1996) 'The reaffirmation of cultural identity in cross-cultural encounters', *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 22(3), pp. 238-248.

Krishnan, A. and Berry, J.W. (1992) 'Acculturative stress and acculturation attitudes among Indian immigrants to the United States', *Psychology and Developmental Societies*, 4( 2), pp. 187-212.

Kuo, B.C.H. and Roysircar, G. (2004) 'Predictors of acculturation for Chinese adolescents in Canada: age of arrival, length of stay, social class and English reading ability', *Journal of Multicultural Counselling and Development*, 32(3), pp. 143-154.

Kvale, S. (1996) *InterViews: an introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

LaFromboise, T., Coleman, H.L.K. and Gerton, J. (1993) 'Psychological impact of biculturalism: evidence and theory', *Psychological Bulletin*, 114(3), pp. 395-412.

Lambert, Y. (1998) 'The scope and limits of nmanreligious functions according to the European value and ISSP surveys', in Billiet, J. and Laemans, R. (eds) *On secularization: homage to Karel Dobbelaere*. Leuven: University Press of the Catholic University.

Lather, P. (2004) 'This is your father's paradigm: Government intrusion and the case of qualitative research in education', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(1), pp. 15-34.

Lazarus, A.A. (2002) *Brief but comprehensive psychotherapy: the multimodal way*. New York: Springer.

Lazarus, R.S. (1993) 'From psychological stress to the emotions: a history of changing outlooks', *Annual Review of Psychology*, 44(1), pp. 1-21

Lazarus, R.S. and Folkman, S. (1984) *Stress, appraisal and coping*. New York: Springer.

Lee, E. (1997) 'Chinese American families', in Lee, E. (ed) *Working with Asian Americans: a guide for clinicians*. New York: Guildford Press, pp. 46-78.

Leininger, M. M. (1985). 'Ethnography and ethnonursing: models and modes of qualitative data analysis', in M. M. Leininger (ed.), *Qualitative research methods in nursing*. Orlando: Grune and Stratton, pp. 33-72.

Levy-Warren, M.H. (1987) 'Moving to a new culture: cultural identity, loss and mourning', in Bloom-Feshbach, J. and Bloom-Feshbach, S. (eds) *The psychology of separation and loss: perspectives on development, life transitions and clinical practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., pp. 300-315.

Liddicoat, A. (2002) 'Static and dynamic views of culture and intercultural language acquisition', *Babel*, 36(3), pp. 4-11.

Luke, C.L. and Bond M.H. (1992) 'Chinese lay beliefs about the causes and cures of psychological problems', *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 11(69), pp. 140-157.

Lysgaard, S. (1955) 'Adjustment in foreign society: Norwegian fullbright grantees visiting the United States', *International Social Science Bulletin*, 7(1), pp. 45-51.

'Map of the United Arab Emirates' (2012) [online image]. Available at: <http://www.juancole.com/2011/01/map-of-united-arab-emirates.html> (Accessed: 29 March 2012).

Marcia, J.E. (1980) 'Identity in adolescence' in Adelson, J. (ed) *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology*. New York: Wiley, pp. 159-187.

Marin, G. and Marin, B.V. (1991) *Research with Hispanic Populations*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Markus, H.R. and Kitayama, S. (1991) 'Culture and the self: implications for cognition, emotion and motivation', *Psychological Review*, 98(2), pp. 224-253.

Markus, H.R. and Kitayama, S. (1998) 'The culture psychology of personality', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 29(1), pp. 63-87.

Markus, H.R. and Kitayama, S. (2003) 'Culture, self and the reality of the social', *Psychological Inquiry*, 14(3-4), pp. 277-283.

Matusmoto, D. (1999) 'Culture and self: an empirical assessment of Markus and Kitayama's theory of independent and interdependent self-construals', *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 2(3), pp. 289-310.

Maundeni, T. (2001) 'The role of social networks in the adjustment of African students to British society: students' perception', *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 4(3), pp. 253-276.

Maykut, P. and Morehouse, R. (1994) *Beginning Qualitative Research: a philosophic and practical guide*. London: Falmer Press.

McClure, J. (2007) 'International graduates' cross-cultural adjustment: experiences, coping strategies and suggested programmatic responses', *Teaching in Higher Education*, 12(2), pp. 199-217.

- McDowell, I. and MacLean, L (1998) 'Blending qualitative and quantitative study methods in health services research', *Health Informatics Journal*, 4(1), pp. 15-22.
- McGuire, W.J., McGuire, C.V. and Cheever, J. (1986) 'The self in society: effects of social contexts on the sense of self', *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 25(3), pp. 259-270.
- McInnis, C., Griffin, P., James, R. and Coates, H. (2001) *Development of the Course Experience Questionnaire*. Cambera: Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.
- McNiff, J. (1988) *Action Research: Principles and Practice*. London: Macmillan.
- Mendoza, R. (1984) 'Acculturation and sociocultural variability' in Martinez, J.L. Jr. and Mendoza, R.H. (eds) *Chicano Psychology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. New York, Academic Press, Inc., pp. 61-75
- Morling, B. and Fiske, S.T. (1999) 'Defining and measuring harmony control', *Journal of Research in Personality*, 33(4), pp. 379-414.
- Myers, D. M. (2004). Qualitative research in information systems. *Management Information Systems Quarterly*, 21, p. 241-242.
- Neyestani, M.R. (2005) 'Cultural and religious identities in era of information and communications globalization', *Alternatives: Turkish journal of international relations*, 4(4), pp. 33-39.
- Nietzsche (1998) *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.
- Nikander P. (1995) 'The turn to the text: the critical potential of discursive social psychology', *Nordiske Udkast: journal for critical social science*, 23(1), pp. 3-15.
- Nilsson, J.E. and Anderson, A.Z. (2004) 'Supervising international students: the role of acculturation, role ambiguity and multicultural discussions', *Professional Psychology: research and practice*, 35(3), pp. 306-312.
- Nisbet, R.E., Peng, K., Choi, I. and Norenzayan, A. (2001) 'Culture and systems of thought: holistic vs. analytic cognition', *Psychological Review*, 108(2), pp. 291-310.
- Oberg, K. (1960) 'Culture shock: adjustment to new cultural environments', *Practical Anthropology*, 7(4), pp. 177-182.
- Olmeda, E. (1979) 'Acculturation: a psychometric perspective', *American Psychology*, 34(11), pp. 1061-70.
- Ong, A. and Ward, C. (2005) 'The construction and validation of a social support measure for Sojourners: the Index of Sojourner Social Support (ISSS) Scale', *The Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology*, 36(6), pp. 637-661.

Ouis, P. (2002) 'Islamization as a strategy for reconciliation between modernity and tradition: examples from contemporary Arab Gulf states', *Journal of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 13(3), pp. 315-334.

Padilla, A.M. (1980) 'The role of cultural awareness and ethnic loyalty in acculturation', in Padilla, A.M. (ed.), *Acculturation: theory, models and some new findings*. Boulder: Westview, pp. 47-84.

Padilla, A.M. and Perez, W. (2003) 'Acculturation, social identity and social cognition: a new perspective', *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 25(1), pp. 35-55.

Paludi, M. (2002) *Human development in multicultural contexts: a book of readings*. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education Inc.

Pandian, A. (2008) 'Multiculturalism in higher education: a case study of Middle Eastern students' perceptions and experiences in a Malaysian University', *IJAPS*, 4(1), pp. 33-59.

Papacharissi, Z. and Rubin, A.M. (2000) 'Predictors of internet use', *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 44(2), pp. 175-19.

Parker, I. (1992) *Discourse dynamics: critical analysis for social and individual psychology*. London: Routledge.

Patron, M.C. (2006) '*Une annee entre parentheses*' *French academic sojourners in Australia: the impact of social and cultural dimensions of acculturation and repatriation on perceptions of cultural identity*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Bond University.

Patterson, J.M. (1988) 'Families experiencing stress: the family adjustment and adaptation response model', *Family Systems Medicine*, 5(2), pp. 202-237.

Patton, Q.M. (1987) *How to use qualitative methods in evaluation*. London: Sage.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Patton, Q.M. (2002) *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Paulhus, D. and Trapnell, P.D. (1998) 'Typological measures of shyness: additive, interactive and categorical', *Journal of Research in Personality*, 32(2), pp. 183-201.

Peng, K., Ames, D. and Knowles, E.D. (2001) 'Culture and human inference: perspectives from three traditions', in Matsumoto, D. (ed.), *Handbook of culture and psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 245-264.

Penrose, J. (2002) 'Nations, states and homelands: territory and territoriality in nationalist thought', *Nations and Nationalism: Journal of the Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 8(3), pp. 277-297.

Persons, S. (1987). *Ethnic studies at Chicago: 1905-45*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Phillips, N. and Hardy, C. (2002) *Discourse analysis: investigating processes of social construction*. Thousand Oaks: Sage (Qualitative Research Methods Series, vol. 50).

Phinney, J.S. (1989) 'Stages of ethnic identity development in minority group adolescents', *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 9(1-2), pp. 34-49.

Phinney, J.S. (1992) 'The multigroup ethnic identity measure: a new scale for use with diverse groups', *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 9(2), pp. 34-49.

Phinney, J.S. (2003) 'Ethnic identity and acculturation', in Chun, K., Ball, P. and Marin, G. (eds) *Acculturation: advances in theory, measurement, and applied research*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association, pp. 63-81.

Phinney, J.S. and Chavira, V. (1992) 'Ethnic identity and self-esteem: an exploratory longitudinal study', *Journal of Adolescence*, 15(3), pp. 271 – 281.

Phinney, J.S. and Flores, J. (2002) "'Unpacking' acculturation: Aspects of acculturation as predictors of traditional sex role attitudes", *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 33(3), pp. 320–331.

Phinney, J.S., Horenczyk, G., Liebkind, K. and Vedder, P. (2001) 'Ethnic identity, immigration, and well-being: an interactional perspective', *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(3), pp. 493-510.

Phinney, J.S., Lochner, B.T. and Murphy, R. (1990) 'Ethnic identity development and psychological adjustment in adolescence', in Stiffman, A.R. and Davis L.E. (eds) *Ethnic issues in adolescent mental health*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 53–72.

Phinney, J. and Rosenthal, D. (1992) 'Ethnic identity in adolescence: process, context and outcome', in Adams, G., Gullotta, T. and Montemayer, R. (eds) *Adolescent identity formation*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 145-172.

Portes, A. (1996) 'Children of immigrants: segmented assimilation and its determinants', in Portes, A. (ed) *The economic sociology of immigration: essays on networks, ethnicity and entrepreneurship*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, pp. 248-280.

Potter, J. (1997) 'Discourse analysis as a way of analysing naturally occurring talk', in Silverman, D. (ed.) *Qualitative Research: theory, method and practice*. London: Sage, pp.144-160.

- Potter, J. (1998) 'Qualitative and discourse analysis', in Bellack, A.S. and Hersen, M. (eds) *Comprehensive Clinical Psychology*. Oxford: Pergamon, pp. 117-144, vol. 3.
- Potter, J. and Edwards, D. (2001) 'Discursive social psychology', in Robinson, W.P. and Giles, H. (eds) *The new handbook of language and social psychology*. Chichester, UK: Wiley, pp. 103-118.
- Potter, J. and Hepburn, A. (2008) 'Discursive constructionism', in Holstein, J.A. and Gubrium, J.F. (eds) *Handbook of constructionist research*. New York: Guildford, pp. 275-293.
- Potter, J. and Wetherell, M. (1987) *Discourse and social psychology: beyond attitudes and behaviour*. London: Sage.
- Potter, J. and Wetherell, M. (1994) 'Analyzing discourse', in Bryman, A. and Burgess, B. (eds) *Analyzing qualitative data*. London: Routledge, pp. 47-66.
- Pritchard, M, *Student Services Adviser, from the United Arab Emirates Embassy in London*. Interviewed by: Shaheem, S. (15 May 2007).
- Quinn, L.F., Barr, H., McKay, J.W., Jarchow, E. and Powell, R.R. (1995) 'International student teaching: New Zealand and the United States perspectives on schooling', *Action in Teacher Education*, 27(2), pp. 18-27.
- Ramirez, M. III (1983) *Psychology of the Americas*. New York: Pergamon Press.
- Redfield, R., Linton, R. and Herskovits, M.J. (1936) 'Memorandum for the study of acculturation', *American Anthropologist*, 38(1), pp. 149-152.
- Redmond, M.V. and Bunyi, J.M. (1993) 'The relationship of intercultural communication competence with stress and the handling of stress as reported by international students', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 17(2), pp. 235-254.
- Reismann, C. K. (1993). *Narrative Analysis*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Rhee, E., Uleman, J.S., Lee, H.K. and Roman, R.J. (1995) 'Spontaneous self-description and ethnic identities in individualistic and collectivistic cultures', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69(1), pp. 142-152.
- Roberts, C. (1997) 'Transcribing talk: issues of representation', *TESOL Quarterly*, 31(1), pp. 167-172.
- Roberts, R.E., Phinney, J.S., Masse, L.C., Chen, Y.R., Roberts, C.R. and Romero, A. (1999) 'The structure of ethnic identity in young adolescents from diverse ethnocultural groups', *Journal of Early Adolescence*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 301-322.
- Roulston, K. 2001: Data analysis and 'theorizing as ideology'. *Qualitative Research* 1, 279- 302.

Rosch, E. (1977) 'Human categorization', in Warren, N. (ed.) *Advances in cross-cultural psychology*. London: Academic Press, vol. 1.

'Rosch's levels of abstraction' (2001) [image], in Haslam, A.S. (2001) *Psychology in organizations*. London: Sage.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (1968) *The Social Contract*. Reprint, England: Penguin Books, 1762.

Rudmin, F.W. (2003) 'Critical history of the acculturation psychology of assimilation, separation, integration and marginalization', *Review of General Psychology*, 7(1), pp. 3-37.

Rumbaut, R.G. (1994) 'The crucible within: Ethnic identity, self-esteem and segmented assimilation among children of immigrants', *International Migrant Review*, 28(4), pp. 784-794.

Ryan, G., and Bernard, H. (2000). Data management and analysis methods In Denzin, N., and Lincoln, Y. (eds.), (2000), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 769-802. London: Sage.

Ryder, G.A., Alden, L.E. and Paulhus, D.L. (2000) 'Is acculturation unidimensional or bidimensional? A head-to-head comparison in the prediction of personality, self-identity, and adjustment', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79(1), pp. 49-65.

Said, E. (1983). *The world, the text and the critic*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Sakamoto, I. (2006) 'When family enters the picture: the model of cultural negotiation and gendered experiences of Japanese academic sojourners in the United States', *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology Journal*, 12(3), pp. 558-577.

Sampson, E.E. (1977) 'Individualism and the American ideal', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 35(11), pp. 767-782.

Sandhu, D.S. and Asrabadi, B.R. (1994). 'Development of an acculturative stress scale for international students', *Psychological Reports*, 75, pp. 435-448.

Sandhu, D.S., Portes, P.R. and McPhee, S.A. (1996) 'Assessing cultural adaptation: psychometric properties of the cultural adaptation pain scale', *Journal of Multicultural Counselling and Development*, 24(1), pp. 15-25.

Sapir, E. (1970) *Language: an introduction to the study of speech*. London: Hart-Davies.

Saussure, F. (1983) *Course in general linguistics*. Reprint, London: Duckworth, 1916.

Schachter, E.P. (2005) 'Context and identity formation. A theoretical analysis and a case study', *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 20(3), pp. 375-395.

Schmidt, R.J. (1956) 'Cultural Nationalism in Herder', *Journal of History of Ideas*, 17 (3), pp. 407-417.

- Schvaneveldt, P.L., Kerpelman, J.L. and Schvaneveldt, J.D. (2005) 'Generational and cultural changes in family life in the United Arab Emirates', *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 36(2), pp. 77-91.
- Schwartz, S.H. (1978) 'Temporal instability as a moderator of the attitude-behaviour relationship', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 36(7), pp. 715-724.
- Schwartz, S.H. and Huismans, S. (1995) 'Value priorities and religiosity in four western religions', *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 58(2), pp. 88-107.
- Schwartz, S.J. (2001) 'The evolution of Eriksonian and neo-Eriksonian identity theory and research: a review and integration', *Identity: an international journal of theory and research*, 1(1), pp. 7-58.
- Schwartz, S.J. (2005) A new identity for identity research: Recommendations for expanding and refocusing the identity literature. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 20, pp. 293-308/
- Schwartz, S., Montgomery, M. and Briones, E. (2006) 'The role of identity in acculturation among immigrant people: theoretical propositions, empirical questions and applied recommendations', *Human Development*, 49(1), pp. 1-30.
- Seale, C. (1999) *The quality of qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Serafini, T.E. and Adams, G.R. (2002). 'Functions of identity', *Identity*, 2(4), pp. 361-389.
- Shankman, P. (2000) 'Culture, Biology, and Evolution: the Mead-Freeman controversy revisited', *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 29(5), pp. 539-557.
- Sherrard, C. (1997) 'Qualitative research', *The Psychologist*, 10(4), pp. 161-162.
- Shore, B. (2002) 'Taking culture seriously', *Human Development*, 45(4), pp. 226-228.
- Shweder, R.A. (1990) 'Cultural psychology – what is it?', in Stigler, J., Shweder, R. and Herdt, G. (eds) *Cultural psychology: essays on comparative human development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-46.
- Shweder, R.A. and Bourne, E.J. (1984) 'Does the concept of person vary cross-culturally?', in Shweder, R.A. and LeVine, R.A. (eds) *Culture Theory: essays on mind, self and emotion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 158-199.
- Silverman, D. (2001) 'The construction of delicate objects in counselling', in Wetherell, M., Taylor, S. and Yates S.J. (eds) *Discourse Theory and Practice*. London: Sage, pp. 119-137.
- Simoni, J.M. and Perez, L. (1995) 'Latinos and mutual support groups: a case for considering culture', *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 65(3), pp. 440-445.

Singelis, T.M. (1994) 'The measurement of independent and interdependent self-construals', *Personality and Social Psychological Bulletin*, 20(5), pp. 580-591.

Siu, P.C.P. (1952) 'The Sojourner', *American Journal of Sociology*, 58(1), pp. 34-44.

Smart, D., Volet, S. and Ang, G. (2000) *Fostering social cohesion in universities: bridging the cultural divide*. Canberra: Australian Education International Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2003). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Methods*. London: Sage.

Snyder, C.R. and Fromkin, H.L. (1980) *Uniqueness: the human pursuit of difference*, New York: Plenum.

Social Science Research Council (1954) 'Acculturation: An exploratory formulation', *American Anthropologist*, 56(5), pp. 973-1000.

Stake, R. (2003) 'Case studies', in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds) *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 134 – 164.

Starks, H. and Trinidad, S.B. (2007) 'Choose your method: a comparison of phenomenology, discourse analysis and grounded theory' *Qualitative Health Research*, 17(10), pp. 1372-1380.

Stephoe, A. and Appels, A. (1989) *Stress, Personal Control and Health*. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.

Stonequist, E.V. (1937) *The marginal man: a study in personality and culture conflict*. New York: Scribner.

Storti, C. (1997) *Culture matters: the Peace Corps cross cultural workbook*. Washington DC: Peace Corps Information Collection and Exchange.

Stratton, P. (1997) 'Attributional coding of interview data: meeting the needs of long-haul passengers' in Hayes, N. (ed.) *Doing qualitative analysis in psychology*. Hove: Psychology Press, pp.115–142.

Strauss, A. L., and Corbin, J. M. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. London: Sage Publications.

'Stress and coping model based on Lazarus and Folkman' (2012) [online image]. Available at: <http://adc.bmj.com/content/90/10/1053.full> (Accessed: 14 March 2012).

Suárez-Orozco, C., Todorova, I. and Louise, J. (2002) 'Making up for lost time: the experience of separation and reunification among immigrant families', *Family Process*, 41(4), pp. 625-643.

Suda, N. (1999) 'Issues of adjustment abroad and readjustment to their home country of Japanese spouses', *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, 12(3), pp. 75-86.

Sussman, N.M. (2002) 'Testing the cultural identity model of the cultural transition cycle: sojourners return home', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 26(4), p. 391-408.

Szapocznik, J., Kurtines, W.M. and Fernandez, T. (1980) 'Bicultural involvement and adjustment in Hispanic-American youth', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 4(3-4), pp. 353-365.

Tadmor, C.T. (2006) Biculturalism: the plus side of leaving home? The effects of second-culture exposure on integrative complexity and its consequences for overseas performance. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of California.

Tajfel, H. (ed) (1978) *Differentiation between social groups: studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations*. London: Academic Press.

Tajfel, H. and Turner, J.C. (1986) 'The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour', in Worschel, S. and Austin, W. (eds.) *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Chicago: Nelson Hall, (pp. 7-24).

Taylor, S. J. and Bogdan, R. (1984). *Introduction to qualitative research methods: The search for meanings*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Taylor, G. W., & Ussher, J. M. (2001). Making sense of S&M: A discourse analytic account. *Sexualities*, 4(3), 293-314.

Teske, R.H.C. and Nelson, B.H. (1974) 'Acculturation and assimilation', *American Ethnologist*, 1(2), pp. 218-235.

Tomlinson, J. (2003) 'Globalisation and cultural identity', in Held, D. and McGrew, A. (eds) *The global transformations reader*. Cambridge: Polity, pp. 269-277.

Trafimow D., Triandis, H.C. and Goto, S.G. (1991) 'Some tests of the distinction between the private self and the collective self', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 60(5), pp. 649-655.

Trainer, S. (2010) 'Body image, health and modernity: women's perspectives and experiences in the United Arab Emirates', *Asia-Pacific Journal of Public Health*, 22(3), pp. 60S-67S.

Trauner, K.R. (2007) 'Patriotism versus nationalism: a historical approach', in Weber, R., Sajda, P. and Nagypal, S. (eds) *Roots of vision, routes of change*. Budapest-Bratislava: BGOI and WSCF-CESR, pp.19-33.

Triandis, H.C. (1988) 'Collectivism and development', in Sinha, D. and Kao, H.S. (eds) *Social values and development: Asian perspectives*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 285-303.

Triandis, H.C. (1989) 'The self and social behavior in differing cultural contexts', *Psychological Review*, 96(3), pp. 506-520.

Triandis, H.C. (1994) *Culture and Social Behaviour*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Triandis, H.C. (1997) 'Cross-cultural perspectives on personality', in Hogan, R., Johnson, J. and Briggs, S. (eds) *Handbook of personality psychology*. San Diego: Academic Press, pp. 439-464.

Triandis, H. C. (2007). Culture and psychology: A history of the study of their relationship In S. Kitayama & D. Cohen (Eds.), *Handbook of Cultural Psychology* (pp. 59-76). New York: Guilford Press.

Triandis, H.C., Carnevale, P., Gelfand, M., Robert, C., Wasti, A., et al. (2001) Culture, personality and deception. *International Journal Cross-Cultural Management*, 17(1), pp. 73-90.

Trumbull, E., Diaz-Meza, R., Hasan, A. and Rothstein-Fisch, C. (2001) *Five Year Report of the Bridging Cultures Project*. San Francisco: West Ed.

Tseng, W.C. and Newton, F. (2002) 'International students' strategies for well-being', *College Student Journal*, 36(4), pp. 591-598.

Tuckett, A.G. (2005). Applying thematic analysis theory to practice: A researcher's experience. *Contemporary Nurse*, 19 (1-2), 75-87.

Turner, J. and Giles, B. (1981) *Intergroup Behavior*. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Turner, J.C. (1996) 'Henri Tajfel: an introduction', in Robinson, W.P. (ed) *Social groups and identities: developing the legacy of Henri Tajfel*. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann, 1-24.

Turner, J.C., Hogg, M.A., Oakes, P.J., Reicher, S. and Wetherell, M. (1987) *Rediscovering the social group: a self-categorisation theory*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Turner, J.W., Grube, J.A. and Meyers, J. (2001) 'Developing an optimal match within online communities: an exploration of CMC support communities and traditional support'. *Journal of Communication*, 51(2), pp. 231-251.

UAE National Bureau of Statistics (2012) *Government Reports* [Online]. Available at: <http://www.uaestatistics.gov.ae/FaqEnglish/tabid/112/Default.aspx> (Accessed: 12 August 2012).

Uehara, A. (1983) 'The nature of American student re-entry adjustment and perceptions of the sojourner experience', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 10(4), pp. 415-438.

Van de Vijver, F.J.R. and Phaet, K. (2004) 'Assessment in multicultural groups: the role of acculturation', *Applied Psychology*, 53(2), pp. 215-236.

Van Dijk, T.A. (1996) 'Discourse, power and access', in Caldas, C.R and Coulthard, M. (eds) *Texts and Practices*. London: Routledge, pp. 84-104.

Verba, S., Schlozman, K.L. and Brady, H.E. (1995) *Voice and equality: civic voluntarism in American politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Vignoles, V.L., Chryssochoou, X. and Breakwell, G.M. (2000) 'Evaluating models of identity motivation: self-esteem is not the whole story', Manuscript submitted for publication.

Vohra, S.S. and Broots, K.D. (1996) 'Beliefs and the adaptation to a new culture: the case of Indian immigrants', *Journal of Indian Academy of Applied Psychology*, 22(1-2), pp. 55-64.

Ward, C. (1998, August) *Models and measurements of acculturation*. Paper presented at XIV Congress of the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology, Bellingham, WA.

Ward, C., Bochner, S. and Furnham, A. (2001) *The Psychology of culture shock*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. East Sussex: Routledge.

Ward, C. and Kennedy, A. (1999) 'The measurement of sociocultural adaptation', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 23(4), pp. 659-677.

Ward, C. and Searle, W. (1991) 'The impact of value discrepancies and culture identity on psychological and sociocultural adjustment of sojourners', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 15(2), pp. 209-224.

Warner, S.R. (1993) 'Towards a new study of religious gatherings in the diaspora', *American Journal of Sociology*, 98(5), pp. 1044-93.

Wei, M., Ku, T.Y., Russell, D.W., Mallinckrodt, B. and Liao, K.Y.H. (2008) 'Moderating effects of three coping strategies and self-esteem on perceived discrimination and depressive symptoms: a minority stress model for Asian international students', *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 55(4), pp. 451-462.

Weiss, R. (1994) *Learning From Strangers; The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York, The Free Press, 222.

Wetherell, M. (1998) 'Positioning and interpretative repertoires: conversation analysis and poststructuralism in dialogue', *Discourse and Society*, 9(3), pp. 387-413.

Wetherell, M. (2001) 'Discourse in discourse research', in M. Wetherell, Taylor, S. and Yates, S.J. (eds) *Discourse theory and practice: a reader*. London: Sage, pp. 380-399.

Whorf, B.L. (1956) *Language, thought and reality*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Willig, C. (1999) *Applied discourse analysis: social and psychological interventions*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Willig, C. (2001) *Qualitative research in psychology: adventures in theory and method*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Wooffitt, R. (2005) *Conversation Analysis and Discourse Analysis: A Comparative and Critical Introduction*. London: Sage Publishing.

Yamaguchi, S. (1994) 'Empirical Evidence on Collectivism among the Japanese', in Kim, U., Triandis, H.C., Kagitcibasi, C., Choi, S.C. and Yoon, G. (eds.) *Individualism and collectivism: theory, method and applications*. Newbury Park: Sage, pp. 175-178.

Yang, R.P.J., Noels, K.A. and Saumure, K.D. (2006) 'Multiple routes to cross-cultural adaptation for international students: mapping the paths between self-construals, English language confidence and adjustment', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 30(4), pp. 487-506.

Yeh, C. (2003) 'Age, acculturation, cultural adjustment, and mental health symptoms of Chinese, Korean, and Japanese immigrant youths', *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 9(1), pp. 34-48.

Yeh, C. and Inose, M. (2003) 'International students reported English fluency, social support satisfaction and social connectedness as predictors of acculturative stress', *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 16(1), pp. 15-28.

Yohanan, E. and Rosenthal-Sokolov M. (2000) 'Acculturation attitudes and sociocultural adjustment of sojourner youth in Israel', *Journal of Social Psychology*, 140(6), pp. 677-691.

Yoon, E. (2006) *Acculturation, social connectedness, and subjective well-being*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Minnesota.

Ypinazar, V.A. and Margolis, S.A. (2006) 'Delivering culturally sensitive care: the perceptions of older Arabian Gulf Arabs concerning religion, health and disease', *Quantitative Health Research*, 16(6), pp. 773-87.

Zahlan, R.S. (1989) *The making of the modern Gulf states: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman*. London: Unwin Hyman.

Zapf, M. (1991) 'Cross-cultural traditions and wellness: dealing with culture shock', *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 14(2), pp. 105-119.



## **Appendix 1**

### **Interview Schedule I**

#### **I. Opening**

A. (Establish Rapport) [shake hands] My name is Samineh Izedi, a research student at UEL, and very interested in thinking about certain aspects of the UAE and their culture.

B. (Purpose) I would like to ask you some questions about your background, your education, some experiences you have had back home and here in the UK.

C. (Motivation) With your permission, I hope to use this information for my research and PhD dissertation. May also have your permission to record this interview?

D. (Time Line) The interview should take about 45 minutes. Are you available to respond to some questions for this time period?

(Transition: Let me begin by asking you some questions about you, your culture and education.)

#### **II Body**

##### **A. (Topic) General demographic and background information**

###### **1. How long have you lived in the UK?**

(As an icebreaker and get student to think about their location and present context)

###### **2. What made you choose UK as a place to study?**

(Try and elicit pre arrival reasons and motivations for coming to the UK)

- a. Had you travelled to the UK before?
- b. Were you comfortable with speaking English?

- c. Do you have any siblings who had studied here?
- d. Any family that live here?

### **3. How did you decide to come and study in the UK?**

(This question might gently encourage students to talk about family and the influence they have on decision making which will lead to think about other variables that make up the Emirati cultural identity)

- a. Is the family an important part of the Emirati identity?

### **Transition to next part**

### **(Cultural Identity)**

### **4. Can you describe what it means to be an Emirati to you?**

(Ask students to try and think about aspects of their cultural identity, if specifics are not mentioned, ask directly about different dimensions)

- a. In what sense is religion important to you?
- b. In what sense are traditions/values/norms important in your culture?
- c. How about notions of shame/honour/reputation?

### **b. How about what it means to be an Emirati abroad? An Emirati as an international student abroad?**

### **5. How has the modernization process? Do you think it has affected the Emirati cultural identity in any way?**

### **6. Do you feel privileged to be an Emirati? In what way?**

(Ask them to think about certain privileges that they have as Emirati nationals in their country)

### **7. Does that sense of privilege exist here for you as students abroad?**

(It be worth enquiring about how they think about 'privilege' when they think about their identity as students abroad) It might well be that some of social identity work that I am after might be organized, structured around their identity as 'students')

## **Transition to next part**

### **(Acculturation Process; Accommodation, adaptation)**

#### **7. What was it like at first when you did not have the same benefits or privileges while living in the UK?**

(Encourage students to begin thinking about the changes they have experienced)

- a. What were some of the biggest challenges?
- b. Was language acquisition a concern at all?
- c. Was it hard living on your own?
- d. Did you suddenly feel invisible?

#### **8. Tell me more about how you feel as an Emirati here in the UK?**

- a. Have you changed?
- b. How have you experienced changing/or not changing?

(This is an important aspect mainly from the perspective of psychological acculturation theories. What is potentially interesting here is how changing/not changing gets talked about.)

- b. If so, in what way?
- c. Who are the people that you are contact with here? Friends?
- e. Was it hard adapting?
- f. In what way?
- g. What did you do to feel better/to cope with changes?

#### **9. Do you act/feel differently with your Emirati friends than with your friends from other backgrounds?**

(Here it is important to try and uncover some of the identity dilemmas faced, private v/s public identity portrayal and code switching between individualistic and collectivist selves)

**Transition to next part**

**(Importance of maintaining the Emirati Cultural Identity)**

**10. Would you consider staying in UK after you graduate?**

- a. Why or why not?
- b. Why is it important to return to the UAE?

**11. What factors would encourage you to remain here?**

- a. What would it take for you to alter aspects of your Emirati cultural identity? (change again!)
- b. Are there any consequences you might face for being less 'Emirati'?

(These questions aim to uncover how rigid their cultural identity is and what are the main motivations of retaining important aspects of their cultural identity?)

**(Transition: Well, it has been a pleasure finding out more about you and the Emirates)**

### **III Closing**

- A.** I should have all the information I need however would it be alright to call or email you if I have any more questions?
- B.** Is there anything else you would like to ask me?
- C.** Is there anything else you would like to add or comment on with regard to Emiratis in the UK?
- D.** Thanks again. Please let me know if you would be interested in receiving a short summary of what my research has shown when I have completed my work.

## **Interview Schedule II**

### **I. Opening**

A. (Establish Rapport) [shake hands] My name is Samineh Izedi, a research student at UEL, and very interested in thinking about certain aspects of the UAE and their culture.

B. (Purpose) I would like to ask you some questions about your background, your education, some experiences you have had since returning back home.

C. (Motivation) With your permission, I hope to use this information for my research and PhD dissertation. May also have your permission to record this interview?

D. (Time Line) The interview should take about 45 minutes. Are you available to respond to some questions for this time period?

(Transition: Let me begin by asking you some questions about you, your culture and education.)

### **II Body**

#### **A. (Topic) General demographic and background information**

##### **1. How long did you live in the UK?**

(As an ice breaker and get student to think about their location and present context)

B. How long have you been back?

##### **2. Can you describe what it means to be an Emirati to you?**

(Ask students to try and think about aspects of their cultural identity, if specifics are not mentioned, ask directly about different dimensions)

a. In what sense is religion important to you?

b. In what sense are traditions/values/norms important in your culture?

c. How about notions of shame/honour/reputation?

##### **3. Did any of these characteristics which you have described change while you were abroad?**

a. exploring the way in which student might talk about possible cultural identity transformation

##### **4. Did you want to return back to the UAE?**

##### **5. Was it difficult coming back home?**

(Here students will be encouraged to think about possible repatriation challenges they may have experienced after returning to the UAE)

- a. Your relationship with family and friends?
- b. Connectivity to your religion or traditions?
- c. Explore notions of privilege once again here

**6. How did you try and overcome those difficulties?**

(Exploring strategies employed during this first phase of re entry)

**7. Do you have any plans of returning for further education?**

**(Transition: Well, it has been a pleasure finding out more about you, your educational experience and the Emirates)**

**III Closing**

- E.** I should have all the information I need however would it be alright to call or email you if I have any more questions?
- F.** Is there anything else you would like to ask me?
- G.** Is there anything else you would like to add or comment on with regard to Emiratis in the UK?
- H.** Thanks again. Please let me know if you would be interested in receiving a short summary of what my research has shown when I have completed my work.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Emirati Cultural Identity - Sojourner Interview Transcript**

#### **Interview 1 – December 25<sup>th</sup> 2008, 2.30 pm London**

Question 1: What does it mean to be an Emirati to you?

Answer: Um, I guess to me being an Emirati it means I have a loyalty not only the geographic area of what makes up the United Arab Emirates but also a loyalty and connection to the indigenous population of this country that existed before the time of oil. That to me is what, what I consider myself, uh to be in regards to being an Emirati...so the very soil, the land, its mountains its rivers, uh the people that lived here long before people actually, international interest came along, long before the British and the connection to the British along with their involvement in the region...that to me comprises a big chunk or at least a starting point to answering that question. (Pause)

Question 2: If you could separate, for example the English influence or the global influence that has had an impact on your country and on your people and looked at the Emirati culture or the Emirati cultural identity, what would you say are some of the important values or the significant characteristics of an Emirati?

Answer: Umm I think it would be very similar to what would be called a Khaleeji Culture, as in the area of the Arabian gulf/Persian Gulf depending on what the historical argument you wish to use. But for this interview lets just say 'The Gulf' (he laughs). The Khaleeji culture would be made up of generosity, in giving to somebody even when you yourself don't have enough for yourself, um it also entails a story of survival, the desert climate is very harsh, the whole culture of surviving, only taking what you need from nature and nothing more...ummm in essence efficient if you will. Like any other group or nation, there's...we have a struggle between good and bad even in what would be termed back then dissolute (?) land. You had those who took the easy way out and were the equivalent, I think, of 'highway men', I think that's what the Europeans call it. Also at sea we had a little bit of a pirate issue, so we had those who fed off of others hard work and those who who went out and and and went into pearl diving. Its also a mixture of different cultures when I say Khaleeji culture or Gulf Culture. There is the Arabs

dealing with the Persians, the Persians dealing with the Indians, Indians dealing with the Arabs. We also have sub divisions within the Arabs, be it either the sunni shia uhh uhh division. So I guess that a part of the cultural identity. History is very important to us but I'm sure more things will come to mind the more I think of this.

Question: What about family for example, it is important in your culture?

Answer: Very important. It is...uhh one of the the pillars of the culture. Particularly when the union between your family ummm it would often be the difference between life and death particularly going back before the time of oil and the modernization of the area. Your family is your back bone. Whether you got along with them, or whether you didn't get along with them, you would have to somehow depend on them, and the closer possibly outer family, like our cousins, cousins and second cousins are are a big thing in our culture, as distant as it might seem, when someone says I know my second cousin, its very normal to know them and be close to them, at least in my ethnicity of a UAE national so extremely important both back then and still today. (Pause)

Question: If you felt differently about a particular idea or decision, felt differently than your family, would it be common for the Emirati to go against the grain or would they be likely to follow the decision of family members?

Answer:

With my exception possibly, I was likely to, or was a person raised up to be a person to stand my ground if I have made a decision based on my experiences and I've thought things through very very carefully and thought about all the different angels, if I than make a decision based on that self analysis that happens to go against what my immediate family like and wish me to do, than I might go ahead with my own opinion but I consider myself to be in the minority because most of the people I know from the UAE have to make decisions, big decisions about their life, like the job they take or the woman they marry, the kind of upbringing they give to their children, a lot of that will be dictated, not in a harsh way, but in a pleasant manner ahhh on the individual so the family would play a big role in their lives a opposed to mine. (Pause)

Question: Why do you think the Emirati might adhere to the decision of their family?

Answer:

I think mostly, like with other cultures, the fashion is to go with the flow and not tend to stick out. Having said that, if you look at the past history, not too long ago even, the father in the Emirati family would be wholly responsible for their child's upbringing, Umm financially emotionally, they would have a lot on their shoulders. And as their children would grow up, they would maintain that support to their children as to what might be considered a late age in other parts of the world. If you're not married in our culture we stay very close within the family and still live at home. Because the father in particular spends a lot of money on the male son and female daughter, to an age like 25, up until they are married, the children are still under their fathers influence and protection so for having such a long period of time of being completely dependant for many things the individual, male or female, hasn't had the history of independence, he doesn't know what its like to do the dirty work, like renewing our passport, or getting the most simple things done, where you would think someone at the age of 15 or 16 in another country would know how to many of these things done. We almost are completely dependant on them, and so when it comes to decisions of marriage or decisions of anything in life, we take their opinions very seriously because you have not had anything else in our life. Then you have the financial obligation, they have done all they can to help us and reach the stage we are at and if you don't listen or go against their opinion or wishes than there is backlash of being marginalized sidelined, even financially, then there is the emotional aspect....there are clear consequences....and when push comes to shove, many, the majority of people I know in the Emirati community would blend in and not go solo if you will because you know we are tribal and to be away from the tribe is a bad thing. Particularly historically where if someone gets isolated from a tribe would mean you either went to another tribe and they would take care of you, and you will always be a stranger to them, even after years and years and years you would be seen as someone who left their tribe and went into another tribe. So you wouldn't be given equal status or respect.

Question: What might be some of the consequences of not conforming to the decision/opinions of others?

Answer:

Financially if you were on the wrong end of the social calendar, or how you would like to describe it, you wouldn't be able to get a financial backing from your family if they don't want you to start a business for example. We wouldn't be able to get a financial backing to start a business venture, if you knew your father or uncles had the money ready and available you wouldn't have access to it if they don't agree with you. The money would maybe go to a stranger but not you so the opportunity would disappear. I would have to ask strangers for money, go to banks, institutions, maybe get a loan, pay extra interest, knocking on doors. What others might just see as life but it's not life here if you do something the family is happy about. And life can be bitter, so if you never had the experience of having to earn money yourself or asking others and getting rejected, going on and going on and going on, it's very disheartening and most would be quick to go to soothe the ego of the parents and family members and say 'look I'm sorry, can we still talk, can you help me out here financially.' That's a financial consequence.

Emotionally you might be marginalized by your father, your aunt or uncles, and again they would have always be there around whether it's a funeral in the house or whether it's Eid, any um any other situation, you feel very uncomfortable, you see them and you can feel the tension, you see it in their eyes, even if they physically don't say anything or do anything, you see it very clearly in their body language. (Pause)

Question: So is their disapproval of breaking from the group felt through an unspoken tension?

Answer: Very much so yes, an unspoken tension and very much that leads in the long run to certain frustrations and you never know when it might explode in your face, one way or the other. (Pause)

Question: Are some of these Emirati cultural values are rooted in Islam?

Answer: When it comes to the position of leaving the mainstream, even if that is your family, I believe if the person is negatively exposed because of the separation, that to mind and through my reading is very unislamic. There are many verses in the Quran and many saying by the prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him, that say if your family are asking you to do something that is morally wrong you have an obligation to go the other way. Regardless if its your mother or father, the end of the day, a wrong moral act is a wrong moral act, doesn't matter who is asking you to do it. So to my mind it is extremely un Islamic and more tribal. This is what I call one see as one of the down sides of the tribal system. When it becomes, when it overrides the moral codes brought down by God almighty, when a human being is saying I know better than God Almighty, that's when I believe the person has overstepped his or her boundaries as a human being. In essence lots of times our Emirati cultural values even supersede religious codes and they come from times before Islam or things that we understand the Islamic argument but we push it to one side and we do our own.

Question: Can you give me an example of when this might happen?

Answer: Yes, Ummm for example our national dance where the girls sway their hair from one side to the other. But it is forbidden in Islam for women to show her hair in public, but this is our national dance but it's a dance that existed before Islam and it's a key part of our culture.

Question: Does religion have an impact on some of the other Emirati values? Or influence identity or behavior in your culture?

Answer: Yes, it does, so long as it doesn't interfere with the egos of certain individuals found in the tribe, it all very Islamic indeed but when push comes to shove and hard decisions have to be made, where Islam and religion are pointing you toward one way and you and the tribal leader or a person of influence wishes to gain power, they may take another route. Apart from these situations, than Islam in many ways affects us. Like on Friday we go to the mosque and it's an every Friday occurrence. When a person passes away, the funeral is very Islamic in regards to the things that are done and what we have to say, how to bury the body. In the holy month of Ramadan there are many Islamic lectures and activities that are all centred around the religion also many public holidays have religious affiliation whether it is the story of prophet Mohamed or his birthday. Many of our women wearing the veil is an important part of our culture, purely

coming from Islam, our diet, what we eat, what we don't eat, how well cooked it is, we don't eat pork for example, how the meat is slaughtered, is a big part of our lives, when we go abroad we're very picky what and where we eat. So there are many many aspects of religion in our culture.

Question: How was it for you when you first went to study in the UK?

Answer:

It was very frustrating, simple things like opening my own bank account, we don't have bank accounts here till later in life, registering for my matriculation number at university, although you would think you just follow a set pattern, it was very weird to have to ask people for help. I only back home would call my father when I needed something, he would call a few others and I would only have to go to one counter and I would fast track the system. I wouldn't have to go from one office to another, maybe not even have to go if they didn't need my signature and the driver would do it, that was something for people with no connections would have to do. So now I'm suddenly in a land where it doesn't know me and I don't know it and I have to go through the system. But I had never gone through the system or asked anyone who was a complete stranger before so there was frustration, I felt like an idiot most of the time, I didn't know the difference between this counter and that counter and I wasted a lot of time. Basic things like balancing my budget was all new as well. I never had a set amount of spending money. But when I started Uni, I had 566.00 pounds spending money a month...which should have been enough for a student from a UK students position but I ran out of that money within the first week. I would see a CD I like or a jacket and I wouldn't have enough money left for the rest of the month. I would quickly call dad or a relative to wire me some money. These were the simplest things, there were people who would buy more than I was buying but somehow they knew where to shop to get more for their money, and they didn't go into the minus, it is an extremely inefficient way of life, but I was never placed in a position where I was called to be efficient, back home. But it is a great experience and I learned a lot, and tremendous amount of self development.

Question: Are there privileges to being an Emirati national in the UAE?

Answer:

Yes it does, because we are so small in number and a minority in the country but the offset access of that is that we know each other very very well so if I don't know someone immediately within an organization or a ministry I would almost always know someone who knows someone who can get me connected for what I need. So yes it does carry privileges. And we could get things done quicker and easier. We don't have to stand in cues. We call it a WASTA, which means a connection or a go between that would cut the long process down so we have a big Wasta factor in our culture and it is very tribal. Knowing the head man is much more effective to get a job done than having to go through three or four others in between and the head guy will then order the middle people to do what needs to be done. Something we have been doing for a long time and still doing in our way in the modern age.

Question: Was it hard not having this kind of privilege in the UK?

Answer:

No Doubt, it was something I had to get used to quickly but it was manageable.

Question: Is it important for Emeritis to be well spoken about and have a good reputation within your community?

Answer:

One's reputation here represents to us a wider representation of the family. Often you get someone doing something, whether its good or bad and that bad or good is also put upon his or her family so its tremendously important in our culture to always maintain a very good reputation...which could be anything from keeping your word, dressing appropriately, not going to or being seen in some places that have a negative environment, anti Islamic environment or not a decent environment, whether a person drinks alcohol or smokes also bears an effect on a persons reputation, so an overall good social status is very important, who they marry, which family is also important.

Question: There are so many bars and clubs in the Emirates, do the Emirati's stay away from them?

Answer:

When it comes to night clubs, I'm sure some Locals go, but its definitely not advertised or discussed with their parents. Socially it is frowned upon and its not encouraged. A minority of locals might drink or go to those places and secretly, not be open about it. Also the clubs and bars here have a policy here of not letting Gulf nationalities into their bars if we are wearing our national dress. They could lose their licence. Now how culturally acceptable is that? It is our country and our national dress but we cant go to such places as who I am so in order to enter into 'that world' I have to strip myself of almost my national identity, ummm in many ways, and that to many is a price we are not willing to pay.

Question:

What is your national dress?

Answer:

It is the Kandora or Dish dhisha with the gutra and agal (White long dress with head gear).

Question:

And most people your age (23) wear the national dress?

Answer:

In formal occasions we almost always wear it, for example when at work also a formal gathering in social occasions. Some people wear it almost every single day. I'm always wearing my national dress when I need to represent my country and so that others know who is a local and who isn't.

Question:

Is being hospitable and generous an important characteristic of an Emirati?

Answer:

Yes, very much so. Taking a person for lunch or dinner. Being generous when you know someone needs help, such as paying a medical bill or, it doesn't need to be financial, it can be a smile, it can be with your time or advice so it is very important.

Question: Your English is very good. Do most Emiratis speak such proficient English?

Answer:

Thank you, you see there are those of us who went to International schools and those who went to local schools, where only Arabic is taught. My school had a British curriculum and we had British teachers and mostly locals who attended but there were some children of expats there as well. The government thought these schools are important to have for the hope that we could assume leadership positions in the future to help build our country and speaking English fluently is a big part of that so it is encouraged.

Question: Do you speak English at home?

Answer: No, not really. Not with my mom and dad for sure. Even with my siblings we speak Arabic and might use a few English words in between but the, majority is Arabic. Even with friends, mainly Arabic is spoken. We only speak English to people who don't speak Arabic.

Question: Has the Emirati cultural Identity been affected by the wave of modernity in the UAE?

Answer: There is a tremendous amount of pride in being an Emirati, simply because our government gives us a lot. The government gives us support in education, sending students abroad with full scholarships. Our leaders and government umm have attempted to move into the modern day era but also very careful about preserving our national and cultural identity. So its not about not wanting change but its about wanting change that moves along with our culture, our national pride and national identity. So its trying to gain the best of both worlds, moving forward but not forgetting our past. Our leaders are great examples of this and we emulate them in many ways. There is a lot of pro government feeling here because they take care of us and always protect us especially since we are a minority. Most things are done to our benefit. (Pause)

Question: How was it for you to move away from the UAE to live in the UK? Were there aspects of your Emirati cultural identity that did/didn't work there?

Answer:

Umm I think being abroad, and I was the first Emirati person other students there had ever met so I wanted to be an ambassador representing my country and was always keen to show them a good image and a positive impression. Having said that, there were situations when they liked to go to a pub or night club and even though it's not part of my culture to go to such places I did go there with friends who were not from the UAE. So my existence abroad elevated lots of my Emirati national identity but at the same time it required some sacrifices of it as well.

(Pause) What was really helpful at the beginning was sports. A game of football is a game of football and the rules in Dubai were the same as in the UK. Playing with people you didn't know helped because you have something in common. I took up boxing there and that taught me a tremendous amount not only about the sport but also how to interact with people who I thought were so scary, but when you're in the ring and training or helping each other, we all become human again. So sports and music also helped. Getting concerts in the UK we wouldn't have seen in the Emirates. We shared that with other people and it would be a common experience. I wasn't considered an Emirati in those situations until we started talking or exchange viewpoints and even then it was overshadowed by the fact that we were both here for this particular artist. Music, sports, films all helped. Maybe because I love sports and the arts.

Question: Have there been any changes in expected female roles in the UAE during the modernization process?

Answer: Yes, very much so for women, possibly more so. Again because it is something the government here always encourages, and brilliant examples, we have women ministers who are very high up in positions. They are highly educated and many are going abroad for higher education. But above all else the government has been very clear about saying that the women of the Emirati culture are the mothers of the future and producers of all the leaders of the future and so embracing the change and being part of it and cultural change is possibly felt more by the women. But at the same time, in the Emirates, women are expected to be women. The restrictions that exist are restrictions to try and limit a woman's femininity from disappearing.

Women are brought up and raised to be women, not aspiring men. They speak different to men, are soft and feminine. There are no limitations to what she can achieve but in essence there are clear differences and a woman is a woman and a man is a man. They both have strengths and weaknesses. Provided the role either of them find themselves in doesn't go contrary to the very part that made them what they are to begin with, a woman or a man, I'm not sure if this is clear but so long as you don't go outside of your natural limitation, your basically fine.

Question: Could you summarize or highlight the most significant aspects of the Emirati cultural identity?

Answer: (Long Pause)

It would be a moderate approach to the future while maintaining the wisdom of the past. So its taking the wisdom and not throwing it away or putting on a Yankees baseball cap and speaking with an American accent or memorizing a few lyrics from 50 cent or M&M (rappers) but its truly living the modern life, adding to the modern life by bringing what we have and I believe our culture has much to add to not only ourselves but also to all of humanity. But its taking that ancient cultural wisdom and taking it into, and mixing into and blending into the modern way of life, that I believe is an important balance of who we are, of moving forward but still maintaining your own sense of identity, tradition and culture, that to me is what it means to be an Emirati. We openly embrace development, we are not afraid of it, we have nothing to hide because our culture stands on firm ground that is flexible, but we are not going to lose our 'Emiratiness'.

## **Sojourner Interview Transcript 2**

**March 11th 2009 – 4.00pm**

### **Research Questions**

- What aspects, if at all, of the Emirati cultural identity are perceived by participants as being affected during their time as international student in the UK?
- What strategies do Emirati students identify as being helpful in the process of adjusting while in the UK? [Sojourners – interviews in London]

General info

I have been here for 2 semesters....from Abu Dhabi...high school, British school.

Why?

Because it is familiar to me and because my father studied here (Scotland) for his PhD and we used to travel to London every summer and therefore know London very well....its like a second home to me.

Any family here?

My brother and sister....they study in British universities...I chose this uni because I heard lots of good things about and knew many Emiratis who have gone here. My major is political science and the universities in Dubai and AD didn't offer this option.

I live in with my brother and sister.

You live with family and your father played role in your decision to come to London. He convinced me to come here. I wanted to go to Australia. I wanted something different than what I knew....but family intervened saying its too far....you don't know it well...and we can't visit you as often as if you were living in London. They thought I was too young to go so far.

How important is family to you?

I am the youngest in the family and the youngest is always the baby in the parents eyes. Such families in the UAE care very much about their kids, for example the children here leave when they are 18...they have their own life, their own freedom and that's not the way it is for us. Perhaps its because they want me to succeed and they do this so that they can see their sons and daughters graduating. My parents supported me all my life, financially and emotionally, educationally, they are there for me, even when troubled...even if I make a decision, the last word has to be my parents word. They get involved and decide if it is right or wrong.

Being Emirati – what does it mean to you?

I am so proud to be Emirati....much of this needs to be accredited to our president....we built a concrete jungle from sand....he supported all his people... he's been an exceptional role model for us as a result of his wisdom and guidance....he did much that everyone appreciated. We represent a lot of what has been achieved....we express ourselves a lot more openly.

No matter where you see an Emirati, London, New York, Milan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Sidney an Emirati will always be an Emirati and be proud of it.

And we are here for an education and we always want to return home so that we can make Emirates even better and better because it has given us so much.

Religion part of?

We were born Muslims and grown p as Muslims....all our norms and values is based on Islam....but being abroad gives you an overview of our others perceive Islam.

When I go to a mosque in London its different than back home. They seem to be a lot more angered and radical....back home they preach peace and peace is what you see. Here they might preach sometimes about peace but what you see is anger and retaliation....I didn't like that.

Being in a mosque back home I feel protected and feel more close to my community....here I feel more vulnerable and insecure. Here the Shiekh, religious clergy was preaching hatred and negative and anger towards the west, the US, governments...and I never heard it in such a harsh way back home.

When Emirati students meet each other, when they greet each other....they don't say 'Hello Mohammed, how are you?' 'Salam Alikum Mohamed which means peace be upon you,' not just hello.

How has your experience with Islam changed in London?

I went to a British school so I didn't learn anything in school, it all came from my family, so it didn't matter where I was studying or where I was....this was already put in to me, and still is through my family.

So even while I am here...I want to even pray more or practice my religion even greater....because I am away from my family and I feel my religion protects me....the only thing that can protect me here is God. So I continue praying here....its very private....my relationship with God.

The work in AD some people used to have their beard long, but now they have been asked to keep it short and women are not allowed to cover their face. As to show you should try and be more professional in your own way, you don't need to advertise it....you are working in global market and we should look presentable. The reason this is happening is mostly because of its roots in religion....but our traditional clothing will be kept....will stay the same.

Do you wear traditional clothing back home?

Yes, it's very rare to see Emirati's wearing jeans or western clothing....we wear Kandora and ghutra and agal.

Sheikh M bin Zayed was talking about maintaining cultural values and said we must not change our values and traditions.

We do all this because of our government....we love our government because they want the best for us...unlike some of the other governments in the region...they are selfish....and there is so much hypocrisy. Saudi has so much money but see how backward they are and how many homeless people they are. Everyone is equal in the UAE to each other...equal opportunity.

5b. Emirati cultural identity hasn't been affected much.... Even when we are studying abroad. We might have a broader understanding of the world. We might have become more open-

minded? Open minded here because we are more close minded back home. Open minded such as having a girl friend here, where as back home you wouldn't do it, at least not openly.

I have picked up some norms which were unfamiliar to me. Like for example here when sometimes you get flashed in the car, they're saying thank, but back home it means something else.

What other norms would you say you've picked?

Equal opportunities...in the sense that here you see that if you work hard, you get rewarded where as in the UAE nepotism exists. Local people work hard but in some ways they have WASTA they get further. One more thing Sheikh Zayed said was that I conquered everything accept WASTA.

I have learnt responsibility in the way that before usually what we are offered back home, everything is taken care of by parents and the government, where as here you are on your own to succeed. You cant cry about it when you are alone, you have to manage it, take care of it. Living here around tells us that its hard, its not easy for us to succeed. In UAE everything is so much easier for us.

For example back in Dubai when I started studying with girls it was strange at first...because I was in an all boys school....so it was strange...also the stereotypes about this country, some were true but I found out some things were not. My father told me what London was going to be like and had facts about how I should be careful with money, what people think about Arabs....so its not a bad thing...it was information I needed

Acculturation?

First thing which was hard was money....trying to manage money was very hard...food, cabs and everything else here. Here its expensive and I get more money but still its difficult to budget.

Time management is a challenge...we have so much more time at home....pace of life is different....back home is more laid back. Transportation...ahhhh so confusing.

I peatty much stayed from summer till Christmas and I was so homesick...it was the longest time I was away and I missed being in AD. Depression was all around me. I missed food the most!

Having to sit around with family and friends...I had more time on my own here, it was hard to build new friends here....no family as well...starting a new life was very hard.

How did you deal?

I was patient...but very depressed and homesick...but still studied and worked hard to show my parents that I am serious and not messing around. I prayed as well. That helped.

Feeling Invisible?

I like that about London! Sometimes we get tired of the pressure from society to maintain a certain image back home. We get tired of it back home...here it doesn't matter who you are or who your father is....people don't know here and don't care....so we are learning from that. The main topic of conversations back home is who you are, who your father is, cars, women...sometimes very boring...but here we have more intellectual conversations with different people...I used to be like that and I did the same....but by coming here, I realized its nice to be more simply, you don't need to mention your parents name....people will like you for who you are.

Different conversations with Emirati friends...maybe....but if its Emiratis who have had the experience of living abroad, we don't have to be careful....but when talking to a typically Emirati you have to think about your words...and maybe stay from conversations such as going out, clubbing, things that are not acceptable in our culture.

I would not consider staying in London, perhaps for a masters but that's it. Because when we're done, we've done all that we wanted, have had freedom, and when you go back the first thing parents might say is time to get married. For guys they may suggest someone for me, but for a local woman, its very different and she will have to listen to her parents more.

The girls look at you differently, because they say he has been abroad and he has a different mind frame...they ask for it as a prerequisite for marriage sometimes you know?

For the girls it is different....if she's studied abroad it raises question marks....like what has she been up to. But if we are compatible than why not?

END OF TRANSCRIPT

### **Interview 3 – Repatriation**

**June 14<sup>th</sup> 2009**

#### **Background info...**

1. I was in London for 2 years. I lived in Victoria with my sisters.
2. I have been coming here pretty much all my life....on holidays...but I have friends and cousins who live here and so I decided to come where I know some people. We used to come here almost every summer, we travelled around Europe, France, Spain the US and lots of different locations with the family.

b. I feel comfortable speaking and writing English because I studied English all my life...never to local school. I went to an international school and then a Canadian school for the remaining high school years.

What language do you speak at home?

I speak both English and Arabic...it depends...in one conversation we shift between languages....if we talk about religion, it'll be Arabic but business will be in English. But its better to speak Arabic at home. Some people will laugh at you, thinking you are trying to show off if you speak only English t

- c. I have 2 sisters but they are younger than me, I am the eldest. They study in London as well.
- d. Yes, I have 5 cousins who live here...I see them from to time, but not always. But we are very close.

In the beginning my father didn't want me to travel for education due to the heightened discrimination against Arabs and political circumstances...but even though he didn't want me to, I was keen to come abroad....so I used WASTA....(Laughing) You know everything works with WASTA for us! I spoke to my aunt who helped convince my father....and another uncle who has

his masters from the US convinced my father to let me go. It was sudden and at the last moment but dad got enough pressure from different sides to give in! My father realises the importance of education but he was afraid because of the attacks on Muslims.

What else attracted you to London?

I was thinking of going to Canada but thought the weather would kill me. And it's too far from my family. I want to study Finance and London is a major player in the world market plus it was very familiar to me....and because of the language as well...being fluent in English....and also the city.

What does it mean to be an Emirati to you?

To me an Emirati is someone who doesn't forget where they came from...the country is only 35 years old and only in that time we were Bedouins living off the pearl trade...and within this short time, we have grown to become one of the most dominant economies and set global standards in so many different industries...like real estate, tourism and the service sector...however we can't forget who we are....we are the sons of a few people who had visions for wanting the best for their people...all what we see in our country is the result of our rulers' visions....he has given so much, so we are so proud of what we have achieved and we will try and make our government proud of us.

How have you incorporated your values and traditions into this modernization process?

Our core norms and values have never actually changed....such as very basic values from Islam, since the days of prophet Mohammed....being honest, having integrity, wanting for others what we want for ourselves...thinking of the nation as a whole rather than selfish needs and gain...unlike some people in the West, Emirati families are tied for life...we are never separate from our family, regardless of age or place they live....we are always close to our family not till

18 when some people are asked to leave or pay rent....so not just mother and father but even the extended family

How much of a role to the family, immediate and extended do they play in your life?

My family is everything to me, my first priority, they are my drive in life...I live for them. I have always pushed myself to make them proud, and I feel so secure because they are my backbone...yet at the same time because I am the eldest I have been looked upon to help carry the responsibility sometimes so that's hard, the high expectations, but I am honoured by it and will try never to disappoint them....they see me in high regard, I worked hard for that impression.

4b. Our traditions are very much tied to our culture and our culture is tied to our religion, so its very difficult to separate these ideas...and it is hugely part of our lives. For example one of the traditions we have, every now and then, my grandfather invites people, maybe its related to poetry or religion where people gather and discuss these things....about once a month and its part of the culture for people to attend...they have regular contact with one another...we see all our family members every weekend...that's about 45 people and if someone doesn't come, they are called and check why they are not there....recently we have lost some of the family gatherings, not because of loss of culture but because of family problems...other commitments.

One of my uncles, everyday the whole family meets for lunch...without fail...with all the kids! I love that about m culture...

Shame/Honor/reputation

A good reputation, its quite a complicated issue....being honoured or free of shame is many things...one of them is having a good reputation in the immediate society, by simply being a good person, in the eye of the public, a good role model. Or if you contribute to charities, openly so others know about it. Where as other people, in the eye of the public may not be highly regarded because they don't show off what they are doing but actually they may be more pure or pious and even more generous but they don't talk about it. And then there are those who just maintain a decent reputation.

So is there a difference between the private and public life of an Emerati?

With some yes, some like to exhibit public gestures, like some of the rich nationals to just show...or they pretend they live clean and honest lives, but in private they are corrupt and do inappropriate things. There are others who do more and live clean lives but its not spoken about. In terms of lifestyle, there's differences between men and women....men can live more openly without being judged....women have to be careful....I don't have to be as secretive....I have nothing to be ashamed of....because my family is more understanding...but for example my father and grandfather would be disappointed if they knew I drink alcohol but I don't talk about it with them...it would displease them rather than dishonour them.

4B. What does it mean to be an Emirati in London?

Hhhmmmmmm interesting....well I am a representative of my country, but having said that I wouldn't consider myself as the perfect example of being an Emirati....ummm...I feel that to a certain extent...although I am not really known here, when other Emiratis see me, I have to maintain a certain image or etiquette which is expected of me so I slightly adapt my behaviour around my Emirati friends compared to my foreign friends...I am exactly the same person in the UAE as in London but I have learnt the skill, from being abroad, of dealing with people from different backgrounds....so whoever I am speaking to, I might slightly adapt my behaviour...for sure this is an important skill I've learnt here....not in the classroom but outside of the school and with people.

It also means I am able to express myself more freely and confidently than other Gulf citizens...I am proud of being Emirati and glad that I could meet others so that they can see who we are. I thank God everyday for the life God has given us both home and here...we are privileged through the government support as well because they are so generous with us....God gives us so much but we haven't given him enough back...at least I don't...I should do more...sometimes I feel guilty for partying and drinking instead of thanking Him...this happens more here than in the UAE....back home there is less temptation...it's simply not acceptable....government doesn't allow it, culture doesn't accept it...society doesn't allow it...for example if you're caught drinking and driving, doesn't matter how much you have had, your licence is revoked immediately and you're jailed for 40 days. Here there is more tolerance for such issues...but there's so much anti social behaviour related to alcohol that it makes sense why Allah doesn't encourage drinking.

Privilege?

More than any other nationality in the world we feel privilege, we have free education, health care, interest free loans, gifted land and if I didn't have money to build my house the government would pay for it....interest free and no taxes...where else can you live like this? Also our passport and nationality is well regarded, we are welcomed in many other countries because of our long standing ties with the UK and the US.

Privilege in London?

Yes it does...a lot of people feel jealous and we can see it...even from other Arab nations....they don't get as much freedom, liberty and benefits as we do...we don't have to work while studying, the government give us around a thousand a month...so we can focus on our studies...but the fact that I am Arab and Muslim can be a negative here in London, not because I am an Emirati specifically, I think that helps when people find out because they know about Dubai and love it, but racism and discrimination does not exist back home, but what I represent as an Arab and Muslim might be seen negatively. But Londoners are very broad minded and educated and don't often generalise....which is nice.

One summer an Arab mini cab driver took an illegal turn and almost crashed onto my black cab....the black cab driver after talking for a while with him before the incident, said if I hadn't had a conversation with a sophisticated young man like yourself I would have thrown a racial Arab slur at him because it is jerks who don't follow the law that give you a bad name.

7. Challenges when you first came?

Reality slapped me in the face...WELCOME TO THE REAL WORLD...I wasn't living before London....I was in a dream...but this is life, its real in the way that you have to look after yourself...you get scared, worried, I never did back home...looking after my mental/physical health and for once I experienced living a normal or average life, not one I had back home....it was a harsh reality check but one that was needed.

Getting by day to day was tough....cleaning after myself, eating alone...cleaning my toilets...I never did these things...I was actually fed with a golden spoon when I was born....and wrapped in a silk cloth....if you don't call that privilege, I don't know what is...I will feed my son with a

fork lift so that he toughens up....so he doesn't have to get the same reality check as I had (LAUGH). I would make them appreciate what they have, I don't think my parents taught us that...they never made me feel responsible or work for what I got....it happened later but not early enough....had I not left the Emirates I would be a spoilt brat.

But one thing I loved right from the beginning is feeling invisible in London....that I am Hassan, only Hassan....not (name stated)....and I am judged as an individual not who I represent....not my family or ancestors...my friends love me for who I am....back home they judge me and watch my every move because of my family. I feel I want to succeed as an individual, not as a result of my last name. I really like going to places where people don't know me, this way I don't always feel the need to act in a certain way, or not act in a certain way because back home there are soooo many expectations about what to say, how to say it, when to say it....because I represent my family so anything I do or don't do may have a ripple effect on my family. In London, I am a little bit more free of all these obligations or expectations.

For example, once I was walking in Knightsbridge and I saw a sheikh...he was in a suit and I was wearing shorts...he knows my father so immediately I turned around and walked the other direction....it just wouldn't be right for him to see me in that way...but here with other nationalities I can dress in whatever way I like.

Tell me in what other ways have you adapted to London?

I feel I have become much more patient, tolerant of peoples differences and their religions...I love my religions but now I understand that there are others who feel the same about their own religions....I have Jewish friends, from Israel here and like them a lot....this would be unheard of back home. I have become so much more independent....more reliant of myself and very confident in my abilities in terms of ability to grasp knowledge, spiritually and physically evolved in many ways...overall my whole experience in London has been amazing....even though I will go back for sure to the Emirates....I won't go back as the same person who left.

I have learnt so much more from my non Emirati friends than my Emirati friends. Most of my Emirati friends just hang out together and that's not really beneficial because they wouldn't have learnt much from their experience because they are surrounded by the same people and talk about the exact same things as back home....so why even be here in London if that's the case?

Also women in the UK are much more open...I have done things with women here which I wouldn't have dreamed of back home...they are open with their behaviour and speech and their sexuality and that sometimes can be discomfoting for us...we are used to women being more conservative. I don't mean to generalise, I'm sorry but I mean on the whole...there is a difference so I might do things with the women here which I wouldn't have dared even mention to my girlfriend back home.

Were you ever homesick?

Only in the beginning but its normal and I was having so much fun and going back so often to the UAE that it never truly bothered me.

How did you ease your way into adapting in London?

At first mixing with people from similar backgrounds....makes you feel comfortable....going to Arabic restaurants....eating the food, or the sweets....listening to Arabic music...so they are in their comfort zone. Keeping in touch with family back home and going home helped as well...it makes you remember who you are and not to forget your culture and nationality. At the same time....making friends with people from London, so you get to know the people and place better....networking with people so that they can help you with things such as how to pay your bills or where to buy certain things...its important to do that because it can be hard to find out for yourself and these things frustrate anyone if you don't find ways around it.

Was it difficult coming back home?

Yes and no...ummm...I was very excited to come home...couldn't wait because I was tired of being away from the easy life for so long but at the same time I had got used to the life there. Another things was that the people back home seems a little strange to me now. Things that never bugged me before, started buggin me!

Like what?

Like people not really sticking to the time! Like this watch they ware is part of their outfit not to keep the time! Aaaahhhh I would get angry for waiting and they don't show up...like these things...also before I did everything myself, and suddenly I find again my parents telling me

what to do, what time to come home, what to eat, not to eat, why you talk so much on the phone...so many things...it was hard

How did you try and overcome those difficulties?

You know I had to learn again about what it means to live at home...not just at home with my family, but I mean home, my country again. Because you know when we are in London, we have to sometimes act a different way....like for example learning to be super polite, saying thank you all the time which is not the same in Arabic...sounds like you're begging. Sometimes I would translate things from English to Arabic which was strange because before I went to the UK I did it the other way around. You know what was funny, I also dream in English now! I never did this before (laugh)

So ya sorry, I spent more time with my family...see how they are doing...what they were up all this time...like I want to know them again. Also they too, they sometimes made fun from me by saying 'ohh who are you, you are so English now Mashaallah' I guess time changes many time...they changed, I changed but Hamdella its for the good and not bad...

Do you have any plans of returning for further education?

I will go back to do my Masters and then come back swimming if I have to! Basically I have the best life possible waiting for me, although it might seem like a fairy-tale, its our reality, I have a job waiting for me, a wife, loans, government money to pay for marriage expenses, so all this support, interest free in a tax free country which is where all my family and friends are...so in reality who would be stupid enough not to go back when all that is waiting for us in the Emirates.

**END OF TRANSCRIPT**



## Appendix 3



# University of East London

## CASS School of Education and Communities

### Information Sheet

**Title of the study and academic year:** EMIRATI STUDENTS IN THE UK: Cultural Identity Transformation 2007-2011

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you consent towards your participation, it is important to understand why the research is being conducted, and what it will involve. Please take your time to read the following information carefully. Please ask if there is anything that may not be clear, or if you would like more information.

The study is designed to explore the possible cultural identity transformation of Emirati international student sojourners in the UK and repatriation concerns upon return to the UAE.

The interview should take about 45 minutes to 1 hour to complete.

Participation is entirely voluntary. You may decide to stop being part of the research study without any explanation. You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to that point, be withdrawn or destroyed. You have the right to omit or refuse to answer or respond to any questions that are asked of you without any penalty. Additionally, we assure that all the data collected during the research will remain confidential.

Please be aware that the UEL Ethics Committee reviews all proposals for research using human participants before we can proceed.

We thank you very much for your valuable time taken for reading this information sheet, and we sincerely hope that you are able to participate in this research.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact any of us at:

**Researcher -** Samineh Izedi Shaheem      [saminehshaheem@gmail.com](mailto:saminehshaheem@gmail.com)

**Supervisor -** Dr. Helen Penn      [Penn@uel-exchange.uel.ac.uk](mailto:Penn@uel-exchange.uel.ac.uk)

## Appendix 4



### University of East London

### CASS School of Education and Communities

### Written Informed Consent Form:

**Title of the study and academic year:** EMIRATI STUDENTS IN THE UK: Cultural Identity Transformation

**Researcher:** Samineh Izedi Shaheem

**Supervisor:** Dr. Helen Penn

I have understood the details of the research as explained to me by the researcher, and confirm that I have consented to participate in the study.

I have been fully informed about the nature of the research and have been given a reasonable period of time to withdraw from participating.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary, and that the data collected will not be identifiable –no names are used or revealed.

I am also aware that I have the full right to withdraw from the project at any time without any obligation to explain my reasons for doing so, or any kind of penalty.

I further understand that the data provided may be used for the analysis and subsequent publication.

I have been given contact details for the researcher in the information sheet, in case of any queries

.....

Print name

.....

Signature

Date:.....

