

Curtin Business School

**Expatriate Managers' Immersion in Another Culture:
A Phenomenological Study of Lived Experiences**

Roger Chesley Russell

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DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

Signature:



Date: June, 2006

ABSTRACT

Although adjusting to a foreign culture is not easy, being immersed in another culture is an experience lived by a growing number of persons in the globalized world. For expatriate managers, successful adjustment is imperative and fundamental in establishing overall effectiveness during overseas assignments. It is intriguing that organizations often blame the individual when expatriate assignments fail (Deresky 2002; Hodgetts & Luthans 2000; Swaak 1995a; Tung 1987) rather than recognizing that others may lack understanding of what it is like to be immersed in another culture.

A study of Canadian expatriate managers who have worked in non-government organizations (NGOs) in Indonesia is presented. The research focuses on interpreting the lived experience of expatriate managers using their own words and meanings. Written descriptions from research participants were obtained via email and analyzed/synthesized using Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method (Giorgi 1975; 1985; Giorgi & Giorgi 2003).

The central finding of the study is that expatriates experience paradoxical ways of being including feelings of: understanding/not understanding, discomfort/comfort, powerfulness/powerlessness, belonging/not belonging, being open to the new culture/yet holding on to own culture, freedom/restriction, being supported/not supported, and being unchanged/changed when immersed, living and working in another culture.

The new knowledge and understanding obtained from this research may result in alterations to present human resource management practices and strategies utilized in facilitating and supporting expatriate assignments. These changes will enhance the experience for expatriate managers and organizations alike.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Study Background

I was exhilarated ... I had never been so immersed in a culture before and I thought boy, I can get used to this. After a few weeks of this, however, I began to feel less satisfied with myself. The routine was becoming boring and I never had a moment to myself. I tried going into my room and closing the door, but that just invited people to come in and ask if I was sick and needed to see a doctor. I couldn't explain that I wanted to be alone - that I wanted privacy – the concept simply didn't exist.

(Research Participant- Prunes)

Due to ongoing globalization, being immersed in another culture is an experience lived by a growing number of individuals worldwide. Many of these individuals are expatriate managers who are in employment with multinational companies, public and non-government organizations.

Today's global economy requires a growing number of Canadians to engage in international activities that result in increased contact of different cultures. The tasks of negotiating, contracting, managing, advocating and teaching can be daunting enough at home; however, when overseas, in an intercultural setting, they can be overwhelming. Professionals agree that, to a large extent, the key to success abroad lies in an effective intercultural preparation (Centre for Intercultural Learning 2000).

All is not perfect in the expatriate world (Osland 2000), a fact of concern for all organizations that manage expatriates. The concern is heightened when recognizing that

“ineffective expatriate performance and premature returns have been found to relate primarily to an inability to adjust to the foreign environment” (Andreason 2003a p. 42).

While the adjustment process has been described and predicted in the literature, there exists a dearth of literature and a lack of understanding of the lived experience of being immersed in another culture. This is reflected in current organizational practices relating to expatriate managers (Forster 2000). Osland (1995a p.xv) said “most HR managers have never lived abroad, and some mistakenly treat expatriates as if they were no different from domestic employees”.

Expatriate managers “have, and their management involves, issues and problems that go beyond those of most other employees ... yet we know less about expatriates and the management of expatriates than we do about other employees” (Brewster 2002 p.128). To enhance understanding of what it is like being immersed in another culture, it is argued that much can be gained by obtaining the expatriate managers’ perspective. Hence, the purpose of the present study is to present expatriate managers’ perspectives and suggest strategies for facilitating international adjustment and understanding of their lived experiences.

The first chapter sets the context of the study, including the following sections:

Canadians doing business in Indonesia; non-government organizations; expatriate management; lived experience; significance of the research study; and the researcher’s perspective. Finally an overview of the organization of the dissertation is outlined.

1.2 Canadians Doing Business in Indonesia

Since 1949, when Canada and Indonesia first exchanged resident Ambassadors, both countries have had active relationships with each other; including “development co-operation, investment in the resource sector, [with] ... a growing level of trade” (Centre for Intercultural Learning 2000 p.160). The relationship is productive and ongoing as indicated by the fact that “cumulative Canadian direct investment in Indonesia is estimated at \$8 billion - Canada’s largest investment destination in South East Asia” (The Indonesia Canada Chamber of Commerce 2000 p.28).

Many Canadian companies and organizations do business in Indonesia and numerous Canadians are employees of these various multinational corporations and non-government organizations. Other Canadians living and working in Indonesia include those employed as teachers in international schools and as civil servants with the Canadian Embassy and the Canadian International Development Agency.

Canada contributes to Indonesia via a development assistance program which began in the early 1950s and expanded dramatically in the 1970s (Centre for Intercultural Learning 2000). Farry (1995 p.21) said “the NGO sector, which generally plays a positive role in the development of Indonesia, is growing. Non-government organizations often respond to local, micro-needs and social issues”. Canada’s program is operated by a federal ministry called the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). To a large extent the development assistance from CIDA is distributed by Canadian non-

government organizations “in the form of goods, services, the transfer of knowledge and skills, and financial contributions” (The Indonesia Canada Chamber of Commerce 2000 p.57) in a partnership approach. Whereas Canadians do not try to do things for the Indonesian people, they do work with them through a collaborative effort to help them to increase their capacities to do things for themselves (Crewe & Harrison 2000).

It is necessary for Canadians, in the process of making productive partnerships, to be immersed in the Indonesian culture. The experience is an absorbing and unending challenge that comes with being immersed in another culture (Russell 2004). The excitement involved in the challenging venture is often what motivates many Canadians to expatriate in the first place. Also, it is the challenges that are considered to contribute greatly to frequent failures and an early return home to Canada (McDonald 1993).

There is no disagreement that “doing business in Indonesia will undoubtedly be different than it is in Canada” (Farry et al. 1995, p.9) as indicated by (Graham 2004 p.20) who wrote:

At times it all looks so simple and reasonable. The doomsayers must surely be wrong. How can such well traveled urbane people who speak English, laugh a lot, wear Western clothes, handle computers with ease and SMS with style be that much different? Surely not. Surely so. It’s not simple; it is unreasonable; it is deceptive. What you see is not what you get. That’s true for us and for them.

Thus, despite a fifty-year relationship that has been mutually beneficial for all Canadian organizations and Indonesians, it is critical when doing business in Indonesia to understand that “business success in Indonesia cannot be separated from successful intercultural adjustment” (Farry et al. 1995 p.5).

1.3 Non-Government Organizations

The non-government organization (NGO) sector has a long history of managing offshore personnel (Anderson 2005), reaching back many centuries with the Roman Catholic Church (Brewster 2002). Organizations in the NGO sector include secular development organizations and religious organizations (Anderson 2005). NGOs employ large numbers of expatriates in numerous countries throughout the world, particularly in the developing world. Despite this lengthy and significant presence, NGOs “form something of an un-researched *black box* which does not appear in the international human resource management literature” (Brewster 2002 p.129); a certainty, yet one that is unanticipated somewhat. Indeed, in the extant literature, there is scarce reference to expatriate management of NGOs (Anderson 2001; Bonache, Brewster, & Suutari 2001; Lewis 2002) due to the existing research mostly having been focused on expatriation in relation to multinational corporations. The current study contributes to the body of literature by taking a step to filling this gap in NGO research using a qualitative perspective.

1.4 Expatriate Management

According to Barber (2004), expatriates are persons living abroad or away from their native country for long periods. In the current research, the term *expatriate manager* refers to individuals who live and work in management positions with NGOs outside of their country of citizenship (Daniels & Radebaugh 1998; Deresky 2002).

Many NGOs utilize expatriates to manage their operations abroad in developing countries, such as Indonesia. Therefore, expatriate managers are important personnel and are clearly key players in the success of NGOs. However, too often expatriate managers are far from being well managed by their senior managers who are located at NGO head offices. This is a critical concern given that “expatriates are among the most expensive human resources in any internationally operating organization and they are almost invariably in crucial positions for the organization” (Brewster 2002 p.128).

The expatriate managers, who were engaged as research participants in the current research, have worked closely with Indonesians in partnership arrangements. Congruent with the NGO literature, their primary work locations are at the village level. They live in the village or in one nearby (Farry et al. 1995). The nature of their life and work demands provides them with the opportunity of being fully immersed in the Indonesian culture. Farry et al. (1995 p.21) explained “most Canadians who are in partnerships with Indonesian non-government organizations work at the grassroots level or in administrative capacities ... and are expected to integrate fully”.

Being immersed in another culture is a highly personal experience for individual expatriate managers, as attested by the written descriptions completed for the current research. A noteworthy generalization is that expatriate managers of NGOs tend to have different, perhaps richer, immersion experiences than their counterparts in multinational corporations; in part, this may be due to the fact they spend more time at the village level and, therefore, have far less contact with persons of their own national culture.

1.5 Lived Experience

In the current research, *lived experience* is the world as expatriate managers directly experience it and describe it in their written descriptions (van Manen 1990). Keen (1975 p.21) ascertained that “the lived experience must be our guide in understanding other people and what things mean to them”.

The extant research on expatriation has been conducted primarily within the natural science paradigm, thereby largely ignoring the subjective nature of expatriate managers’ experiences while being immersed in another culture (Osland 2000). Thus, to more fully understand expatriation, it was necessary to obtain expatriate managers’ perspectives by engaging in research of their lived experiences regarding what it was like being immersed in another culture. The research was designed to capture important insights and to illuminate expatriation from a more complete perspective (Mendenhall 1999). The chosen research methodology was structured to provide the opportunity for participants to describe their own personal experiences of being immersed in another culture. A full discussion detailing the justification for the decision taken to employ a qualitative research methodology is provided in the chapter on methodology (Chapter Three).

1.6 Purpose of the Research Study

The current research sought to uncover the meaning of the lived experience of expatriate managers being immersed in another culture, a topic that has largely been ignored in the

literature. In addition, the business literature rarely has focused on lived experiences. This novel approach substantially will assist in contributing to knowledge by providing an in-depth analysis of the expatriate managers' perspectives of their lived experiences.

Furthermore, the purpose of the qualitative study was to evolve a general structural description of the meaning of what it is like being immersed in another culture. The research was designed to *describe and interpret* the lived experience of expatriate managers using their own words and meanings. The description and interpretation were used to enhance the understanding of international human resource managers and individuals interested in pursuing opportunities of living and working in international settings.

1.7 Research Question

The major research question was: What is the general structural description (or meaning) of being immersed in another culture for expatriate managers? The answer to this question could lead to a better understanding of: what it is like to be an expatriate manager immersed in another culture, and information necessary for creating suggestions for an improved 'best practice model' of, and support for, the expatriate experience.

1.8 Objectives of the Research Study

The objectives of the current research study were to:

1. Describe the meaning or general structural description of being immersed in another culture from the perspectives of expatriate managers.
2. To enhance the understanding of human resource professionals who work with expatriate managers by providing strategies for supporting expatriate assignments of Canadian citizens employed in NGOs in Indonesia.
3. To assist present and former expatriate managers make sense of their own experiences and to better prepare future expatriate managers through adding to information which could be used in educational endeavours.

1.9 Research Approach

Primarily, the expatriation literature is comprised of research completed utilizing quantitative research methods. In a comprehensive review of the literature, Mendenhall, Kuhlman, Stahl & Osland (2002) wrote that research on expatriation has increased significantly during the last twenty years. However, the subjective nature of the expatriate experience has not been adequately researched (Osland 2000) as scholars have relied on positivistic research methodologies (Landis & Wasilewski 1999; Mendenhall 1999).

There are a few qualitative research studies completed on expatriation, (Adler 1987; Briody & Chrisman 1991; Napier & Taylor 1995; Osland 1995b; Selmer 1997) but there remains “a shortage of qualitative studies focusing on the situated individual’s experience

of expatriation” (Richardson & McKenna 2002 p.68). A leading researcher in expatriation, Mendenhall (1999) considered that an emphasis on studying expatriation through the lens of alternative paradigms would capture important insights and illuminate expatriation from a more complete perspective.

Therefore, qualitative inquiry (specifically phenomenology) was the chosen approach for the current research because subjective human experiences cannot be easily quantified. However, the phenomena associated with one’s lived experiences are indicative of deep and personal interactions of persons in real situations. Consequently, the method of inquiry was implemented within a context of discovery rather than within the quantitative context of verification (Giorgi 1985). The research employed Giorgi’s (1970; 1975; 1985; 1986; 1989b; 1992) approach, a descriptive phenomenological method (Giorgi & Giorgi 2003) as the research methodology, utilizing and interpreting written descriptions that were collected from Canadian participants who have lived and worked for NGOs in Indonesia.

1.10 Significance of the Research Study

Canadian NGOs employ large numbers of expatriate managers in projects situated in a number of developing countries, including Indonesia. The success of the projects is of considerable interest not only to employers but also to Canadian taxpayers because much of the project funding is derived from public funds. An anonymous writer for The Economist (1999) noted that the Canadian government provides over \$2 billion annually

in development aid. Thus, the ability of any NGO to continue to obtain funds is critical, and a key ingredient of the NGO's success is an effective expatriate manager.

It has been suggested that expatriate managers often feel misunderstood, not listened to, or ignored by human resource managers (Russell 2004). However, whether such feelings of isolation result from personal, organizational, or social environment issues has not always been made clear; it is arguable that, in some part, the reactions may have been misunderstood because it is rare for qualitative research methods to have been used in studying expatriation from the expatriate managers' perspectives. Therefore, the current research was developed as a phenomenological study designed specifically to give expatriate managers an opportunity to describe what life is like for them. The findings will provide future expatriates with valuable insight into their possible experiences, and may help present and former expatriates to make sense of their experiences. Also, the findings will enhance the understanding of human resource managers, particularly those who have never lived the experience, and will provide opportunities for them to alter strategies employed by organizations in supporting expatriate managers.

1.11 Researcher's Perspective

During the past twenty-five years the researcher has gained a range of employment experiences that have provided a practical viewpoint of the issues covered in the research. A background of having lived and worked in five Canadian provinces, in addition to a two-year work assignment in Indonesia, was a substantial basis for understanding the expatriate role and for connecting with research participants. Furthermore, the

researcher's employment experiences in multinational corporations, non-government organizations, government, regional companies, co-operatives, and universities have assisted in aligning the research questions and methodology.

In undertaking employment with new organizations, with the inevitable relocation to a new site, town, province, or country, it was easy to recognize that there are a great number of lessons to be learned from the process and the experiences; e.g., there was a definite impact on one's person, spouse, and family when moving and adjusting to the novel realities of a new location and situation. It was during these times, that an interest was developed about the importance of understanding the experience from the employees' perspective; particularly, this was true in the case of overseas assignments, where experiences were more varied and unfamiliar. Furthermore, there were new global challenges to be addressed, and yet there was less understanding from head office.

1.12 Research Participants

The research participants were all Canadians who had lived and worked in Indonesia as expatriate managers for NGOs. The research participants were selected purposefully to permit inquiry into, and in-depth understanding of, the phenomenon of being immersed in another culture.

1.13 Organization of the Research Report

The report of the research is comprised of six chapters. What is known about expatriate management is delineated in Chapter Two which describes the academic literature and identifies gaps in the knowledge requiring further research attention. It is argued that one knowledge gap concerns the meaning of living and working as an expatriate manager while being immersed in another culture. Chapter Three describes the research methodology utilized in the current research. Qualitative and quantitative approaches are discussed in detail to explain the rationale for the choices made by the researcher. Phenomenology is discussed and Giorgi's (1970; Giorgi & Giorgi 2003) descriptive phenomenological method is described including the sampling strategy, data collection, and analysis. Chapter Four describes the findings including the data (or written descriptions) of the sixteen research participants in the research. The data analysis is presented, leading directly to the identification of the general structural description or meaning of the lived experience of being immersed in another culture. Chapter Five presents a discussion of the findings reported in Chapter Four, relates the findings to the extant literature, and identifies relevance to the research questions and objectives. Chapter Six, the concluding chapter, includes a discussion of the implications arising from the findings and provides recommendations for practice offered for the benefit of human resources professionals, expatriate managers and academics. In addition, opportunities for further research are suggested for consideration.

1.14 Summary

The introductory chapter has outlined the research, provided an introduction to the phenomenon under study, and indicated the general overview of the research context, purpose and methodology employed. The phenomenological study has the potential for enhancing human resource expatriation strategies by focusing on expatriate managers' perspectives of what it is like living and working while being immersed in another culture.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

Chapter One introduced the topic of expatriation and presented the significance of doing phenomenological research to obtain the expatriate managers' perspectives of what it is like being immersed in another culture, thereby, to understand expatriation more fully. The purpose of Chapter Two is to interpret and provide a synthesis of the extant literature as it relates to the phenomenon under study in order to provide a justification for the research undertaken. Because the topic of expatriation is so vast the writer has chosen to create a framework for presentation of the extant literature using selected key components from that literature. This framework includes: introduction of expatriation, culture, cross-cultural management, organizations engaged in expatriation, international human resource management (IHRM), paradoxes within expatriation, and the concept of lived experiences.

2.2 Introduction of Expatriation

The purpose of this section is to set the stage for the literature review by providing the reader a significant introduction to the field of expatriation. The primary topic areas are: the historical perspective of expatriation, the definition of the term expatriate, short-term versus long-term expatriation assignments, west-to-east expatriation, expatriation management, and expatriation research.

2.2.1 Historical Perspective

Expatriates have been going to live and work with strangers in foreign countries for many centuries. It is not a new phenomenon and many persons view the overseas posting as “an exciting, thrilling but also puzzling and threatening prospect, and the academic study of the consequences of exposure to novel and unfamiliar cultural environments might tend to support them in that view” (Richards 1996 p.553).

The source of many of the first expatriates was international charitable organizations established in Europe and North America. Initially, these non-government organizations were religious in orientation and, interestingly, trace their history back to a Canadian organization called ‘Les Soeurs de Congregation de Notre-Dame’, which was founded in 1653 in Montreal (Suzuki 1998). The first international educational institutions were established in England and France with the objective to provide education for the people living in the various colonized countries in Asia and Africa. Over the years, non-government organizations increasingly have become engaged in socio-economic development activities such as religious evangelization, education and disaster relief (Suzuki 1998).

During a similar time period, the British ruled India by means of their army and public service. The public service (Indian Civil Service), including approximately 1000 British expatriates, was concerned with both commercial and political interests. These expatriates faced work-related challenges very similar to those experienced by expatriates of today’s multinational corporations (Stening 1994). Also similar in their expatriation

experience, were the challenges existing in the non-work environment as Stening (1994 p.389) ably articulated when he noted that “besides the isolation which confronted members ... there were great hardships and challenges for the expatriates in terms of an oppressive climate, countless untreatable diseases ... separation from families in Britain, foreign languages to be learned and generally harsh living conditions”.

While expatriation has a rich past, it was not until the last three decades that the theory of the subject began to develop to match the reality of the experiences (Mendenhall 2002). Indeed, large numbers of expatriates began heading overseas because of the “unprecedented increase in the number of organizations that decided to internationalize their operations towards the end of the twentieth century” (Hutchings 2005 p.553). The practical reality of global organizations significantly increased the demand for persons capable of managing those operations effectively in the foreign context (Katz & Seifer 1996) and added greatly to the responsibility of human resource professionals in ensuring appropriate policies and practices were developed and maintained. Of particular significance to human resource professionals is that “historically, multinational firms have been plagued by the problem of premature return of expatriate managers due to their inability to adapt to the culture of the host country” (Katz & Seifer 1996 p.32). In order to understand the experience of expatriates, one must understand the definition of the term expatriate.

2.2.2 Definition of the Term 'Expatriate'

A broad definition of the term expatriate includes persons living and working abroad or away from their native country for long periods (Barber 2004; De Cieri, Dowling, & Taylor 1991; Mendenhall & Wiley 1994). In a business context, expatriates are employees who were either transferred or hired to take up work assignments while living in foreign countries (Richards 1996; Swaak 1995b; Varner & Palmer 2002). The expatriates, also called *sojourners* (Jun, Gentry, & Hyun 2001), normally have future plans that include returning to their own country (De Cieri et al. 1991). There are several types of sojourners including: businesspersons, missionaries, development workers, educators, technicians, government personnel, military personnel, and students. In the current research, the term expatriate manager is utilized when referring to individuals who live and work in management positions including those employed by non-government organizations (NGOs) outside of their country of citizenship (Daniels & Radebaugh 1998; Deresky 2002).

It is useful to recognize that expatriates can be grouped into different categories as they may have different experiences and perspectives of their life overseas. Two varying approaches to categorizing expatriates were found in the literature (Fukuda & Chu 1994; Swaak 1995b). First, seven types of expatriates according to the overseas assignment purpose were identified by Swaak (1995b). These categories are explained in Table 2.1. Second, Fukuda (1994), categorized expatriates into four distinct groups based on the length of the overseas assignment and position level in the organization. These categories

are referred to as: the starter, the climber, the survivor, and the achiever. They are described in Table 2.2. Other categories that have been written about include: short-versus long-term postings.

Table 2.1 – Expatriate Categories by Assignment Purpose

(Swaak 1995b p.22)

• Assignments to develop identified talent.
• Short- and long- term assignments in which technology transfer specialists carry out specific tasks.
• Project assignments, in which project work specialists develop and implement plans and then return home or go on to other expatriate assignments.
• Long-term/ permanent assignments, in which those interested and willing may end up staying in the country of assignment as local employees.
• Placements in which senior executives manage or monitor an operation in order to provide stability in a local or regional operation.
• Placements in which executives oversee worldwide activities and connect regions.
• Regional coordination assignments, in which regional specialists who excel in managing local operations connect countries in a particular region.

2.2.3 Short-Term versus Long-Term Postings

Expatriate assignments can be a relatively short-term, consisting of a less than one year to a one year posting, or a long-term posting where the relocation is generally between three and five years (De Cieri et al. 1991; Peppas 2004; Tung 1987). The short-term overseas postings can be problematic because the expatriate barely has time to adjust before the completion of the assignment, implying that performance may not have been as effective as it might have been if the person had had the opportunity to become fully adjusted (Tung 1987). It is interesting that the literature indicates expatriate turnover rates are high regardless of the length of the posting overseas (Varner & Palmer 2002 p.9).

Families are less likely to accompany expatriates on short-term assignments. This may be advantageous to companies in ways such as reduced complexities and costs (Peppas 2004). Long-term assignments can cause a significant disruption in the lives of expatriates and their families. Also, from the employers' perspective, there are added responsibilities including: housing, transportation, children's education, taxation, health insurance, dual career implications, spouse and family adjustment issues and a higher probability for failed assignments (Peppas 2004).

When the overseas assignment is central to the work of the organization, a long-term assignment is probable and the company, in fact, may post several persons overseas covering a broad range of responsibilities (Varner & Palmer 2002). Short-term assignments may be ideal when the company has limited interests abroad or when the assignment is not critical to the organization's overall success (Varner & Palmer 2002). Often these types of short-term assignments will be technical in nature or could involve a negotiation that can be completed in a relatively short period of time. Type of assignment is important, so is the direction from which expatriates move.

2.2.4 Expatriation -- West-to-East

Most of the millions of expatriates working in foreign countries are from First World countries (Mendenhall & Wiley 1994). Further, much of the extant literature concerns Westerners, most frequently from the United States, who have expatriated to other countries in Asia, Africa, South America and Eastern Europe. These expatriates most

often are assigned to countries in the developing world where, often, they are considered a visible minority in addition to facing large cultural distances (Mendenhall & Wiley 1994). The literature itself could be considered to have an ethnocentric bias as only a few empirical studies on expatriation included the host-country nationals' perspective (Mendenhall & Wiley 1994) despite the potential for valuable new or reinforcing material. The current research will focus on Canadians who have gone East to Indonesia for their expatriation management experiences.

Table 2.2 - Expatriate Categories by Position & Assignment Length

(Fukuda & Chu 1994 p.44)

The Starter
Expatriates who have spent less than six years in overseas assignments holding relatively low positions in a given functional area of management. They are typically young and tend to view the international assignment for career development and advancement. Many are still single or just starting their young families.
The Climber
Expatriates who have worked abroad for less than six years in all and usually in midcareer. They view the international assignment as a way to further their career by demonstrating their abilities to manage the company's overseas operations. They are usually married with young, preteen children.
The Survivor
Expatriates who have spent more than six years abroad holding relatively low positions in the company. They are typically middle-aged performing technical jobs. Although they have survived many years of service abroad, they have not advanced much career wise. They are usually married, with teenage children.
The Achiever
Expatriates who have spent more than six years abroad holding senior positions (e.g., general manager/director). They are typically older already having successful track records in their services abroad. They are usually married with teenage or older children.

2.2.5 Expatriate Management

This section provides an overview of expatriate management by outlining some of the most important aspects concerning living and working in a foreign country. The areas focussed on are: the role of expatriates, expatriate life, international human resource management, cross-cultural interaction, careers, cost of expatriation and its failure.

2.2.5.1 Role of Expatriates

In general, international organizations use expatriate managers to make certain the wishes of the home office are not only heard by the host country's people but are acted upon (Varner & Palmer 2005). Without a doubt, an expatriation program is an important aspect of many international organizations, with expatriates playing critical roles as: controllers, coordinators and knowledge transferers in strategic alliances, joint venture negotiations, subsidiary management, new market development and technology transfer (Bonache et al. 2001; Guthrie, Ash, & Stevens 2003; Klaus 1995; Suutari 2003; Suutari & Brewster 2001). For example, the role of expatriates in China is increasingly valuable as a result of a dramatically increasing international trade due to China's large and growing economy (Hutchings 2005). Many western organizations are relocating and/or expanding their Asian operations in China and other countries in the East; this means employing an increasing number of expatriates.

China is a major factor in overall globalization, but corporate expansion clearly involves many countries in making it a truly worldwide phenomenon. Multinational organizations are sending an increasing number of expatriates overseas (Varma 2003) to manage their foreign offices in order to create and sustain competitive advantages within the changing dynamics of the world economy (Aryee, Chay, & Chew 1996; Bauer & Taylor 2001; Shim & Paprock 2002; Sims & Schraeder 2004). The increase in numbers of companies participating internationally (Guthrie et al. 2003) has resulted in about eighty percent of average- to large-sized companies assigning expatriates to overseas postings (Andreason 2003b).

In light of the increasing number of expatriates, it is important to be aware that the expatriation experience usually is challenging and often ends in failure. According to Osland (1995a p.3), “many expatriates have to plumb the depths of their inner resources, first to survive the differences and changes, then to be effective”. Indeed, this is a fundamental concern with the growing significance of expatriates as more organizations turn to international strategies (Shim & Paprock 2002). Understanding the role and life experiences of expatriates who are immersed in another culture is important.

2.2.5.2 Expatriate Life

An insight into expatriate life is well articulated by Osland (2000 p.228) who wrote:

Expatriates consider and eventually accept the request to go abroad, leaving behind the domestic office of the organization and the social support of an established life. They embark on the fascinating, adventurous but initially lonely, overseas assignment. The location is shrouded in ambiguity, due to unknown

languages and customs. Their tasks are challenging, often well beyond what they would have been asked to accomplish in their own country in terms of autonomy and the degree and breadth of responsibility.

There is no doubt that expatriation is a new and often unsettling experience for expatriates and their families with regard to issues such as privacy, especially considering “virtually all parts of their daily lives are open to employer influence” (Welch 2003 p.159). The overseas assignment is a new way of life for the expatriate consisting of many unfamiliar demands on him or her and family. It is much more than a simple change in jobs (McDonald 1993).

Another informative take on expatriate life is presented by Tung (1987) based on quantitative research including 144 senior managers in multinational companies located in Europe, Japan and the United States who responded to questionnaires. Tung (1987 p.117) wrote,

In the first six months [the expatriate] was unable to devote much time to company activities because he was preoccupied with problems he and his family were having in adapting to the new environmental setting....in the last six months he often worried about his upcoming job change. He heard that a peer and rival at home had just been promoted to a position for which both men had aspirations. What must he do to get back into the race?

Undeniably, the life of an expatriate is demanding and one must be prepared to meet the challenges involved. De Cieri (1991) believed an overseas posting is not for everyone and described some personal factors including sound self-esteem, adequate social support and family relationships as necessary factors for surviving the assignment. Most expatriates reminisce fondly about the positive experiences in their life abroad even though it involved a mix of negative and positive experiences (Richards 1996). The positive

experiences uncovered in Richards' qualitative study of twelve participants includes satisfying and memorable experiences, fulfillment of a search for adventure, insights into cultural differences and oneself, and the excitement of the confusing feeling of being a 'stranger in a strange land' (Richards 1996). Later in this chapter, paradoxical experiences will be further delineated. As well, participants' descriptions of their experiences will be shared which will be important for those interested in international human resource management.

2.2.5.3 International Human Resource Management

International human resource management is commonly addressed in the literature. "One of the greatest challenges is how to manage human resources on a global scale" (Lee 2005 p.273). The main challenges for international human resource professionals are aspects including selection, training, adjustment difficulties of expatriates and their families, early returns, repatriation problems, and career management issues (Evans, Pucik, & Barsoux 2002; Suutari 2003; Suutari & Brewster 2001). Additionally, the culture shock experience (examined later in this chapter) and perceived cultural distance between home and host countries are important considerations in the design of the human resource programs (De Cieri et al. 1991). In particular, it is suggested that a more active role by international human resource professionals in facilitating expatriate adjustment will enable organizations to be successful in their expatriation programs (De Cieri et al. 1991). Also, the literature indicates a first step towards that active role is for "international firms ... to replace their parochial mindset with one that is open to a

greater understanding of the problems involved in expatriate adjustment” (Andreason 2003a p.56).

It is imperative for professionals involved in international human resource management, as well as senior managers, to recognize that overseas assignments differ from domestic assignments. Contrary to what some senior managers believe, managing in Halifax, Canada is not the same as managing in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. In this regard, Osland (2000), in her qualitative research using interviews with 35 returned American expatriates, identified four differentiating aspects which enhance understanding about expatriation issues that may be useful to human resource practitioners. These are presented in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 - Differentiating Aspects of Overseas Versus Domestic Assignments

(Osland 2000 p.229)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overseas assignments are a journey into the unknown in a more pronounced way than domestic assignments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overseas assignments involve a greater physical separation from one's organization, extended family, and friends than do domestic assignments leaving expatriates facing the unknown without their accustomed anchors.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overseas assignments produce a greater sense of uncertainty regarding the potential adjustment of the family than do domestic assignments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During overseas assignments, one's normal defense mechanisms and mental maps must be reorganized to cope with a different culture. During this process, the expatriate will endure a high degree of uncertainty, anxiety, and unavoidable adventure. This is not so with domestic assignments.

The literature contains ample evidence that expatriate training is an important priority and challenge for international human resource managers (Forster 2000; Mendenhall et al. 2002; Suutari & Brewster 2001). In regards to training and support, Hutchings (2002)

argued that human resource personnel should ensure that expatriates undergo cross-cultural training and have realistic expectations prior to departing on their overseas assignments. Further, training and support should continue upon arrival to the overseas post and for the duration of the assignment (Edkins 1995; Jassawalla, Connelly, & Slojkowski 2004; Shaffer, Harrison, & Gilley 1999). Cross-cultural interaction will be addressed next with training and support being elaborated upon later in the chapter.

2.2.5.4 Cross-Cultural Interaction

The use of expatriate managers to meet the demand of international organizations has led to increasing numbers of individuals living and working overseas on long-term assignments in foreign cultural environments. Cross-cultural interactions are frequent and involve challenging factors both at work and in everyday living (Banuta-Gomez 2002; Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou 1991). Black (1990 p.114) indicated that cross-cultural “interactions occur in a variety of work-related situations, including short-term business trips to foreign countries, long-term overseas assignments, and even work [with]in one organization”. In an environment of cross-cultural interaction, expatriates have been compared to heroes according to the following description taken from the work of Osland (2000 p.228).

Unfamiliar obstacles of all stripes and colors appear. They force the adventuring heroes to question their own identity, their values, and their assumptions about numerous aspects of everyday life previously taken for granted. Some of these obstacles appear in the form of paradoxes the expatriates must learn to resolve, such as how much of their identity must they give up to be accepted by the other culture? When they perform their tasks successfully and learn to adapt to another culture, the expatriates experience a solid sense of satisfaction, mastery, and self-efficacy.

The challenge of cross-cultural interaction is evident, but the rewarding experience makes it satisfying and worthwhile. Osland (2000 p.228) said expatriate stories contain “numerous examples of ‘hero talk’ such as their pride in succeeding at difficult work assignments, making it ‘on their own’, feeling ‘special’, and taking pride in their ability to acculturate and adapt to change”. Change becomes a way of life for expatriates throughout their careers.

2.2.5.5 Careers

Expatriation is an increasingly common part of an individual’s career according to Richardson (2002 p.67) who said “a growing number of managers and corporate executives will experience expatriation at some point in their working lives”. Moreover, he considered forecasts of increasing internationalization well into the third millennium to mean that this is unlikely to be a passing trend. Baruch’s (2002) qualitative research, using in-depth interviews of four senior human resource managers and 15 expatriate managers, revealed that expatriates are motivated to undertake overseas assignments because they see it as a prime career development opportunity in addition to financial motives (Suutari 2003). Further, for many expatriates, there exists a personal interest and willingness to relocate and to be exposed to new experiences and an enriched life style (Baruch et al. 2002; Suutari 2003). The motivation for taking one’s career overseas is influenced by the expatriate’s family status (i.e. single; with spouse; with spouse and children). The expatriate’s main motivators for overseas assignments as described by Baruch (2002) are seen in Table 2.4 by order of importance to the expatriate.

Table 2.4 - Motivators for Expatriation

(Baruch et al. 2002 p.665)

Order of Importance	Single	With Spouse	With spouse and children
1	Remuneration	Language	Career prospects
2	Accommodation	Position	Remuneration
3	Language	Remuneration	Education
4	Position	Family	Repatriation

Richardson (2002) made an important distinction between those expatriates who are ‘forced’ to go as a result of company transfers and those who are known as ‘self-selecting’ -- meaning those expatriates who sought out an overseas opportunity on their own initiative. Richardson’s (2002) qualitative research utilizing in-depth interviews involved 30 expatriate academics who were categorized as ‘self-selecting’ expatriates. Also, it is noted that expatriates from various NGOs tend to fit this category which is pertinent to this research. Yet, one must also understand the cost of expatriation.

2.2.5.6 Cost of Expatriation

The cost of sending employees overseas is three to four times the salaries of their domestic colleagues. Furthermore, expatriate failure rates range from 16 to 40 percent of assignments and the cost of failure is estimated to reach as high as US\$1 million dollars per failure (Shaffer et al. 1999). Thus, it is no understatement that expatriates “represent a big financial drain for companies, especially when they fail” (Bauer & Taylor 2001 p.135). Similarly, there may be significant personal costs on the part of the expatriate, for

‘failure’ can be very damaging to an otherwise healthy career (Bauer & Taylor 2001 p.135).

It is well known that globalization has meant “an increased need for the relocation of employees, particularly executives, to international assignments” (Rushing & Kleiner 2003 p.12). The costs of this staffing strategy are large and increasing; however, it is necessary for organizations to understand the international environment in order to provide and control expertise in overseas operations (Lee 2005; Shaffer et al. 1999). The key to getting a healthy return on the costly investment is effective management of people and understanding failure when it happens. Understanding failure is a very important challenge for international human resource professionals.

2.2.5.7 Failure

Mendenhall & Oddou (1988 p.78) stated that “success in an overseas assignment depends upon possession of skills in the personal, people, and perception areas”. Other scholars articulated reasons for failure such as incongruencies in perceptions (Martinko & Douglas 1999) and culture shock (Oberg 1960), while Shaffer (1998 p.92) pointed to the “project based nature of international assignments... [and argued] having this fixed horizon may affect early return decisions”. Failure frequently occurs to the tune of 20 to 30 percent of expatriate assignments returning home prior to the original completion date (Mendenhall & Oddou 1988). The figure was increased a decade later to between 16 and 40 percent of all expatriates (Montagiani & Giacalone 1998). A significant failure is

exacerbated when expatriates remain until the end of the assignment but are ineffective, to varying degrees, in their job performance.

Wederspan (1992) pointed to several factors that combine to cause costly expatriation errors and failures. These include the time pressures associated with an overseas assignment, the stress and anxiety of the potential expatriates, the uncertainties and unknowns facing both the assignees and international HR professional, and the great distance between home office and foreign locations (Wederspan 1992). It is clear that achieving success can be difficult. Failure will be further delineated later in the chapter while expatriation research will be considered next.

2.2.6 Expatriation Research

The objective of this segment is to provide a broad overview of where expatriation research stands today. It includes sections on quantitative versus qualitative research, and refocusing of research.

2.2.6.1 Expatriate Research Today

In a comprehensive review of the literature, Mendenhall et al. (2002) wrote that research on expatriation has increased significantly during the last twenty years. However, the subjective nature of the expatriate experience has not been researched adequately (Osland 1995b) as scholars have relied on positivistic research methodologies (Landis &

Wasilewski 1999; Mendenhall 1999). There are relatively few qualitative research studies completed on expatriation, including Adler (1987); Briody (1991); Napier (1995); Osland (1995b) and Selmer (1997); but there remains “a shortage of qualitative studies focusing on the situated individual’s experience of expatriation” (Richardson & McKenna 2002 p.68). A leading researcher in expatriation, Mendenhall (1999) considered that further emphasis on studying expatriation through the lens of alternative paradigms would capture important insights and illuminate expatriation from a more complete perspective. A full discussion detailing the justification for the decision taken to employ a qualitative research methodology is provided in the chapter on methodology (Chapter Three).

2.2.6.2 Quantitative versus Qualitative Research

As indicated, much of the extant research has been completed utilizing quantitative as opposed to qualitative research methodologies. Indeed, traditionally there has been less attention given by qualitative researchers to the topic concerning expatriation (Osland 1995b). Reliance on quantitative methodologies may have left human resource professionals with insufficient understanding of the meaning of expatriate managers’ experiences of being immersed in another culture, and of what it is like for expatriate managers to live this experience. Mendenhall (2002 p.170) said “it seems unlikely that adjustment processes can be easily unearthed via the standardized survey questionnaires that empirical studies on expatriation have almost exclusively relied on in the past”. Thus, there is a need for refocusing of research.

2.2.6.3 Refocusing of Research

To underline the significance of doing research on expatriation, Peppas (2004 p.41) pointed out that recent studies indicate that “most firms expect the number of employees they send on international assignments to grow”. The majority of scholarly research on expatriate managers has been limited to a large number of studies about the international human resources management activities in relation to the individual components of the expatriate cycle including: selection, training and support, adjustment (effectiveness), and repatriation (career development) (Bonache et al. 2001; Osland 2000; Shim & Paprock 2002; Tung 1988; Varner & Palmer 2002). Shim’s (2002) expressed concern that research needs to refocus on the importance of human relations functions in the acculturation of expatriates. “The unprecedented internationalization of organizations in the past two decades has made the need for cross-cultural awareness, appreciation, and understanding in the daily operations of international businesses increasingly prevalent” (Hutchings 2005 p.553).

A significant weakness in the expatriation literature is the relatively few qualitative studies or subjective methodologies used in studying expatriation in order to enhance understanding of how individuals experience the process of expatriation (Osland 2000; Richardson & McKenna 2002). According to Osland’s (2000 p.227) argument, most human resource professionals cannot really understand that “it is the less tangible and less readily researched aspect of the experience that quite simply eludes those who have never lived abroad”. It is also very important to recognize that the “literature on

international assignments has been dominated by research focusing on expatriation within multinational companies. In reality, foreign work experiences are much more diversified” (Bonache et al. 2001 p.7). Interestingly, research is very limited, largely ignoring the many foreign assignments that are self-initiated (Bonache et al. 2001). Small and medium sized companies are an under-researched area of expatriation. Noteworthy to the current study, is the serious shortage of literature on international organizations such as government, NGOs, charities and intergovernmental bodies. In fact, Brewster (2002 p.129) contended that “the literature has tended to overlook the most international organizations of all [, that is] the not-for-profit sector” including two major groups: inter-governmental organizations (UN, World Bank etc.) and international NGOs. Brewster (2002 p.129) made an important observation when he said “a rapid expansion is occurring amongst the NGOs...[they] now operate in every country in the world and have more or less extensive international operations”. It is also significant that, typically, the literature still deals with “international assignments as ‘once in a lifetime’ experiences ... less attention has been devoted to ... managers who are committed to international careers for a longer term” (Suutari 2003 p.185). With international careers, comes living and learning about different cultures.

2.3 Culture

The topic of the current research is about being immersed in the Indonesian culture, so a general introduction to culture as well as specifics regarding the Indonesian culture are provided as important background information. Thus, this section is divided into several

components including: definition of culture, national and host country cultural differences, culture shock, cultural differences between Canada and Indonesia, and business implications for working in Indonesia.

2.3.1 Definition of Culture

Culture is the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experiences and to guide their behaviors ... In the business world, culture can affect technology transfer, managerial ideology and attitudes and even business-government relations” (Katz & Seifer 1996 p.33).

A well known researcher on cross-cultural adjustment , Oberg (1960 p.180) argued that “the culture of any people is the product of history and is built up over time largely through processes which are, as far as the individual is concerned, beyond his awareness”. In fact, culture has an all-encompassing power on the conduct of individuals because “a person’s perceptions, attitudes, motivations, values, learning experiences and personality are all, to a very large extent, shaped by culture” (Forster 2000 p.64). Of particular interest in the current study is Forster’s assertion that, usually, we do not think consciously about our culture, nor are we even aware of it (Oberg 1960) until we are in circumstances such as living and working in a different culture.

It is noteworthy that international business, by its very nature, brings people of various cultures together where intercultural interaction is necessary on a daily basis (Black 1988;

Varner & Palmer 2005). In this way, culture plays a critical part in the successful performance of expatriate managers (Katz & Seifer 1996; Varner & Palmer 2005). The work of Banuta-Gomez (2002), who wrote about his own experiences managing persons in the different cultures of Africa, Asia and the Middle East, is presented in Table 2.5 to clarify what culture does.

Table 2.5 - What Culture Does

(Banuta-Gomez 2002 p.30)

• Culture creates a secure social environment for human interaction to take place.
• Culture allows for sharing of emotions and meanings and creates a way of life for human beings to live together in peace.
• Culture provides each person with reasons he or she can understand as to why things happen and his or her role to play in reality.
• Culture enables humans to develop civilizations and technology by supporting and maintaining shared meanings thus empowering collective action on a scale unheard of in any other species of living being.
• Culture creates an ordered stable social space in which learning and the pursuit of knowledge flourish, thus creating opportunities for humans to expand their creativity.

Moving to a new unfamiliar cultural environment involves learning about a new culture which is analogous to the layers of an onion (Trompenaars 1996) or an iceberg, which is a well known metaphor mentioned by Forster (2000). Both the onion and the iceberg serve to emphasize that there are visible aspects of a culture, as with the tip of an iceberg or the skin of the onion, which can be readily seen by the eye. Also, there are hidden aspects to the novel culture that one can discover in a manner akin to ‘peeling off the layers of an onion’ or ‘looking below the surface of the water’. Peppas (2004) used the descriptive terms *surface culture* and *deep culture* while making the same important

points. Table 2.6 depicts the combined thoughts of Trompenaars (1996), Forster (2000) and Peppas (2004) in regard to the visibility of culture.

Table 2.6 - Visibility of Culture

Adapted from (Forster 2000; Peppas 2004; Trompenaars 1996)

	ONION	ICEBERG	SURFACE/DEEP
Visible	The outer layer. What people principally associate with culture: the observable reality of clothes, food, language and housing.	The cultural items 'above the waterline' include: language, food, festivals, clothing and dress, architecture and art.	The surface culture includes: food preferences, religious, patriotic and personal observances, celebrations, fine arts, architecture, music, work habits, social and political preferences, and dress.
Not Visible	The inner layers. Include the norms and values which a community holds: what is considered right or wrong (norms) and good or bad (values).	The 'below the waterline' items are much more numerous including: business ethics, values, morality, facial and body language, male/female relationships, family fidelity, learning styles, work motivation and employee loyalty.	Deep culture includes: esthetics, attitudes toward family, conception of justice and fair play, incentives to work-patterns of superior/subordinate relationships, notions of leadership, group decision-making, approaches to problem solving, age, sex, class, position, and kinship roles, concepts of time and the tempo of work and concepts of social correctness.

A very visible part of the new culture is language and any attempt by the expatriate to communicate a few simple words or phrases in the host language almost always is appreciated and often makes the new culture more accessible (Peppas 2004). However, "understanding the core of the onion is the real key to successfully working with other cultures" (Trompenaars 1996 p.52). In dramatic fashion, Forster (2000 p.65) said the

largest part of culture is “out of sight ... waiting to destroy any business venture if people are unaware of its hidden dangers”. Further he stated, “what we think and how we choose to act is a result of what we have been taught in our culture” (Forster 2000 p. 64). Thus, to be effective in another culture, it is necessary to be aware of the significance of the differences between home and host cultures. For the current study, an important consideration is that it might take several years to learn and internalize another culture. Unfortunately many international organizations unfairly expect expatriate managers to hit the ground running or at least within a matter of weeks (Forster 2000). With this in mind, one can understand clearly that living and working in another culture as an expatriate manager tends to involve a very steep learning curve (Montabaur 2002).

According to the literature, cultural issues may be divided into physiological and psychological elements (Ircha 1999) as presented in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7 - Cultural Issues

(Ircha 1999 p.152)

Physiological Elements	Psychological Elements
Includes developing methods of mitigating the detrimental effects of inhospitable environments, such as ensuring adequate safety and security and reducing the effects of hot, humid weather, traffic congestion, pollution, inadequate housing and unfamiliar food	Includes social formality or casualness in day-to-day business activities, organizational hierarchy (autocratic top-down versus collegial bottom-up management), forms of contracts (good faith based on long-standing personal relations versus detailed legal documents), negotiation style (confrontation versus collaboration) and team or group orientation versus individual achievement.

Cultural issues must be discerned through reviewing national and host country differences.

2.3.2 National and Host Country Cultural Differences

The differences between national (home) culture and host country culture are a primary motivation for initiating the current study. Melles (2002 p.11) made a point about national culture in humorous fashion when she wrote “how many Canadians put food on the Barbie? Then again, Australians don’t sit on the chesterfield”. Thus, national culture greatly influences the manner in which persons of different cultures communicate and interact in general (Fisher & Hartel 2003).

Of particular significance, according to Peppas (2004 p.45) is “the greater the cultural distance between the home country of the ... expatriate and the destination country ..., the greater the likelihood of miscommunication”. For this reason, some countries require more adaptation than others and Katz (1996 p.34) made an important statement when he said “identical human resource policies may have very different effects in different countries”. It is revealing that Aryee (1996 p.279) found in his quantitative research of data from 220 participants using structured questionnaires, that “respondents were significantly more willing to accept an expatriate assignment in a culturally similar than a culturally dissimilar country”.

A widely known and cited researcher, Geert Hofstede (1984; 1998; 2000), studied culture in 40 countries and identified four dimensions to measure cultural differences in relation to nationality. These dimensions are referred to as: power distance (Blunt 1988; Harrison, McKinnon, Wu, & Chow 2000; Merritt & Helmreich 1996), uncertainty avoidance (Blunt 1988; Ircha 2005), individualism (Blunt 1988; Harrison et al. 2000; Ircha 2005; Katz & Seifer 1996; Martinko & Douglas 1999; Merritt & Helmreich 1996) and masculinity (Blunt 1988). The dimensions are summarized in Table 2.8 (Quaddus & Tung 2002).

Table 2.8 - Hofstede's Dimensions to Measure Cultural Differences

(Quaddus & Tung 2002 p.95)

Power Distance
The extent to which society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organizations is unevenly distributed.
Uncertainty Avoidance
The degree to which a society feels threatened by uncertain and ambiguous situations, which leads individuals to support beliefs promising certainty and to maintain institutions protecting conformity.
Individualism
A preference for a loose-knit social framework in society in which individuals are only supposed to take care of themselves and their immediate family members; as opposed to collectivism, which implies a preference for a tightly knit social framework in which individuals can expect their relatives and clan to protect them in exchange for loyalty.
Masculinity
A preference for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material success; as opposed to femininity, which implies a preference for relationships, modesty, caring for the weak and the quality of life.

Merritt (1996 p.7) wrote that the power distance dimension can be “seen in the decision-making style of the superior, ranging from participative to autocratic, and the (un)willingness of subordinates to disagree with their superior”. In high power distance

societies, often the case in developing countries, decisions tend to be directed upwards to the person in authority (Ircha 2005).

Uncertainty avoidance refers to a society's reliance on social norms and rules to reduce present and future situations that are seen to be unstructured or unpredictable (Blunt 1988; Ircha 2005). Table 2.9 presents factors that might be observed in a national cultural group exhibiting uncertainty avoidance.

Table 2.9 - Factors That May Indicate Uncertainty Avoidance

(Blunt 1988 p.236)

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More emotional resistance to change. • Less risk taking. • A preference for clear organizational structure that must be respected at all costs. • Strong feeling that conflict in organizations is undesirable and should be avoided. Preference for clearly laid out rules and regulations that should not be broken. • Tendency to want to restrain the initiative of employees. • Reluctance to compromise with opponents. • Suspicion and distrust of foreigners as managers. • More ritual behavior. • Managers who are more involved in detail. |
|---|

Culture has been delineated in terms like individualism or collectivism. To clarify the differences between individualism and collectivism Merritt's (1996 p.6) work is quoted as saying,

Individualists consider the implications of their behavior within a narrowly defined area of personal costs and benefits, and they value independence and self-sufficiency, preferring individual achievement and recognition to group rewards. Self-reliance is strength, whereas seeking help implies weakness ... in comparison, collectivists consider the implications of their behavior in a wider framework of concern for others, particularly members of their in-group. They conform, obey and are unquestioningly loyal to their in-group to maintain in-group harmony and the social order. Because place and position are determined

by group membership, which is often outside the influence of the individual, there is a stronger belief in fate.

Frequently, in the literature describing culture, the terms individualistic and low context appear together. For example, Martinko (1999 p.283) said “expatriate leaders from highly individualistic, low context cultures are more likely to hold host country members responsible for poor performance than host country leaders from highly collectivistic, high context cultures”. Varner (2005 p.12) explained that a “low context culture spells things out. They are precise and leave nothing to chance. Whereas, high context cultures on the other hand, derive meaning from context rather than “from the actual words”. Martinko (1999) summarized the differences between low and high context cultures as presented in Table 2.10.

Table 2.10 - Low and High Context Cultures

(Martinko & Douglas 1999 p.271)

	Low Context Culture	High Context Culture
What is Desired	Get right down to business	Establish trust first
What is Valued	Performance and expertise	Personal relations
Negotiation Style	Efficient as possible	Tend to be slow and ritualistic

Significant to the current study is the perspective that cultures in developing countries are often high context which are more human-oriented as opposed to low context cultures found in countries like Australia and Canada. Instead of being human- or group-oriented, low context countries tend to be much more slanted towards technology and individual achievement. Maintaining harmonious relationships is important to high context cultures and is facilitated through the use of non-verbal and indirect communication. Such

communication follows a somewhat vague and roundabout route and may often lead to frustration and impatience on the part of the expatriate manager whose home culture is considered low context (Banuta-Gomez 2002).

The fourth dimension of Hofstede's work has to do with how gender roles are defined within respective cultures (Blunt 1988). Hofstede (1984) mentioned that ethnocentrism is evidenced by the tendency to think of one's cultural group as superior to all others. Ircha (2005 p.3) explained that "people are often barely aware that other realities exist". Such a narrow view of the world may lead to ethnocentrism in that we judge others from our own cultural perspective leaving the potential for serious cultural misunderstanding and misperceptions.

There are two other noteworthy points to make about national culture. First, culture is not synonymous with nation, as there can be different cultures all existing within a nation's boundaries (Adler, Doktor, & Redding 1986; McDonald 2000). Second, an individual's interpretation of his or her foreign cultural experience can vary widely when being related to others at a later date. In fact, Osland (1999 p.233) framed it well when she utilized a well known metaphor: "one's contact and exposure to another culture ... and the resulting interpretations may be like ...[several] blind men touching different parts of the elephant's anatomy and assuming they [each] understand the beast as a whole". These misunderstandings may lead to culture shock.

2.3.3 Culture Shock

It is well documented in the literature that expatriates typically experience difficulties when moving across cultures (Jun et al. 2001). In fact, “the very act of living and working in a foreign culture can cause massive stress ... a normal stress reaction under conditions of uncertainty, information overload, and loss of control” (Mendenhall et al. 2002 p.159). This phenomenon is referred to as culture shock (Oberg 1960). Sims (2004 p.74) reported that “culture shock can hit immediately and be overwhelming, exhausting, and numbing. Culture shock can also have a creeping effect, evolving slowly as the expatriate experiences more idiosyncrasies of their host country’s culture”.

Oberg (1960 p.177), a foremost researcher on adjustment to foreign cultural environments, said culture shock is caused by

anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. These signs or cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life: When to shake hands and what to say when we meet people, when and how to give tips, how to give orders to servants, how to make purchases, when to accept and when to refuse invitations, when to take a statement seriously and when not to. Now these cues which may be words, gestures, facial expressions, customs or norms are acquired by all of us in the course of growing up and are as much a part of our culture as the language we speak or the beliefs we accept. All of us depend for our peace of mind and our efficiency on hundreds of these cues, most of which we do not carry on the level of conscious awareness.

Other researchers (Black & Mendenhall 1990; De Cieri et al. 1991; Melles 2002) confirmed that culture shock is about misinterpreting multiple cultural cues in the foreign country leading to inappropriate behaviours and subsequent anxiety that tend to increase with greater cultural distances between home and host cultures. Dealing with the challenge of adjusting to the new culture may be intensified as individual family

members are not immune to culture shock and typically experience this phenomenon in different ways and at different times during the posting overseas (Andreason 2003b). Culture shock can be a serious impediment to success in overseas assignments, therefore must be overcome. It is believed that cross-cultural training and skills development can dramatically enhance the individual's abilities in coping with culture shock (Forster 2000; Sims & Schraeder 2004). Sims' (2004) review of the literature identified five factors that influence culture shock; viz., the training the expatriate receives, the demographic characteristics of the expatriate, the dispositional and personality characteristics of expatriates, the level of organizational support provided to the expatriate, and the level of technical competence of the expatriate. Culture shock can be experienced in any country. Indonesia is no exception.

2.3.4 Indonesia

The country of interest in this study is Indonesia which is an archipelago located in Southeast Asia between the Indian and Pacific Oceans and two continents, Australia and Asia. It is comprised of approximately 13,500 islands, and with more than 220 million citizens is the world's fourth largest population (Centre for Intercultural Learning 2000) behind only China, India and the United States.

Indonesia's strategic position has always influenced the cultural, social, political and economic life of the country (Farry et al. 1995). Indonesia is especially important to business because its natural resources are astounding, in addition to it being located on a

traditionally vital link to international trade (Foster 1998). The country is particularly rich in mineral resources with the most important being crude petroleum (Centre for Intercultural Learning 2000). Despite its rich resource base, Indonesia is a developing country with a significant part of its economic development financed by foreign aid (Centre for Intercultural Learning 2000). Thus, there are many expatriates in the country working on a multitude of development projects with NGOs in addition to those employed by a myriad of multinational corporations.

Religion is essential to most Indonesians and is “intertwined with politics, business and family life, not compartmentalized as it is in much of Canadian society” (Farry et al. 1995 p.12). The dominant religion in Indonesia is Islam and is practiced by at least 85 percent of the population (Centre for Intercultural Learning 2000). Foster (1998) discussed some aspects of Islam that have evolved into strong cultural behaviors, such as avoiding touching people on the tops of their heads. Other examples are presented in Table 2.11.

Table 2.11 - Cultural Behaviours Evolved from Islam

(Foster 1998 p.29)

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect and give a “soft” handshake instead of the often brutal Western grip/pump. • Slight bow or dipping of the head in respect when someone is being introduced. • Eye contact patterns require lower-ranking individuals to look down or away. • Greet others with their titles and the greeting will be returned. • Non-confrontational speech usually builds and maintains relationships. • The word “I” is replaced with “we” and “us” in conversations. |
|---|

These cultural behaviours differ substantially with behaviours that are part of the Canadian culture.

2.3.4.1 Cultural Differences between Indonesia and Canada

It is well documented that people across cultural groups believe and behave differently (Graen & Chun 1996) and different cultural groups often exist within the national borders of one country. Especially, this is true of Indonesia considering there are more than three hundred ethnic groups each having its “own language, cultural tradition, social structure and ethnic identity” (Sarwono & Armstrong 2001 p.41). It is the cultural distance between the home and host culture that often creates a challenge for the newly arriving expatriate in a foreign location (Brewster & Pickard 1994); e.g., a British expatriate assigned to New Zealand, would experience minimal culture novelty compared with being assigned to Cambodia (Mendenhall & Wiley 1994). Thus, an important impact of cultural novelty may be that “sojourners are not likely to be motivated to engage in active participation in a new environment if they are uncertain as to what is appropriate behavior... contacts with host nationals could be threatening and increase anxiety” (Jun et al. 2001 p.317).

Significant to the current study, is the considerable cultural distance between Indonesia and Canada as depicted by Bacon (1999 p.12) who wrote that, an expatriate

coming from the “developed” world [e.g. Canada] will find a world [Indonesia] where contradiction occurs with every other step. [It is] a world of improbable extremes; a world where any notion of apparent “logic” is out the window, where saving face outweighs any other obvious course of thought. [It is] a world where

individual opinions are blurred into a single collective mentality; where people will actually “lie” rather than risk offending you with what might be the truth. [It is] a world where, for the most part, people are forced to accept all manner of conditions, without even a murmur of protest; where glaringly corrupt policies are implemented and labour forces exploited; where imported technology gathers dust, where human error runs high.

These differences surface implications for Canadians and other Westerners working in Indonesia.

2.3.4.2 Business Implications for Working in Indonesia

There are business implications that arise when Westerners work in Indonesia. Foster (1998 p.28) stated,

Classic business problems between Westerners and Indonesians usually revolve around the [western]-style that assumes individuals seek to be and should be empowered to make decisions and take action on their own. Once [Western] managers have laid out the goals, they usually take a “hands-off approach”, allowing subordinates to demonstrate their competencies by taking charge of the project. In Indonesia, and many other status and rank-oriented cultures, this kind of managerial behavior usually results in a vacuum in which nothing gets done. Oftentimes, subordinates won’t risk taking action unless the action clearly meets with the superior’s approval.

Thus, expatriate managers need to develop and communicate work strategies to host country employees but, additionally, in order to succeed in Indonesia they also need to remain closely involved in the daily work activities ensuring a satisfactory completion (Foster 1998).

Cultural errors in Indonesia by Westerners are common but few are as serious as the expatriate sales executive who had spent several months negotiating a sale with an

Indonesian business person. The executive believed the transaction was imminent until, out-of-the-blue, he was “astounded to discover that the final decision could not come from Jakarta but must come from the major shareholder in Osaka” (Mann 2000 p.51). In hindsight, he realized how little he understood the rules of the Indonesian culture and, as a result, suffered a significant career setback. A sampling, from various scholars, of cultural differences having business implications is presented in Table 2.12.

Table 2.12 - Cultural Differences and Business Implications

In North American businesses, individuals usually make decisions, while in [Asia], groups make decisions...in North America, a decision is made very quickly, while in some slow-paced cultures, the amount of time spent on decision making increases the value of the decision.	(Tung & Quaddus 2002 p.177)
An [Asian] company will send a large team to learn everything you know while a Western company will send one person to tell them everything you know.	(Kupfer 1988 p.58)
Praising in public is inappropriate in Indonesia ... where public praise causes the recipient loss of ‘face’, the implication being that the manager was surprised that the employee was able to perform the task.	(Kerr & Von Glinow 1997 p.118)
Do not praise individuals too highly in front of their peers. Instead praise the group when things go well.	(Foster 1998 p.29)
Managers in [Canada] tend to be risk- and reward-oriented and are expected to give direction to subordinates only as needed. Delegation and empowerment are typical managerial techniques. Managers in [Indonesia] tend to be group reward-oriented and concerned with the opinions of subordinates in decisions impacting their objectives.	(Katz & Seifer 1996 p.36)
Canada is a highly individualistic society, whereas Indonesia is much more collectivist in social relationships.	(Hofstede 1984; 2000)
Traditional agricultural values in Indonesia have produced a life view that emphasizes communal effort (harvesting rice is a group project), subordinating personal agendas for the greater needs of the community.	(Foster 1998 p.28)
Indonesia has a different way of dealing with time.	(Banuta-Gomez 2002 p.35)
Time is always less important than maintaining relationships-this attitude might be related to the Indonesian belief that there are fate and forces one can’t control, but may sometimes be able to placate. Time is secondary to almost everything. The clock stretches to fit the needs of the people at any given moment and in any given situation...it is best to remain flexible in unpredictable Indonesia.	(Foster 1998 p.28)

A further example of cultural implications in business is when Southeast Asian expatriates (such as Indonesians) working within the British business environment experience great unease due to the 'debating chamber' mentality of the British meeting (Anonymous 1998). Thus, in summing up, there is little doubt that cultural differences between countries, particular those with vastly differing cultures (e.g. Indonesia and Canada), pose significant challenges for appropriately functioning in both work and non-work situations. These differences are prominent in cross-cultural management situations.

2.4 Cross-Cultural Management

Cross-cultural management knowledge and understanding is vital for success of business ventures. Banuta-Gomez (2002 p.29) stated, "being knowledgeable of and valuing the cultures of other people is a very important quality for a manager who desires to succeed in a country other than his or her own". However, this is easier said than done given that "the cross-cultural context is a unique milieu in which many individuals are led to question their basic assumptions about themselves, their culture, their interpersonal relationships, and their management style" (Osland 1995a p.2).

Montagliani (1998 p.598) reported "the presence of a world economy has forced individuals and groups representing various organizations, historically foreign to each other in terms of language, norms and culture, to interact actively and communicate with each other to conduct business". Sometimes host-country nationals are utilized, in place of expatriate managers, because they have familiarity with the local culture (Tung 1982).

However, Andreason (2003a p.42) considered that “despite recent trends indicating an increased use of host-country nationals in foreign operations, more and more international firms are finding it necessary to send parent-country nationals as expatriates to live and work abroad”. The reasons for this growth include the rapid expansion of international business, the necessity of maintaining organizational control and coordination and the need to develop a cadre of managers with international expertise (Andreason 2003a).

With globalization it has become vital for expatriate managers to understand and adjust to foreign cultures because they are imperative requirements for business success (Banuta-Gomez 2002; Peppas 2004). In Table 2.13, Black’s (1990) and Adler’s (1983) skill requirements for managers working in a novel cultural environment are described.

Table 2.13 - Managers’ Skill Requirements for Working in a New Culture

(Adler 1983 p.43)	(Black & Mendenhall 1990 p.115)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional and managerial skills • Personal and social skills • Cross-cultural and international skills • Spouses and families who could adapt to foreign environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills related to the fostering of relationships with host nationals • Skills related to the maintenance of self (mental health, psychological well-being, stress reduction, feelings of self-confidence) • Cognitive skills that promote a correct perception of the host environment and its social systems

Noteworthy is Adler’s (1983 p.43) argument that expatriate “managers should have all the skills requisite for domestic management plus those cross-cultural and international skills that make for effectiveness in geographically dispersed, multi-cultural, work environments”. A major point of concern, however, is that the literature supports

Beamer's (1998 p.54) assertion that "cross-cultural management and communication conflicts appear to be the norm rather than the exception ... throughout the world".

Alarming, Selmer (2000 p.9) pointed out the "literature on expatriate work adjustment typically finds that expatriate managers apply the same managerial style they used in their home country and do not adjust well to norms and practices of the host country".

Banuta-Gomez (2002 p.34) sheds further light on what may happen with adjustment challenges.

Western managers make errors ... because the situations appear familiar to them but, in actuality, are quite different. What they do not consider is that the context of the situation determines its meaning. Because they are in a different culture, the context of situations is, in reality, unfamiliar to them. The context of all human interactions is always the culture in which they occur. That is why training in cultural differences should be required for anyone who is to be a manager at a global level.

It is well documented that many expatriate managers are not successful because effective "interpersonal relations are thwarted through miscommunication, misinterpretation and misevaluation by both parties to the interaction" (Montagliani & Giacalone 1998 p.598). Similarly, Hawkins (1983 p.48) contended "communication problems result when people fail to understand the differences in gestures, words and custom between cultures" and Peppas (2004 p.44) agreed writing "understanding, and adhering to the unspoken 'rules' of business and society makes life easier and usually lead to more productive encounters in a shorter period of time".

Of great significance is the notion that "communication impediments can pervade every facet of life for expatriates and their families, producing unhappiness in their current

surroundings and hindering adjustment to the host country and its culture” (Montagliani & Giacalone 1998 p.599). This scenario can lead to serious psychological stress, reduced productivity, harm to the reputation of the expatriates and their employers, outright expatriate failure and, therefore, serious career implications. As noted earlier in the chapter, the situation often leads to a premature return home for between 16 and 40 percent of all expatriates (Montagliani & Giacalone 1998).

Peppas (2004) reported on the causes of cultural misunderstandings in the workplace as presented in Table 2.14.

Table 2.14 - Causes of Cultural Misunderstandings in the Workplace

(Peppas 2004 p.44)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sources and levels of authority • Importance of cooperation vs competition • Personal vs company goals • Gender or ethnic biases • Attitudes toward uncertainty in business • Negotiation styles • Perspectives of time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer/employee relationships • Centralized/decentralized decision-making • Short-term vs long-term horizons • Sources of power • Ideas of fairness • Attitudes toward individualism • Differences in business ethics • Punctuality, deadlines, pace of work
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These cultural misunderstandings must be considered when managing people in another country.

2.4.1 Managing People and Business in a Developing Country

Managing people and business in a developing country requires specialized skills and insights into that country's culture. In his work, Banuta-Gomez (2002 p.35) said,

Managers from developed countries ... often inappropriately expected their employees in developing countries to respond to incentives for individual achievement as [Westerners] do ... western managers working in developing countries quite often neglect to utilize their employees' strong cultural value of group achievement. Ignoring the need to train its managers in managing cultural differences skills inevitably hinders the organizational effectiveness of any company.

Thus, to manage in a developing country where there tends to be a high context culture, as described in the case of Indonesia earlier in this chapter, Banuta-Gomez (2002) recommended using community teambuilding, group problem solving, allowing for task autonomy while maintaining accountability and responsibility. These strategies must be considered by organizations engaged in expatriation.

2.5 Organizations Engaged In Expatriation

There has been a dramatic increase in the numbers of companies operating internationally over the past few decades which has resulted in a growing number of expatriate management assignments to countries all over the world. However, it is very important to recognize that besides multinational corporations, government and non-government organizations have lengthy and continuing traditions of managing expatriates but largely these are ignored in the literature (Anderson 2005). Thus, when all international organizations are considered, it is especially accurate to state that the "expatriate

experience is shaping the lives and careers of an increasing number of people” (Osland 2000 p.227). Noteworthy to the current study is that human resource management is a key to the success of international organizations of any type. It is a primary responsibility of human resource professionals to effectively manage the persons in expatriation programs that are valuable, but costly (Brewster 2002). Multinational corporations, government and NGOs are all involved in expatriation and, as such, their role in expatriation is important to point out.

2.5.1 Multinational Corporations

Multinational corporations have been in operation in foreign countries for a long time; thus, the deployment of expatriates overseas is not entirely new to them. However, more and more multinational companies, in order to successfully compete, are recognizing the need to develop internationally competent executives. In this new reality, expatriation has become a vital strategy by “which organizations can gather and maintain a resident base of information about the complexities of international management” (Downes, Thomas, & Singley 2002 p.24). Therefore, a strategic and well-developed expatriation program plays a big part in fulfilling this need (Selmer 2000).

A new wave in growth of expatriates is the result of many small and medium-sized companies getting into the international game alongside the large multinational companies that have dominated the international domain over the last few decades. This change has created new opportunities for business expatriates whose international

knowledge and expertise is valued, especially by smaller companies that often have little or no international experience (Selmer 2000). According to Peppas (2004), multinational companies utilize expatriates for a variety of reasons. These reasons are presented in Table 2.15.

Table 2.15 - Reasons Companies Use Expatriates

(Peppas 2004 p.41)

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish presence quickly in response to market developments. • To provide skills that are not available in a particular country. • To transfer technical knowledge. • To transfer company culture and policy after mergers and acquisitions. • To allow employees to gain international experience as part of company management development programs. |
|---|

Some of these reasons may be pertinent to NGOs as well.

2.5.2 Non-Government Organizations

Non-government organizations (NGOs) are present and located worldwide. They are important because they often offer a “more independent, if not critical, perception of social reality than governments, because they are closer to the grassroots” (Farry et al. 1995 p.21).

Suzuki’s (1998 p.1) definition of NGOs is useful for the current study. He stated,

NGOs refer to non-governmental organizations that attempt to address concerns of the underprivileged and the underserved in the Third World through development activities such as agricultural assistance, primary health care, provision of basic services and education.

NGOs are a distinctive organizational type that has evolved as an alternative to the government-to-government type of development assistance. There are now many NGOs operating throughout the world, particularly in developing countries (Suzuki 1998). NGOs generally have culturally diverse staff, management styles and working environments, but this reality has been largely ignored in the literature (Lewis 2002). Development projects of NGOs often involve other organizations including donors, government agencies and village groups so there may be a great deal of cultural complexity in the work environment (Lewis et al. 2003; Suzuki 1998). Local NGOs often work in partnership with international NGOs including both secular and religious organizations. In general, international NGOs provide development assistance and have a considerable history of managing expatriate managers (Anderson 2005).

Many international NGOs are based in North America, Australia and Europe with local offices located in countries with widely varied socio-economic patterns, political systems, religious and ethnic groups. Due to this complex milieu, the management function of international NGOs is rather daunting (Suzuki 1998). Noteworthy to the current study is the fact that the NGO sector is growing in Indonesia. NGOs perform an important role in responding to local individual and community needs and larger social issues (Farry et al. 1995; Russell 2002). Other government organizations are also discussed in the literature.

2.5.3 Government Organizations

Government, also referred to as the public sector, has been involved in expatriation management for many years. The most familiar purposes for organizations falling under the public sector are diplomatic and military service (Anderson 2005).

2.5.4 Summary

Expatriation research has been focused mostly on multinational corporations as opposed to NGOs. NGOs employ huge numbers of expatriates but research in this area is very scarce (Anderson 2001; Bonache et al. 2001; Lewis 2002). Bonache (2001 p.15) argued that research needs to consider “other types of foreign work experiences than just expatriation within multinational companies”. Consequently, the current study will take a step in filling this gap from a qualitative perspective which, in turn, may assist with international human resource management.

2.6 International Human Resource Management

International human resource management (IHRM) is a large section in this literature review comprising of twelve primary components. These parts include: expatriation strategies in the expatriate cycle, expatriate experience, selection, preparation, training, support, adjustment, failure of expatriate managers overseas, repatriation and performance management of the expatriate manager. The information provided, relating

to the IHRM components, may overlap somewhat depending on the focus taken during this section of the literature review.

2.6.1 Introduction

Hutchings (2005 p.554) maintained that “since the 1970s, a plethora of literature in the field of IHRM has highlighted the vital importance of organizations providing comprehensive, strategic, country-specific programmes of preparation for expatriates in order to achieve expatriate cross-cultural competence”. Thus, IHRM traditionally has been synonymous with expatriate management for many multinational organizations (Bonache et al. 2001). In reality, IHRM may be broader in scope and increasingly significant over the last 30 years due to the increasing number of multinational companies and subsequent “increased awareness of the use of expatriate personnel and the importance of managing personnel effectively” (Anderson 2005 p.567). Anderson (2001 p.33) wrote, “the international human resource management literature recognizes that expatriate assignments must be managed effectively as such assignments are demanding of human and economic resources”. Yet, in spite of this knowledge, the literature provides ample evidence that many organizations remain unsuccessful in effectively managing their expatriation programs (Varma 2003).

Scholars have emphasized the need for improvements in expatriate management interventions in recent years (O'Sullivan, Appelbaum, & Abikhzer 2002). This is especially important considering Forster's (2000 p.77) prediction that:

Cross-border transfers will remain an important part of international HR strategies for the foreseeable future. However, rather than being the domain of senior managers, as they have been in the past, these will occur earlier in employees' careers, when the learning curve is likely to be greater and when they are usually unencumbered by family constraints. The new generation is much more amenable to learning about other cultures, many have traveled abroad and increasing numbers are embracing international careers.

The up and coming younger generation of expatriates who, generally, are more culturally sensitive, bodes well for the future success of expatriation programs. Further, the expatriate's spouse and children often are reasons for an early return home so it may be that utilizing younger expatriates without families may enhance the chances of a successful overseas assignment.

Many senior managers still seem to hold to the belief that there is no major difference in managing overseas versus managing in a domestic position. It was held over 30 years ago that a good manager in New York will be a good manager in Hong Kong (Baker & Ivancevich 1971). However, Black (1990 p.114) more recently disagreed and argued this is a culturally insensitive view and may be the primary "reason for many faulty international human resource practices and the high expatriate turnover rate".

Wederspan (1992 p.27) believed "the classic lament that human resource (HR) managers lack clout to influence the course of corporate events is especially valid in the area of [IHRM]". However, a lesser role for HR means a larger role for the operational department which could be problematic. To avoid problems, Baruch (2002) argued that the HR department should take a more proactive role as the operational departments tend to focus on day-to-day operations and are less likely to focus on expatriate staff who are 'out of sight and out of mind'.

A revealing statistic (though dated) is that only 11 percent of human resource managers have ever worked in an international posting themselves (Wederspan 1992) meaning most HR hands-on experience is in the domestic context. Black (1999 p.54) expressed his concern that one cannot become knowledgeable about “foreign cultures by staying at headquarters or taking short business trips abroad. Such intangibles come instead as a result of having spent more than one sustained period working abroad”. Ineffective expatriate assignments and early returns home often occur because of factors not present in domestic placements such as culture shock and the accompanying emotional stress (O'Sullivan et al. 2002). Expatriates require the technical qualifications, but they also need to be properly prepared for the experience of living and working in an unfamiliar foreign cultural environment. However, the reality of unique personal and professional challenges that expatriates experience often is not well understood by human resource managers and often leads to a less than effective management of this important and costly human resource (Black & Gregersen 1999).

The increasing international business activity in Asia and Eastern Europe points to a growing number of expatriate assignments in those regions, implying there is a “consequential need to address human resources activities ... in order to improve the success of expatriate transfers and to lower the failure rates associated with these placements” (McDonald 1993 p.27). Indeed, Sim (2004) described a number of important strategies about how human resource professionals could facilitate and enhance the chances of successful expatriation programs. These approaches are highlighted in Table 2.16.

Table 2.16 - Approaches for Enhancing Expatriation Programs

(Sim & Dixon 2004 p.47)

- Include employees' families during pre-departure assessments to allow an employer to determine, with greater certainty, the probable success of the relocation and to encourage candidate self-selection for the assignment.
- Design a quality benefits plan that responds to the unique needs of expatriates in providing a level of comfort and security that will allow expatriate employees to focus on the job at hand, knowing that if a medical crisis arises, they will have access to qualified and competent professionals.
- Develop a contingency plan for crisis management. Such a plan will help ensure expatriate security and the company's business interests.

These approaches are vital for the development of any large scale expatriation strategy.

2.6.2 Expatriation Strategies in the Expatriate Cycle

“The development of effective international HR strategies is a major determinant of success in international business” (Forster 2000 p.63). Although companies may view overseas assignments from differing perspectives, determining company philosophy is always a good first step in developing a suitable expatriation strategy (Mendenhall & Oddou 1988). The philosophy of a company as it pertains to the expatriation program may be determined by assessing the factors presented in Table 2.17.

Table 2.17 - Factors for Assessing Expatriation Philosophy

(Mendenhall & Oddou 1988 p.78)

- The strategic importance of the international assignment.
- The level of integration of human resources into strategic planning.
- The amount of international experience in senior management.
- The validity of the performance evaluation instrument and system.
- The degree of formalization of the selection, training, and support systems.

There is considerable evidence in the literature that a hands-on involvement of HR departments may lead to a successful expatriation program. One research article concluded, “a successful expatriate management strategy requires the direct involvement of HR departments in planning, executing and enhancing the experience for both the employee and the employer” (Sim & Dixon 2004 p.47). Other authors also support the notion that it is ideal to manage the expatriation program in a systematic or comprehensive way (Ferraro 2002; Swaak 1995b; Varma 2003). However, organizations still need to develop strategic processes that pay attention to all the different aspects of the expatriation process. Indeed, most companies do not pay sufficient attention to aspects including identification of expatriate requirements, recruitment, selection, predeparture and post-arrival training, in-country support and repatriation (Ashamalla 1998; Ferraro 2002; Hutchings 2005; Varma 2003).

Table 2.18 - Considerations for Improvement of Expatriation Strategies

(Tung 1987; Varner & Palmer 2002)

• Organizations must develop a more international orientation and outlook.
• Organizations need to determine what level of importance international operations play in their organizational mission.
• Organizations should develop a longer-term orientation with regard to expatriate assignments, overall planning, and assessment of performance. Short stints abroad are not conducive to high performance because the expatriate barely has time to adjust before transfer home or to another location.
• Organizations must provide more comprehensive training programs to prepare expatriates for cross cultural encounters. Studies have shown the technical competence alone is a necessary but insufficient condition for successful operations abroad.
• Organizations need to systematically manage the knowledge expatriates have gained and apply it to the benefit of the organization.

Further, Varner (2002) and Tung (1987) articulated important areas that an organization should consider if they are to improve expatriation programs. These factors are synthesized in Table 2.18.

It has been suggested by Ashamalla (1998 p.54) that “in light of the current high rates of expatriate failure and the increasing need for managers who can function successfully abroad, the need for sound international management practices presents itself with urgency”. According to Black (1999), the primary practice strategies that organizations with successful expatriation programs follow can be briefly summarized as: sending people for the right reasons, sending the right people and finishing the right way. These practices are described in increasing level of detail (from left to right) in Table 2.19.

Table 2.19 – Practice Strategies for Successful Expatriation

(Black & Gregersen 1999 p.53)

Practice	Description	Explanation
Sending People For The Right Reasons	A focus on creating knowledge and developing global leadership skills.	Many companies send people abroad to reward them, to get them out of the way, or to fill an immediate business need. At companies that manage well, people are given foreign posts: to generate and transfer knowledge, to develop their global leadership skills, or to do both.
Sending The Right People	Making sure candidates have cross-cultural skills to match their technical abilities.	Companies that manage their expatriates wisely do not assume that people who have succeeded at home will repeat that success abroad. Emphasis is placed on indications that they would be likely to live comfortably in different cultures.
Finishing The Right Way	Preparing people to make the transition back to their home offices.	Expatriate assignments end with a deliberate repatriation process. Repatriation is a time of major upheaval, professionally and personally, for two-thirds of expats. Wise companies provide them with career guidance enabling them to put their international experience to work.

A problem which surfaces in expatriation is that “business and time pressures mean that decisions regarding sending employees abroad are often made on an ad hoc basis at the operational level where the human resource department’s value added role is not always fully integrated” (Sim & Dixon 2004 p.47). Baker & Ivancevich (1971) earlier stated and Jassawalla (2004) added that this situation often results in poorly planned and designed overseas assignments particularly from the expatriate manager’s perspective. Jassawalla (2004 p.38) said “a lack of HR planning seems to leave managers unclear about the details and nuances of their sojourns”. DeCieri’s (1991) writing concurred regarding the importance of avoiding hasty decisions and recommended five practices that might benefit both the expatriate manager and the employing organization (see Table 2.20).

Table 2.20 – Expatriation Practices

(De Cieri et al. 1991 p.409)

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having lead times as long as possible prior to relocation. • Involving the partner/spouse in discussions. • Ensuring adequate training. • Having experienced employees and partners interact with newly arrived. • Ensuring company assistance for the partner/spouse. |
|--|

One strategy garnering some attention in the literature related to successful projects, is the practice of using host country nationals in place of the expatriate manager (Ashamalla & Crocitto 1997; Tung 1987; Varma 2003). There may be advantages in using host country nationals as they are more familiar with the cultural environment and often the job itself. They can serve to boost local morale, and their employment can be cost effective especially considering the frequency of expatriate failure. In fact, using host country nationals sometimes can be a solution to expatriate failure; however, early

research by Tung back in 1987 pointed out that using host country nationals leaves some gaps in the overall international business course of action as depicted in Table 2.21.

Table 2.21 - Disadvantages in Using Host Country Nationals

(Tung 1987 p.118)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local nationals may have problems relating to organizational members in the head office because of non-familiarity with corporate culture.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companies need to send expatriates ... to the less developed nations because of the lack of talent in these countries. In most instances, these are the countries that pose the major problems of adjustment for expatriates.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the increasing globalization of industries and business activities, international experience in strategic markets ... should be considered an integral part of any career development program.

More recently, these perspectives are changing in our more globalized world.

Ferraro (2002) presented the argument that there is a small, but increasing, number of firms that can serve as standards for best practice. He said “organizations that are dealing with overseas transfers in the most efficacious way start from a strong and unequivocal global focus that is built into the very fiber of the corporate culture” (Ferraro 2002 p.159). Most importantly, these organizations view past and present expatriate employees as valuable assets while new expatriate manager recruits are encouraged, supported and compensated to reflect the valuable role they will play now and in the future. Thus, it is evident that the cross-cultural international experience can be a very positive aspect of career development (Ferraro 2002). It is just a case of taking a “more holistic (long-term) approach to management development by paying close attention to all the various phases

of making international (global) transfers” (Ferraro 2002 p.159). Included in the phases are expatriate experiences.

2.6.3 Expatriate Experiences

Positive expatriate experiences enhance performance, and for this reason may be of great interest to human resource professionals. Similarly, avoiding negative issues that result in ineffective performance can reduce failures which, as previously stated, are costly to both employees and employers (Downes et al. 2002; Forster 2000). Some researchers report that the expatriate experience is frequently unenjoyable because “daily chores such as food shopping, laundry and other errands often cause significant problems for new expatriates and their families” (Katz & Seifer 1996 p.42). However, overseas assignments can be excellent opportunities to enhance one’s professional and personal development.

Osland (2000 p.237) argued that “companies need to understand that living abroad may be the most significant experience of many expatriates’ lives”. To maximize the experience, expatriate managers must take considerable responsibility into their own hands. This includes preparing themselves to go, keeping in touch with the home office, maintaining professional networks, building career options while overseas and enjoying the benefits of personal growth (Mendenhall & Oddou 1988). Research is important to “provide the expatriate and potential expatriate with more realistic expectations about the

experience of an overseas assignment and the factors most likely to facilitate or impede” (Downes et al. 2002 p.33).

It is crucial to recognize that “human resource people also need expertise on the expatriate experience if they are to prepare, support and debrief expatriates as effectively as possible” (Osland 1995a p.xv). Most alarmingly, as described earlier “expatriate management practices, such as selection, preparation, liaison with home country representatives, performance evaluation, repatriation and career planning, are often found to fall short of the wishes of the expatriates” (Suutari & Brewster 2001 p.554).

Worth mentioning are the various factors that, especially, are relevant to the expatriates and their subsequent level of satisfaction in regard to their overseas experience. Shaffer’s (1998 p.92) research on expatriates’ psychological withdrawal, involving over 700 questionnaire respondents, included the “degree of assignment completion, non-work satisfaction and cross-cultural adjustment, as well as several family context variables such as family responsibility and spouse experiences”, as important to overall satisfaction.

Another interesting and important aspect of the expatriate experience is the notion of expatriates having allegiance to two masters; namely, the home office and the local office. Black (1992 p.61) described how many expatriate managers “end up directing their allegiance too far in one direction or the other, creating serious costs and consequences for both themselves and their organizations”. This is a common aspect of

an expatriation posting and as such the pattern of allegiance is described as well as a policy counterbalance, in Table 2.22.

Table 2.22 - Allegiance Patterns and Policy Counterbalance

(Black & Gregersen 1992 p.61)

Allegiance Pattern	Description	Policy Counterbalance
Free agent	Expatriate has low allegiance to both the parent firm and local unit.	Consider not hiring.
Going native	Expatriate has low allegiance to the parent firm and high allegiance to the local unit.	Limit time away from corporate site, send managers with strong ties to corporate site, establish corporate sponsor or mentor programs.
Hearts-at-home	Expatriate identifies more strongly with the parent firm than with the local operation.	Send younger managers, facilitate cross-cultural adjustment, provide cross-cultural training for the family and encourage host national sponsorship programs.
Dual citizen	Expatriate is highly committed to both parent and local operation.	Sending managers with strong ties to the parent firm; facilitating cross-cultural adjustment; plan overseas jobs strategically.

A remarkable point is “expatriate programs are threatened with ineffectiveness if those targeted for such assignments refuse to take them [on] or take them unwillingly”

(Borstorff, Harris, Feild, & Giles 1997 p.30). Often employees are proposed to be sent overseas by way of a transfer and they go because it may be quite detrimental to their career if they refuse acceptance. (This is opposed to the self-selecting expatriate, described earlier, who actively campaigns for the internal transfer or joins an organization in search of an expatriation assignment). The literature has indicated that “employees undertaking these assignments unwillingly could be subject to even more

stresses than those normally encountered by employees willing to work in unfamiliar, international environments” (Borstorff et al. 1997 p.30). Clearly, the expatriate experience would have less chance of being a good one in the case of the reluctant expatriate. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, four main components of expatriate management that contribute to the success of international assignments include: selection, training, in-country support and repatriation (Katz & Seifer 1996).

2.6.4 Selection

Recruitment and selection issues are documented at length in the literature as being significant factors in a successful expatriate assignment (Anderson 2001; Baker & Ivancevich 1971; Edkins 1995; Hutchings 2002; Morley & Flynn 2003a). Indeed, Morley (2003a p.43) alleged “poor selection has been linked to expatriate failure, either in the form of premature re-entry or significant underperformance while on assignment”. It has been traditional for organizations to select expatriate managers based on their technical abilities as opposed to placing much emphasis on cross-cultural skills and family situation (Anderson 2001). Selecting primarily on the basis of technical capabilities highlights the underlying belief that the overseas assignment is not really different from the domestic position (Baker & Ivancevich 1971). However, Edkins (1995) made it clear that the overseas assignment is different; one indication of this is his recommendation that HR personnel should include the expatriate’s family in the recruitment and selection process. Morley (2003a) and Forster (2000) both recommended a sophisticated selection process, pointing to the importance of factors including

extroversion and personal competencies in the form of stress reduction skills, empathy skills (Morley & Flynn 2003a) and language and cross-cultural skills for both expatriates and their families (Forster 2000).

In the literature, it is apparent that the time and effort expended in developing effective recruitment and selection strategies are sound investments for any organization's expatriation program (Hutchings 2002). This is because it "could substantially reduce the problems associated with having expatriate managers who are emotionally and practically ill-equipped for the demands of the business and social environment in their host country operation" (Hutchings 2002 p.48).

Generally, it is mentioned in the literature that international organizations should carry out a systematic process for selecting individuals for overseas assignments as part of the expatriation program (Katz & Seifer 1996).

In the 1980s, the selection was based on exceptional cases of employees ... who were willing, but not necessarily suitable. Subsequently induction was inadequate. Expatriation was "sold" to people to persuade them to accept it, and financial incentives played a major part of the deal (Baruch et al. 2002 p.663).

More recently, selection practices have improved and, now more than ever, "the choice of an individual for an expatriate assignment looms large as [a] key, strategic selection decision" (Guthrie et al. 2003 p.229). Thus, a large and increasing amount of research has been focussed on selection decisions.

What is being discovered is that, in most companies, selection for overseas assignments is often described as ‘ad hoc’ (Hutchings 2002), or ‘an irrational process’ (Anderson 2005) or done too ‘hastily’ (Ferraro 2002). Further, the selection criteria tend to be inadequate, inasmuch as there is minimal long-term strategic thinking involved and sometimes the selection process is outside the responsibility of the HR department (Anderson 2001; 2005; Ferraro 2002). This is rather alarming especially as expatriates tend to be expensive and high risk investments (Edkins 1995).

Even though research studies “suggest strongly that a wide range of criteria need to be applied to the selection process”(Ferraro 2002 p.159), most multinational corporations continue to select expatriates primarily on the basis of technical skills and knowledge (Anderson 2005; Andreason 2003b; Bonache et al. 2001; Katz & Seifer 1996; Mendenhall et al. 2002; Sims & Schraeder 2004). In other words, a manager assigned overseas in Jakarta, for example, will be selected primarily based on job-related knowledge and managerial expertise obtained in the domestic environment. This is troublesome according to Mendenhall (2002 p.173) who considered that “heavy emphasis on technical qualification and past performance for international selection decisions ignore the fact that success in a domestic operation does not necessarily guarantee a managers’ effectiveness in a foreign environment”. In fact, Andreason (2003b p.549) said “a manager who performs well in the domestic setting ... may not be able to adapt to managing in a different culture setting or living in intimate contact with members of a different culture”. Consequently, “instead of continuing the one-dimensional focus on technical competence as the primary consideration of expatriate managers, it has been

suggested that multinational firms should focus on more comprehensive selection criteria” (Katz & Seifer 1996 p.39).

It is noteworthy that the reliance on technical factors for selection is particularly true of organizations in the private and public sectors, while NGOs often additionally assess prospective candidates for interpersonal skills and include spouses and children in recruitment and the overall process (Anderson 2005).

2.6.4.1 Recruitment

Borstorff (1997 p.30) argued that “practitioner and research literature have confirmed that a growing reluctance to accept job transfers stems from considerations of financial and career costs, family disruptions, spouses’ careers, a growing awareness of employee rights and personal stresses associated with moving”. Thus, in designing the recruitment phase of the selection process, it is important to consider the factors associated with employee willingness to take expatriate assignments. This is brought to bear by Borstorff (1997) in Table 2.23.

Table 2.23 - Willingness to Expatriate

(Borstorff et al. 1997 p.38)

• Employees more willing to serve are likely to be single.
• Married couples without children at home or those with non-teenage children will probably be the most willing to move.
• Prior international experience appears associated with willingness to work as an expatriate.
• Individuals most committed to their professional careers...and to their employing organizations are prone to be more willing to work as expatriates.
• Careers and attitudes of spouses will likely have a significant impact on employee willingness to move overseas.
• Employee and spouse perceptions of organizational support for expatriates are critical to employee willingness to work overseas.

For those employees presenting themselves as willing to embark on an expatriate assignment, there are a number of factors that should be discussed during the recruitment phase, really prior to getting on with the selection process itself (O'Sullivan et al. 2002). O'Sullivan (2002) believed several factors (including career development, political conditions, quality of living conditions (i.e., medical facilities), difficulty of spousal adjustment and length of assignment) would open up a future expatriate's eyes to the realities of the expatriate experience, perhaps deterring some from making the plunge, and, in this way, enhancing the overall success of future overseas assignments while the remaining candidates would carry on in the selection process. According to Tung (1988), as cited in Ashamalla (1998), an ideal selection approach should involve a number of important aspects as presented in Table 2.24.

Table 2.24 - Selection Approach Considerations

Tung (1988) as cited in Ashamalla (1998 p.57)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear identification of the nature of the job and an assessment of the qualities and attitudes required by the expatriate who will be assigned to that job.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate information concerning the differences between the political, legal, social and cultural forces of the home country and the country of foreign assignment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the candidate's willingness to serve in the foreign country, actual preparation to do so, and the ability to serve effectively in what could be a greatly different culture.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of the candidate's and family's abilities and willingness to live abroad.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local nationals should be considered, given they have adequate abilities and the professional competence for the job.

The selection approach in recruitment is driven by selection criteria.

2.6.4.2 Selection Criteria

Organizations continue to expand dramatically their international operations, so the demand for expatriates continues to increase (Hutchings 2005). Success is important and depends largely on selecting the right individual for the overseas post (Fukuda & Chu 1994). To reduce failures, and thereby enhance the chances of success, Varner (2005 p.6) argued that “there has been an increasing attempt to isolate criteria that can contribute to success and select employees for expatriation who meet these criteria”. There is no doubt that “expatriate selection must be made on a number of criteria that go beyond technical competency and serve as effective predictors of cultural adjustment and consequently expatriate success” (Ferraro 2002 p.160).

As previously noted, the most important selection criteria described in the literature generally include the expatriate's ability to adapt, the ability of the spouse/family to adapt and human relation skills (Anderson 2001; Ashamalla 1998; Deresky 2002; Ferraro 2002; Katz & Seifer 1996; McDonald 1993; Tung 1982). The literature provides a rather lengthy breakdown of the selection criteria into specific factors including: interest in other people and cultures, combined with cultural empathy; sensitivity to cross-cultural factors; sensitivity to world events; respect for all that is different (awareness of environmental constraints); openness to experience, persistence and resilience; foreign language proficiency or ability to acquire within a short time frame; role flexibility, adaptability and entrepreneurship; self-motivation; tolerance for ambiguity; managerial and decision making abilities; communication skills; interpersonal skills; extraversion, emotional stability and agreeableness; conscientiousness; and international experience (Ashamalla 1998; Baruch et al. 2002; Ferraro 2002; Hutchings 2005; O'Sullivan et al. 2002; Selmer 2002; Sim & Dixon 2004; Sims & Schraeder 2004; Suutari & Brewster 2001). It is useful to review the literature that has described what successful companies see as similar characteristics in individuals who excel in their expatriate assignments (Andreason 2003b; Black & Gregersen 1999; Ferraro 2002; Rushing & Kleiner 2003). These factors are summarized in Table 2.25.

Table 2.25 - Characteristics of Successful Expatriates

(Andreason 2003b; Black & Gregersen 1999; Ferraro 2002; Rushing & Kleiner 2003)

Characteristic	Description
A Drive To Communicate	Most expatriates will try to communicate with local people in their new country, but people who end up being successful in their jobs are those that do not give up after early attempts either fail or embarrass them. Learning the language enhances communication.
Broad-Based Sociability	The tendency for many people posted overseas is to stick with a small circle of fellow expatriates. By contrast, successful global managers establish social ties to the local residents, from shopkeepers to government officials.
Cultural Flexibility	It is human to gravitate to the familiar – that’s why many Westerners overseas find themselves eating lunch at McDonalds’s. But those who add the most value to their companies – by staying for the duration and being open to local market trends – are those who are motivated to willingly experiment with different customs.
Cosmopolitan Orientation	Expatriates with a cosmopolitan mind-set intuitively understand that different cultural norms have value and meaning to those who practice them. Companies that send the right people abroad have identified individuals who respect diverse viewpoints; they live and let live.
A Collaborative Negotiation Style	Different cultures can hold radically different expectations about the way negotiations should be conducted. Thus, a collaborative negotiation style, which can be important enough in business at home, becomes absolutely critical abroad.
A Happy Family	The importance of the satisfied spouse is emphasized. Often the spouse is not employed while living in the foreign environment and may encounter a greater challenge in adapting to the circumstances than the expatriate who has the security and familiarity of the workplace.

Unfortunately, often it is difficult to identify these characteristics in individuals until they are actually living the overseas experience. However, it is possible to use currently available measurement tools, and some companies do just that, to try to identify these characteristics. Indeed, the selection process has become more sophisticated as evidenced by the existence of these tools including “personality tests; biographical data

questionnaires; structured interviews; and behavioral assessment techniques”

(Mendenhall et al. 2002 p.174).

The importance of the family is stressed throughout the expatriate literature. Ashamalla (1998 p.56) clearly expected “the selection plan should also include the expatriate family”. In fact, it is crucial that the employer and the employee both assess the ability of the spouse and children to adjust to the environment of the new culture. Poor adjustment by the family has been identified as one of the primary reasons for the failure of the expatriate assignment (Ashamalla 1998; Sim & Dixon 2004).

For the current study, where expatriate managers’ perspectives of the lived experiences are being sought, it is informative to review Suutari’s (2001) quantitative research in which 660 expatriates were asked, via questionnaire, to identify what they felt were the most important selection criteria from their experience. Interestingly enough, 74 percent of the expatriates said work related skills were the most important selection criteria (Suutari & Brewster 2001). The top seven responses are listed in Table 2.26.

Table 2.26 - Most Important Selection Criteria as per Expatriates

(Suutari & Brewster 2001 p.563)

Most Important Selection Criteria	Percent of Expatriates (N= 660)
Work related skills	74
Language skills	60
Human relations skills	50
Knowledge of the country and its culture	31
Family situation	12
Prior performance	10
Earlier international experience	5

Mendenhall (2002 p.172) noted “it is necessary to undertake a careful analysis of the job, organization and host culture first, and then establish and prioritize the selection criteria according to the demands of the particular position”. Different jobs have different realities when it comes to such things as contact with the local cultural community. An accounting or technical manager probably requires much less local interaction than the marketing or general manager, for example. Thus, different weightings on the selection criteria may be utilized (Mendenhall et al. 2002; Tung 1982). Tung (1982 p.63) said “in jobs which require more extensive contacts with the local community, attributes like ‘adaptability, flexibility in new environmental settings,’ and ‘communication’ were more frequently identified as being very important”.

Tung (1987 p.118) explained that, “since technical competence almost always prevents immediate failure on the job ... selectors play [it] safe by placing a heavy emphasis on technical qualifications and little on the individual’s ability to adapt to a foreign environment”. This shortsighted approach to selection (Forster 2000) could lead to adjustment difficulties for the expatriate manager who is going abroad in the belief his selection was based on his ability to meet the challenges awaiting him during his assignment.

To complete this discussion on selection, general recommendations for the selection process that could assist both expatriates and companies in dealing with overseas assignments (McDonald 1993) are found in Table 2.27.

Table 2.27- General Recommendations for Selection Process

(McDonald 1993 p.24)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assessment and selection procedure of employees and families must be considered carefully and not assuming that a job requires the same skills from one location to the other.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The home country employer should undertake a review of the core cultural views that exist in the home society.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the confines of equal opportunity guidelines, consideration of the past experiences of a candidate should ensue. For example participation on student exchange programmes, periods of isolation such as boarding school or extended travel.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When evaluating a candidate for an overseas assignment, consideration of the whole family, a spouse who is not entirely happy with the placement, or children who could be unsettled by the experience, will jeopardize the success of the assignment.

Once a candidate is selected, the organization embarks in preparation for the assignment.

2.6.5 Preparation

Hutchings (2005 p.562) observed recently,

Organizations are still not prepared to invest financial and time resources in preparing their expatriates, but at least they are acknowledging the importance of acquiring individuals for expatriate assignments who already have some of the skills that contribute to cross-cultural competency.

To prepare expatriate managers for the rigours of the overseas posting, Katz (1996) introduced the term ‘socialization’ to include three processes (selection, pre-departure training and on-site socialization) that human resource personnel should insist upon to enhance the potential expatriation. Preparation is about getting ready for life in the host country. Sometimes it is forgotten that this includes putting things in order in the home country before departure. Preparing for departure can be stressful as there may be

numerous tasks and decisions involved and the time available between selection and departure is often limited with two months being about right (Suutari & Brewster 2001). Mendenhall (2002 p.175) said that “multinational companies are generally helpful in arranging transport, housing, etc., and in preparing assignees for the requirements of their job”. Beyond this, the main focus is on the expatriate’s needs, while the family is largely ignored (Anderson 2001).

Although pre-departure training is a primary component of preparation for the overseas assignment (Peppas 2004) other activities including “preparatory visits, informal briefings, shadowing and overlaps may be more cost effective” (Bonache et al. 2001 p.10). Overall preparation is far from perfect, as reflected in the literature which indicated “clear deficiencies in expatriate preparation practices from the expatriates’ point of view” Suutari (2001 p.565).

One relatively common type of preparation activity is a pre-assignment visit by the expatriate and spouse to the host country (Ircha 1999; Sims & Schraeder 2004). These visits provide first-hand information about the host country and culture and greatly assist in evaluating what it would be like to live and work in the new cultural setting while also completing some practical activities including house hunting and checking out schooling for the children.

During preparation activities for the overseas assignment, it is common among European multinationals to utilize experienced expatriates to brief new expatriates and their

families during preparation for the overseas assignment (Tung 1987). It is best that the briefings are by “experienced managers who have worked here recently and who were up to date with what’s going on here” (Forster 2000 p.73). Further, McDonald’s (1993) recommendations concerning preparation including training and preparation activities are detailed in Table 2.28.

Table 2.28 -Recommendations for Overseas Assignment Preparation

(McDonald 1993 p.24)

Training Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predeparture training should be given to both the expatriate manager and also, of equal importance, to their family.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the failure rate in an estimated 80 percent of the cases attributes to poor adjustment rather than the lack of technical skills, the emphasis should be on more expatriate preparation programmes which involve specific cross-cultural training.
Other Preparation Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow adequate preparation lead time between the appointment decision and the transfer.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange a pre-assignment visit to the location for both the employee and their spouse.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide financial counseling to expatriate employees.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give an accurate time perspective of how long the overseas assignment will be.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign a home country mentor who will enable the manager to have regular contact with their home office.

Many organizations do not employ adequate cross-cultural training activities (Brewster & Pickard 1994; Mendenhall et al. 2002) which may result in a lack of human relations skills and can be a primary reason for expatriate failure (Ashamalla 1998; Ashamalla & Crocitto 1997; Braud 1998; Forster 2000; Hutchings 2003; McDonald 1993; Tung 1987). In fact, Tung (1982) reported that 68 percent of expatriates did not have any cross-cultural training at all.

The reasons given by organizations for not providing training included: unproven effectiveness, time constraints, cost, temporary nature of assignments and a trend toward employing local people (Forster 2000; Tung 1982). Recent expatriate literature strongly identified training as necessary and that the level of such training should depend on factors including: cultural distance, length of assignment and degree of interaction with local people (Andreason 2003a). Also, training can be beneficial in preparing for the return home.

Tung (1982) said suitable training has a positive impact on the performance effectiveness of the expatriate manager while Adler's (1983 p.33) research, involving 52 experts in the field of management, indicated that "training managers to be sensitive to cultural considerations was seen as being more important than either locating or selecting competent job candidates". Furthermore, Morley (2003a) pointed out the value of undertaking cross-cultural training initiatives dedicated to improving empathy, communicative ability, the development of coping mechanisms through the provision of useful stress management techniques, and the nurturing of abilities suited to developing and handling cross-cultural interactions.

It is interesting to note the existence of low management turnover rates in European and Japanese multinational corporations as opposed to their North American counterparts where turnover tends to be higher. Due to this reality, investments in cross-cultural training are not seen as being as sound in North American companies simply because one is not as certain about retaining management employees.

In the following sections, cross-cultural training is divided in several parts to facilitate further explication regarding the importance of cross-cultural training, training of family, expatriate managers' perspective of training, predeparture and post-arrival training, and ongoing training.

2.6.5.1 Importance of Cross-Cultural Training

The ability to adapt to new cultures is one of the most important elements of a successful international assignment. This is where cross-cultural training can play such an important role. The main purpose of these training programs is to introduce staff to the importance of culture and to sensitize them to cultural differences. They should also make them aware of the inevitable psychological stresses that occur when people adapt to living and working in new cultures.
(Forster 2000 p.65)

Mendenhall's (2002 p.175) view is that "as expatriate assignments play an increasingly critical role in the execution of international business strategies and the development of global managers, the effective training of expatriates is of strategic importance to the overall success of [multinational corporations]". Similarly, Hutchings (2002 p.39) argued that "large employers would be more likely to have developed some form of cross-cultural and expatriate training programme". Unfortunately, only about 30 to 45 percent of international organizations offer cross-cultural training to their expatriate managers (Ashamalla 1998; Ashamalla & Crocitto 1997; Black & Mendenhall 1990; Ferraro 2002; Mendenhall et al. 2002; Shim & Paprock 2002; Tung 1982) even though these "training programs help the international assignee ... navigate the rules of a foreign culture with greater ease and success" (Melles 2002 p.11). Furthermore, the organizations that do offer cross-cultural training to their expatriate managers, are likely to limit training

activities in duration to superficial information about general living conditions in the host country and an overview of the sociopolitical and economic circumstances (Ashamalla 1998; Ashamalla & Crocitto 1997; Ferraro 2002; Glanz 2003; Tung 1987). In years past, Tung (1987) called this kind of training an environmental briefing at best and deemed it to be insufficient in preparing expatriates for overseas assignments. Most illuminating and troubling, more recently, is the attitude often associated with cross-cultural training; viz., that “disappointing financial quarterly results may lead an American company to cancel cultural training sessions for the next quarter (Prud'homme van Reine & Trompenaars 2000 p.239).

Although “cross-cultural training has long been considered essential in facilitating effective interaction” (Ashamalla & Crocitto 1997 p.108), there are reasons for the lukewarm interest in cross-cultural training activities. There is ample evidence in the literature that many senior managers question the effectiveness of cross-cultural training believing that working in the home country equals that of the host country (Bonache et al. 2001; Brewster & Pickard 1994; Shim & Paprock 2002; Tung 1982). Further reasons for lack of interest in cross-cultural training programs include such things as: the expensive cost, the time consuming features, the short term nature of expatriate assignments, the lack of time between selection and departure, the past dissatisfaction with previous training programs and the trend to hiring managers from the host country instead (Katz & Seifer 1996; Sims & Schraeder 2004; Tung 1982).

Fortunately, academics have recognized the importance of cross-cultural training and have long recommended its implementation (Black & Mendenhall 1990; Shim & Paprock 2002). The fundamental reason for providing cross-cultural training is the evidence that management skills are not transferable readily around the world, but need to be integrated with adequate cross-cultural knowledge and skills (Hutchings 2005; Selmer 2002). Black (1990 p.132) agreed with this point of view stating that “in both domestic and international contexts new work-related behaviors must be learned; however, in most cross-cultural training situations new nonwork behaviors must be learned as well”. Without cross-cultural knowledge, expatriates will be unprepared to understand and respond effectively in the foreign cultural environment. Instead they will “be relying on their existing response patterns learned in their home country and with the danger of misinterpreting the current situation and creating consequential problems” (McDonald 1993 p.20).

An increasing amount of research indicates that cross-cultural training is valuable in developing cultural skills, accelerating and enhancing expatriate adjustment to the novel cultural environment and, thereby, increasing the effectiveness of job performance during the overseas assignment (Black & Mendenhall 1990; Mendenhall et al. 2002; Shim & Paprock 2002). It is about “the gradual development of familiarity, comfort, and proficiency regarding expected behavior and the values and assumptions inherent in the new culture” (Black & Mendenhall 1990 p.118) and clearly cross-cultural training can speed up this process by reducing uncertainty, minimizing inappropriate behaviors and other errors or setbacks.

Brewster (1994 p.19) argued that “the depth of training provided should depend on the task, the environment, and the individual, or on the length of stay, the extent of integration into the host culture, and the cultural difference of the host country from the home country”. The kind of content that should be included in cross-cultural training programs for sojourners was identified in the literature (Andreason 2003b; Hutchings 2005; Mendenhall et al. 2002; Shim & Paprock 2002; Tung 1982). This material is synthesized and presented in Table 2.29.

Table 2.29 - Cross-Cultural Training Programs

Adapted from (Andreason 2003b; Hutchings 2005; Mendenhall et al. 2002; Shim & Paprock 2002; Tung 1982)

Type of Training	Description of Training
Job Expectations	Providing the expatriate with accurate job expectations and a clear sense of what he/she is “getting into”.
Environmental briefing	Providing practical information on housing, schools and factual information about the host country including geography, climate, political, economic and cultural facts about the host country.
Cultural orientation	Providing cultural awareness including information about the cultural institutions, value systems of host country.
Culture assimilation	Providing simulated experience describing intercultural encounters via such techniques as role play, negotiation simulations, and field experiences.
Language training	Developing effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills with local country hosts.
Sensitivity training	Developing flexibility in attitudes toward host nationals.
Training for Family	Providing training activities for the spouse and family whose adjustment can be difficult and is necessary for overall success in the expatriation program.

The level and type of training should depend on “the expected level of interaction with host nationals and the amount of similarity with the home culture” (Andreason 2003b

p.550). In the case of significant interaction, Banuta-Gomez (2002) pointed out that training manuals recommend developing personal relationships with host nationals by learning to speak the language, participating in ethnic celebrations, eating local foods, being patient and tolerant, and soliciting perspectives regarding your own culture.

2.6.5.2 Expatriate Managers' Perspectives on Training

It is interesting to note that “some resistance to formal expatriate training comes from executives themselves” (Glanz 2003 p.260). It is reported by Glanz (2003 p.260) that as many as one third of managers themselves choose not to engage in the offered training activities possibly due to other commitments or lack of time. However, the majority of expatriates tend to be positive about cross-cultural training for expatriation (Bonache et al. 2001; Brewster & Pickard 1994; Prud'homme van Reine & Trompenaars 2000).

Brewster (1994 p.19) explained that “this is not surprising [as] they are being put into a new and difficult position, in an environment that they do not understand, and with great expectations of performance weighing on them”. The expatriates believe that training has the potential to help them adjust to the host country. Further, irrespective of their earlier expatriate experience, career expatriate managers believe that an expatriate must be trained additionally for every new host country to which they are assigned (Suutari 2003). Thus, the importance of cross-cultural training from the expatriate managers' perspective is clear. Unfortunately, recent studies have indicated that only one out of five expatriates who have undertaken cross-cultural training believe it to be of good quality (Peppas 2004).

Of interest to the current study is the research that investigated training in relation to expatriates' loyalty to their organization. The loyalty categories of free agent, hearts-at-home, going native and dual citizens (Black & Gregersen 1992) were described earlier in this chapter (see Table 2.22). In relation to training, these different categories are considered in relation to perception of cross-cultural training (Prud'homme van Reine & Trompenaars 2000) as presented in Table 2.30.

Table 2.30 - Organizational Loyalty and Perception of Cross-cultural Training

(Prud'homme van Reine & Trompenaars 2000 p.241)

Free agent
They are focussed on their personal career. Their perspective on training will probably be that they need enough information to be successful in their temporary new environment and avoid making mistakes.
Hearts-at-home
They are likely to be mainly interested in training that helps them to impose systems and procedures from headquarters in the local subsidiary. Because some of these individuals accept their assignment mainly because of a fear of negative career consequences, they may also show resistance to training.
Going native
Because they want to adapt to the local culture, they may be very interested in various types of training. However, the going-native approach is not necessarily the most effective. It may hinder coordination between global and local operations.
Dual citizen
This type of expatriate will likely be interested in training that helps him or her to reconcile different cultural orientations, such as that of the culture at the corporate headquarters and that of the host country-they make the most effective of international managers.

2.6.5.3 Pre-departure & Post-Arrival Training

While the majority of cross-cultural training reported in the literature typically takes place prior to the overseas assignment, it can also take place after the expatriate is living

and working in the host country environment. Both pre-departure and/or post-arrival training are considered key ingredients to successful adjustment and effectiveness of expatriates (Hutchings 2005; Ircha, 1999; Katz & Seifer 1996). Unfortunately, “little appears to be provided in the way of pre-departure and in-country training for expatriate managers and their families” (Mendenhall et al. 2002 p.176). The main reasons for this are presented in Table 2.31.

Table 2.31 - Reasons for Not Providing Pre-departure and In-Country Training

(Mendenhall et al. 2002 p.176)

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The belief that cross-cultural training programs are not effective or relevant. • Trainee dissatisfaction with training programs. • Time constraints prior to an international assignment. • The trend toward employing local nationals in foreign subsidiaries. • The costs involved in providing cross-cultural training. • No perceived need for cross-cultural training on the part of top management. |
|---|

Even with reasons for not providing pre-departure and in-country training, cross-cultural training is necessary and should focus on providing expatriates with essential information, skills and attitudes they may require when living and working in an unfamiliar and uncertain cultural environment (Ashamalla 1998; Baker & Ivancevich 1971; Ircha 1999; Melles 2002; Sims & Schraeder 2004). It is believed the level of training needs to reflect the realities of “cultural toughness (the extent of the difference between the host culture and the home culture), the assignment’s duration, the degree of interaction with the host nationals, and the differences in tasks to be performed on the job” (Andreason 2003b p.550). As well, training must be ongoing.

2.6.5.4 Ongoing Training

Documented research has indicated that cross-cultural training activities were more common in the pre-departure stage than in the post-arrival stage (Suutari & Brewster 2001). Indeed, international assignments are considered to be processes rather than one-off events (Forster 2000; Ircha 1999), thus training activities should be undertaken on an on-going basis during the actual overseas assignment.

Varner (2005 p.19) believed that “training in cultural awareness needs to be an ongoing process because the employees, their companies, and the environment in which they operate all change”. Glanz (2003) wrote about the importance and effectiveness of on-site, real-time training and indicated that it is more valued by expatriate managers. Cross-cultural training can benefit both the expatriates and the host country employees and is easily accommodated by in-country training activities (Suutari & Brewster 2001). The Canadian International Development Agency funds publications such as *Working with a Canadian Partner* (CIDA 1995) and *Working with an Indonesian Partner* (Farry et al. 1995) for this very purpose.

As stated, it is interesting to note that “the literature on expatriate training focuses on pre-departure training and preparation” while research on the role of on-site, real time training is very rare (Suutari & Brewster 2001 p.300). HR is more limited in its ability to offer training programs in remote and or unfamiliar environments, and this may be a similar limitation for researchers.

In light of the current study, it is useful to review training related concerns as expressed by expatriate managers in a study completed by Forster (2000). He described the main concerns of the expatriate managers in his sample (N= 1,630) were the lack of up-to-date knowledge concerning local business environments, the very short duration of most of these courses, the lack of advice on coping with family problems during international assignments and the lack of follow-up training after they had started international assignments (Forster 2000). Therefore, support is vital for expatriates and their family members.

2.6.6 Support

Rushing (2003 p.18) stated that “employers are realizing that making an investment in the management of the employee’s concerns will be rewarding to both parties in the long run”. There is little doubt this may lead to more successful expatriate assignments and, consequently, not as many costly failures. Considering this, it is surprising that Hutchings’s (2002 p.32) work indicated a “serious deficit in in-post support” in expatriation assignments located in China, which arguably is of utmost importance to international business and increasingly so, not to mention the imposing cultural challenges confronting expatriate managers in China. It was found that many expatriate managers emphasize the importance of in-post support (Hutchings 2005) and Edkins (1995 p.36) commented that “ongoing support and mentoring from HR is essential ... particularly in the early weeks and months”. Shaffer (1999 p.573) stressed the importance of logistical and co-worker support and simply said “firms seeking to enhance the

effectiveness of their expatriates should attempt to foster a supportive organizational culture both at home and abroad”. In promoting active in-post support, Jassawalla (2004 p.42) proposed that organizations should “deliberately provide opportunities for frequent communication in ways that enable the expatriate to feel sufficiently connected and involved in home office operations”.

It appears that the key to a successful in-post support program is to plan and implement it well in advance so it is functioning prior to serious issues or problems cropping up (Klaus 1995). Programs should include language and cross-cultural training as well as cultural mentors, but most importantly, HR must remain responsive and adaptable to the expatriates’ actual needs during the overseas assignment as this will enhance adjustment and the overall performance level of these valuable employees (De Cieri et al. 1991; Rushing & Kleiner 2003; Shim & Paprock 2002). De Cieri (1991 p.411) had stressed the view that “the development of comprehensive and flexible approaches to help expatriates is a vital consideration for people involved in international business”.

Baruch (2002) proposed that in-post support consists of work related and non-work related aspects, while Shaffer’s (1998) research illuminated the need for HR practitioners to address non-work related aspects in addition to the traditional work-related aspects. This is a major difference in practice from the domestic setting, but is vital especially to the expatriate’s overall well-being in the foreign cultural setting. It is important to recognize, as written earlier in this thesis, that non-work factors, including family issues, remain important throughout the entire duration of the assignment, and play a large role

in the case of a premature ending of an expatriate assignment as evidenced by Shaffer's (1998) research. Furthermore, Shaffer (1998 p.113) noted that few HR policies are "directly aimed at supporting the expatriate's family" so he felt organizations could reduce premature returns by placing some focus on this critical aspect of in-post support.

Partially, in-post support may be in the form of training activities; however, Suutari (2001) pointed out the literature has not paid much attention to what has been provided in terms of on-site training as traditionally the focus has been on pre-departure training. Of significance to the current research is the literature demonstrating that NGOs differ significantly from corporations in regard to their support of the needs of the expatriate's family. NGOs were found to be more inclusive of families throughout the expatriate assignment than were multinational corporations (Anderson 2001).

Table 2.32 - Three Types of In-Post Support

(Kraimer et al. 2001 p.73)

Type	Description of Type	What it does/provides
Aid	Entails providing relevant information and assistance to the expatriate.	Reduces his or her stress and helps make sense of the work environment.
Affect	Is based on interpersonal attraction between the source of social support and support seeker.	Affect is similar to mutual liking and provides high-quality supportive relationships.
Affirmation	Refers to reaffirming the support seeker's abilities and beliefs in oneself to deal with the stressful situation.	Relationships that are reaffirming will be more helpful than those that are not reaffirming.

Hutchings (2005) describes in-post support as being the assistance provided to expatriates during overseas assignments; others describe it similarly. For example, Kraimer (2001

p.73) defined in-post support in the host country as “the availability of helping relationships and the quality of those relationships” and described three distinct types he named as aid, affect and affirmation, as detailed in Table 2.32.

In overseas assignments, expatriates and their families have to find ways to cope with the changes that the new job and foreign environment require; even a thorough preparation for the assignment cannot entirely protect expatriates from adjustment troubles, confusion due to unexpected behavior, the experience of unpredictability and the feelings of abandonment and isolation (Mendenhall et al. 2002). It has been suggested that beneficial in-country support often is delivered in three ways: by a person(s) at the home country office, by fellow expatriate(s) at the foreign location, and by a host country national (Hutchings 2005).

2.6.6.1 Company-Home Support

Black (1999 p.52) has argued that “once expats are in place, executives back home are not usually inclined to coddle their well-paid representatives. When people are issued first-class tickets on a luxury liner, they’re not supposed to complain about being at sea”. However, the literature is clear that this is not sufficient. Expatriates need support from home because “international assignments often involve role conflicts between family and career or between home-country expectations and host country job demands” (Mendenhall et al. 2002 p.178). In fact, it is well documented in the literature that in-post support from the home organization and supervisor is important to expatriate managers

and their families (Ashamalla 1998; Kraimer et al. 2001). Interestingly, it may be enough for the expatriate simply to feel that his or her organization cares about his contributions and well-being both outside the workplace and at the workplace (Kraimer et al. 2001; Suutari & Brewster 2001).

Company support from home can be designed to support cultural adjustment to the different living and working environment, enhance job performance and assist in maintaining home country contacts (Mendenhall et al. 2002). Specific examples of support by home country organizations include frequent contact with the headquarters' HR department, and senior line managers through meetings in the home or host countries, the use of mentor-mentee support systems, regular provision of guidebooks, telephone and email communication, medical and psychological assistance, information on housing, health and schooling and language/communication training (Ashamalla 1998; Hutchings 2005; Katz & Seifer 1996; Sims & Schraeder 2004; Suutari & Brewster 2001). The benefits of home organization support is not to be underestimated, as most expatriates experience a real concern regarding the "sense of isolation from the domestic realities of the firm and feelings of being away from the corporate centers of power" (Ashamalla 1998 p.60).

2.6.6.2 Expatriate Colleagues' Support

Valuable cultural guides often referred to as 'informal support' frequently are in the form of experienced expatriates in the host country. These persons often are found at

international schools and expatriate communities or through the newly arrived expatriate's initiative in taking memberships in business associations and recreation clubs whose fees are normally paid for by the home organization (Ashamalla 1998; Hutchings 2005; Ircha 1999).

2.6.6.3 Host Nationals' Support

The social and work relationships with local host nationals are an important source of support for expatriates, especially newly arrived individuals who are in the process of figuring out the unfamiliar cultural environment (Shim & Paprock 2002). In particular, this type of support, and/or the use of more local managers, is valuable in more remote locations where there is a limited expatriate presence (Brewster & Pickard 1994; Varner & Palmer 2005). All types of support are proposed to benefit expatriates and their families and lead to adjustment of the experience.

2.6.7 Adjustment

Clearly, there exists some level of adjustment whenever an individual ventures into an unfamiliar cultural environment such as the expatriate manager whose "realization that he had crossed a threshold came on his first day in a foreign assignment. A manager met him in the host country and gave him a brief refresher course on driving a manual transmission" (Osland 1995b p.48). Although this may be seen as quite humorous, adjustment is to be taken seriously; as Katz (1996 p.33) pointed out: "the inability of

expatriate managers to adjust to the host country's social and business environment is costly in terms of management performance, productivity in the overseas operation, client relations, and operations efficiency".

Cross-cultural adjustment difficulties are an important topic in expatriation given that, as previously written, an average of 30 percent of overseas assignments fail or are ineffective as a result (Ashamalla & Crocitto 1997). Indeed, when an expatriate enters another cultural environment, old routines are upset, creating uncertainty and anxiety. Adjustment involves reducing the uncertainty by learning appropriate behaviours to facilitate the adjustment process (Mendenhall & Wiley 1994). Several researchers (Andreason 2003a; Kelly 1998; Martinko & Douglas 1999; Selmer 1999) have identified that the inability to adjust to the foreign environment is the main factor in failed expatriate assignments.

Researchers use the terms adjustment, adaptation and acculturation interchangeably (Mendenhall et al. 2002) when referring to the process that expatriates undergo while living in another culture. There are two mechanisms of adjustment that have been identified. These are referred to as the coping process (strategies and behaviours that are used to cope with the foreign environment to achieve psychological well-being) and the learning process (the individual's ability to negotiate new aspects of the new culture) (Mendenhall et al. 2002; Selmer 1999; Zimmerman, Holman, & Sparrow 2003). Undeniably, expatriate acculturation is a complicated process (Richards 1996) that is

initiated when the organization determines its overseas requirements and engages in recruiting, selection and training activities (Andreason 2003a).

Mendenhall (1994) proposed there is a relationship between cross-cultural adjustment and individual skills after Mendenhall & Oddou (1985) identified four dimensions that directly relate to expatriate adjustment. These include self-orientation (consisting of stress reduction, technical competence and reinforcement substitution); orientation to others (including relationship development and willingness to interact with local people); perceptual abilities (relating to one's ability to understand why the local culture behaves as it does); and cultural toughness (referring to the cultural distance between home and host cultures). A review of the international adjustment literature contained numerous references to these dimensions (further described in Table 2.33) as being significant to successful cross-cultural adjustment by the expatriates (Lee 2005).

Individual attributes, skills and abilities are important ingredients in producing successful overseas assignments. However, this implies a focussed attention on the expatriate while underplaying the vital responsibility of the employing organization in developing, implementing and managing successful expatriation programs. Thus, it is important to make note of the pre-departure and post-arrival dimensions comprising five factors involved in international adjustment (Black et al. 1991; Lee 2005) as presented in Figure 2.1.

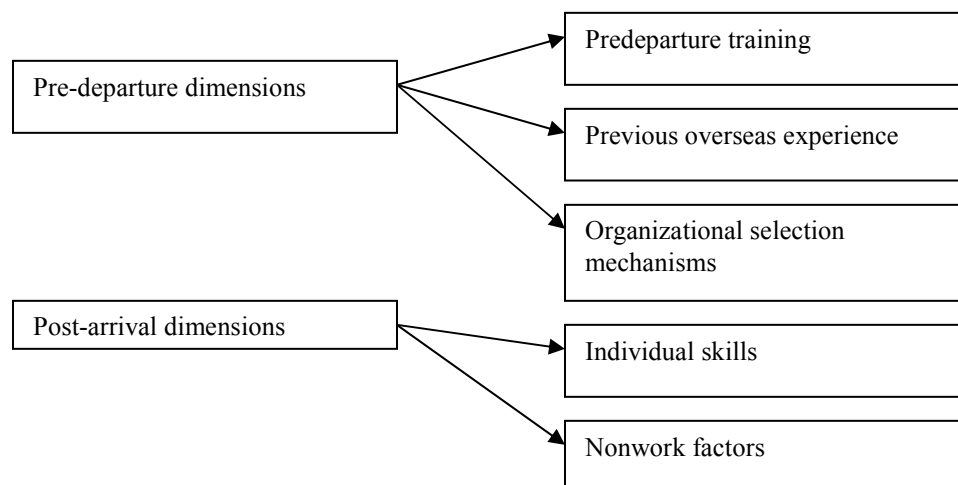
Table 2.33 - Four Dimensions related to Successful Expatriate Adjustment

Adapted from (Anderson 2005; Black et al. 1991; Katz & Seifer 1996; Lee 2005; McDonald 1993; Mendenhall & Oddou 1985; Mendenhall & Wiley 1994; Richards 1996; Stening 1994)

Self-orientation
The expatriate expresses an adaptive concern for self-knowledge, self-efficacy, self-esteem, self-confidence, mental health, mental hygiene, psychological well-being, effective stress management, physical mobility, technical competence, dealing with alienation, dealing with isolation and realistic expectations prior to departure.
Others-orientation
The expatriate expresses concern for host country nationals and fosters relationships in order to interact effectively with host nationals. The expatriate's ability is marked by: willingness to communicate, nonverbal communication, respect for others and empathy for others.
Perception-orientation
The expatriate correctly perceives and evaluates the host environment and understands behaviour of the host nationals. The expatriate has tolerance for ambiguity and flexible attributions and is non-judgmental, and open-minded and independent.
Cultural tough-mindedness
The expatriate has the ability to adapt to vastly differing cultures by being resilient and persistent or tough.

Figure 2.1: Five Dimensions in International Adjustment

(Black et al. 1991; Lee, 2005)



As indicated in Figure 2.1, three factors deal with aspects that occur before expatriates leave for their overseas assignment (pre-departure), and the remaining two factors are those that are relevant once the expatriate manager is on location in the foreign country (post-arrival).

In their work, Black et al. (1991 p.292) noted that “most domestic adjustments do not involve significant changes in the nonwork environment; living in Los Angeles versus New York may be quite different in many ways, but the language, cultural, economic, social, and political contexts are significantly familiar”. On the other hand, the international assignment, although the work environment may be similar, may involve functioning daily in very different circumstances related to the general culture and general living conditions (Lee 2005). Certainly, the “unique aspect of international assignments is the expatriate’s adjustment to living and working in a foreign culture” (Shaffer & Harrison 1998 p.93).

Consequently, the related field of domestic adjustment has been studied for many years and proved valuable in the development of an integrated model of domestic and international adjustment literature by Black et al. (1991), who are prominent scholars in the field of expatriation (Suutari & Brewster 2001). In developing a theoretical framework of the expatriate adjustment process, Black et al. (1991) identified three in-country adjustment types; namely adjustments to work, general culture and interaction with local people. The different types of in-country adjustment are described in Table 2.34. Also, the theoretical framework demonstrated that adjustment to a foreign culture occurs in two phases. The first is called anticipatory adjustment and occurs during the

pre-departure phase of the expatriation process (Selmer 2002). Mendenhall & Wiley (1994 p.611) purported it is “the degree to which correct information about the values, norms, and behavioral rules of the host culture is available to expatriates before they embark on their overseas assignment, [when] anticipatory adjustment occurs”. The proper level of anticipatory adjustment facilitates the second major component, in-country adjustment, which begins to occur upon arrival at the overseas location (Shaffer et al. 1999).

Table 2.34 – Facets of In-Country Adjustment

Adapted from (Andreason 2003b; Black et al. 1991; Fukuda & Chu 1994; Kraimer et al. 2001; Mendenhall & Wiley 1994; Morley & Flynn 2003b; Selmer 2000; Shaffer & Harrison 1998; Suutari 2001)

Adjustment	Description	Adjustment Problems
Adjustment to work	Is job-related and refers to the expatriate’s psychological comfort with respect to the job tasks of the foreign assignment.	Adjustments to work problems often emerge in manager-subordinate interaction, functioning of organizations, communication, and task environment.
Adjustment to interacting with host country nationals	Overlaps the work and nonwork environments and concerns interacting and communicating with the host country nationals.	
General adjustment to the nonwork environment	Is nonwork-related concerning the general culture and living conditions of the foreign society at large.	Adjustments to non-work problems generally include issues concerning schooling, housing, food, shopping, banking, entertainment, legal regulation and healthcare.

Of relevance to the current research is that inadequate attention has been given to non-work adjustment and the impact it has on work adjustment (Hutchings 2002).

Black (1990 p.130) argued that “some scholars have defined adjustment in terms of the psychological comfort and familiarity an individual feels for a new culture”. A distinction is made between the psychological and sociological adjustment components of expatriate international adjustment. Psychological adjustment deals with subjective well-being or emotional satisfaction (e.g., depression, anxiety, tension and fatigue) (De Cieri et al. 1991) occurring during the dynamic process of expatriation and repatriation. Sociological adjustment is about cultural specific skills (Selmer 2000; 2002; 2004) and ability to fit in “as measured by the amount of difficulty experienced in the management of everyday situations in the host culture” (Selmer 2000 p.73).

To enhance the expatriate manager’s adjustment to living and working in another culture, McDonald (1993) makes recommendations for human resource professionals (see Table 2.35) which may serve to enhance the adjustment process.

Table 2.35 - Recommendations for Human Resources in Facilitating Adjustment

(McDonald 1993 p.25)

• Do not expect the employee to be able to perform immediately on arrival.
• On arrival, appoint one employee (preferably at a similar level) to assist the new employee and their family.
• Flexible organization and communication structures of branch offices are conducive to expatriate effectiveness- particularly structures that are decentralized.
• Maintain frequent communication.
• Encourage contacts with host nationals and emphasize importance of early networking.
• Do not underestimate the effect that the local culture and physical environment may have on the manager.
• Emphasize the importance of ‘reinforcement substitution’ for the employee, spouse and family.

As well, of interest to the current study are references in the literature to two theories relevant to explaining and predicting international adjustment. They are impression management theory (Mendenhall & Wiley 1994; Montagliani & Giacalone 1998) and sense-making theory (Weick 1995). Impression management theory “offers a cognitive and interpersonal framework within which to understand how individuals’ abilities and predispositions prior to leaving their home country may affect expatriate adaptation via the controllability of communication”(Montagliani & Giacalone 1998 p.599).

Communication skills play a significant role in developing culturally appropriate behaviors and impression management, which refers to the “tendency to present oneself in a socially desirable way to others” (Mendenhall & Wiley 1994 p.608), may be a good strategy to utilize in navigating the cultural uncertainties of interacting with the host country. In addition, sense-making theory refers to a “process whereby we use conscious rational thought to reanalyze and bring order to confusion and surprise” and, thus, may be a viable construct for dealing with the uncertainties involved in the overseas expatriate experience (Glanz 2003 p.260).

Mendenhall (2002 p.171) argued that “current theoretical models of the expatriation process may concentrate too heavily on the issue of adjustment to the foreign culture”. Of particular interest to the current study is Mendenhall’s (2002) assertion that there are challenges facing the expatriate in addition to cross-cultural adjustment issues. Examples of potential challenges include difficult parent-host company relations, family issues, financial difficulties and negative effects due to climatology. However, this part of the expatriate’s experience is largely ignored in the literature.

2.6.7.1 Spouse and Family Adjustment

It is very important to recognize that the expatriates' spouse and family also undergo the adjustment process. This is important because many expatriates return home prematurely for spouse- and/or family-related reasons, primarily due to the inability of the spouse and/or family members to make a successful adjustment to the foreign culture (Adler 1983; Bauer & Taylor 2001; Brewster & Pickard 1994; Briody & Chrisman 1991; Fukuda & Chu 1994; Katz & Seifer 1996; Shaffer & Harrison 1998; Shim & Paprock 2002; Suutari & Brewster 2001). In fact, family adjustment difficulties are the primary cause in as many as 60 percent of all failed expatriate assignments (Sims & Schraeder 2004). For the expatriate remaining on the overseas assignment, a poorly coping family can serve to reduce the expatriate's morale and overall performance on the job (Anderson 2005). As well, Sims (2004 p.77) made the point that "it cannot be over-emphasized that the quality of the expatriate's experience functions in tandem with the experience of the expatriate's family". Clearly, organizations with expatriation programs need to pay attention to the effects on expatriate families and not just focus on the expatriate him/herself (Baruch et al. 2002; Frazee 1998). Especially, this is important considering there are estimates of more than one million spouses accompanying expatriates on overseas assignments (Bauer & Taylor 2001).

The accompanying spouse and children may be immersed in the local culture more than the expatriate, who is learning a new job in a familiar working environment and often with a built-in organizational support structure (Andreason 2003b; Rushing & Kleiner

2003). The family is left dealing with unfamiliar social and cultural realities on a daily basis (Fukuda & Chu 1994). In the spouse's case, frequently there is no support structure even though there is evidence of needs for culture and language lessons that may go beyond those of the expatriate if she or he is to adjust to the foreign living environment. There are three dimensions in the literature related to spouse adjustment; how well the spouse builds relationships with host-country nationals, how well the spouse adjusts to local customs and the culture in general, and the extent to which the spouse has a sense of becoming part of or feeling at home in the foreign country (Bauer & Taylor 2001).

Recommended company practices for families are presented in Table 2.36.

Table 2.36 - Recommended Practices for Families

(Andreason 2003b; Bauer & Taylor 2001; Mendenhall et al. 2002; Shaffer & Harrison 1998)

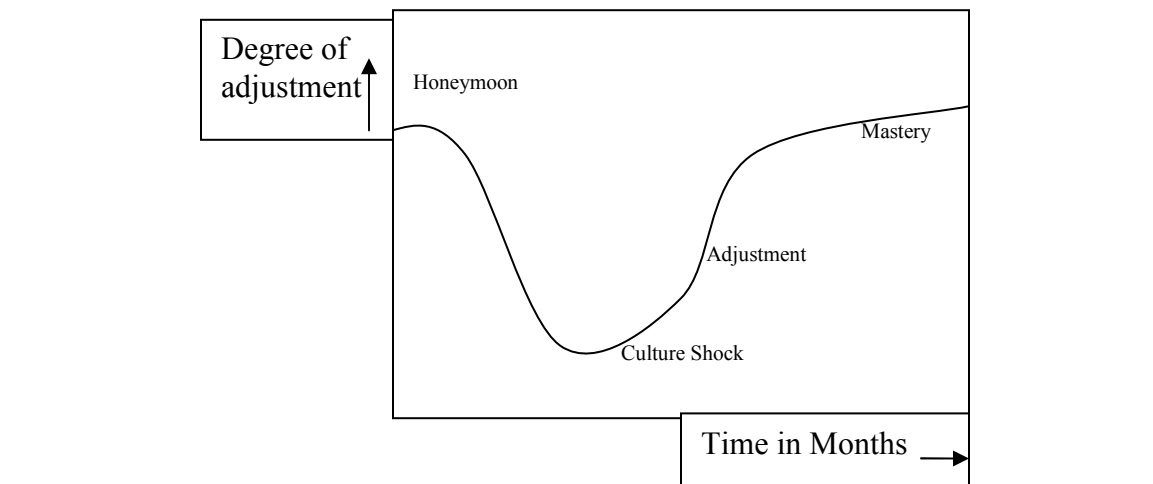
- Being realistic re assignment expectations.
- Predeparture assistance and ongoing support Pre-relocation and in-country language, intercultural orientation and training.
- Family business assistance with passport, banking, tax, relocation, clubs, school and housing arrangements.
- Family mentoring programs and/or cultural counselors.
- Company-sponsored social functions with host country nationals to obtain to social networks.
- Company facilitating communication back home for family.
- Job search assistance/work permit/visas etc.
- Career development activities.
- Psychological counseling.

2.6.7.2 Adjustment Phases

Adler (1991) and others (Deresky 2002; Ferraro 2002; Hodgetts & Luthans 2000; Montabaur 2002) described cross-cultural adjustment as a four-phase process frequently depicted by a u-shaped curve (see Figure 2.2). The first phase (honeymoon - top of curve) represents expatriates' experience of euphoria as they enjoy new experiences associated with the culture and feel able to deal with the daily routine of living and working (Black 1988; Ircha 2005; Lee 2005); phase two (culture shock - bottom of curve) depicts a period of disillusionment as difficulties of daily life become real. Hostile and aggressive attitudes towards the host nationals develop and the expatriate is left feeling helpless and depressed (Black 1988; Ircha, 2005; Lee 2005) and in a state known as culture shock (Oberg 1960); phase three (adjustment - curve ascends) occurs when the individual begins to understand and acknowledge new cultural norms and values and in so doing his or her behaviour gradually becomes more appropriate and acceptable to the host nationals (Black 1988; Ircha, 2005; Lee 2005); phase four (mastery - curve levels off) shows the expatriate feeling increasingly positive about foreign ways of being whereby quality of life and work improves and stabilizes producing an effective functioning in the new culture. Indeed, "until an individual has achieved a satisfactory adjustment he is not able to fully play his part on the job" (Oberg 1960 p.180). Interestingly, the u-shaped curve can be extended into a w-shaped curve depicting a second and similar adjustment process upon repatriation, often referred to as reverse culture shock (Baruch et al. 2002; Richards 1996).

Figure 2.2: U-Curve Theory of Adjustment

(Lee 2005 p.275)



This theory of adjustment is useful in understanding/predicting adjustment and in explaining failure.

2.6.8 Failure of Expatriate Managers Overseas

While organizations continue to grow and establish themselves overseas, they have to deal with high failure rates of their expatriate managers (Ashamalla 1998). Varner (2005 p.2) said the “research literature and the anecdotal evidence have consistently demonstrated that the failure rate of expatriates is high enough for concern”. Black (1999 p.52) asked why “so many companies get it so wrong?” As stated earlier, the literature has suggested the answer is that many senior executives still believe business is the same everywhere making technical competence of topmost importance in selection while often there is seen no need to engage in special programs to assist their expatriates (Black &

Gregersen 1999). Ferraro (2002 p.160) added that “the professional literature is clear that expatriates fail not because of technical incompetence but because they (or their accompanying family members) have not adjusted to the foreign culture”. There is no question that high expatriate failure rates coupled with high failure costs is a big concern for international human resource managers especially considering “multinational firms often rely on expatriate managers to perform key functions in the context of their global operations” (Guthrie et al. 2003 p.231).

To describe the literature on expatriate failure appropriately, the following sections are presented on what is failure, failure rates, failure costs, reasons for failure, success, and satisfaction.

2.6.8.1 What is failure?

Some researchers simply define failure as what happens when the expatriate returns home before completing the timeframe originally agreed upon for the overseas posting (Ashamalla 1998; Martinko & Douglas 1999). Tung (1987 p.117) added that failure has to do with “the inability of an expatriate to perform effectively in a foreign country, and hence, the need for the employee to be fired or recalled home” which suggested a focused blame for failure on the individual. Shaffer (1998), Fukuda (1994) and Varner (2005) concurred that failed assignments may also occur when the expatriate does not make a premature return home. By this they meant the expatriate remains on the assignment but psychologically withdraws causing “indirect losses for the firm- productivity, market

share, competitive position, damaged staff, customer and supplier relations, corporate image and reputation” (Shaffer & Harrison 1998 p.88). Varner (2005) explained the emphasis in regard to failure should be on aspects including: effectiveness of the expatriate during the assignment; knowledge the expatriate has obtained; whether the organization uses that knowledge; and whether the company retained the expatriate after repatriation.

2.6.8.2 Failure Rates

The failure rate of expatriation ranges from ten to 60 percent (Andreason 2003a; 2003b; Ashamalla 1998; Ashamalla & Crocitto 1997; Baruch et al. 2002; Black & Mendenhall 1990; Black et al. 1991; Borstorff et al. 1997; De Cieri et al. 1991; Deresky 2002; Ferraro 2002; McDonald 1993; Mendenhall & Oddou 1988; O'Sullivan et al. 2002; Selmer 1999; Sims & Schraeder 2004; Swaak 1995a; 1995b; Tung 1987). As mentioned previously in this chapter, many other expatriates endure to the end of their assignment but largely are ineffective and do not perform up to their managers' expectations (Black & Gregersen 1999; Mendenhall & Oddou 1988). In fact, Klaus (1995 p.60) said “some estimates indicate that over half of all international assignments fall short of their objectives” but it is only the worst cases that terminate before the planned conclusion.

Ircha (1999 p.152) reported that “the problem many North American [expatriates] face in accepting [and being successful in] international assignments is that their employers may not provide them with sufficient time to consider and learn about the cultural changes

they will face”. Of special interest to the current study, is that failure rates for expatriate postings in developing countries are generally much higher than in developed countries. While the failure rates for developed countries is concentrated in the 25 to 40 percent range, it is not uncommon for failure rates to be as high as 70 percent in developing countries such as Indonesia (Andreason 2003a; Swaak 1995a; Tung 1982; Varner & Palmer 2002). Costs to organizations are prevalent with failure of expatriate assignments.

2.6.8.3 Costs

Expatriate failures are costly to the corporations involved, as well as to the expatriates themselves (Ashamalla & Crocitto 1997; Hodgetts & Luthans 2000; Tung 1987) especially as most failing expatriates “had a noteworthy track record in the home office prior to overseas assignment” (Tung 1987 p.117). Thus, failing expatriates often suffer through a serious career setback at the same time as their personal lives are under a high level of stress (Ashamalla 1998; Ashamalla & Crocitto 1997). Career interruption and impaired business relationships can provide a heavy cost to an individual’s ego and a severe loss of self esteem and confidence. Also there can be serious personal costs in terms of family relationships and financial matters (Briody & Chrisman 1991; Shaffer & Harrison 1998; Tung 1987). However, there is a lack of literature detailing the financial and emotional costs to the expatriate and his or her spouse and family (Swaak 1995a) and this should be more fully understood by expatriates and their employers (De Cieri et al. 1991).

The direct cost of failed expatriate assignments represents a tremendous cost in terms of “repatriating the family; finding an appropriate position for the returning [expatriate]; selecting and training another family to replace the repatriated one and filling the domestic position of the new chosen [expatriate]” (Briody & Chrisman 1991 p.27). Indeed, the cost of failed expatriate assignments is considerable to individual organizations (Ferraro 2002). Estimated costs fall across a large range beginning at US\$ 55,000 per failure and up to over US\$ 2 billion nationally per year (Ashamalla, 1998; Black & Mendenhall 1990; Borstorff et al. 1997; De Cieri et al. 1991; Hutchings 2005; McDonald 1993; O'Sullivan et al. 2002; Shaffer & Harrison 1998; Sims & Schraeder 2004; Swaak 1995a).

The above costs include the identifiable costs connected to relocation, compensation, training, development, orientation and termination (Ashamalla 1998; Swaak 1995a). Black (1991 p.291) stated that “in addition to these costs, approximately 30 to 50 percent of American expatriates, whose average compensation package is \$250,000 per year, stay at their international assignments, but are considered ineffective or marginally effective by their firms”. Borstorff (1997) and Andreason (2003a) agreed that under-performing expatriates represent a significant, but largely unmeasurable, cost to organizations. This occurs because “job dissatisfaction, lowered morale, reduced productivity and personal and interpersonal difficulties at work” (De Cieri et al. 1991 p.409) are all probable.

The unmeasurable, also referred to as hidden or unidentifiable, costs include loss of business opportunities, damaged company reputations, weakened customer, supplier and

host government relationships and damaging effects on host country employees (Ashamalla 1998; Ashamalla & Crocitto 1997; Black & Mendenhall 1990; Hutchings 2005; Selmer 2000; Swaak 1995a). Furthermore, Fukuda (1994 p.36) has noted that “expatriate failure also represents human capital loss, especially if the individual’s skills, knowledge, and experience are important to the firm and scarce in the internal or external labor markets”. Reasons for failures have been addressed in the literature as well.

2.6.8.4 Reasons for Failure

Sadly, it is convenient and most alarming that failures “tend to be seen as indications of an individual’s inadequacies” (De Cieri et al. 1991 p.382) when “they should be viewed as consequences of company management practices” (De Cieri et al. 1991 p.382).

Similar to other researchers, Anderson (2005 p.568) believed the root cause for expatriate failure to be “inappropriate selection practices, inadequate preparation and training and the challenges inherent in expatriation”. Further, Anderson (2005 p.568) argued that “the failure of expatriate assignments, such as inappropriate selection, draw attention to the ... role of HR in the management of expatriates”.

Martinko (1999 p.266) supported the view that “the culmination of problems concerning cross-cultural adjustment, in addition to the more traditional problems concerning the acceptance of a new managerial position, too often result in failure”. More specifically, Tung (1987 p.117) suggested that “the family situation and relational abilities factors are usually responsible for failure or poor performance abroad”. Andreason (2003a p.43)

added that “experimental and anecdotal evidence suggest that the major contributing factor to expatriate failure is an inability to adjust to the foreign environment rather than a lack of technical competence”. The common theme is that “few companies actually pursue rigorous methods for assessing and developing the relational abilities of their expatriate personnel” and this often leads to failure (Tung 1982 p.67).

A list of factors contributing to failure, presented in descending order of importance, is noted in Table 2.37.

Table 2.37 - Reasons for Expatriate Failure

(Adler 1983; Anderson 2005; Katz & Seifer 1996; Tung 1982; 1987)

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability of the manager’s spouse to adjust to physical or cultural environment. • Expatriate’s inability to adapt rapidly to physical or cultural environment. • Family-related matters. • Expatriate’s personality or emotional characteristics. • Inability to cope with the complexity of the responsibilities of overseas work. • Expatriate’s lack of technical competence. • Expatriate’s lack of motivation to do the work overseas. |
|--|

The expatriate’s own inability to adapt to the foreign environment, or that of his/her family, receives an enormous amount of attention in the literature as a key reason for failure (Andreason 2003b; Swaak 1995a). Morley (2003a p.32) suggested a number of things that pose challenges while living in a novel cultural environment. They are presented in Table 2.38.

Table 2.38 -Challenges encountered in Foreign Environment

(Morley & Flynn 2003a p.32)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture shock • Isolation • Homesickness • Housing • Schooling • Cuisine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differences in work-related norms • Gender roles • Differences in healthcare • Language • Customs • Cost of living
---	---

Failures must be understood in order for success to occur.

2.6.8.5 Success

De Cieri (1991 p.409) argues that “companies need to be more aware of the potential benefits associated with adequate assistance for expatriates”. The main factors that influence expatriate success are family situation, job knowledge and motivation, relational skills, flexibility/adaptability and cultural openness (Guthrie et al. 2003). Through improved selection, preparation, training and in-post support these factors can be positively impacted, leading to increased overall success in the overseas assignment (De Cieri et al. 1991). It has been noted that, traditionally, there has been a higher success rate among expatriates of European and Japanese multinationals. Tung (1987) reviewed this reality and her reasons are listed in Table 2.39.

Table 2.39 - Reasons for Successful Expatriation in European and Japanese Firms

(Tung 1987 p.119)

European & Japanese Multinationals	Europeans only
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their long-term orientation regarding overall planning and performance assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International orientation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of more rigorous training programs to prepare candidates for overseas assignments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer history of overseas operations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of a comprehensive expatriate support system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language capability.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall qualification of candidates for overseas assignments. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted job mobility. 	

Success is also related to satisfaction.

2.6.8.6 Satisfaction

It has been written that international human resource professionals must be cognizant of how an expatriate's overseas experience impacts on his or her job satisfaction (Downes et al. 2002). Simply stated "if expatriates are not satisfied while on assignment, the motivation to perform well and/or to remain abroad for the specified length of time is diminished" (Downes et al. 2002 p.26). Thus non-work satisfaction plays a big role in the overall satisfaction of expatriates and certainly impacts on the decision to remain on assignment through to completion. These important aspects also are considered to be important for performance management of expatriates.

2.6.9 Performance Management of the Expatriate Manager

Performance management of the expatriate manager is important; however, generally it is not well measured if at all. In fact, the primary indicator appears to be attending to simple statistics concerning the expatriate managers' success in remaining overseas for the full term of the assignment. More critical measures (effectiveness, productivity and reputation) typically associated with evaluating management performance generally take a back seat (Briody & Chrisman 1991) in the international scenario.

Considering the large investment in placing and maintaining expatriates in overseas assignments, it is rather surprising that the literature has indicated that international organizations generally do not monitor and manage expatriate performance attentively (Bonache et al. 2001; Briody & Chrisman 1991). Swaak's (1995a p.51) argument took an opposite perspective, proposing that "management may be reluctant to terminate an overseas assignment after investing a great deal of money in the move". Also, the problem may be exacerbated by the typically considerable physical distance between expatriate and performance evaluator, thereby making evaluations a practical challenge (Bonache et al. 2001; Swaak 1995a; Varma 2003).

Due to the expanding growth in international operations, there is little doubt that the performance of expatriate managers is increasing in importance (Kraimer et al. 2001). In this light, performance evaluations are vital. Further, they represent an excellent opportunity for establishing communication flow between supervisors and expatriates

and, thereby, enhancing their relationships. By maintaining a positive link to headquarters, the expatriate will stay abreast of new developments at home, enhance career planning, and discuss work objectives, activities and results (Ashamalla 1998). In this way, the expatriate may experience reduced “feelings of isolation and purposelessness that seem acute among managers who have fewer, less frequent opportunities to communicate with the home office” (Jassawalla et al. 2004 p.42) thereby removing a potential hindrance to achieving high performance levels. The supervisors are recommended to take the initiative in developing a positive relationship with the expatriate for this translates into improved work performance by both expatriate and supervisor (Kraimer et al. 2001).

High performance definitely is linked to successful cross-cultural adjustment and a healthy supervisor-expatriate relationship helps to foster this process (Kraimer et al. 2001). As well, cultural mentors (Osland 1995b p.50) and positive family situations (Briody & Chrisman 1991) are seen to enhance expatriate performance in a constructive and significant way. Good performance may be rewarded with compensation.

2.6.9.1 Compensation

Compensation is so important it often is a significant factor in decisions by managers to accept or seek out a foreign assignment in the first place (Andreason 2003b). It is written that global compensation programs must draw and keep qualified expatriates, assist in the relocation to the foreign country and return home, provide for an acceptable standard of

living while overseas, reward high performance, serve to motivate expatriates in taking on difficult postings, provide the means for skill and knowledge development, protect against personal risks, be team oriented and provide for financial advancement (Andreason 2003b; Swaak 1995a). In simple terms, the components of compensation should include a competitive salary and bonuses as well as overseas differentials to offset the financial and personal risks in working overseas (Klaus 1995; Sims & Schraeder 2004). Sadly, risks these days are increasing with the effects of terrorism.

2.6.9.2 Impact of Terrorism

In research completed almost ten years ago, Hunt (1996) found the biggest concern of 47 percent of business travelers was personal security. Indeed, “in today’s volatile world, the safety and security of employees on long-term assignments outside of their home country is a constant concern” (Anonymous 2003b p.8), even more so following the attacks of 9/11, and companies should do more to support and or protect their expatriates (Britt 2002; Hunt 1996; Sim & Dixon 2004). Britt (2002 p.21) considered productivity and peace of mind are lacking because expatriates “want their companies to provide them with security bulletins, contingency plans and emergency guidelines to keep them up to date about potentially adverse condition” but few are getting this material thus far.

In light of increasing global dangers, Bradford (2003) discussed an example of what it can mean to those individuals who are living and working overseas in Indonesia,

Multinational companies and gathering spots for Westerners in Indonesia are seen as the main targets of terrorism in the country and are on guard against further

attacks ... those incidents have forced organizations that employ or host Westerners to take a close look at their security procedures. The capital is often the scene of protests and demonstrations over policies or changes in government leaders. In other parts of the country, Western workers have been injured and harassed by Indonesians over foreign company's business practices.

Another example of how terrorist activities can impact on the expatriate and his or her family was when Western intelligence agencies warned that members of Al Qaeda's organization in Indonesia may turn their resources to attacking international schools which enroll Western students (Perlez 2002). Social life overseas often revolves around the school. Since it plays a large role in the daily life of the expatriate and family, it is understandable that "many parents, unnerved by a specific terrorist threat to bomb international schools, said they were leaving Indonesia immediately" (Perlez 2002 p.12) and did (personal experience 2002).

It is important to recognize and offset the detrimental influence that the threat of violence may have on the expatriate and his or her family. This is articulated by Hunt (1996 p.46) who contended that "companies must actively ensure that should events develop unexpectedly, appropriate support and procedures are in place so employees and their families will remain safe and can be relocated quickly". Repatriation may occur as a result of terrorism, or as a natural process of ending the expatriation experience.

2.6.10 Repatriation

A major advantage of sending people abroad is the skills and experience repatriates bring back. With some planning, an organization should be able to form a database of this knowledge. If an employee leaves a company that does not

have such a database, all their skills and knowledge could be lost for good - or go to a competitor (Anonymous 2003a p.19).

Ashamalla (1998 p.61) stated that an “often neglected area in IHRM is the repatriation process and the subsequent career path of the international manager after the overseas assignment is concluded”. Unfortunately, upon repatriation it is seldom the case that the overseas knowledge and experience gained by the expatriates are used to prepare new expatriates (Anonymous 2003b; Kerr & Von Glinow 1997). This perceived lack of value and importance associated with returned expatriates relates to the fact that approximately 20 percent of expatriates resign from their companies after repatriation (Osland 2000). Jassawalla (2004) developed a model of effective repatriation and in so doing said repatriation is much more effective if planned before the overseas assignment begins rather than just a program that kicks in at the end of the assignment.

Repatriation has been reported to be traumatic for the expatriate.

People at the home office find it difficult to imagine that returning expats need help readjusting after just a few years away. They don't see why people who've been given an extended period to explore the Left Bank or the Forbidden City should get a hero's welcome. As a result of such thinking, the only time companies pay special attention to their expats is when something goes spectacularly wrong. And by then, it's too little, too late.

(Black & Gregersen 1999 p.52)

Another example of repatriation difficulties was provided by Osland in 2000. She wrote “the expatriate's return is often marked by a sense of loss at leaving behind the magical charm and fulfillment of the sojourn” (Osland 2000 p.228).

According to the literature, the repatriation phase is neglected by organizations because generally it is believed the transition poses minimal problems (Ashamalla 1998; Hutchings 2002; Zvara & Singh 2004). Also, it has been an under-researched area as scholars traditionally have focussed on the earlier phases of the expatriation cycle including primarily selection, training and adjustment (Bonache et al. 2001; Suutari 2003). Nevertheless, “it does suggest that the experiences of returning expatriates merit serious attention” (Forster 1994 p.405).

Repatriation is important to expatriate managers. It is not uncommon for them to worry about it throughout the period of time they are overseas on the assignment. Indications are that career issues are a primary anxiety; “research found that 68% of the managers were unsure of the position or job that they would have prior to their return home” (Black 1991 p.17). The most common issues concerning repatriation include: expatriation is considered a one way street; expatriate managers lose touch with changes in their organization because of ineffective communication; organizations undervaluing of expatriates’ experiences; expatriates’ expectation of career benefits are often not met; and the experience of reverse culture shock including family members’ experiences (Ashamalla 1998; Forster 1994; Hodgetts & Luthans 2000; Jassawalla et al. 2004; McDonald 1993; Selmer 2000; Tung 1988).

There is remarkable literature supporting the fact that returning home can be difficult and stressful (Adler 1991; Ircha 2005; Mendenhall et al. 2002) and involves a similar adjustment process as experienced when moving away (Ashamalla 1998; De Cieri et al.

1991). Research has shown that the settling in experience can be very traumatic for more than 60% of repatriated managers (Black 1991; Tung 1988). This so-called reverse culture shock “occurs when there is a significant mismatch between people’s expectations prior to their repatriation and what they actually encounter after they return home” (Forster 1994; Welch 2003). An effective repatriation process including a position fitting the expatriate’s expectation would minimize the reality of reversed cultural shock (Baruch et al. 2002).

Black (1991) reported as many as 77 percent of expatriates returning home felt demoted and dissatisfied due to employer ineffectiveness in managing repatriation. This may lead to as many as 25 percent leaving their respective company and, additionally, cause a significant negative influence on the recruitment process for new expatriates (Baruch et al. 2002; Black 1991; Black & Gregersen 1999; Bonache et al. 2001; Selmer 2000). Indeed, Forster (1994 p.406) stated that “ many organizations will need to give more serious consideration to how they manage the return of expatriate staff if they are to retain experienced employees and encourage others to work on foreign assignments by providing positive role models of returning staff”.

The repatriation literature indicated that international experience does not translate into advantages such as promotion to more senior level positions (Tung 1988; Welch 2003). In fact, expatriate assignments are not just neutral, but actually are damaging to career development and aspirations (Ferraro 2002). As explained by Bonache (2001 p.13), positions after expatriation often are defined ambiguously, new positions often involve

less authority than the position held during the foreign assignment and the expatriates may find themselves in a ‘holding pattern’ on their return”. Working overseas is a powerful growth opportunity but little research attention has been focussed on the personal and professional development of expatriates upon repatriation.

It is well documented in the literature that companies take repatriation lightly or casually and, therefore, do little to assist the expatriate and family apparently due to the assumption that returning home to familiar cultural surroundings involves little more than a minimal adjustment (Anderson 2001; Ashamalla 1998; Forster 1994; Tung 1988). Unfortunately this is not the typical circumstance as it is well known to be a time of difficult professional and a personal challenges for the expatriate and family with serious implications for the employer (Ashamalla 1998; Ferraro 2002; Zvara & Singh 2004).

Although expatriate managers return home with plenty of new knowledge and experience (Antal 2001; Jassawalla et al. 2004), most organizations do not value, or even use, this new knowledge (such as international perspective and management skills) to benefit the overall organization (Baruch et al. 2002; Bonache et al. 2001; Jassawalla et al. 2004; Welch 2003). This can be considered in the light of Suutari’s (2001 p.569) research that found that “99 percent of the expatriates believed that the development of their skills during the assignment *would be valued* by their company” (researcher’s italics). This knowledge, in fact, is valuable as it “can help organizations to understand better and manage culturally diverse and changing conditions in a world which requires both global awareness and local sensitivity” (Antal 2001 p.62). It is the very key to recognizing that

“repatriation is made easier for expatriates who receive a hero’s welcome, returning to companies that value their experience and quickly utilize the skills and knowledge they acquired abroad” (Osland 2000 p.236). As previously discussed, poorly managed repatriation can lead to high turnover of valuable human resources; that is, the recently returned expatriate brimming with new knowledge and skills (Varner & Palmer 2002).

Sometimes, expatriates are ‘forgotten employees’ while overseas, which typically increases the difficulties of adjusting upon repatriation (Klaus 1995; Mendenhall et al. 2002; Tung 1987). Thus, returnees should work hard during their overseas assignment to ensure maintenance of both professional and personal contacts at home. Professionally, they should insist on, and make use of, email and snail mail communication, professional journals and magazines, announcements on personnel and organizational changes within the home organization, visits from HR and line managers, annual home visits, timely performance reviews and mentorship programs (Baruch et al. 2002; Klaus 1995; Mendenhall et al. 2002). Personal contacts such as family ties and friendships can fade away (Mendenhall et al. 2002) so extra efforts should be undertaken to maintain and keep open personal networks which will smooth the way for repatriation. Even so, upon return, many expatriates “reported feeling distanced from past friends whose lives have not changed and developed as had their own” (De Cieri et al. 1991 p.403). Ircha (2005 p.24) described it best,

Sojourners usually want to share their incredible international experiences with family and friends. But they soon find there is a decided lack of listener interest. People who have not experienced international travel tend to be more interested in local affairs and issues than in sojourner’s stories of incidents and experiences that seem far removed from their daily lives.

Osland's (2000) research supports the view that the majority of expatriates found repatriation to be very difficult. Their reasons are summarized in Table 2.40.

Table 2.40 - Why Repatriation is Difficult

(Osland 2000 p.236)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “You Can’t Go Home Again’ phenomenon that occurs when people try to fit back into a former life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The testing period in which expatriates are expected to prove they can also be successful back home and that they have not changed too much abroad.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ‘Little Fish in a Big Pond’ syndrome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The idealization of home and false expectations about repatriation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The readjustment to decreased autonomy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high degree of uncertainty regarding the job or the move.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of interest in their experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing life abroad.

There is considerable evidence in the literature that the key to an effective and efficient repatriation process is to plan well, and well in advance (Black 1991); ideally prior to the expatriate's leaving for the overseas assignment in the first place (Jassawalla et al. 2004; Rushing & Kleiner 2003; Suutari 2003). It is most effective when the repatriation plan is developed as a result of a collaborative effort between the expatriate and senior management (Rushing & Kleiner 2003; Sim & Dixon 2004). The absence of a repatriation plan may contribute to decreased expatriate performance during the overseas assignment and lead to his or her resignation upon returning home or soon after (Rushing & Kleiner 2003).

Tung, (1988) suggested that three important phases relating to successful repatriation are career planning before departure; continuing guidance and/or counseling while the

expatriate is abroad; and, career planning about the next assignment at least six to eight months prior to returning home. Mendenhall (2002) added that getting returned expatriates involved in mentoring and training for new and present expatriates can enhance the overall repatriation process. McDonald (1993) provided several recommendations for organizations in managing the repatriation process. These recommendations are summarized in Table 2.41.

Table 2.41 - Recommendations for Organizations in Managing Repatriation

(McDonald 1993 p.26)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the decision has been made to repatriate an employee, either because of an unsuccessful placement or at the end of a natural term of tenure, should be notified at least six months ahead of the actual date. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human resource professionals and expatriate employees should be aware that repatriation can be associated with psychological problems for the returning employee.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible assistance, should be offered i.e., financial/tax advice to the expatriate employee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work assignments should be considered carefully and temporary lower-level arrangements avoided.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The knowledge and experience of the repatriated employee should be utilized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 'follow-up' audit should be undertaken.

2.6.11 Summary

In concluding this section on IHRM, it is noted that research by Osland (2000) summarized important suggestions for selection, training, support and repatriation including: selecting people with a strong desire to go abroad, providing effective language training, understanding that expatriates may be off-balance during the first months overseas, providing headquarters sponsors, removing the uncertainty about

repatriation arrangements by assigning expatriates a challenging domestic job that allows them to use the skills developed overseas and that requires the continuous learning they enjoyed abroad.

Osland has completed qualitative research on the experiential aspects of expatriation. One of the other interesting components of her research, which is unique in the literature, is the notion of living paradoxes.

2.7 Expatriate Experience of Living Paradoxes

A leading qualitative researcher and scholar, Osland (1995a; 1995b; 2000) described how paradoxes are common experiences of expatriates, although paradoxes rarely have been studied empirically. Other scholars mentioning the paradoxical nature of the expatriate experience include Suutari (2001), Richards (1996) and Russell (2004). Osland (1995b p.50) did an excellent job of describing the whole concept of expatriate paradox in the following quotation,

Paradoxes constitute a particular form of expatriate obstacle, one that is highly significant but less well-researched and articulated than the other obstacles expatriates encounter in a cross-cultural experience. A paradox is a situation in which a person faces contradictory, mutually exclusive elements at the same time. Paradoxes occur because expatriates are mediating between two cultures and two organizations. For example, an expatriate may face a mediation paradox if there is a lack of integrated goals between corporate headquarters and the foreign subsidiary. Paradoxes can also occur if these two entities have different ways of operating and do not understand each other's culture. Managers at corporate headquarters often ask expatriates to do things that are acceptable in the home culture but not in the host culture.

So paradoxes are lived and experienced by expatriates stationed in foreign countries.

Some other references of paradox in the literature include that of Suutari (2001) who referred to paradox when describing how expatriates must be adequately immersed in the local country environment to be effective, but at the same time remain unattached in order to represent and act on the needs of the home county office. Another scholar, Richards (1996 p.557), talked about the paradoxical qualities whereby “the stranger is physically near but socially remote, in that he or she will have different values and ways of behaving” which is particularly true in the expatriate circumstance.

Additionally, a finding in Russell’s (2004) pilot research on expatriate experience was that of the concept of balancing both worlds being a powerful paradox; one lived all-at-once where one is constantly missing, yet not missing, home. Often, thoughts are of home. The reasons for choosing to be away from home are reviewed constantly, knowing the experiences gained from the international experience are those that one would never experience at home. It is a matter of living and choosing value priorities.

Fascinating research by Osland (2000) resulted in the development of a comprehensive inventory of expatriate paradoxes under four categories known as social acuity, marginality, mediation and identity value paradoxes as outlined in Table 2.42.

Table 2.42 - Expatriate Paradoxes

(Osland 2000 p.233)

Social Acuity Paradoxes
Possessing a great deal of power as a result of one's role but down-playing it in order to gain necessary input and cooperation.
Seeing as valid the general stereotype about the culture one lived in but also realizing that many host country nationals do not fit that stereotype.
Marginality Paradoxes
Generally thinking well of the host country nationals while at the same time being very savvy about being taken advantage of by them.
Feeling at ease anywhere but belonging nowhere.
Mediation Paradoxes
Feeling caught between contradictory demands of the headquarters on the one hand and the demands of the host country nationals and the local situation on the other.
Trying to represent ones company as best one can in order to succeed but also realizing that the 'ideal' values one acts out abroad may not exist back at headquarters.
Being freed from many of one's own cultural rules and even from some of the host culture's norms but not being free at all from certain host country customs, which one must observe in order to be effective.
Identity Values Paradoxes
Giving up some of one's US cultural ideas and behaviors in order to be accepted or successful in the other culture while at the same time finding some of ones own core US values becoming even stronger as a result of exposure to another culture.
Becoming more and more 'world-minded' as a result of exposure to different values and conflicting loyalties, but becoming more idiosyncratic as to how one puts together one's own value system and views on life.

Paradoxical experiences may be a significant part of the expatriate's lived experience.

2.8 Lived Experience

Lived experience is a phenomenon arising out of the human sciences (Walsh 1995).

Walsh considered the goals of human science research are to interpret implicit aspects of the person's experiences through qualitative research methods. In the current research, lived experience is considered to be the world as expatriate managers directly experience

it and describe it in their written descriptions (van Manen 1990). Keen's (1975 p.21) opinion was that "the lived experience must be our guide in understanding other people and what things mean to them". There has been no business or other literature found to date focusing on the lived experience of expatriates being immersed in another culture. In fact, the extant research on expatriation has been conducted primarily within the natural science paradigm (seeking cause-effect explanations to why things happen), thereby largely ignoring the subjective nature of expatriate managers' experience in another culture (Osland 2000). Thus, to more fully understand expatriation, it is necessary to obtain the expatriate managers' perspective by utilizing research of their lived experience as to what it was like being immersed in another culture. The research was designed to capture important insights and illuminate expatriation from a more complete perspective (Mendenhall 1999). The research methodology for this study was structured to provide the opportunity for participants to describe their own personal experience of being immersed in another culture. This novel approach will contribute to knowledge by providing an in-depth analysis of the expatriate managers' perspectives of their lived experience. In other words, the current study will seek to uncover the meaning of the lived experience of expatriate managers being immersed in another culture, a topic that largely has been ignored in the literature.

2.9 Summary

The extant literature on the overseas experiences of expatriate managers is relatively limited and, traditionally, has been focused on such factors included in the expatriate

cycle such as: as recruitment, selection, training, adjustment, culture shock, performance and repatriation. In general, the literature primarily is comprised of research completed utilizing quantitative research methods as opposed to qualitative methodological studies. The former studies have provided opportunities for researchers to develop theories to predict and explain the expatriation cycle and adaptation. As well, the majority of the extant literature has focused on expatriation as practiced by multinational corporations including suggestions for successful expatriation and repatriation. There is a dearth of references related to expatriate managers of NGOs and no studies have been found to date that have considered the expatriate managers' perspective about what it is like being immersed in another culture or what the meaning of that experience is for them. Similarly, there were no studies found describing the experience of Canadians in Indonesia.

Thus, there is a need for research that enhances understanding of what it is like for expatriate managers living the experience of being immersed in another culture. The research findings will provide information that could be used to enhance human resource managers' understanding of what life is like for expatriate managers of non-government organizations; that is, what the meaning of the experience is for those managers. In turn, the information may alter the strategies employed by NGOs for facilitating the expatriation cycle. In addition, it is expected that the findings will provide information and insights to past, present, and future expatriate managers themselves in making sense of their experiences.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to explain and describe the methodology that was utilized while conducting the current research. It is presented by outlining important aspects of the study, including the research approach, paradigm, sampling strategy, data collection and data analysis methods utilized in response to the research question and objectives. Silverman (2000 p.88) defines methodology as simply “a general approach to studying research topics”. Bogdan and Taylor (1975) view methodology as how a researcher approaches a research problem and seeks answers. In particular, the descriptive phenomenological approach developed by Giorgi (1970; 1985; Giorgi & Giorgi 2003) was the overall methodology used to guide the current research.

The extant literature on expatriation indicates that the phenomenon of being immersed in another culture has not been adequately studied. There has been scant attention given by qualitative researchers to the topic concerning expatriation (Osland 1995b); and scholars have relied on positivistic research methodologies (Landis & Wasilewski 1999; Mendenhall 1999). A leading researcher in expatriation, Mendenhall (1999) considered that an emphasis on studying expatriation through the lens of paradigms alternative to the positivistic one would capture important insights and illuminate expatriation thereby gaining a more complete perspective of the topic. Thus, Giorgi’s descriptive

phenomenological method (Giorgi 1970; 1985; Giorgi & Giorgi 2003) was chosen and utilized in the current study. The rationale for using this approach was to recognize and illuminate the importance of the lived experience of being immersed in another culture within the context of living and working as a Canadian expatriate manager in a non-government organization located in Indonesia. This was done by explicating the meaning of the experience from the perspective of the expatriate manager. The method emphasized that the expatriate manager's perspective is very important for gaining insight and understanding that may serve to alter human resource management strategies relating to the field of expatriate management. A detailed description of Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method (Giorgi 1970; 1985; Giorgi & Giorgi 2003) and the specific research procedures are included in this chapter.

3.1.1 The Research Question and Objectives

The purpose of the current research is to understand the meaning of being immersed in another culture from the expatriate managers' perspective. The research sought to develop the meaning, or a general structural description, that describes what it is like being immersed in another culture. The guiding research question was: What is the general structural description (or meaning) of being immersed in another culture for expatriate managers? The answer to the question could lead to a better understanding of what it is like to be an expatriate manager immersed in another culture as well as suggestions for an improved 'best practice model' of, and support for, the expatriate experience. In an effort to explicate the meaning of the phenomenon, the researcher

asked expatriate managers to: *“please write about an experience or situation that best describes what it was like for you to live and work as an expatriate manager in Indonesia”*.

To develop an understanding of the phenomenon of being immersed in another culture, the following objectives related to the basic question were addressed in the research:

1. To describe the meaning or general structural description of being immersed in another culture from the perspectives of expatriate managers.
2. To enhance the understanding of human resource professionals who work with expatriate managers by providing strategies for supporting expatriate assignments of Canadian citizens employed in NGOs in Indonesia.
3. To assist present and former expatriate managers to make sense of their own experiences and to better prepare future expatriate managers through adding to knowledge and information to be used in educational endeavours.

Consequently, Giorgi's (1985; Giorgi & Giorgi 2003) process method was used.

3.2 Research Methodology

The following is the research methodological framework which guided the research process in the study. It is important that the guiding methodological approach is appropriate to the research question to be answered. The approach for this study was qualitative inquiry which is appropriate in understanding human experience as lived by individuals.

3.2.1 Research Design

Denzin & Lincoln (1998b p.28) argued that “a research design describes a flexible set of guidelines that connects [research] paradigms to strategies of inquiry and methods for collecting empirical data”. Table 3.1 depicts the research design of the study.

Table 3.1- Research Design

Research Topic Development
Personal experiences, knowledge & understanding; discussions with academic & business colleagues; review of the academic literature; clarification of focus.
Research Question & Objectives Development
Identified research question within appropriate research paradigm & methodology; developed research objectives; reviewed academic literature; fine-tuned the research question and research objectives.
Understanding the Research Method
Skill & knowledge development of Giorgi’s descriptive phenomenological research method (Giorgi 1970; 1985; Giorgi & Giorgi 2003); reviewed extant research where Giorgi’s method was utilized; made preparations for engaging research participants.
Selection of Research Participants
Developed selection criteria regarding research participants; determined sampling strategy; identified appropriate research participants; obtained research participants’ consent to participate.
Data Collection
Engaged research participants; made preparations for receiving, managing, and storing emailed data descriptions.
Data Analysis
Developed skill & knowledge related to Giorgi’s method of data description analysis process (Giorgi & Giorgi 2003); reviewed academic literature.
Interpret Findings
Related findings to academic literature; to practice; to education; and built on extant literature.
Discussion, Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusions
Synthesized and formulated recommendations and conclusions at the end of the research process.

This research design was followed after having considered other research approaches to studying the research question.

3.2.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Research Approaches

Einstein's view was that "not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted" (Patton 2002 p.12). This concept suggests the potential for debate about which research methodology to employ. Indeed, there is debate as to whether one should follow in the traditions of quantitative or qualitative research inquiry.

A qualitative research method facilitates the study of issues in depth and detail. The researcher is not limited by preset categories, but by a process that allows for depth, openness, and detail in the qualitative inquiry. Qualitative methods do not isolate phenomena from their context and meanings are allowed to emerge. In comparison, quantitative research methods require the use of standardized measures, where "the perspectives and experiences of people must fit into a limited number of predetermined categories to which numbers are assigned" (Patton 2002 p.14). With this discussion in mind, Silverman's (2000 p.12) suggestion "it is sensible to make pragmatic choices between research methodologies according to your research problem" was considered. However, it is a reality that "all social scientists approach their research subject/participant via explicit or implicit assumptions about the nature of the social world and the way in which it may be investigated" (Burrell & Morgan 1979 p.1). In other words, the researcher's worldview is dominated by the ontological, epistemological and methodological choices made by the researcher in any research study (Mitchell & Cody 1992).

3.2.3 Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology

Ontology is a branch of philosophy that “deals with the problem of the ultimate nature of things. Do external things really exist out there to serve as sources of our sensations” (Dooley 2001 p.5)? Quantitative researchers tend to believe there are types of real sources and, as such, are said to have a realist perspective (Palys 1997). This type of researcher follows the thinking that “the social world has an existence which is as hard and concrete as the natural world” (Burrell & Morgan 1979 p.4). The quantitative researcher tends to believe that reality is measurable using objective data while, at the same time, discouraging the idea that collecting subjective or qualitative data can be a valid form of scientific inquiry. Qualitative researchers believe in a more human-centred approach whereby social scientists attempt to understand human behaviour (Palys 1997). They consider “that any science of human behaviour is destined to be trivial and/or incomplete unless it takes people’s perceptions into account” (Palys 1997 p.17). These researchers tend to take the view that “multiple subjectively derived realities can coexist” (Lee & Poynton 2000 p.6). Therefore, the qualitative researcher collects in-depth information, using techniques including interviews and written material, from various research participants because of the belief that people can have different perspectives on the experience or situation under investigation.

Epistemology is a “branch of philosophy concerned with the relation between knower and known” (Dooley 2001 p.6). It is “the science of knowing” (Babbie 1998 p.18) and is about showing how we know that real things exist. “Claiming that you know something

implies that you can defend the methods by which you got your knowledge” (Dooley 2001 p.6). Quantitative researchers tend to follow what is known as a positivist’s epistemology in the belief that they are independent from the research participants and their responses (May 1997). They believe that data collected in this manner will be valid and reliable regardless of the research context (Silverman 1993). Schutz (1970) disagreed with this independent approach, insisting that it would be inadequate in obtaining a full understanding of human behaviour. Thus, qualitative researchers, in general, feel that not only is this level of independence impossible to achieve, but interaction by the researcher is to be encouraged to gain the depth necessary to understand the context of the data (Parse 2001). In fact, interpretivists “insist that researchers are no more ‘detached’ from their objects of study than are their informants” (Miles & Huberman 1994 p.8). Miles & Huberman (1994 p.8) also made reference to qualitative research as “a *co-elaborated* act of the art of both parties, not a gathering of information by one party”. This interactive and participative approach is contrary to the structured process of quantitative methods where subjects are questioned in a closed, prearranged mode. Furthermore, the quantitative researcher’s position is revealed in the effort to remain unbiased by utilizing impersonal and formal language as compared to the qualitative researcher’s use of more basic language, in a similar fashion to the research participants’ own wording and context.

Methodology is “the science of finding out” (Babbie 1998 p.18). The methodology taken on by quantitative researchers is more deductive and “emphasizes the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes” (Denzin & Lincoln

1998a p.8). In contrast, “qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry” (Denzin & Lincoln 1998a p.8). The qualitative researcher is more involved with developing new or enhanced concepts from data and with understanding underlying processes; for example, “qualitative methods can be used to obtain intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about” (Strauss & Corbin 1998 p.11).

Silverman (2000 p.8) further contended that “the methods used by qualitative researchers exemplify a common belief that they can provide a ‘deeper’ understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative data”. As guidance to researchers, Silverman (2000 p.1) said “the choice between different research methods should depend upon what you are trying to find out ... [and if] ... you are concerned with exploring people’s life histories or everyday behaviour, then qualitative methods may be favoured”. Research paradigms are also indicative of what it is the researcher wants to find out.

3.2.4 Research Paradigms

The researcher’s ontology, epistemology and methodology should be congruent with each other and together form what is called a paradigm. Thus, a research paradigm may be seen as “a basic set of beliefs that guide action ... in connection with a disciplined inquiry” (Guba 1992 p.17) and is referred to as a worldview or “a way of thinking about and making sense of the complexities of the real world” (Patton 2002 p.69). Gummesson

(1991 p.2) said the term ‘research paradigm’ refers to “the underpinning values and rules- that govern the thinking and behavior of researchers”. The long-standing paradigm debate has focussed on two dominant research paradigms generally known as the positivist and interpretivist research paradigms. The positivists and interpretivists tend to be associated with worldviews known respectively as natural science and human science. Natural science is used to study “objects of nature, things, natural events and the way things behave” (van Manen 1990 p.3). In contrast, human science is used to study “persons, or beings that have consciousness and that act purposefully in and on the world by creating objects of meaning that are expressions of how human beings exist in the world” (van Manen 1990 p.3). Dilthey (1988) considered that natural science involves explanation, while human science requires interpretation. Thus, according to Patton (2002 p.69), as one might expect, the positivists tend to use “quantitative and experimental methods to generate and test hypothetical deductive generalization ... [while the interpretivists use] ... qualitative and naturalistic approaches to inductively and holistically understand human experience and construct meanings in context specific settings”. Gephard (1999 p.1) stated “positivistic concerns to uncover truths and facts using experimental or survey methods have been challenged by interpretivists who assert that these methods impose a view of the world on subjects rather than capturing, describing and understanding these worldviews”. It is fitting, then, that Giorgi’s (1985) position was that many important phenomena as lived and experienced by persons, such as being immersed in another culture, are overlooked or distorted in the methods employed by researchers that embrace the natural science worldview. Thus, the current research phenomenon (being immersed

in another culture) fits within a human science worldview and within the ‘interpretivist’ paradigm.

3.2.5 Qualitative Inquiry Interpretive Paradigm

Denzin & Lincoln (1998a p.8) wrote that “the word ‘qualitative’ implies an emphasis on processes and meanings that are not rigorously examined, or measured (if measured at all), in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency”. This assumes the researcher is not limited by predetermined categories as one might find in quantitative approaches and standardized measures (Patton 2002) but by a process that allows for depth, openness and detail in the inquiry. Indeed, a qualitative research methodology facilitates the study of issues in depth and detail with the principle actors fully participating as ‘insiders’ during the research process. The primary objective of the present study research was to obtain an understanding of the meaning of the lived experience of expatriate managers being immersed in another culture. Thus, it was critical to the study that details about the research participants’ feelings, thoughts and emotions about the phenomenon were sought and uncovered; a result that may not have been as possible through quantitative techniques such as utilizing a survey questionnaire with preset responses. Therefore, the interpretive, qualitative tradition was selected for the study because it was a most suitable way to find the meaning of a lived experience from the research participants’ perspectives. Phenomenology has been a chosen method to uncover the meaning of identified experiences.

3.3 Phenomenology

According to Husserl (1970), the father of phenomenology, the guiding theme behind phenomenology is to return to the things themselves. Merleau-Ponty (1999 p.329) explained that “to return to things themselves is to return to that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always speaks”. Husserl (1999 p.254) wrote that the phenomenological process is one of “seeing, clarifying, and determining meaning, and by distinguishing meanings ... it does not theorize or carry out mathematical operations; that is to say, it carries through no explanations in the sense of deductive theory”. The concern of phenomenology is that of “giving the phenomena a fuller and fairer hearing than traditional empiricism has accorded them” (Spiegelberg 1965 p.656). Giorgi (1994 p.192) reinforced this thought when he wrote that “one of the appealing aspects of phenomenology for me is its comprehensiveness ... that phenomenology always starts from the perspective of consciousness and allows that whatever presents itself to consciousness, precisely as it presents itself, is a legitimate departure for research”.

The current researcher followed the qualitative tradition on the basis that the primary research purpose was to study what the lived experience is like for expatriate managers immersed in another culture. The phenomenologist, utilizing qualitative methods, is interested in gaining knowledge and understanding from the research participant’s own frame of reference (Bogdan & Taylor 1975). Thus, the qualitative approach utilized in the research was phenomenology.

Phenomenology, in a philosophical sense, refers to a particular way of approaching the world; it implies understanding experience as it is lived in a natural setting. “This philosophy introduces a shift of focus away from the thing and nature toward human beings and their worlds” (Giorgi 2005 p.76). It is a way of viewing humans and their experiences. As stated by van Manen (1990 p.11), “phenomenology is a human science since the subject matter of phenomenological research is always the structures of meaning of the lived human world”. Phenomenology is a philosophy in which the phenomenon is considered foremost and an understanding of the phenomenon comes from letting it unfold, rather than having pre-described categories through which it is studied. In this way, phenomenological method is about developing new knowledge around a particular phenomenon.

3.3.1 Phenomenological Method

The phenomenological method was selected because it is useful in researching lived experiences (Sanders 1982) such as being immersed in another culture and, as such, would provide insight into the unique experiences of expatriate managers who experience the phenomenon. Giorgi (1975 p.100) wrote “it is precisely the subject’s viewpoint of the situation that provides the rich data which must be obtained”. Using the phenomenological method allowed the context and content from research participants to arise rather than using specific questions to guide the research (Parse 1996). Use of the phenomenological method enabled the researcher to collect and interpret data descriptions of what it was like for individuals being immersed in another culture.

How the expatriate managers experience being immersed in another culture has been largely ignored in the literature. In addition, the extant research on expatriation as described in the literature review was conducted primarily within the natural science paradigm. The studies were reported as testing existing theories, investigating cause-effect relationships, predicting, controlling and/or measuring. As stated, the opposite worldview is the human science paradigm that “stresses the essentially subjective nature of human affairs” (Burrell & Morgan 1979 p.7). Phenomenology, having a human science perspective, provided the researcher with a more in-depth understanding of the phenomena rather than a simple identification of facts that are controllable and generalizable (Speziale & Carpenter 2003). Sanders (1982 p.357) declared that phenomenology “presents a ‘new way’ of viewing what is genuinely discoverable and potentially there but often not seen”. In using a phenomenological approach “one is less interested in the factual status of particular instances: whether something actually happened, how often it tends to happen, or how the occurrence of an experience is related to the prevalence of other conditions or events” (van Manen 1990 p.10). Phenomenology is an interpretive approach where the interpretivist believes that to understand this world of meaning one has to interpret it (Denzin & Lincoln 1998b). As Bogdan & Taylor (1975 p.2) stated, “the phenomenologist is concerned with understanding ‘social phenomena’ from the actor’s own frame of reference”. Thus, the phenomenological method is ideal for researching a subjective concept such as the meaning of the lived experience of being immersed in another culture. Similarly, as noted earlier, the expatriate literature primarily was conducted within the prevailing dominant positivist paradigm, so the

phenomenological approach with an interpretive research paradigmatic perspective provided the researcher with an opportunity to investigate expatriation through the lens of an alternative paradigm, thereby enabling the capture of important insights and illuminated expatriation from a more complete perspective (Mendenhall 1999). In following the rigorous processes in data gathering and analysis that govern the phenomenological method, an enhanced understanding of the meaning of the lived experience of being immersed in another culture was achieved in the current research.

Husserl's (1970) writings about phenomenology have influenced several high profile phenomenologists over the past half century, including Sartre (1956), Heidegger (1962) and Merleau-Ponty (1962). All these philosophers have made significant contributions to the understanding of phenomenology; for example, Sartre (1956) is credited with the belief that phenomenological philosophical assumptions help a researcher to investigate the experiential world a great deal more accurately than either positivistic or logical empiricism. Similarly, it was important to read Spiegelberg (1965; 1971; 1976; 1982) who completed a historical accounting of phenomenology and, in doing so, articulated the general steps involved in the process of the phenomenological method; they are investigating the particular phenomena; investigating the general essences; apprehending the essential relationships among essences; watching modes of appearing; watching the constitution of phenomena in consciousness; suspending belief in the existence of the phenomena; and interpreting the meaning of the phenomena (Spiegelberg 1965 p.659).

Phenomenology is about describing, not explaining, and the only way to gain access to phenomenology is to utilize a phenomenological method (Giorgi 1985). Phenomenology is known in the literature as a philosophy as well as a method (Giorgi 1975; Parse, 2001; Sanders 1982; White 1990). However, for clarity, the current research focussed on phenomenology as a method only. The researcher chose phenomenology as the method because it is a systematic way to uncover and describe the internal meaning structure of lived experiences (van Manen 1990). Indeed, “phenomenology as a research method is a rigorous, critical, systematic investigation of phenomena” (Streubert & Carpenter 1999 p.48). Giorgi’s descriptive phenomenological method is the process utilized in the current research to uncover the meaning of being immersed in another culture, a human lived experience.

3.3.2 Giorgi’s Descriptive Phenomenological Method

Giorgi’s descriptive phenomenological method was developed with the purpose of discovering and articulating “meanings being lived by the research participants that reveal the nature of the phenomenon being researched” (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003 p.252). The researcher employed Giorgi’s method (1970; 1989a; 1992) because it is a systematic way to uncover and discover the meaning of the lived experience (van Manen 1990) of research participants who have experienced the phenomenon being researched. Giorgi’s method is a specific method which stands on its own and which, when utilized properly, is a rigorous method for answering specific kinds of research questions. The method includes specific ways of formulating research questions and explicit procedures for data

collection and analysis/synthesis. As evidenced in the literature (Baker, Arsenault & Gallant 1994), Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method (Giorgi 1970; 1985; Giorgi & Giorgi 2003) provided rich data descriptions and insight into the unique experiences of persons who lived the phenomenon. The development of Giorgi's (1986 p.5) descriptive phenomenological method was based on his belief that "if humans, as scientists, can under proper conditions, use descriptive reports with precision, then ... humans, as subjects, should also, under proper conditions be able to generate valid descriptive reports". Giorgi (1986) believed that a written or verbal description of a situation could form the basis of a research study when the meaning of these descriptions is the focus rather than the seeking of objective facts. One guards against distorting the language of the research participants from the actual dialogues or written responses by dwelling with the material, by immersing oneself with the whole experience. It is a researcher/research participant work of art. A growing number of research studies employing Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological research method and utilizing written descriptions for data collection (Parse 2001) have been found in the literature (Aquino-Russell 2003; Hetherington 2002; Kraynie 1985; Ng & Sinclair 2002; Purola & Aavarinne 2001). When using the method, certain qualitative rules, such as bracketing, are considered.

3.3.3 Bracketing

Giorgi & Giorgi (2003 p.249) said "when we encounter familiar [situations] we tend to see them through familiar eyes and thus often miss seeing novel features of familiar situations". This points to the importance of the process known as bracketing (Heidegger,

1962; Husserl, 1931) which is when the researcher suspends his beliefs about the lived experience being studied in order to be open to the possibility of new discovery. “Past knowledge concerning the phenomenon of interest should be put aside and ... what is presented to consciousness should be seen without the automatic positing of existence that also normally takes place” (Giorgi 2005 p.75). Giorgi & Giorgi (2003 p.249) meant for researchers to “bracket past knowledge about the experienced [situation] to experience this instance of its occurrence freshly”. Furthermore, Giorgi (1970) said that a person can hold his beliefs in abeyance (bracket them) but in the end that person’s point of view will surface. Thus, Giorgi (1970) argued that researchers should avoid the temptation to quickly label something the first time it is read. He believed that dwelling with the data would ensure openness to the possibility of new discovery. Hence, Giorgi’s processes of holding one’s beliefs in abeyance were attempted during the analysis of the research participants’ descriptions which were elicited through a rigorous process of sampling and selection.

3.4 Sampling and Selection

3.4.1 Sampling Strategy

Purposeful sampling (Denzin & Lincoln 1994; Patton 2002; Silverman 2000) was the sampling strategy used in the current selection of appropriate research participants. Patton (2002 p.46) stated “nowhere is the difference between quantitative and qualitative methods better captured than in the different strategies, logics, and purposes that

distinguish statistical probability sampling from qualitative purposeful sampling”.

Silverman (2000 p.104) elaborated by arguing that “purposeful sampling allows us to choose a case because it illustrates some feature or process in which we are interested”.

The research participants were “selected purposefully to permit inquiry into and understanding of a phenomenon in depth” (Patton 2002 p.46). A good research participant has the experience the researcher requires, has the ability to reflect, is articulate, has the time to participate, and is willing to take part in the study (Denzin & Lincoln 1998b). “Phenomenological studies are designed to describe the essence of a given phenomenon and informants are chosen because they have lived the experience being investigated” (Baker, Wuest, & Stern 1992 p.1358). Silverman (2000 p.104) said “purposeful sampling demands that we think critically about the parameters of the population we are interested in and choose our sample ... carefully on this basis”. Thus, purposeful sampling is commonly used in phenomenological research. Parse (2001 p.15) stated that the “selection of and number of research participants are decided by the researcher in conjunction with the specifications of the method” as opposed to external criteria. Giorgi’s descriptive phenomenological method (Giorgi 1970; 1985; Giorgi & Giorgi 2003) encourages the researcher to have prior association with the research participants as it enhances the selection process. Prior professional association with most of the research participants existed in the current research study. The research participants, who were previously known to the researcher, recommended other research participants, based on the same selection criteria, to complete the sample. Therefore, the sampling strategy remained purposeful throughout the participant selection process, thereby allowing the researcher to gather an adequate number of research participants for

the study who had experienced the phenomenon of interest. The research participants were selected to fit the criteria set out in Table 3.2 entitled: Research Participants' Inclusion Criteria.

Table 3.2 - Research Participants' Inclusion Criteria

Canadian expatriate managers.
Experienced with the phenomenon of being immersed in the Indonesian culture.
Worked for a non-government organization while living in Indonesia.
Had lived and worked in Indonesia for more than two years.
Articulate and could read and write in the English language.
Willingness to correspond with the researcher using the email technique.

To emphasize the important role of research participants in qualitative studies the following excerpt and explanation is presented. "Qualitative researchers generally do not label the individuals who inform their inquiry as subjects [but instead] use the terms research participants or informants" (Streubert & Carpenter 1999 p.22). The major difference is that no one person in a quantitative study has any value/existence/rights of their own – it's only cumulative data that counts; not so in a phenomenological methodology. Sample size is also a consideration in qualitative research studies.

3.4.2 Sample Size

Typically, sample size is small in qualitative research because it is usual to receive an abundance of rich data (Bogdan & Taylor 1975). Indeed, "in-depth information from a small number of people can be very valuable" (Patton 2002 p.244); further, Patton said "the validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more

to do with the information richness of the cases selected and the observational/analytical capabilities of the researcher than with sample size” (Patton 2002 p.245). Giorgi (1985) described the phenomenological method as a method of depth rather than breadth; one that does not require a large sample size. In phenomenological research, it has been demonstrated that samples of 2 to 6 research participants have provided data redundancy or saturation which is an accepted indicator of sample size sufficiency (Parse et al. 1985) meaning either that no new concepts emerge in the data or the research participants start to say the same things, or both. In fact, Sanders (1982 p.356) stated clearly that “more subjects do not yield more information” in phenomenological studies. There are others who believe that saturation is a myth and new data, by increasing sample size, is always possible (Morse 1989). It is noteworthy to the current research that “a phenomenological description is always one interpretation, and no single interpretation of human experience will ever exhaust the possibility of yet another complementary, or even potentially richer or deeper description” (van Manen 1990 p.31). To ensure congruency with past Giorgi studies, the researcher reviewed seventy-six published studies which employed Giorgi’s method and established that 8.3 persons was the average sample size. Thus, the researcher decided that a sample size of 15, almost double the average sample size, would be more than acceptable and proceeded on that basis.

3.4.3 The Research Participants

Initially 21 Canadian expatriate managers who met the inclusion criteria, as presented in Table 3.2, and agreed to participate in the study, were asked to write a description in

response to the interrogatory statement posed by the researcher. At first, all selected expatriate managers agreed to participate in the research, but during the process of completing the written descriptions, 6 of the 21 identified research participants were unable to submit written descriptions due to reasons including: serious illness or time constraints caused by demanding work schedules or new positions/promotions involving relocation. The remaining 15 individuals became the research participants and all completed written descriptions that were received by the researcher within a four month period. Ethical principles were followed for participants.

3.5 Ethical Considerations & Research Participant Protection

According to Streubert & Carpenter (1999 p.59) “the personal nature of phenomenological research results in several ethical considerations for researchers”. Important ethical considerations such as confidentiality and anonymity are not easy to manage in qualitative research where sample sizes typically are small and resulting data is rich in detail.

Without proper procedures it is possible for research participant identities, for example, to be revealed. To ensure anonymity, pseudonyms of the research participants’ choice were used without exception, known only to the researcher, so the research participant is never identified by name on any of the data collected in the research, doctoral research report or in any other documentation, presentations, or publications that have or will come from the research. In addition, identifying characteristics of the research

participants (including names of colleagues, locations or organizations) were deleted and replaced with pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. To ensure confidentiality, email submissions of the research participants' descriptions were printed and are being kept in a locked cabinet. All original emails were deleted from the researcher's personal laptop computer, a computer of which he is the sole user. All data from the current research is being stored for a minimum of five years consistent with the joint NHRC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice and will be destroyed after that time.

Electronic mail (email) is not considered to be 100 percent confidential. For this reason, many people still hesitate when it comes to purchasing something online using their personal credit card. This is an important factor to consider in this research, as email was the primary means of collecting the data and that was comprised of personal material. However, there was no indication that confidentiality of the research participants' emails was ever compromised as a result of utilizing the Internet, particularly in the data collection phase of the research.

To ensure that protection of the rights of the research participants were protected, the researcher conducted the study in accordance with Curtin Business School, Curtin University of Technology's *Code of Conduct for the Responsible Practice of Research* as follows:

- The research proposal was submitted to the appropriate ethics and research committees at Curtin Business School, Curtin University of Technology and was approved by both committees.

- In the *Introduction and Consent for Participation in Research Study* letter there was full disclosure to research participants of the research purposes and procedures (see appendix A).
- Research participants signed and returned their *Informed Consent* before participating in the research (see appendix A).
- Prior to the participating, research participants were informed that they could withdraw, without penalty, from participating at any time during the research process.
- Prior to the study, research participants were given the researcher's email address, telephone number, and permanent mailing address should they have questions or concerns relating to their participation in the research study.
- The research participants' right to anonymity and confidentiality was assured at all times.

Finally, it is noted that all research participants had the right to present or withhold any information that they chose. Further, it is noted that there was no indication that any research participant experienced any distress whatsoever due to their participation in the research study.

3.6 Data Collection

“The most straightforward way to go about our research is to ask selected individuals to write their experiences down” (van Manen 1990 p.63). In the current research, data in the

form of written descriptions were collected from 15 research participants. This enabled the researcher to capture the descriptions verbatim and in their entirety with no chance of inaccuracy as a result of transcription procedures. Thus, fundamental data were in the form of written descriptions (Giorgi & Giorgi 2003) that were collected directly via email from the research participants (Mann & Stewart 2000) who were located on both sides of the world. Malinski (1999 p.201) said that email is an excellent way to “obtain written descriptions of a lived experience from research participants”. The significant advantages of email are outlined in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 - Significant Advantages of Email

A practical way to collect data from research participants located in various geographically diverse areas (Mann & Stewart 2000). In the current study, research participants were primarily located in various Indonesian provinces and a few had recently repatriated to Canada.
Time and cost savings occur because travel, tape recording and transcriptions are not required (ibid.). This was a major consideration given the researcher’s location on the east coast of Canada, limited research budget, time constraints, and location of research participants already mentioned.
Easier management of data, as data is already in electronic form; indeed, a real advantage as no time was needed to type the responses verbatim. With no chance for transcription errors, this also served to maximize the accuracy of the descriptions (ibid). Data analysis was able to proceed without a time lag.
Sensitive issues for research participants may be more accessible (ibid) as research participants may be more likely to articulate such issues as compared to the face-to-face communication method. This was important as research participants were expected to share their thoughts, feelings and perceptions on personal matters.

“To gain access to other people’s experiences we request them to write about a personal experience” (van Manen 1990 p.65). Thus, each research participant was asked to respond to the interrogatory statement: *Please write about an experience or situation that best describes what it was like for you to live and work as an expatriate manager in Indonesia*. The statement was designed to draw out, without leading, the feelings and

thoughts of expatriate managers and each research participant was left to write as much, or as little, as they saw fit. Following receipt of the research participants' written descriptions, the researcher then undertook Giorgi's (1975; 1985) process of analysis as described in Giorgi & Giorgi (2003). The researcher's role is also important to acknowledge.

3.6.1 Researcher's Role

In phenomenological research, the role of the researcher is to obtain descriptions of the lived experiences from each research participant without leading them in any way. To facilitate this process, great care was taken not to elaborate on the interrogatory statement, but simply request that the research participants respond to it as they wished. The researcher did not provide instructions concerning the length of the written descriptions. A time period of one month, later extended to four months, was provided to research participants for completing and returning written descriptions. Upon receipt of the written descriptions, the researcher initiated the analysis/synthesis process as informed by Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method (Giorgi 1970; 1985; Giorgi & Giorgi 2003).

3.7 Data Analysis Description

"The goal of phenomenological analysis ... is to clarify meaning of all phenomena. It does not explain or discover cause, but it clarifies" (Giorgi 2005 p.77). The data

analysis/synthesis process followed the descriptive phenomenological method (Giorgi 1970; 1985; Giorgi & Giorgi 2003) which consists of several steps as summarized by Aquino-Russell (2003 p.99) and presented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 - Giorgi's Descriptive Phenomenological Method

Step 1 - Dwelling with the written description
Giorgi & Giorgi (2003 p.251) said “the entire description has to be read because the phenomenological perspective is a holistic one. One cannot begin an analysis of a description without knowing how it ends”. This involved the researcher engaging in a rigorous process of intuiting, analyzing and describing the raw data descriptions which was completed through reading and rereading the entire description of each research participant's experience to get a general sense of the whole.
Step 2 - Returning to research participants for clarification if there is ambiguity in the description
Following reading and rereading the written description, the researcher elicited further written response, if there was ambiguity about an area of the description. In this case the research participant was asked for clarification or elaborations using open-ended questions; i.e., Please describe this further.
Step 3 - Identifying Meaning Units
The researcher started at the beginning of the description and examined the raw data descriptions for spontaneously occurring shifts in meaning or transition. Discrete passages of text, called meaning units were identified. Meaning units are context-laden constituents, rather like words in a paragraph (Giorgi 1975). Meaning units were established by going through the text and every time the researcher experienced a transition in meaning, a slash was placed in the description of the text (Giorgi 1989a). The researcher operated with spontaneity while constituting meaning units (thinking: something important is happening here or there is a change here or something interesting is going on). By doing this, the researcher dwelled with the description longer than when it was first read (Giorgi 1989a). Meaning units were expressed in the research participants' own words.
Step 4 - Identifying Focal Meanings
“The meanings expressed by the research participants have to be made...explicit with regard to the phenomenon that is being researched and not directly as revelatory of the research participant in his or her personal existence” (Giorgi & Giorgi 2003 p.252). The meaning units were raised to a higher level of discourse and were reformulated by the researcher to become focal meanings in the language of the researcher and using the extant literature framework established in Chapter Two. During this part of the process, meanings were uncovered (Spiegelberg 1971) and the analytical phase of data description interpretation was completed.

Step 5 - Synthesizing Situated Structural Descriptions
<p>The researcher synthesized each set of focal meanings into a situated structural description for each research participant. It is the situated structural description that grasps the meaning of the lived experience from the perspective of the research participant. The situated structural descriptions were written in an effort to try to understand the world of each research participant. The situated structural description presents the meaning of the lived experience from the perspective of each of the research participants (Giorgi 1975). The situated structural description is considered the first stage in the development of a consistent description of the phenomenal pattern (Santopinto 1989). The situated structural description is grounded in the concrete setting of each research participant (Giorgi 1985). All focal meanings of each research participant are relayed in that research participant's situated structural description. The investigator synthesized and integrated the insights contained in all of the focal meanings into a consistent statement for each of the research participants' lived experience of being immersed in another culture.</p>
Step 6 - Synthesizing a General Structural Description
<p>Giorgi & Giorgi (2003) said, "the end result of the analytical process is a description of the structure of the experience provided by the research participants." The general structural description of this lived experience was generated from the synthesis of the research participants' situated structural descriptions. This stage has been referred to as the second stage of the phenomenal description, which grasps the most general significance of the phenomenon under study and is aimed at capturing the meaning of the lived experience described by the research participants in an insightful and focused way (Giorgi 1975). Giorgi (1975 p.88) stated that the general structural description "leaves out the particulars of the specific situation and centers on those which ... while not necessarily universal are at least trans-situational or more than specific". Giorgi & Giorgi (2003 p.258) said "the structure is not meant to be universal but only general or typical".</p>

3.8 Quality Criteria

The quality criteria for qualitative research is associated with Guba (1992) who developed criteria based on credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These characteristics help to establish rigour within qualitative research and will be discussed in relation to the current research in Chapter Five.

3.9 Methodological Expertise

“A check of the original researcher’s procedure can be performed by any competent colleague” (Giorgi & Giorgi 2003 p.248). Consequently, to ensure that the research method was properly employed, the researcher sought out and received expert mentoring from a scholar who is knowledgeable and experienced in Giorgi’s descriptive phenomenological method (Giorgi 1970; 1985; Giorgi & Giorgi 2003). The mentor reviewed the thesis at various stages to advise on methodological issues, particularly in relation to the analysis/synthesis steps as developed by the researcher. It was not necessary that the expert agreed with the analysis/synthesis, but, rather, that the expert did not disagree with the analysis/synthesis process. This activity made certain that the Giorgi’s method was employed appropriately by the researcher as did having completed a pilot study to learn the method.

3.9.1 Pilot Study

A similar but smaller study using two research participants, completed in a supervised Qualitative Research Methods course was developed as a pilot study. The pilot study ensured, and improved, the researcher’s ability in research participant selection and in collecting rich data descriptions on the phenomenon from research participants. The pilot study confirmed that the interrogatory statement was well designed and could be employed in the current research with confidence. The pilot study also gave the

researcher valuable hands-on experience with the analysis/synthesis steps involved in Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method as described in Table 3.4.

3.10 Summary

The present chapter has described the appropriateness of using qualitative research methods for investigating the research phenomenon in depth and detail. The rationale for using a phenomenological approach and Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method to enhance understanding of being immersed in another culture has been provided. The next chapter will discuss the findings and analysis in detail.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In the local market, sitting in the mini bus, old ladies and some not so old would come up and touch hairs on my arm and laugh ... I was a stranger and I felt like an alien - from somewhere in outer space. (Research Participant - Prunes)

4.1 Overview

This chapter begins with an introduction to the 15 research participants. What follows is a presentation of their descriptions, and the findings that surfaced from each participant's description of what their experience of being immersed in another culture was like for them as individuals.

The general structural description (or meaning) of the lived experience of persons being immersed in another culture was developed by the researcher using Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological research method (Giorgi 1970; 1985; Giorgi & Giorgi 2003). The findings from the current study emerged through a rigorous method of intuiting, analyzing and describing by the researcher in which the raw data descriptions (meaning units) were raised to higher levels of discourse and into the language of the researcher (focal meanings). The analytical process was that of synthesizing the meaning units to focal meanings, and then to a situated structural description for each of the participants. The general structural description of the lived experience, considered the central finding of the current research, was generated from the synthesis of the participants' situated structural descriptions and is presented at the end of the chapter. The entire analysis was

presented in a logical fashion to facilitate the auditability of the researcher's interpretive decision path.

As the meaning units are direct quotations from the research participants' written descriptions there is considerable potential for revealing the individual's identity. Therefore, in an effort to maintain participants' confidentiality and anonymity, each person is referred to by a pseudonym of their choice known only to the participant and the researcher. In addition, all names of places, organizations, other persons, or any other potentially identifiable characteristics have been changed or omitted.

4.2 Research Participants

As reported in Chapter 3, all research participants in the current study experienced the phenomenon of being immersed in another culture while living and working in Indonesia. Initially, twenty-one selected expatriate managers readily had agreed to share their personal experiences by engaging as research participants in the current study. However, during the process of completing the written descriptions, six of these individuals chose not to submit written descriptions due to reasons including: serious illness or time constraints caused by demanding work schedules or new positions/promotions involving relocation. The remaining fifteen individuals became the research participants and all completed written descriptions were received by the researcher within a four month period.

A limited amount of demographic information was collected from each research participant, as the primary interest in them was their role as expatriate managers and not so much as members of other categories. The 15 research participants originated from every region of Canada and, while working in Indonesia, had lived in several Indonesian provinces. Many of them still live and work in Indonesia, while several have since repatriated to Canada. All but three of the research participants were married, both genders were represented in the sample and their ages ranged from the early 30s to mid-60s.

Table 4.1 - Demographics of the Research Participants

Name/ Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Marital Status	# of Children	Education Level	Home Region in Canada	Years in Indonesia
Archer	30s	Male	Married	1	Bachelor	Western	5-10
Batik	30s	Female	Single	0	Bachelor	Central	2-5
Batman	60s	Male	Married	3	PhD	Central	5-10
Imron	40s	Male	Married	1	PhD	Central	5-10
Justin Edwards	50s	Male	Married	3	Bachelor	Eastern	10-15
Kate Phelan	50s	Female	Single	0	College	Western	2-5
Luke Gerard	40s	Male	Married	3	Bachelor	Central	5-10
Made	40s	Male	Married	0	Masters	Central	15-20
Martin Wyatt	30s	Male	Married	2	Bachelor	Central	5-10
Pak Jasiento	50s	Male	Married	2	PhD	Central	2-5
Powell	50s	Male	Married	3	Masters	Western	8-10
Prunes	50s	Male	Married	0	Bachelor	Western	15-20
Sophia	30s	Female	Married	1	Bachelor	Central	5-10
Thomas Austin	30s	Male	Single	0	Bachelor	Western	2-5
Tristan Phillips	30s	Male	Married	1	College	Western	5-10

In general, the research participants were experienced expatriates with an average of 7.5 years spent living and working in Indonesia and 126 total years of working in Indonesia. Most of the research participants had at least one university degree and many had been employed by more than one NGO. Several of the research participants previously had

been employed as expatriate managers in other countries in addition to Indonesia, which is the country of focus in this study. The research participants were drawn from 12 different NGOs. The demographic information of the research participants is presented in Table 4.1.

4.3 Findings

The meaning units, focal meanings, and situated structural description for each research participant are as follows, listed in alphabetical order by pseudonym as recorded in Table 4.1.

Archer

Archer - Meaning Unit 1

“I think I arrived in [small city] in February 1996 but I can’t be sure. Pak [Director] picked me up from the airport in the old brown [International NGO] Toyota Kijang. I love that Kijang because we would later go everywhere in that thing. I lugged my massive duffle bag into back of the Kijang and climbed into the passenger seat. There were no seat belts.

In 1996, the northern [expressway] had just been completed and it was empty. The Kijang raced across it. Pak [Director] drives too fast. But then you can’t really coax a Kijang to go very fast anyways, it only has four gears. [The international NGO] had just bought land in [outskirts of small city] ... That’s the equivalent of the suburbs of [any small Canadian city], I think geographers would call it “peri-urban”. As we left the [expressway] behind and drove up [local] road, green rice fields flanked either side of the two lane road. Occasionally we would pass a wooden cart pulled by a morose ox. Honda and Yamaha scooters which Indonesians call Bebek (ducks) buzzed by us. Farmers stooped in paddy fields. This was to be my commute for the next four years.”

Archer - Focal Meaning 1

Differing modes of transportation combined with novel scenery provide lasting first impressions and glimpses of adventures to be experienced during one's lengthy assignment.

Archer - Meaning Unit 2

"We arrived at the new [International NGO] campus. At that time they owned a small house which doubled as a residence for three of the staff. They also owned a new piece of land just down the road which was under construction. Two buildings were being built here: the new office and the training center. This training center was Pak [Director]'s dream. A place of learning and sharing. The [International NGO] Training Center.

At the time I arrived, the basic shell of the office had been completed. A wall had been built around the whole piece of land. I was told that you have to build the wall first because if you don't, people steal your building materials at night. The training center had yet to be built. It would emerge over the next year. For the moment, this walled-in plot of land was occupied by the new office building on one side and a grove of cassava plants which one of the staff ... had planted on the other. Pak [Director] showed me a room in the office building facing the cassava. This was to be my bedroom for the next few months."

Archer - Focal Meaning 2

Being immersed in another culture entails accepting new ways of living and working decided on your behalf.

Archer - Meaning Unit 3

"[International NGO] Canada-Indonesia was populated by unique inhabitants. Although she was technically Pak [Director]'s secretary, Nuriyati was the actual power behind the throne. [Director] only trusted her with the finances and she would spend long hours working on the books or [Director]'s reports and presentations. She was more than just dedicated, she was his devotee. She thought of [Director] as some sort of Wayang character, a social hero of sorts. She could have easily become a nun but had attained her own celibate status in her devotion to [local NGO]. She had long passed the age at which Indonesian women sought Indonesian men".

Suhadi was the office rogue. Artistic in nature, and a talented community organizer, Suhadi was father of two beautiful kids. He had a beautiful and devoted wife. He wore black clothing every day and attempted to evoke a mystical aura. He smoked kretek cigarettes constantly. His weakness was that he liked women too much. He had been

censured by the local NGO community more than on one occasion for sexual harassment of female NGO activists. But Suhadi was loyal to [Director], and [Director] valued loyalty and so [Director] protected him. It is a testament of [Director]'s standing and respect among the NGO activists in [small city] that Suhadi's reputation is not further blighted. When the second incident occurred, I sided with the NGO community out of principle. [Director] defended Suhadi again. I suppose, this was a cultural lesson for me on the relative importance different people place on different values. In return for [Director] protection, Suhadi was his yes man and sent to deal with any ugly situations which cropped up with the government or with the communities".

Archer - Focal Meaning 3

One learns that values drive persons' behaviours and attitudes towards others.

Archer - Meaning Unit 4

"Rudi was our diminutive office clerk and was directly under Nuriyati's supervision. He was always cheery and smiling in public, but in private he liked to gripe about Nuriyati."

Archer - Focal Meaning 4

One might perceive that obliging staff are blinded almost in behaving faithfully to managers, yet there always exists potential for smiling employees to hide their actual emotions.

Archer - Meaning Unit 5

"Despite being an NGO, [local NGO] is still essentially a Javanese organization and extremely hierarchical. This frustrated me quite a bit because I come from a very activist background. Most decisions could only be taken by Pak [Director], even the smallest. Staff did not have the independence or confidence to take decisions on their own."

Archer - Focal Meaning 5

One experiences annoyance of others' submission to an autocratic management style.

Archer - Meaning Unit 6

"Ironically, Pak [Director] is a very democratic fellow and especially when his associates with NGO folks outside his own organization he is very open and participative. But within the organization, he tended to take most of the decisions. To a certain extent, there was no one within the organization who could rival Pak [Director] intellectually. Even his program managers were very much in awe of him and rarely challenged him. He would win most arguments although those were few. Most staff deferred to him.

When he was away (which he often was) no decisions could be made even over quite obvious things. Sometime Nuriyati would act as his enforcer and prevent things from happening pending Pak [Director]'s return.

Quite often staff would come to me with their complaints. Just because they deferred to Pak [Director] did not mean they did not grumble. One of the biggest issues that eternally loomed in the background was the issue of succession. Who would take over when Pak [Director] left? It was clear from the high-paid consultancies that Pak [Director] accepted that he did not need [local NGO]. He could have made so much as a private consultant. Nevertheless, he remained with [local NGO] (and is still there today). He donated a large portion of his consultancies to [local NGO] and that was a large reason for the success and continued expansion of the organization. I think it is also a reason why he has not been able to pass the leadership of the organization to a new generation of leaders despite every year announcing that "next year, I will move on". He has invested so much of his own spirit, toil and money into [local NGO]. The term for this is "Founder Disease" and [local NGO] had a highly advanced case of it. In fact, [local NGO] is Pak [Director].

Nevertheless, in my early years there Pak [Director] treated me like some sort of prodigy. I had the impression he was grooming me. He took me to various meetings and strategic planning workshops for international organizations. Under his tutelage I learned Strategic Planning techniques and facilitation skills. I cut my teeth on Result based Management with Pak [Director]. For that I am extremely grateful. He was a good teacher."

Archer - Focal Meaning 6

One's foreigner status gave rise to being sought after for opinion and for being a sounding board, as well as being mentored.

Archer - Meaning Unit 7

"I also liked the idea of being groomed. I think I have missed a real mentor in life. Maybe that is an Asian thing, like the talented but undisciplined fighter who is honed into a Kung Fu martial artist by a domineering but benevolent Si Fu (Master) of Hong Kong action movies (I watched too many of those when I was young). My father was never really at home much and never filled that mentoring role. None of my teachers throughout high school or university did either. Only when I started working in NGOs did I form those mentoring relationships but only in a limited way. I think ... learning from the poor touches this need within in me."

Archer - Focal Meaning 7

One's novel experience of developing under another's wing and the irony of gaining knowledge from the impoverished gives rise to feelings of contentment in being immersed in another culture.

Archer - Meaning Unit 8

"[The local NGO] is akin in spirit to a monastery. Many of the staff are former clergy. Pak [Director] is a former brother; there are two former priests there. The majority of the staff is Catholic in a majority Muslim province. The community service that drew some of these people to the clergy has imbued the culture of [local NGO] and working there has a spiritual and sacrificial element to it. Nuriyati is nun-like in her demeanor: eternally devout, loyal and unmarried. She lives at the office in a monastic way. Like many communities which try to seclude from society in some way, [local NGO] is located in a somewhat remote corner of [small city] in a neighbourhood which is more village (Dusun Duwet) than it is city. The [local NGO] Campus has greatly expanded to include the original compound and several associated buildings including a training center, lodging for 30 and a good sized library. The campus has a self-reliant air about it. They grow some of their own vegetables; staff eat together in a common mess. There is a feeling of seclusion about it ... tension between the monastic spirituality and social critique is an interesting but not easy dichotomy. It requires an incredible level of commitment. [Pak] never stopped working. His wife would complain to me about his work hours in the hope I could somehow change his behaviour. I don't think anyone can change Pak [Director] except for himself. It was a commitment that was difficult to keep up with."

Archer - Focal Meaning 8

Dedication and commitment to the cause is seen to be impressive, almost religious acts, yet unfamiliar to one from another culture.

Archer - Meaning Unit 9

"Eventually, I found a house in [small city] and moved out of the office. [The local NGO] provided me with a motorcycle and I commuted ... (where the office is) every day by motorcycle. Those were some of my best years. I found a road which cut through the paddy fields to the office. My 15 minute ride was dominated by a fantastic view of a huge volcano every morning. I would pass farmers in their fields and children in their uniforms going to school. This beautiful ride would always put me into a great mood when I got to work and the day was usually very productive.

Having my own place was also a great relief. I could host friends, have out-of-town guests and finally had my privacy back again. I had the freedom to go out and socialize at night. I had been so immersed in work and learning Bahasa Indonesia for the first few months that I was in [small city] that I had forgotten how restricting living at the office had become. In short, I got my life back. I had left the monastery.”

Archer - Focal Meaning 9

Freedom/Restriction was recognized with emerging independence amid the splendor of Indonesian landscape.

Archer - Meaning Unit 10

“I hired a maid to do the cleaning and laundry. Her name was Ibu Imah who lived just around the corner of my house. I think I was a very lucrative client for her. She was not a particularly good cook so after enduring a few of her meals I asked her not to prepare dinners and took to the food stalls instead. Neither was she a very thorough cleaner but I was hardly ever home so rarely noticed. She would routinely borrow money from me for this reason or that, and I would routinely forgive her debts to me. Her husband was unemployed and fairly lazy. However, once I was away in [bordering country] and my house was broken into. Not knowing where to contact me Imah and her husband mounted a round the clock guard on the house because they did not know who to contact to repair the door. A couple of days later, I rode up to the house with a few [bordering country nationals] friends and found them camped on my porch looking fairly tired. I was amazed and grateful.”

Archer - Focal Meaning 10

One’s perceptions of unpredictable and contradictory behaviors by host nationals gives rise to a range of emotions.

Archer - Meaning Unit 11

“I loved my house. It consisted of one large open space with two small bedrooms off to the side. An Indonesian “kamar mandi” [bathroom] was situated in between the two rooms. The large central space served as living room, dining room and kitchen. Open concept and very simple. I had a small number of cheap rattan furniture. I had no wall decoration. The house was located in the midst of rice paddies. The land right across from the house was owned by an old man who would rest in my yard and borrow water from my garden tap. At planting time, I would wake up to the sound of a buffalo mooing which pulled a plough to turn the dry soil. During the rainy season, in the afternoon I would watch the rain wash across the fields like translucent waves. The calls of frogs and crickets would fill the night. One time a snake made its bed in my knapsack which I had dumped on the floor. I shared the house with a Toke, a large gecko like lizard, which

has a very loud cry that sounds like “to-ke! To-ke! TO-KE!” Hence its name. The thing was huge and aside from its loud eerie call, it had a penchant for suddenly shuffling across the ceiling which would startle me awake if I was sleeping. Nevertheless, the Javanese believe it is highly auspicious to have a toke in one’s home and many guests complimented me on having a toke.”

Archer - Focal Meaning 11

Appreciation for Indonesian vegetation, wildlife, climate and way of life surfaced when living among local people in similar manner.

Archer - Meaning Unit 12

“Living in [small city] was a mixture of good and bad. On the one hand, [small city] is still a very small town in many ways. It’s very human scale, no massive building or imposing highways. The level of English is low there so one is forced to learn Indonesian through daily use. Getting around the city is fairly easy with a motorcycle. One cannot get all Western commodities there but the basics exist partly due to the tourist industry. [small city] has a youth feel about it because of the many university students studying there. But it also has a real sense of history due to the Kraton and the annual Javanese festivals. On the other hand, [small city] also tends to be somewhat provincial. The cultural and social life is somewhat limited. After living there for four years I found some people very parochial. One of my colleagues for instance, who had known me for nearly three years, still would ask:” sudah bias makan nasi?” (Can you eat rice?) As if I had been eating bread all my years in [small city]. Many people have a very narrow view of the world and I found myself continually explaining the outside world, even to people I had known for several years.”

Archer - Focal Meaning 12

Even though one is adjusted to the surroundings, one still has feelings of missing out on more global thinking and still not belonging.

Archer - Meaning Unit 13

“While I had many colleagues and acquaintances in [small city], I never really felt I became very close with any many of them; never formed long-lasting relationships. There were a few exceptions. My wife in particular, who I met in [small city]. A teacher at my language school, Pak Mahmud, who eventually moved to Jakarta and later spent much time abroad. That’s about it. I suppose largely because with most people in [small city], I can understand their world but they cannot understand mine.”

Archer - Focal Meaning 13

One experiences living and working with people but remains a stranger with understanding/not understanding underlying daily aspects of one's relationships.

List of Focal Meanings for Archer

1. Differing modes of transportation combined with novel scenery provide lasting first impressions and glimpses of adventures to be experienced during one's lengthy assignment.
2. Being immersed in another culture entails accepting new ways of living and working decided on your behalf.
3. One learns that values drive persons' behaviours and attitudes towards others.
4. One might perceive that obliging staff are blinded almost in behaving faithfully to managers, yet there always exists potential for smiling employees to hide their actual emotions.
5. One experiences annoyance of others' submission to an autocratic management style.
6. One's foreigner status gave rise to being sought after for opinion and for being a sounding board, as well as being mentored.
7. One's novel experience of developing under another's wing and the irony of gaining knowledge from the impoverished gives rise to feelings of contentment in being immersed in another culture.

8. Dedication and commitment to the cause is seen to be impressive, almost religious acts, yet unfamiliar to one from another culture
9. Freedom/Restriction was recognized with emerging independence amid the splendor of Indonesian landscape.
10. One's perceptions of unpredictable and contradictory behaviors by host nationals gives rise to a range of emotions.
11. Appreciation for Indonesian vegetation, wildlife, climate and way of life surfaced when living among local people in similar manner.
12. Even though one is adjusted to the surroundings, one still has feelings of missing out on more global thinking and still not belonging.
13. One experiences living and working with people but remains a stranger with understanding/not understanding underlying daily aspects of one's relationships.

Situated Structural Description for Archer

For Archer, being immersed at first in another culture involves lasting impressions and glimpses of upcoming adventures. It entails accepting new ways of living and working decided on one's behalf by others while recognizing restriction-freedom with emerging independence.

Archer believes values drive persons' behaviours and attitudes towards others, perceiving that obliging staff are faithful to managers, yet there is always potential for smiling employees to conceal their actual emotions. Archer's perceptions of unpredictable and

contradictory behaviors by host nationals give rise to a range of emotions; e.g., experiencing annoyance of host national's submission to an autocratic management style, Archer views hosts' dedication and commitment to the cause as impressive, almost religious, yet unfamiliar to one coming from abroad. Archer recognizes that foreigner status entails being sought after for opinions, being a sounding board, as well as being mentored. Archer's novel experience of developing under another's wing, mixed with the irony of gaining knowledge from the impoverished, surfaces feelings of contentment in being immersed in another culture.

Archer maintains an appreciation for Indonesian vegetation, wildlife, climate and way of life, which surfaces especially when living among local people. Yet even though adjusting to the surroundings, Archer has feelings of missing out on global thinking and still not belonging. Being immersed in another culture, for Archer, involves experiences of living and working with people but remaining strangers and having feelings of understanding/not understanding underlying relationships.

Batik

Batik - Meaning Unit 1

“An invitation to an [Indonesia] wedding – wow, I thought, this was sure to be a different experience than those we attend in Canada. Culturally, Indonesia is so very different from Canada, and I looked forward to attending my first [Indonesian] wedding. Just how different I had no idea until I actually attended the event. My first clue came when the invitation was delivered. My presence was requested from 5 – 7 p.m. Interesting! The time was certainly different from those we attend in Canada. My mind recalled the numerous weddings I had attended back home, the social aspect of the evening, sharing

drinks with friends, and dancing until all hours of the evening. Certainly there was to be none of this, if the reception was a mere two hours. Not that I expected to find any alcohol...knowing that most Indonesians do not drink, I was not anticipating any type of alcoholic beverage on the tables.”

Batik - Focal Meaning 1

Expectations about familiar events in unfamiliar and novel surroundings raise

comparisons with one's home culture.

Batik - Meaning Unit 2

“What did one do at an [Indonesian] wedding? My friends decided that I should not attend in my Western clothes, but rather I should be dressed the same as all other female attendees. Therefore, I should be fitted for a kebaya [blouse], and traditional skirt as well. What fun, I thought. Measurements were taken, and a few days later, there appeared my new Javanese clothing. No problems with the kebaya, but my goodness, how do the women walk in these hip-hugging skirts! Very sloooowly, I was about to learn. Baby steps, and I mean, baby steps!”

Batik - Focal Meaning 2

Appropriate ways of being and looking are fortified by generosity and social support

from one's cultural guides.

Batik - Meaning Unit 3

“Walking into the reception hall, my eyes immediately fixed on the front stage. Stunning! Like a movie set. There at the front stood bride, groom and both sets of parents, in the most elegant clothing. I almost did not recognize the bride, with her hair all done up in a puffy like way, and several layers of make-up that made her face appear somewhat artificial. Still, most beautiful! The smell of Jasmine wafted through the air. Up at the front were strings and strings of Jasmine, giving the room such a pleasant aroma. Then there was the red carpet. All guests walked up the red carpet upon entering, and went to congratulate the new couple. Such a long line of people that one did not get much time to talk with the couple. Much like Canada I suppose, with the receiving line. Following the greeting, I was then invited to dine at the various buffet tables that had been set up around the room. Nothing but the best of Indonesian food – delicious! It was now about 6:00 pm, and after some standing around and chatting, those with whom I had attended the wedding said, “Well, should we go?” Should we go, I thought! After just one hour? Yes, it was expected I was told. In such formal occasions, one was expected to stay just a short while so that all guests could have their chance to greet the couple and

eat. Okay. We then wandered up the red carpet again, this time to seek permission to leave. Good byes were said, and we were on our way home.”

Batik - Focal Meaning 3

Surprises arise as one discovers and learns unwritten cultural expectations.

Batik - Meaning Unit 4

“I could not wait to write and share this wedding experience with my friends back home. The entire ceremony, over and done within one and a half hours. No drinking, no dancing, no loud music. This was different from any other wedding that I had attended. Very different. Quite an elaborate event. Javanese people always dressed elaborately at social events, but the women’s clothing was stunning. Traditional skirts lined with gold threads, and men all wearing their batik shirts. Very picturesque!”

Batik - Focal Meaning 4

Novel experiences when being immersed in another culture compel one’s reporting to significant others at home.

Batik - Meaning Unit 5

“I forgot to mention about gifting at these weddings. Not really sure what was expected, I prepared a card as one would in Canada, and placed some money in the envelope. Unfortunately, my card would not fit in the box that was set out to hold the envelopes. Quickly I realized that gifting in Indonesia and Canada was something completely different. No gifts were present; rather people placed anonymous envelopes in the box. When I mentioned to friends how much I had put in my envelope – Rp. 500,000, they were astounded. Apparently Rp. 20,000 – 50,000 was the norm! Oh well, they were good friends and I had wanted to help. My Indonesian friends laughed – apparently the couple would never see my gift – rather, the parents would keep any funds that were deposited in the box. Well, that was a ‘lesson learned’ so to speak. In future, I would not be putting so much in the envelope. Also, in future, I would be sure to ask about local customs and traditions before making any assumptions.”

Batik - Focal Meaning 5

Gaining host cultural knowledge and wisdom entails making mistakes, staying positive while choosing to alter future behaviours and actions.

Batik - Meaning Unit 6

“I still think about these events. Luckily, I may have the opportunity to attend another in late December of this year.”

Batik - Focal Meaning 6

Cherished experiences are reminisced and desired to have again.

List of Focal Meanings for Batik

1. Expectations about familiar events in unfamiliar and novel surroundings raise comparisons with one's home culture.
2. Appropriate ways of being and looking are fortified by generosity and social support from one's cultural guides.
3. Surprises arise as one discovers and learns unwritten cultural expectations.
4. Novel experiences when being immersed in another culture compel one's reporting to significant others at home.
5. Gaining host cultural knowledge and wisdom entails making mistakes, staying positive while choosing to alter future behaviours and actions.
6. Cherished experiences are reminisced and desired to have again.

Situated Structural Description for Batik

For Batik, being immersed in another culture entails gaining host cultural knowledge and wisdom while making mistakes, staying positive and choosing to alter future behaviours and actions. Surprises arise as one discovers and learns unwritten cultural expectations; however, appropriate ways of being and looking are fortified by generosity and social support from Batik's cultural guides.

Batik's expectations about familiar events in unfamiliar and novel surroundings surfaces comparisons to the home culture. Novel experiences compel Batik's reporting to significant others at home while cherished experiences are reminisced and Batik maintains desires to have them again.

Batman

Batman- Meaning Unit 1

"I recently participated in a funeral in [large Indonesian city]. It was that of a young boy named Hari who was my girlfriend Tuti's only son. Hari passed away following a long bout with cancer. He was 12 years old, smart, good looking and particularly courageous. I think the Indonesian medical staff did all they could for Hari. At the same time they employed a somewhat elevated stance towards Tuti and I. This was not unlike cases I can recall my parents discussing in Canada years ago when doctors were thought to treat patients and families in a condescending manner and were often suspected of withholding information."

Batman- Focal Meaning 1

Comparisons to home country reveal familiarities in healthcare workers' efforts and attitudes.

Batman- Meaning Unit 2

"I and some of the staff from [NGO] arrived at the hospital to find Tuti and the nurses in tears. Within a couple of hours the local mosque had arranged for the lying in and a group had gathered for prayer. It was comforting as well as even a little surprising to see the neighbours and the mosque come forward, considering that neither Tuti or I are practicing Muslims.

That evening and the following morning there was a lying in followed by a burial in the afternoon. Overall it was a somber, ritualistic affair with touching moments as when an entire class arrived from Hari's school many of them in tears.

A dramatic scene was provided by Tuti's former pembantu [maid] who carried on protracted weeping at protracted length. She had recently resigned without notice, to the

distress of Tuti who had been hard pressed to find a replacement to help take care of Hari. We at first thought it might be remorse at having abandoned her charge but I think she considered it expiation.”

Batman- Focal Meaning 2

In time of need, caring support from community (neighbours, mosque, school, pembantu) is unforeseen, substantial, and filled with strong emotions.

Batman- Meaning Unit 3

“At the cemetery I gave a eulogy, almost completely inaudible due to the sound of nearby traffic. In making arrangements I guess Tuti had opted for the economy burial. It turned out that this was without a coffin, only loose boards angled over the body at the bottom of the grave. After the burial, the grave diggers made an energetic plea for more money. Having spotted a foreigner too late, they must have regretted not having negotiated a higher price. Vulnerability begets opportunity. I suppose it's the vulnerable exploiting the vulnerable.”

Batman- Focal Meaning 3

With opportunity, awareness arises that others will take advantage of the preconceived notion that expatriates are rich.

Batman- Meaning Unit 4

“There followed 7 days of praying. Each evening a troupe of 30 ‘prayers’ arrived just after the evening Sholat. They prayed for half an hour and received sustenance in the form of snacks and food parcels to bolster their fervour. This magically appeared each night from the hands of a small group of local women. On the seventh night many of our closest friends came to the house for a commemoration. Food appeared from nowhere and the focus was on helping Tuti get back to normal.”

Batman- Focal Meaning 4

Community support and cultural rituals, often appearing out of the blue, are important factors in helping others in need.

Batman- Meaning Unit 5

“A final cultural short circuit: A longstanding Christian friend came to the commemoration with her new husband who is Muslim. As they were leaving Tuti and I

gave her a kiss on each cheek. Seeing me touch his wife upset the husband who pronounced some religious principle and stormed out.”

Batman- Focal Meaning 5

The breaking of cultural behaviour rituals arises, unknown until after the event.

Batman- Meaning Unit 6

“Overall I'm grateful that I won't have to witness my own funeral.”

Batman- Focal Meaning 6

Gratitude surfaces in knowing one's complex and emotionally draining interment will be lived by others not self.

List of Focal Meanings for Batman

1. Comparisons to home country reveal familiarities in healthcare workers' efforts and attitudes.
2. In time of need, caring support from community (neighbours, mosque, school, pembantu) is unforeseen, substantial, and filled with strong emotions.
3. With opportunity, awareness arises that others will take advantage of the preconceived notion that expatriates are rich.
4. Community support and cultural rituals, often appearing out of the blue, are important factors in helping others in need.
5. The breaking of cultural behaviour rituals arises, unknown until after the event.
6. Gratitude surfaces in knowing one's complex and emotionally draining interment will be lived by others not self.

Situated Structural Description for Batman

Being immersed in another culture for Batman involves comparisons with his home country, revealing familiarities in healthcare workers' efforts and attitudes. When having experienced a death in the family, Batman considers caring, unforeseen community support (from neighbours, mosque, school, and pembantu) and cultural rituals as important factors in helping others in need that are filled with strong portrayal of emotions. Yet Batman's gratitude surfaces in knowing one's interment will be lived by others not self.

For Batman being immersed in another culture enhances the awareness that others, with a preconceived notion that expatriates are rich, may take advantage and includes the breaking of cultural behaviour rituals, unknown until after the event.

Imron

Imron - Meaning Unit 1

"For a number of years we regularly attended a Koranic reading group every Saturday. The gathering was attended by a range of individuals, from their early 20s to early 70s. I was the expatriate that attended these gatherings on a regular basis."

Imron - Focal Meaning 1

One experienced significant encounters with local community members yet always being aware of one's observable differences.

Imron - Meaning Unit 2

"I always enjoyed the discussions as the uztad (the religious instructor) was very knowledgeable about Islam. Even though he could be very conservative at times, his

grasp of Islamic philosophy brought new dimensions to the religion that rarely, if ever, are discussed in the mainstream press or literature. I always felt that these discussions were opportunities to move beyond the stereotypic images of Islam that are often encountered in the mainstream press. I felt that I was getting an insight/education about Islam as well as about Indonesia that very few Westerners ever experience. For me these discussions were not just about religion but they were also about culture. Through the Saturday gatherings I was getting inside the 'Indonesian mindset'."

Imron - Focal Meaning 2

Individual interest initiatives illuminate one's unique and deeper understanding of host country's culture.

Imron - Meaning Unit 3

"But there is one day that sticks out in my mind the most. The discussion centred on the state of Islam in Indonesia and its relationship to the current political context. I distinctly had the feeling that I understood all the words that were being said but I completely missed the message. It was as if the uztad was speaking in code and everybody was nodding in agreement but me. I remember looking around the room and concluding that something just happened and I totally missed it. There were cultural signs or reference points that I didn't understand. It was then that I concluded that there will always be a layer(s) of understanding about Indonesian culture that I will not be able to penetrate or completely grasp. Coming to this conclusion is on one hand discouraging as I will always be an "outsider". But on the other hand it also has made me more sensitive to the layers of Indonesian culture and how rich it can be."

Imron - Focal Meaning 3

One appreciates the complexity of the host country's culture while being immersed in another culture, yet one acknowledges dispiriting thoughts of never really belonging as a real member of society.

List of Focal Meanings for Imron

1. One experienced significant encounters with local community members yet always being aware of one's observable differences.

2. Individual interest initiatives illuminate one's unique and deeper understanding of host country's culture.
3. One appreciates the complexity of the host country's culture while being immersed in another culture, yet one acknowledges dispiriting thoughts of never really belonging as a real member of society.

Situated Structural Description for Imron

For Imron being immersed in another culture raised significant, uncomfortable encounters with the local community members. While always aware of observable differences, dispiriting thoughts arise of never really belonging as a real member of society.

When being immersed in another culture, individual interest initiatives illuminated Imron's unique and deeper understanding of host country's culture, giving Imron an appreciation for the host country's cultural complexity.

Justin Edwards

Justin Edwards - Meaning Unit 1

"Upon arrival I was given a cultural orientation by the volunteer agency and two months of intensive language training in [small Indonesian city]. After this training I was sent to my posting in [a large city]. This training prepared me in many ways to not only understand the language but also to cope with the many new aspects of the Indonesian culture. Without this in-country introduction, which included a number of field trips, my abilities to cope would have been greatly challenged."

Justin Edwards - Focal Meaning 1

In-country training enhances one's ability to adapt to the novel cultural environment.

Justin Edwards - Meaning Unit 2

"I come from a poor Catholic family of 17 children. My father was a carpenter specializing in house construction. At times he made good money but more often than not, he lost money on the sale of houses built. This was primarily due to swings in the provincial and national economies. After the children were old enough, my mother worked as a baby sitter and took care of people in old age homes. I can remember having hunger pains on many occasions when I was young, and I can remember receiving food boxes from the church at Christmas. My affinity, therefore, has always been with the poor."

Justin Edwards - Focal Meaning 2

Understanding gained from previous experience as a less fortunate member of society generates empathy and motivation in one's current role.

Justin Edwards - Meaning Unit 3

"I moved out on my own when I entered college at the age of 20. After graduation I worked in the government ... department for 4 years and then traveled to [another Canadian province] where I again worked for 8 years for government ... When I was 32 years old I went to university to obtain a degree ...; shortly afterward I worked for a Canadian [NGO] for 2 years as a ...manager in [developing country]. After this contract I traveled with a ... friend to countries in [several continents]. The majority of our time was spent in developing countries ... This exposure gave me good experience into how to cope in new environments and to make the most out of cultural encounters. While traveling we communicated using much sign language and when available small language books."

Justin Edwards - Focal Meaning 3

One recognizes that previous experiences are transferable and have contributed to enhanced insights and ability to optimize time spent in foreign cultures.

Justin Edwards - Meaning Unit 4

"It is common knowledge that a period of adjustment is needed to adapt to or tolerate differences between two cultures. I have been in Indonesia now for 12 years and I find that the longer I stay here the more tolerant I become of the culture and events that normally would cause me concern, frustration or even anger. The reason for my change

in tolerance is not entirely clear to me but I think it comes as a result of many experiences where impatience of my part, was found to be more counter productive and time consuming. This impatience not only resulted in people not wanting to serve me, but also exposed a negative side of myself that upon reflection, I later found quite embarrassing.”

Justin Edwards - Focal Meaning 4

One regards cultural adjustment as individual learning in which one filters out

inappropriate personal behaviours over a lengthy process of contemplation through trial and error.

Justin Edwards - Meaning Unit 5

“When I first arrived it seemed that the concept of line-ups was not understood or not seen as necessary. This is in contrast to an Indonesian people that appeared to be very patient on one hand, but very impatient on another. People in general are very friendly, quiet in nature and over polite in contrast to western culture. This impression is somewhat distorted however when people need to form line ups at service counters in banks, stores, bus stations, etc. At times it seems that the person with the sharpest elbows and the most aggression usually gets served first.

This is slowly changing now that people are forced to use a number system, for example in lines at banks or some department stores. If presented with a system the people are willing to conform, but if a system does not exist, then there can be confusion and an opportunity for the strong and aggressive to succeed.

Indonesians are slow to anger but once ignited it is extremely difficult to put out, and revenge is often the product. This can be seen in conflicts over religion, politics, worker rights, and disputes between clans or individuals over property rights. Individually people are slow to react, but if a large number of people can be provoked, then the consequences of actions taken could have catastrophic effects. There always seem to be people who would take advantage of situations where large crowds are gathered for personal gain. I have therefore learned to lie low and collect as much information as possible when the threat levels increase.”

Justin Edwards - Focal Meaning 5

Consideration and observations of paradoxical behaviours ranging from calmness to

sudden rage in host persons create erudite wariness and comparisons of Canadian ways of organizing people.

Justin Edwards - Meaning Unit 6

“When the conflict with [Indonesian province] broke out in September 1999, [Indonesian province] received more than 250,000 refugees. At the forefront of this influx were bands of armed militia groups that were earnestly looking for foreigners or anyone associated with UN or [NGOs]. Initially the police and the military stood by, allowing these thugs to carry firearms, steal food and supplies from shops and start fights with neighbourhood gangs. As it turned out these gangs became a controlling factor that prevented militia groups from entering some neighbourhoods. Where possible foreigners were protected by these neighbours. Fortunately I and my family were evacuated to [Indonesian province] before these militias reached [capital city]. The support given by the Indonesians for us was excellent.”

Justin Edwards - Focal Meaning 6

Expected reliance on government institutions for personal security is questioned amid powerful awareness of being well protected and cared for by the local community.

Justin Edwards - Meaning Unit 7

“As the [Indonesians] were settling into refugee camps throughout [Indonesian province], the international agencies were beginning their relief work. I was the project manager for a program to bring relief supplies across the border into [small city], the [Indonesian province] enclave. In total I led 5 convoys across the border, through militia, police and military road blocks. In one incident I had just finished buying maize seed from local farmers on the Indonesian side of the border, which were to be distributed to displaced [Indonesian] farmers in the enclave. On approach to the border the militia placed large rocks across the road to prevent us from passing. Luckily we had a soldier with us aboard so they started to remove the boulders from the road. The militias then started to move to the back of the truck to remove the sacks of seed. Seeing that they were unarmed, I instinctively jumped down, ran to the back of the truck and held them at bay, speaking in Indonesian that it was my seed and that they could not have it. It seems I caught them off guard with my forcefulness and was able to quickly jump back in the truck and drive on. The soldier was of little use as he did not want to anger the militias.

Many Indonesian people that are simple farmers or unemployed (as were these militias) do not really know how to react to foreigners (especially white foreigners). These foreigners are usually held in high respect, are involved in large projects that often target the poor, and punishments are high if you hurt or kill one. Perhaps my being a white foreigner could also have helped me in throwing them off their guard at the road block. I admit that this was not a wise thing to do, but it is sometimes hard to predict what one will do in a given circumstance.

This respect for foreigners, I believe, also allowed me to control situations in refugee camps when disputes broke out during rice distributions. Knowing the language is the key to effective communication. In a couple of incidents where food supplies had not been fully distributed, and where staff safety was a big concern, I was able to give the task of finishing the distributions to local leaders. This action allowed my staff to leave quickly and a mechanism was still in place for them to continue distributions with minimal supervision.”

Justin Edwards - Focal Meaning 7

One’s mere presence, with observable physical differences and proficient language skills, sanctions certain liberties in getting one’s way despite reckless, impulsive behaviour.

Justin Edwards - Meaning Unit 8

“There are several things that are encountered that many foreigners find particularly annoying. There is little to do but tolerate it otherwise you would become an angry nervous wreck in no time. The annoyances include:

People reading over your back when you are writing or reading something: In the western culture this is considered very rude as what one writes or even reads is considered private. In Indonesia this situation is unavoidable in buses or planes and I often take the effort to give a better view of the newspaper to the other person, but leave it to my discretion when to turn the page. Other times I give a portion of the paper to the person so that I can read my section on my own. This often works well. There are however still things that I cannot tolerate, such as an employee at the Telkom office reading the content of my fax before sending it. In these circumstances I firmly asked the person to stop reading and to just send the fax, and I remind him/her that this practice should not be followed again. Other Indonesians standing by seemed very happy that I had made these statements. I’m sure certain Indonesians would have spoken in like manner if presented with the same situation.

Strangers asking many questions about your personal life: When I first arrived in Indonesia I was told that it is the culture here to make personal enquiries about the new person on the block. Questions generally refer to your religion, marital status, number, name, age of your children and wife, origin of your husband or wife (as many foreigners marry Indonesians – more so men marrying Indonesian women rather than women marrying Indonesian men), address in Indonesia or in your home country, where you work, etc. etc. If you allow them the time, they will grill you with questions for hours on end. This does not bother me as much as it used to at first. Now I turn the tables and ask them a lot about who they are and what they do. The intent of their initial questions is to open up a communication generally as a matter of politeness. By asking them a lot of questions in return an atmosphere of friendliness and some degree of trust is achieved. Nowadays people are asking for phone numbers and e-mail addresses. These I usually restrict to individuals that I feel I would like to contact again.

As you pass strangers in the street they often ask you where you are going: To a foreigner this may be considered private information, but to an Indonesian it is considered as part of the initial contact together with the ‘Hello Mister!’ During orientation in [small city], I was told that it has been a common practice for many many years to ask where people they are going as they pass by. This is a part of the traditional community security system which provides information on the whereabouts of individuals in the case of emergencies or in case some one is missing. In this context it makes perfect sense, and I am now more apt to let someone know generally speaking where I am going rather than totally ignore the person, which may be seen as very rude.

Teenagers are more apt to make rude statements: toward foreigners that younger or older people, who seem to have more respect or fear of foreigners. This I think is a pattern similar to many countries in the world. “Hello Mister” is a common phrase that is heard about 30 – 50 times a days by foreigners in Indonesia. This doesn’t faze me any more, as I realize that this is probably the limit of their English skills and you can usually tell by the tone if it is genuine. If they are being rude I just ignore them and continue on.

Foreigners are often given special ‘tourist prices’: in tourist areas. These prices are usually above those of local tourists. Because I have been here a long time, and know the language, I can generally sense when prices are too high. If the price is only slightly above the regular price, then I may give in. Sometimes arguing over prices is counter productive and strains the relationship between buyer and seller. By paying the price offered the service is usually very good and smiles go all around, which makes your trip or purchase that much more pleasant. Some tourists try to drive the price of an item to ridiculously low levels, not understanding the consequence of the low sale on the family income of the seller. If people were more aware of the poverty level in this country and the struggle for honest people to make a living they would not fight over the difference of 5¢ or 10¢ on an item.”

Justin Edwards - Focal Meaning 8

Being immersed in another culture raises the spectacle of inescapable irritations yet, with experience, understanding and innovative methods of handling variations emerge.

Justin Edwards - Meaning Unit 9

“I had never intended to marry an Indonesian woman, but 6 months before my contract was to end I met someone that made me feel incomplete if we could not always be together. Here they call it ‘jodoh’. This in English means ‘the perfect match in a marriage partner’. My interest was not to get married quickly to this person. I wanted to get to know her first and to take her to Canada to meet the family and allow her to experience my culture first, but this was an impossibility.

In the Indonesian culture, if a woman was to travel alone with a man, it was assumed that they would also be sleeping together. For this reason my invitation to travel to Canada

six months later was seen in a much more serious light. After much soul searching I decided to give up the bachelor life and made a commitment of marriage to this person. I have never been sorry I had made this decision. We married in 1997 and we are now the proud parents of 3 beautiful children. So my reasons for staying in Indonesia are more than just for the work that I can find. Indonesia is now an important part of the life of my children, whom I want to experience both cultures so that they do not forget their roots.”

Justin Edwards - Focal Meaning 9

The desire to share one’s Canadian roots with one’s Indonesian family remains steadfast.

Justin Edwards - Meaning Unit 10

“The concept of a family in Indonesia goes beyond the concept used by Westerners. Close family include not only uncles, aunts, cousins and grand parents on both sides of the family, but also the husbands, wives and children of relatives not found in the direct line of the family tree. Your mother-in-law’s, cousin’s husband’s brother can still be seen as a close enough family member to be invited to family functions or to be asked to make a contribution to a wedding.

Creating these linkages and dependencies helps unite large families. In times of disaster such as drought or civil unrest, these linkages play an important role in ensuring the well being of all family members. To deliberately alienate yourself from the family is social suicide, as you will be left without help if you run into a crisis that you cannot handle on your own.

Dependencies between families can be seen in a good light, but at times can also be seen as a burden that inhibits financial or social progress within a family. When the rainy season is poor, some farmers experience crop failure while others do not. It is expected that families getting good crop yields provide food to other families that did not get good yields. In a subsistence farming culture this may be seen as a ‘poverty trap’, wherein families are unable to sell surplus crops to pay for other family needs (such as house or fence repair, health costs or schooling) because they have to give it to other households in their family. Everyone in the family circle suffers in the same way, and all are kept at a very low level of subsistence.

It is difficult for me to do anything about this as it is related to culture norms that have been established for hundreds of years. My role is to feed into this system if necessary as the need arises. Fortunately to date we have been required to pay very little into family debts.

Because I married into a matrilineal system and because my wife is the first born in her family, we are obliged to take care of the immediate family when my wife’s parents pass away. I was aware of this before marriage and accept the burden.”

Justin Edwards - Focal Meaning 10

One experiences power in family connections, yet is also powerless in regard to the obligation of supporting all members of one's extended family.

Justin Edwards - Meaning Unit 11

"One really annoying thing to Westerners married to Indonesian spouses is having what seems like 1000 relatives in your house at all times. Fortunately for me I come from a very large family and feel quite uneasy if there are not more than 5 adults and 3 kids in the house at any one time. Relatives often come to visit, but they do not stay long, and those that come always help out where possible (e.g. washing the car, repairing the fence, building a fish pond, painting the walls, going on errands, playing with the kids, babysitting, etc. etc.). We feed them and they relax in front of the TV at night, but that is normal and they do not abuse the benefits offered. They have never asked for money unless it was an emergency, and my wife takes care of all financial transactions with other family members. I trust her completely in these instances as she is not as generous as I."

Justin Edwards - Focal Meaning 11

One experiences similarities between host and home countries when living as a member of a large family with imminent rewards and responsibilities.

Justin Edwards - Meaning Unit 12

"[Region of Indonesia] is predominantly Catholic/Protestant with approximately 10% Islam, 5% Hindu and 2% Buddhist. Tolerance between religions in [Region of Indonesia] has been very good over the past 10 years with only 4 to 5 major outbreaks of violence usually between the Christians and the Islamic religions.

Perhaps the reason I am so comfortable in [Region of Indonesia] is that it closely resembles the Catholic based neighbourhood where I grew up in Canada. Living in an Islamic society would be much more difficult to cope with, especially with the 'Call to Pray' over the mosque loud speakers 5 times a day. I do not mind the day time 'Call to Pray', but having to wake up to the sound of morning prayers from a loud speaker at 4:30 every morning would be a true test of my ability to tolerate things."

Justin Edwards - Focal Meaning 12

One reflects on religious similarities between host and home cultures while surmising discontentment would emerge in a dissimilar scenario.

Justin Edwards - Meaning Unit 13

“The Catholics and Protestants here I would consider somewhat on the fanatic side. They take religion very seriously and woe to the person that is seen desecrating a host at communion in a Catholic church. People have been known to be beaten to death for such a thing here. As stated before, Indonesian people are generally very friendly and quiet in nature, but if angered they can turn very quickly into raging mobs. It seems that they lose all sense of logic and are easily directed by certain individuals to target destruction on buildings, cars, motorcycles, police stations, people, etc. It is quite amazing actually. I do not try to understand it, but I am careful to avoid it.”

Justin Edwards - Focal Meaning 13

One perceives unpredictable and dangerous emotions lurking just below the surface in host culture residents that are not understood, yet are real; so one remains constantly cautious.

Justin Edwards - Meaning Unit 14

“In conclusion I feel lucky to be working and living in an Indonesian society, and I do not feel that my immersion has been a burden. The cultures of Indonesia are many and each has its own distinct appeal. In spite of the negative aspects as expressed above, there are far too many positive aspects that help tip the balance for me.”

Justin Edwards - Focal Meaning 14

One’s experience emerges as treasured opportunities which outweigh the limitations.

Justin Edwards - Meaning Unit 15

“At times I do not feel that I am a foreigner, and at other times it is very obvious. I do not feel as a foreigner within my Indonesian family but during project visits and meetings with government officials, my presence as a foreigner is very heavily felt. In both instances I feel comfortable as these are roles that must be played and I feel that I have the capabilities to cope in either.”

Justin Edwards - Focal Meaning 15

Strong feelings of being an insider - yet being an outsider in differing cultural locales - highlights the reality of duality with one’s experience of being immersed in another culture.

List of Focal Meanings for Justin Edwards

1. In-country training enhances one's ability to adapt to the novel cultural environment.
2. Understanding gained from previous experience as a less fortunate member of society generates empathy and motivation in one's current role.
3. One recognizes that previous experiences are transferable and have contributed to enhanced insights and ability to optimize time spent in foreign cultures.
4. One regards cultural adjustment as individual learning in which one filters out inappropriate personal behaviours over a lengthy process of contemplation through trial and error.
5. Consideration and observations of paradoxical behaviours ranging from calmness to sudden rage in host persons create erudite wariness and comparisons of Canadian ways of organizing people.
6. Expected reliance on government institutions for personal security is questioned amid powerful awareness of being well protected and cared for by the local community.
7. One's mere presence, with observable physical differences and proficient language skills, sanctions certain liberties in getting one's way despite reckless, impulsive behaviour.
8. Being immersed in another culture raises the spectacle of inescapable irritations yet, with experience, understanding and innovative methods of handling variations emerge.

9. The desire to share one's Canadian roots with one's Indonesian family remains steadfast.
10. One experiences power in family connections, yet is also powerless in regard to the obligation of supporting all members of one's extended family.
11. One experiences similarities between host and home countries when living as a member of a large family with imminent rewards and responsibilities.
12. One reflects on religious similarities between host and home cultures while surmising discontentment would emerge in a dissimilar scenario.
13. One perceives unpredictable and dangerous emotions lurking just below the surface in host culture residents that are not understood, yet are real; so one remains constantly cautious.
14. One's experience emerges as treasured opportunities which outweigh the limitations.
15. Strong feelings of being an insider-yet being an outsider in differing cultural locales - highlights the reality of duality with one's experience of being immersed in another culture.

Situated Structural Description for Justin Edwards

For Justin Edwards, in-country training related to being immersed in another culture enhances his ability to adapt to the novel cultural environment. Justin Edwards regards cultural adjustment as personal learning in which one filters out inappropriate behaviours over a lengthy process of contemplation through trial and error. Justin Edwards recognizes his previous experiences are transferable and have contributed to enhanced

insights and ability to optimize time spent in foreign cultures. Through his own previous experiences as a less fortunate member of society, empathy and motivation are generated in his current role.

Being immersed in another culture for Justin Edwards raises the spectacle of inescapable irritations, yet with experience and understanding innovative methods of handling variations emerge. Considerations and observations of host persons' unpredictable, dangerous paradoxical behaviours lead to Justin Edwards' erudite wariness and comparisons with Canadian ways of organizing people; he perceives host culture residents' emotions as lurking just below the surface and are not understood, yet they are very real so he remains constantly cautious. Further, Justin Edwards questions the expected reliance on government institutions for personal security amid prevailing awareness of being well protected and cared for by his local community.

With observable physical differences and proficient language skills, Justin Edwards' mere presence sanctions certain liberties in getting one's way despite reckless, impulsive behaviour while being immersed in another culture. Justin Edwards maintains strong feelings of being an insider - yet being an outsider in various cultural locales. This stance validates the reality of the duality associated with being immersed in another culture.

Justin Edwards reflects on similarities between host and home countries with regard to religion, and when living as member of a large family noting the imminent rewards and responsibilities. He experiences power in family connections, yet also powerlessness with

the obligation of supporting all members of his extended family. Nevertheless, Justin Edwards' desire to share his Canadian roots with his own Indonesian family remains steadfast.

Overall, Justin Edwards' experience being immersed in another culture emerges as treasured possibilities outweighing limitations.

Kate Phelan

Kate Phelan - Meaning Unit 1

"My staff, wife and husband, Putu and Soki have been with me for over three years. They had occasionally asked me to attend ceremonies in their village, and Putu was meticulous about meeting the spiritual obligations of the land I had leased. After our first Galungan/Kuningan together, they shyly asked whether I would like to join them on their annual pilgrimage to pray at the temples of Lake Batur and Besakih, Bali's holiest site. (It is a religious obligation for all Balinese Hindus to pray at Besakih and Batur at this time). I was honoured to be asked, especially since this was the first year that they would be taking their children, aged 3 and 5, with them.

I drove to their village early the next morning, excited at the prospect of our family pilgrimage. Few Westerners take part in this ritual. I was dressed in pakain adat (sarong, lace kebaya and sash) and when I arrived at their compound I saw that everyone was also dressed for prayer, even the 3 year old. Putu loaded two heavy offering baskets into the back of the little car and climbed in after them with the children. Soki took the wheel and our little pilgrimage set forth."

Kate Phelan - Focal Meaning 1

Feelings of a strong sense of acceptance and fitting in surface when taking part in important religious/cultural activities with a local 'family'.

Kate Phelan - Meaning Unit 2

“It was early on a bright, clear morning and there was little traffic. As we drove up the mountain the air became cool and crisp. The children had never been this way. Putu shared out oranges and home-made ginger sweets. There was a sense of excitement and anticipation - as much for the day's outing as for the religious duty, I sensed.

We arrived at Batur in less than an hour. Rai, the 3 year-old, was mesmerized by the sight of the volcanic lake below. It was still early and uncrowded, but we still had to park a long way from the temple. Putu carried an offering basket on her head, Soki and I each held a child by the hand and we made our way along the main road to the temple. I thought I had understood that Putu and Soki prayed here each year, but they were puzzled by which temple entrance to use and had to ask. They seemed oddly shy in this big temple. Putu went off to leave her basket near the sanctuary and we stood about waiting for her return. The children were amazed at the temperature; they had never been so cold (it was about 18C). A few people stared at me in a friendly way; I was correctly dressed and with Hindus, but I felt a bit shy as well.

Putu returned and we found a place to sit in a row to wait for the prayers. Putu shared out the little offerings we would use and Rai sat in my lap. We became just 5 more heads of the thousands that gathered to pray in neat rows. Waiting to begin, Putu pointed out the latest fashions in kebayas, the most expensive sarongs among the crowd, then the huge, intricate offerings made of rice and pig skin. Some people meditated, some chatted as they waited.”

Kate Phelan - Focal Meaning 2

Being immersed in another culture brings new experiences, familiar yet a sense of misunderstanding is present.

Kate Phelan - Meaning Unit 3

“The priest's bell rang. We lit our incense and stuck it in the ground in front of us, then ritually washed our hands in the sacred smoke, wafting it over our heads. The bell rang again and we raised our steeple hands, empty above our heads in the first prayer. I was only half way through when the bell rang -- they really rush along when there are so many people, I thought! We each picked up a white flower, passed it through the incense smoke, and raised it between our fingers for the next prayer. Then a pretty cone of banana leaf filled with flowers. Then a blue flower, then a yellow one, then empty hands once more. With each prayer I cast out a widening net of blessings for my self, my family, my community, world peace.

The bell rang a final time and we waited patiently for the priests and their assistants to come and bless us. About a dozen of them fanned out to perform this ritual for 3 or 4 people at a time. When it was our turn, we opened our hands and lowered our heads

while holy water was sprinkled on us, then cupped our right hand over left and holy water was poured three times into our hands to be sipped. The fourth time, we sprinkled this water over our heads, blessing ourselves. Then the priest offered a plate of wet rice and we all took a little, sticking a few grains on our foreheads and throats, dusting a few on our heads and eating a symbolic grain.”

Kate Phelan - Focal Meaning 3

Amidst the numbers, participating in ritual sequence, yet having feelings of being rushed.

Kate Phelan - Meaning Unit 4

“The ceremony was over. Now we had to wait until everyone in the huge compound had received the blessing before we could rise and wait for Putu to retrieve her offering basket and make our way out of the temple. Then we got into the car and drove to Besakih along the edge of an ancient caldera. Putu told me, as we passed tiers of car parks, that if you came later in the day and had to park in the lower car parks, you would have to walk up to 2 km with a heavy basket on your head. But we were still very early and were able to park right near the temple forecourt. I tried to carry Putu's basket on my head but it was so heavy I had to give it up in a few minutes.”

Kate Phelan - Focal Meaning 4

Trying to do what is expected but physically unable.

Kate Phelan - Meaning Unit 5

“Now we had to locate the little temple dedicated to the cast and location of each Balinese. Soki had to ask the way, and again I had the sense that they had not been here for a while. The children ran ahead, mounting the steep steps in jumps. Finally we found the family temple, a small, intimate garden with a magnificent meru at one end, presided over by a kindly priest. We sat in a row on the soft grass, lit our incense and prayed in the fragrant garden with the penjors whipping in the cool wind above our heads. It was delightfully intimate; I felt very close to divine grace.”

Kate Phelan - Focal Meaning 5

Overwhelming feelings of connection to divinity surface with immersion in religious experience.

Kate Phelan - Meaning Unit 6

“All too soon Soki had hustled us out of the little temple and down the stairs again, turning right into a very large temple compound where several thousand people were gathered to pray. It was production line prayer; baskets here, sit here, pray now, be

blessed, file out, step aside as a worker sweeps up the abandoned offerings. I had a much greater sense of holiness in the little temple higher up. Not for the first time I wondered whether Balinese would still embrace these rituals if it was an individual and not a cultural/community obligation. It can take days to make the offerings for certain ceremonies, which makes it hard to hold down a job with regular hours. Then there is the endless waiting to pray ... this why the Balinese are so patient. They sometimes have to wait several hours to enter the inner compound of the temple to pray, if there is a large crowd. Then they have to wait for all present to receive the blessings. Then all the people have to file out of the split gate again.”

Kate Phelan - Focal Meaning 6

Understanding the power of community yet not understanding the compromises willingly made.

Kate Phelan - Meaning Unit 7

“Our obligation fulfilled for the year, we made our way down the steep temple steps. The children were tired now. Soki went to the car and returned with rice packets Putu had bought in her village that morning. We sat on the grass, eating rice and smoked chicken with our fingers and sampling the offerings from the basket. All around us, dozens of families were doing the same. I was the only foreign face.

We made our way back to the car between a honky-tonk alley of vendors selling food, clothes, toys and other fairground accessories. Many were Muslims from [region of Indonesia]. The children were tired now.”

Kate Phelan - Focal Meaning 7

Awareness of being different often surfaces while being immersed in another culture.

Kate Phelan - Meaning Unit 8

“Soki bought a toy car for Putu. This became an annual ritual, as has our visit to Besakih to pray. I look forward to this all year and soon after Galungan I start pestering Putu to look at the calendar and see when we will make our next pilgrimage. I feel blessed to be allowed to enter the Balinese culture in this small way, and blessed that my staff welcome me to do so. Recently I was attending a ceremony at their village; it was night and the whole village was in and around the temple compound praying, chatting, eating, sleeping. “I am the only tamu [guest],” I said to Putu. She touched my elbow gently. “You are not a tamu now, you are orang Bali,” she corrected me.”

Kate Phelan - Focal Meaning 8

Feelings of being fully accepted by a cultural community and recognized as one of them provide a sense of fulfillment.

List of Focal Meanings for Kate Phelan

1. Feelings of a strong sense of acceptance and fitting in surface when taking part in important religious/cultural activities with a local 'family'.
2. Being immersed in another culture brings new experiences, familiar yet a sense of misunderstanding is present.
3. Amidst the numbers, participating in ritual sequence, yet feelings of being rushed.
4. Trying to do what is expected but physically unable.
5. Overwhelming feelings of connection to divinity surface with immersion in religious experience.
6. Understanding the power of community yet not understanding the compromises willingly made.
7. Awareness of being different often surfaces while being immersed in another culture.
8. Feelings of being fully accepted by a cultural community and recognized as one of them provide a sense of fulfillment.

Situated Structural Description for Kate Phelan

Being immersed in another culture brings Kate Phelan new experiences, familiar yet mixed with a sense of misunderstanding. She understands the power of community but

does not understand the compromises willingly made by host country others. Kate Phelan participates in rituals, yet feels rushed and attempts to do what is expected but finds herself physically unable to do so. This maintains Kate Phelan's awareness of being different, feelings which often result from being immersed in another culture.

Kate Phelan experiences overwhelming feelings of connection to divinity with engagement in religious rituals. She feels a strong sense of acceptance and fitting in when taking part in religious/cultural activities with her local 'family'. Her feelings of acceptance by the cultural community, and being recognized as one of them, leads to a sense of fulfillment in Kate Phelan's immersion in another culture.

Luke Gerard

Luke Gerard - Meaning Unit 1

"My most memorable immersion into Indonesian culture was also my most complete one. It came in October 2000 in a non-descript [small] village about an hour outside of [large city]. At my own suggestion, I was assigned to do a "longitudinal ethnographic survey" (the term assigned by my employer, not something I invented myself) assessing the impact of a [NGO] project. This meant I would spend 4-5 days every three months (over the next two years) in the tiny village of [small village]... – population about 3,500 – and about as far removed from my home base of [large Indonesian city] as possible. It wasn't meant to be a 'regular' [NGO] monitoring visit where a team of so-called experts descends upon a village for two or three hours, then heads off to their (usually) comfortable hotel in the district capital. Rather, I was entirely on my own – full-scale immersion in a village where no one spoke nary a word of English and where many people told me they had only ever seen a white person on the television."

Luke Gerard - Focal Meaning 1

Unforgettable experiences of being immersed in another culture arose with partaking in a unique, self-designed culturally rich mission in an isolated locale.

Luke Gerard - Meaning Unit 2

“I felt equal parts exhilaration and anxiety. While I had made countless project visits to the remotest corners of Indonesia, I had never spent this length of time in a village and I had certainly never done it alone. I had joked with friends before leaving about playing ‘amateur anthropologist’ – my chosen major at university though I had never really practiced it in the field. Still, I couldn’t help thinking of my long-dead father who had scoffed at the idea of studying anthro and had groused “Do you want to work in a museum for the rest of your life”? I was wishing he’d been there in [small village] with me. The feeling of ‘If you could only see me now’ was all but overwhelming.”

Luke Gerard - Focal Meaning 2

One’s emotions ranging from worry to excitement with anticipation of opportunities amidst reflections of achieving something special not considered or thought possible by important others.

Luke Gerard - Meaning Unit 3

“The exhilaration came from doing something that was entirely unique. I am an adventurer at heart and this definitely could be classified as an adventure par excellence. And to be paid for it was icing on the cake.”

Luke Gerard - Focal Meaning 3

Great satisfaction was felt in reaching a significant pinnacle in doing what one loves for a living; the uniqueness of the experience a highlight.

Luke Gerard - Meaning Unit 4

“But there was anticipation and a strong element of anxiety as well. Although I spoke reasonably fluent Indonesian, I was concerned about being able to adequately express the reasons for this research. I would be staying with the village chief – also the main ustad (Islamic religious teacher) in the area – and wondered both if I would get along with this family and if, as a non-Muslim foreigner, I would be accepted by them. And then there were the living conditions. At 44, I was no spring chicken and wondered how well I would adapt to having to use the MCK (a public latrine and shower that is common in [the province]) and sleep on something that barely qualified as a bed.”

Luke Gerard - Focal Meaning 4

Thoughts of gaining new experiences are framed with a sense of apprehension and silent questioning of one's personal and professional abilities in tackling a different cultural environment.

Luke Gerard - Meaning Unit 5

"In the event, [small village] was a richly rewarding experience; truly one of the most professionally (and to some degree personally) rewarding experiences I have ever had. Over time (I continued to visit the village for 2.5 years), the number of children who faithfully trooped after me as I headed to the MCK – ostensibly to ensure my welfare – diminished. I'm not sure that most of [small village]'s residents ever understood what exactly I was doing – attributing my activities to the eccentricities of a strange but friendly foreigner – but, for me, [small village] will always have a place in my heart."

Luke Gerard - Focal Meaning 5

Gratitude remains for the village whose residents became accustomed to, yet never really understood, the outsider.

List of Focal Meanings for Luke Gerard

1. Unforgettable experiences of being immersed in another culture arose with partaking in a unique self-designed culturally rich mission in an isolated locale.
2. One's emotions ranging from worry to excitement with anticipation of opportunities amidst reflections of achieving something special not considered or thought possible by important others.
3. Great satisfaction was felt in reaching a significant pinnacle in doing what one loves for a living; the uniqueness of the experience a highlight.

4. Thoughts of gaining new experiences are framed with a sense of apprehension and silent questioning of one's personal and professional abilities in tackling a different cultural environment.
5. Gratitude remains for the village whose residents became accustomed to, yet never really understood, the outsider.

Situated Structural Description for Luke Gerard

Luke Gerard's unforgettable experiences of being immersed in another culture arose with partaking in a unique, self designed, culturally rich, mission in an isolated locale.

Initially, Luke Gerard's thoughts of gaining these experiences were framed with a sense of apprehension and silent questioning of his personal and professional abilities in tackling a different cultural environment. His emotions ranged from worry to excitement with anticipation of opportunities amidst reflections of achieving something special that was not considered or thought possible by important others. Yet in the end, Luke Gerard feels great satisfaction at reaching a significant personal pinnacle by doing what he loves for a living. He remains grateful to the village residents who became accustomed to, yet never really understood, the outsider.

Made

Made- Meaning Unit 1

"I am married to an Indonesian and together we live with her sister, husband and three of her five children. In that sense, almost everyday of my life for the past 14 years I have felt immersed in Indonesian culture. In addition, in my work, I am totally surrounded by Indonesian staff, partners, and community members, and thus I would say that even in

that aspect of my life I feel I have been immersed for at least the last 19 years. Hence to pinpoint a particular situation is rather difficult.”

Made - Focal Meaning 1

The process of living and working in a foreign cultural environment feels continuous and constant.

Made- Meaning Unit 2

“While I have always felt comfortable with Indonesians around me and they have certainly made me feel at home, I cannot say that I have ever felt being Indonesian As a tall white expatriate, I don’t think one can ever feel immersed in the Indonesian culture. You just stand out and you are reminded on a daily basis. Being different is a fact of life in Indonesia, no matter how hard you try to be Indonesian, and people treat you differently because of that.”

Made - Focal Meaning 2

Visible minority status leaves one with feelings of ease anywhere, yet belonging nowhere.

Made- Meaning Unit 3

“I guess accepting that you are different and that people will treat you differently because of that is the first step in feeling immersed. It’s when you can predict what people will think or how they will behave, and accept that, and have fun with it.”

Made - Focal Meaning 3

One has accepted diversity and recognized local persons’ behaviours while keeping amused with the experiences.

Made- Meaning Unit 4

“By now I have mastered the Indonesian accent, to the extent that over the phone many people have mistaken me for an Indonesian. These are perhaps the only true moments where I can say that I have felt immersed, albeit for a short while.”

Made - Focal Meaning 4

Language skills, through voice alone, bring powerful, fleeting moments of feeling a sense of belonging and fitting in.

Made- Meaning Unit 5

“While I feel comfortable with the Indonesian culture (for the most part: easy to have a conversation, joke around, cultural traditions, etc.), there are certain parts of me that would like to have more directness and deeper conversations. The indirectness is certainly challenging.”

Made - Focal Meaning 5

Contentment is being at ease in the host customs, yet feelings of a lack of profundity remain.

Made- Meaning Unit 6

“Overall, however, I know I will miss the culture once I return to Canada. Perhaps that is a sign of immersion as well: when it’s become part of you.”

Made - Focal Meaning 6

Thoughts of repatriation arouse feelings of personal transformation anticipated as not being easily reversed.

List of Focal Meanings for Made

1. The process of living and working in a foreign cultural environment feels continuous and constant.
2. Visible minority status leaves one with feelings of ease anywhere, yet belonging nowhere.
3. One has accepted diversity and recognized local persons’ behaviours while keeping amused with the experiences.

4. Language skills, through voice alone, bring powerful, fleeting moments of feeling a sense of belonging and fitting in.
5. Contentment is being at ease in the host customs, yet feelings of a lack of profundity remain.
6. Thoughts of repatriation arouse feelings of personal transformation anticipated as not being easily reversed.

Situated Structural Description for Made

Being immersed in another culture feels continuous and constant for Made. He is at ease with host customs, accepting diversity and recognizing local persons' behaviours while keeping amused with the experience. However, Made's visible minority status leaves him with feelings of belonging nowhere; yet his language skills, through voice alone, bring powerful, fleeting moments of feeling a sense of belonging and fitting in. Made's thoughts of repatriation arouse feelings of personal transformation which are anticipated as not being easily reversed.

Martin Wyatt

Martin Wyatt – Meaning Unit 1

“With [the NGO] there was a work partner program (for older youth 21-25 years old) for 10 Canadians to travel to Indonesia and live in a village as well as complete small community development projects with the local communities. There were also 10 Indonesian counterparts on the program. We were divided up in to 2 villages, with 5 Canadians and 5 Indonesians each.

Therefore there was the experience and cultural aspects of working with Indonesians on community development projects full time. There was also the fact that we were

individually housed with a local family and lived with them as one of the family for the duration of the program. I personally can't see anyone being more immersed in the culture than that."

Martin Wyatt - Focal Meaning 1

Complete immersion in another culture arises when living and working in a community as a member of a local 'family'.

Martin Wyatt – Meaning Unit 2

"The village I was living in had approximately 3,300 citizens, which was around 1000 households. I was living with the only Catholic family in the village, the rest of the families in the village were Islamic, which added a bit of twist in my cultural experience in the village.

It should also be stated that during my time in the village, the president of the country was ... and I truly believe this impacted the amount of information I was able to receive during my time there and influenced the closeness of my relationships with people."

Martin Wyatt - Focal Meaning 2

One feels political and religious underpinnings were a significant influence on one's experience of being immersed in another culture.

Martin Wyatt – Meaning Unit 3

"The house was set up as is generally occurs in [region of Indonesia]. My house was in the centre, the older houses 2 meters to south was my host grandparent's house and 4 meters to north-east was my host uncle's house. The people surrounding this plot of land were mostly family and had family connections, such as grandfather's cousin etc. Family means different things in Java than it does in Canada. Extended family is still considered fairly important and geographic locations in the village can show that this is still strong also. You are more likely to be related to those in your own sub-village than you are with those in other sub-villages (although there are probably still family connections there too).

I lived with a host father, host mother, 2 host sisters and about half way through my stay there I had a host sister-in-law who was 9 months pregnant and then of course I had a host niece living with me too."

Martin Wyatt - Focal Meaning 3

One compares the significance of family in the host culture with relatives in one's home culture.

Martin Wyatt – Meaning Unit 4

“One thing that I found very interesting in the village was the power and leadership structure. There was a very formal power and leadership structure – village head, sub-village head, neighborhood head and the village executive which included the village head, sub-village heads (3), treasurer, secretary, and head of village development.

However, after a very short time in the village it was clear that although these people had the official power in the village, the actual decision making for most things in the village happened with the informal power structure. As it turns out my host father was the unofficial head of the village. As I have mentioned he was also the only Catholic head of a house in the village, which I wouldn't consider a normal situation.

(Note: There were 8 sub-villages in the village and 3 sub-village heads; each was actually responsible for 2-3 sub-villages)

I think there are two reasons for this. The first reason was that he was from the household that had the oldest people in the village (my host father's parents) and apparently it can be seen that in the past this family has been very strong in the village (for generations I think). Land ownership, in the fact that comparatively they had lots, was a clear indication not only that they had some power in the past but they also prospered with that power, or because of that power they prospered (chicken or egg scenario was it the money that got them power or was it the power that got them money?)

The second reason was that my host father was ex-military. An Infantry sergeant who saw the way out of the village was to join to the Indonesian military as can be seen in villages across (region of Indonesia). He had retired after 25 (or something) years in the military and came back to the village. He has a bullet in his leg from when he was visiting [Indonesian province] in 1975 as part of his work. During this time ... was still President in the country and having military connections brought not only power but other benefits.”

Martin Wyatt - Focal Meaning 4

One comes to appreciate that official community authority is apparent, yet authentic power is perceived to stem from status in community arising from wealth, respect for elders, and military links.

Martin Wyatt – Meaning Unit 5

“When he retired from the military, he took over his father’s fields (although his father is still in the fields everyday until now (he is 100 years old this year) his father was unable to properly take care of them any longer. Then he ran for the 8 year term of village head. He won the election, I don’t know much about how [he] achieved that but considering I asked a number of times and didn’t get a response from anyone close to the family I am thinking that it was probably a bit dodgy as village politics were at the time. The reason I think it was a bit dodgy was that if you ask the same question to a number of people about the same thing and don’t get a satisfactory response, odds are that the answer is embarrassing or not good (and will cause the people to be ‘malu’ [bashful]).”

Martin Wyatt - Focal Meaning 5

One surmises discomfort of local insiders when qualms surface through elusive responses on sensitive matters.

Martin Wyatt – Meaning Unit 6

“When he became head of the village, with military and government assistance he rebuilt the village head office (I think he also relocated it to an area near his house, but I am not certain, but it would fit with the absolute power situation that comes with money and influence in a [Indonesian] village). With his army unit he then built (at that time) the only real road (rock and dirt) to the sub-district town which was of course in front of his house. This changed in the next village administration. The village head was from the other end of town and although it was much further to the sub-district town as the crow flies than the original road built by my host father. The new asphalt road was built in front of the new village head’s house. Which I think gives a little insight into the power and privilege relationship that comes with office at the village level in Indonesia.”

Martin Wyatt - Focal Meaning 6

One perceives the benefits of power, yet accepts this as customary in the host environment.

Martin Wyatt – Meaning Unit 7

“The funny thing is that although my host father hadn’t been the official head of the village for over 5 years at the time I was in the village, he still seems to be the most powerful man in the village. Apparently this is pretty normal in [region of Indonesia]. There is often going to be an unofficial power and leadership structure. I also never saw or heard of my host father ever have a discussion with the official village head, but decisions that were made in the village including a lot of official decisions were basically decided by my host father. Somehow my host father’s wishes made it to the official

village head. Which is an interesting part of living in [region of Indonesia] – the unseen communications.

Quite often I would come home and my host father would be holding court for various men in the village, they would be a bit out of the way (i.e. not really seen from any doors) and they would be talking quietly in [Indonesian dialect]. I therefore couldn't tell you what exactly was being said at these kinds of discussions, but it was pretty clear to me that there were some decisions being made, disputes being settled, lobbying being done.

I think the reason for his power is very directly related to the original reasons outlined above as to how he was voted the official head of the village at one time. Those factors haven't changed. Since retiring from the army he works in the nearby city as a security guard, and has the steady income from that along with the working the land mentioned above and still is the contact person for the security forces in the village. Not to mention the family situation hasn't changed either – the traditionally powerful family.

There was at least one other family that was traditional powerful in the village and for a lot of issues it seemed that they worked together with my host family. The father of this other traditional strong family also hosted a Canadian participant and was the village development person under my host father's administration. It seemed that the trick in this village was to get both of these families on your side and you would pretty much get done what you wanted to get done. There was obviously a lot of politics involved between these two families both in formal and informal politics and the placing of people in power in the village."

Martin Wyatt - Focal Meaning 7

One experiences the paradox of understanding/not understanding the workings of local politics making one contemplate the ostensibly enigmatic operations of local power brokers.

Martin Wyatt – Meaning Unit 8

"The housing allowances that our host families in the program received was a fiasco from the get go. I have found this should not have been surprising although it very perplexing for your supervisors for the project. The system was supposed to work that each of the host families would receive a modest allowance for each of program participants who lived at their houses. There were 10 participants and 10 host families. This was to off set the costs of food as well as the having someone living in their homes with their families. It seemed pretty simple to the Canadian participants on the program.

However, what actually happened was of course much different because money was involved. In my house, there were actually 3 participants who were staying there, Me, [Siti] and [Tika]. [Tika] was my host family's natural daughter and she was actually

supposed to be placed with another family in another sub-village (and be [Nancy's] counterpart) but she didn't, she stayed at home. [Siti] was instructed by my host mother to just stay at our house and tell the supervisors she was actually staying with others. My host mother told [Siti's] real host family that she was to stay with us and that they were supposed to tell the supervisors that [Siti] was actually staying there.

A similar situation happened at the other end of the village too, with the powerful family over there (mentioned in the section above). They had two children as Indonesian participants in the program, [Suhadi] and [Sherisada], and they were supposed to stay with other families in other sub-villages, but they didn't, they stayed at home under the same arrangement that happened with [Tika] at my house. They were also hosting a Canadian participant [Susan].

Every month the program supervisors did a visit to each of the 10 host families to give them the allowance. What happened was that after the supervisors left the host mothers went around and did the following:

My host mother, would go and collect the money from [Siti's] supposed host family, and would collect the money from [Nancy's] host family as well as get the allowance for hosting me. [Nancy's] host mother would then go and collect the money from [Tika's] supposed host mother. It was so complicated because of power and politics in the informal village decision making.

On the other side of the village it was less complicated. [Susan's] host mother would collect [Susan's] allowance and then would go to [Suhadi] and [Sherisada's] supposed host families and collect the allowances from them. So in the end, both powerful families ended up with 3 allowances every month.

And it was clear those with the most power also got the most money out of the deal, and also denied other poorer families of having any financial benefit that came along from hosting a participant.”

Martin Wyatt - Focal Meaning 8

One sees troubling practices emerge in the presence of external funding opportunities exposing otherwise submerged complexities in local community.

Martin Wyatt – Meaning Unit 9

“When this was tried to be cleared up and fixed as it should have been, it was a bigger mess. They told the participants they had to live where they were assigned. Everyone said yes of course and then didn't, with one exception (described below). The host families were told that even though a participant might not be there, this was their money and they didn't have to give it anyone (in hopes that they would keep the money and then force the

participants to actually move there). Which was nice in theory, but with the power structure in the village no one was brave enough to actually do it.

On the other side of the village, things kept on as they were, until finally the supervisors in the last month didn't provide any allowance at all for either [Suhadi] or [Sherisadi]. In my side of the village things went on as before, however [Siti] did leave and lived with her host family as it was supposed to be, but that ended up causing so many problems for her she wished she was never in the program, because she went against the wishes of my host mother. It go so bad that after [Siti] and I were engaged, that my host mother told [Siti] she now had to all of my laundry, something my host mother (and all other host mothers did for the participants) did without complaint during the duration of the program. This was just one way my host family tried to get back at [Siti] for her failure to comply with their desires. [Siti's] host family benefited from two months of the allowance and they were able to better themselves because of it. They were able to buy a breeding pair of goats to contribute to their livelihoods in the future. It should also be noted that even though [Siti] was living there, my host mother still came by after the allowances were distributed to get a portion of [Siti's] allowance, because she felt she was the one who gave the opportunity to [Siti's] host family. They didn't give in and after we left, [Siti's] host father was replaced as the nominal head of the neighborhood he lived in, which I don't think was coincidence."

Martin Wyatt - Focal Meaning 9

One may be intrigued and critical when viewing the mechanism for maintaining cultural norms despite inequalities and external forces.

Martin Wyatt – Meaning Unit 10

"What part in any of this the host father's had is still a big question in my mind ... The fact that my mother was also caught cheating at an 'arisian' which is a traditional savings program, really did make me wonder if it was just her, or was host father pulling the strings?"

Martin Wyatt - Focal Meaning 10

Distrust surfaces as a result of others' apparent dishonesty.

Martin Wyatt – Meaning Unit 11

"In summary, as I have seen during my time in the village as well as my experiences since. Everything that seems easy, simple and logical all goes out the window when you are talking about or with money. Money has a very strange effect in [region of Indonesia] and Indonesia that I have not experienced in other places. I blame this on ... [past system of government and government services caus[ing] corruption (or what Westerners would consider corruption) to become institutionalized into Indonesian systems. I truly believe

that this process of institutionalization was so effective that it actually became a part of all aspects of society and even has rooted itself in modern Indonesian culture. It's to the point that most Indonesian's don't even see what others might consider corruption. It's going to take a couple of generations for this gift ... to work itself out of the culture and life in Indonesia, if it ever does."

Martin Wyatt - Focal Meaning 11

Being immersed in another culture brings one different perspectives of invisible values.

Martin Wyatt – Meaning Unit 12

"One of the most frustrating things that happened to me during the community development project, was about introducing water pipes ... that I was in charge of with an Indonesian counterpart on the program. I had troubles with meeting with the sub-village head (this is a different person than outlined above) that I needed to meet with. If I went to him he was always there and always happy to meet me, but when we had a village wide meeting usually at my house (because of its central location in the village) he would never come. This then made the village wide meeting not very useful because 1/3 of the village wasn't represented at the meeting.

After a few months, I finally figured out what the problem was and why. The problem was that this sub-village head was not welcome at all at our house. Of course no one actually ever admitted this or ever said anything, even when I asked why he never comes to the meeting – there was the shrug and the "I don't know". Again it was because of the fear of embarrassment (*malu*) for those involved. It turns out the sub-village head at some point in the past (the timeframe was never clear) was having an affair with my host Uncle's wife and is now under the threat of a very powerful family not to bother coming around anymore.

Rather than this just being a gossip column of a [Indonesian] village I will try to tie this in to Indonesian culture. Now if you ask anyone in [region of Indonesia] if this ever happens at the village level, everyone will deny it. "That only happens in the west" or "it might happen in [large Indonesian city] but it would never happen in a village". Would they tell someone from outside like me what is really going on with this – no. This I think is why Indonesians are often misunderstood. It's because the information you can get, particularly on something that might make people '*malu*' is not easy to get. It takes a lot of relationship building and eventually someone might let something slip that will give you the key to the problem that you just can't figure out."

Martin Wyatt - Focal Meaning 12

Being an outsider leaves one feeling perplexed and disconnected yet with persistence and time one becomes more accepted and the gaps narrow.

Martin Wyatt – Meaning Unit 13

“One of the most embarrassing moments I had in the village was during a road construction project (as outlined later). One day we were working on a cement and rock road a km or so from my house. It was a hot day and all the local men were working without shirts and wearing shorts, I was sweating like pig, so I thought “when in Rome....” and decide to take off my shirt in public for the first (and I think the last) time in Indonesia. I was being a bit of a show off to be completely honest as well. I was taking one 40 kg bag of cement on each of my shoulders down to the end of the road where we were building (it was only about 20-30 m so I was hardly being a hero) but in the tropics this led to being pretty sweaty.

Anyway, we get to break time. So really sweet tea and some snacks are provided by one of the families located on the road we are working on. I am standing there shirtless drinking my tea (which I don’t really like, but the need for hydration was greater) in a group of Ibu-Ibu’s (women). One of the Ibu’s (woman) who was also working on the road and drinking tea sitting in this group stands up and grabs her crotch and points to me and says “is this white too”. Well, what would you do in that situation? I laughed and walked away...

So my point here is that oddly enough the people of [Indonesian province] are known as the most “halus” (refined, dignified, polite) people in Indonesia. But I can be asked questions like this - to fits of hysterical laughter from about 15-20 women. I don’t know anyone in Canada who would ask me that (mind you they might be able to guess the answer without having to ask too). This was one of the most interesting parts of [Indonesian] culture in my opinion, the fact that talk of sex is prohibited by the culture until you are middle aged and then there are no holds barred.

This was proven later in life on my wedding day. At that time I was 113 kg and my wife was 38 kg, so we made an interesting couple to look at. You should have heard the comments that were made on our way out of the wedding reception. I could only understand a small percentage of the comments as they were mostly in (Indonesian dialect], but my wife was blushing for about an hour after that and I was totally appalled at what I did understand. I don’t think a bar full of sailors in Halifax would have come up with some of the stuff that I heard that night and these comments were coming from middle aged to older [Indonesian] women wearing kabaya’s (the traditional dress).”

Martin Wyatt - Focal Meaning 13

One experiences embarrassment when singled out for observable differences while attempting to fit in, yet one simultaneously gains important insights into the surprisingly acceptable value differences inherent in the host culture.

Martin Wyatt – Meaning Unit 14

“One thing that still gets me about Indonesia is the questions you get when you meet someone new. I first experienced this in the village so that is why I am including it here. What is your name, is pretty normal worldwide, however when I said my name to a small group in my host father’s house the day I arrived in the village, I was told my name was too difficult to pronounce with a [Indonesian] tongue. My first day in the village, I was renamed [Marti], which was easier for them to pronounce and pretty similar to my own name. I am still known as [Marti] in that village and with NGO work many also know me as [Marti] in Indonesia because of this experience.

Where are you from? Again a normal enough questions, but when you say Canada the vast majority of the people here think Canada is part of the USA. So then you get in to geography discussion/lesson and try to explain that the USA is our neighbor but they are actually separate countries, which generally I have found people listen, but you can see they don’t understand, or don’t believe you when you are done.

Are you already married? Not yet and the discussion on relationships is usually finished. You might at some point get some brave soul who will ask if you have a girlfriend, but that is pretty rare. The funny thing is after you say no to marriage no one ever asks if you have children. They always ask you if you have children once you have said you are married. To be honest in Indonesia alone (let alone in the west) there are people who are not married who do have children, and by denying that this could ever happen you might not get the information you need to actually know something about the person you are talking too.

What religion are you?, is usually one to follow. You absolutely have to have an answer to this question. Being atheist or agnostic just isn’t a possibility. Not only that but you have to have one of the 5 religions laid out by the Indonesian government (Islam, Buddhist, Hindu, Catholic or Protestant) which did cause some problems for my Jewish friends who have come to Indonesia. Therefore, I was baptized Catholic, so I always answered Catholic, which didn’t really help you much in Islamic [region of Indonesia] , but it was also expected that all Westerners will be Catholic or Protestant, so it did at least fit in their minds and they didn’t make me change that too like my name.”

Martin Wyatt - Focal Meaning 14

Predictable inquiries by local residents are an unavoidable pattern, yet with experience and understanding, acceptance emerges.

Martin Wyatt – Meaning Unit 15

“However, being Catholic did really help when I worked in [regions of] Indonesia and the majority of the population there are Catholic. However, it was also expected that I go to Church every week... which, isn’t something I have ever done in my whole life. This

basically brings me to my point – although I have an answer to this question, the fact I am not a practicing Catholic and maybe not even a believing Catholic (that is a book on its own), I am easily pigeonholed into something that they can relate to and understand. The best part of the religion questions is it's not something you would normally do in a Canadian context and I was very much taken aback by someone coming out and asking in the first 4 questions that someone asked me.”

Martin Wyatt - Focal Meaning 15

Being of similar faith accelerated acceptance by hosts, yet being categorized arose amidst feelings of misunderstanding.

Martin Wyatt – Meaning Unit 16

“So in the end, after people listen to your answers to the main questions, they either change the information, don't understand/believe you, ask you questions that would never have been asked in Canada and in the end how much have they real learned about you? But this is the process of getting to know people and building relationships so you go through the motions so that you can move on to actually getting to know people.”

Martin Wyatt - Focal Meaning 16

One acknowledges that the preliminary routine of getting acquainted paves the route for deeper cultural interaction.

Martin Wyatt – Meaning Unit 17

“The funniest story about first questions has to be the first question the woman who is now my wife asked me. This was the first day of the program when the Indonesian counterparts met with the Canadian participants on the project. She walked up to me after the formal introductions and said the following in English “Can I call you Mas Gendut”. I responded with, “What does that mean”. I was then told that means ‘the fat guy’. I said “In my country that is rude” and I walked away... Again, this is not how you would introduce or get to know someone in Canada is it? However, it was obviously effective - a year to the day later we were married.”

Martin Wyatt - Focal Meaning 17

One feels offended with perceptions of discourteous behaviour based on one's own cultural norms, yet one learns what is an acceptable host cultural norm.

Martin Wyatt – Meaning Unit 18

“*Masuk angin* is one of the most fascinating occurrences I have come across in Indonesian culture. I met many people when I was in the village that had or had been treated for masuk angin. It translates to ‘the wind goes in’ and if you get it, it leads to the person feeling generally unwell physically. I have thought about this for years and talked to a number of people about what they think it is and I have come to conclusion that there is nothing in western medicine that can describe this phenomenon. .

Because of this, the vast majority of foreigners write it off as hokus pokus or However, it’s very important to the social order or things in village life. Basically there are whole bunch of rules, probably based on traditional situations and values that are controlled by the threat of masuk angin. You can’t walk out in the rain, you have to wear at least a hat if you do go out in the rain, you can’t have a bath/shower (mandi) in the middle of the day, you have mandi in the morning and in the afternoon (twice a day) etc. Some of it makes sense, you can get sick walking in the rain in the tropics, you will be cleaner and therefore healthier if you mandi twice a day. Some of it doesn’t make sense to the western mind. However, I am sure it is soundly based on past experiences and things that have happened that have caused people to be unwell.

All this being said I can’t figure out the treatment of masuk angin. You get a type of locally available oil (I think it’s from the Eucalyptus tree) and take a coin and you scratch the back (and sometimes the neck) of the person who has come down with masuk angin. The treated person then ends up looking like a tiger with red stripes across their whole back. It’s pretty painful to look at. But those who get masuk angin feel this is the only way to treat it properly. I have never met a foreigner who has ever had masuk angin, so I can’t really tell you what it actually feels like. Some people I have talked to about this figure the treatment as outlined here increases blood flow to the internal organs and people actually can and do get better because of it. However, considering we still don’t know what masuk angina is, its kind of hard to tell with any certainty if people can get better this way medically (western medicine) or if it is just a belief issue. It will make me better and it does because the person with masuk angin believes it.”

Martin Wyatt - Focal Meaning 18

One marvels at, without understanding yet respecting, local medical practices amid the need for legitimizing practices through Western eyes.

Martin Wyatt – Meaning Unit 19

“Unfortunately one of my fellow participants, [Susan], was bitten by a cobra during our stay in the village. This story starts with me being awake for 40 or so hours because the night before my host sister-in-law had just given birth, so I was carted around with the whole family to hospitals etc and waited in the city until the baby was born. When I got back the next morning there was a road project scheduled and I didn’t feel too bad so I

went and helped with the road. However, by that evening I was ready for bed. My head hit the pillow and I was out like a light. Literally 5 minutes later I get a knock on the door to - wake up it's an emergency. [Susan] was bitten by snake and is now at my host uncle's house. Why is she at my host uncle's house? It turns out that he is the local minor 'dukun' traditional/witch doctor, something none of us knew about until this event.

So I get to go there and there are about 20 people (some of the most important people in the village – [Susan's] host family was from the other powerful family from across the village) standing around. [Susan] is in pain (no big surprise) and my host uncle is playing with her foot. There are herbs, fire, razor blades etc scattered on the table in front of them. After the uncle does some stuff to her (still not clear what it was exactly). They say she will be fine all she needs is some sleep and everything will be ok. I waited for her to say something, and to my surprise she said "yeah, it feels better everything will be ok, I will just go back and sleep."

At which point I decided to take the lead. I said no she isn't. Take me and her to the doctor in the sub-district town at least and get him to look at it. I actually wanted to go straight to the hospital, but this was the best compromise I could come up with at the time. Surprisingly enough, considering who was in the room, after a bit of explanation they listened to me. We went to the sub-district town about 30 minutes away, and the doctor wasn't in, so we went down the road to another doctor, who looked at [Susan's] foot for about 10 seconds and said get her to Solo as fast as we can. At which point everyone was really worried, but some reason I kept a clear enough head to lead everyone through the process of finding an ambulance at the local health care facility and getting to a hospital in [a larger city].

We get to the hospital an hour and half later and [Susan] is given the generic antiserum that they have at the hospital. They said it has to be taken 2-3 hours after the snake bite. I said it's been just about 3 hours by this point. In the end I got our supervisor out to the hospital, unfortunately, he been taking some R and R in [small city] and it was about 2 am before he showed up on the hospital. I finally got home at 9 am and slept for a long time. [Susan] was in the hospital for week, and then had to walk on crutches for about 2 months and her toe in which she was bitten still has no feeling in it to this day.

The interesting note in this story is actually two-fold. The first being the very strong belief in traditional healing at the village level even though it in some cases such as this is not based on any medical practices or procedures. I would have hated to see what would have happened to [Susan] if I wasn't there. The second is the automatic higher status in being a foreigner at the village level. In this case I took the lead in a room full of village leadership at the age of 25 and barely being able to communicate in Bahasa Indonesia. This was partly aided in the fact that the patient in question was also foreigner, but I could not imagine any situation where a 25 year Indonesian villager would have convinced the people in that room to go see a doctor (particularly if the patient was also Indonesian). In this case it was lucky that there was this kind of differentiation for foreigners. There are tons of examples of how this higher status for foreigners can manifest itself, I have just chosen this story to allow it be discussed here."

Martin Wyatt - Focal Meaning 19

One's home culture behaviour suddenly emerges and dominates during a crisis leading to submissiveness of the host culture.

Martin Wyatt – Meaning Unit 20

“The Farewell Party ... was one of the most bizarre things that happened to me during my 5 months with this program. I swear the story is true, as is everything here, although it might be hard to believe.

The going away party for our group was scheduled for mid-February in [region of Indonesia]. Which is the middle of the rainy season, and that year it was a particularly heavy rainy season. It rained every day for at least 4 months. There was no day that it didn't rain and we had our party during this time. We brought in a band from the city to play local music as they would at a wedding reception or something. However we had invited the whole village, which as I have mentioned was over three thousand people. The only place big enough to house this was the field in front of my host father's house. It was also a central location in the village. The band and speakers etc, were set up on the front porch of my host grandfather's house.

So not having an indoor space and because it was the rainy season we thought the whole thing could turn in to a disaster. However, one of our Indonesian counterparts, I can't remember which one now, suggested we go to the powerful witch doctor in the area and give a couple of hundred thousand rupiah and he can keep the rain away from the event. All the Canadians said “yeah right, but its not going to hurt anything either”. So we gave them the money to get the witch doctor to do his thing. It was an incredible party over 2,500 people came and although the clouds threatened all day from about 4 pm it didn't rain. The party was over at 12 midnight, and the skies opened up at about 12:30 am. Other than this being engineered by the witch doctor I have no other explanation for it.

From this I learned that there might be a supernatural. I have seen other things in other parts of [region of Indonesia] and other parts of Indonesia that also make me think the same thing. These people have been living in this part of the world for thousands of years (as the Java man skull found just outside of Solo would prove) and if there was anyone who would be close to the supernatural it would be these people. I generally don't believe in this sort of thing myself, but I will tell you that there are times like this one described here, where I really do wonder if there is something else going on.”

Martin Wyatt - Focal Meaning 20

One's doubt in alternative ways and beliefs shifts to feelings of wonderment and curiosity from witnessing events unexplainable by logical means.

List of Focal Meanings for Martin Wyatt

1. Complete immersion in another culture arises when living and working in a community as a member of a local 'family'.
2. One feels political and religious underpinnings were a significant influence on one's experience of being immersed in another culture.
3. One compares the significance of family in the host culture with relatives in one's home culture.
4. One comes to appreciate that official community authority is apparent, yet authentic power is perceived to stem from status in community arising from wealth, respect for elders, and military links.
5. One surmises discomfort of local insiders when qualms surface through elusive responses on sensitive matters.
6. One perceives the benefits of power, yet accepts this as customary in the host environment.
7. One experiences the paradox of understanding/not understanding the workings of local politics making one contemplate the ostensibly enigmatic operations of local power brokers.
8. One sees troubling practices emerge in the presence of external funding opportunities exposing otherwise submerged complexities in local community.
9. One may be intrigued and critical when viewing the mechanism for maintaining cultural norms despite inequalities and external forces.
10. Distrust surfaces as a result of others' apparent dishonesty.

11. Being immersed in another culture brings one different perspectives of invisible values.
12. Being an outsider leaves one feeling perplexed and disconnected yet with persistence and time one becomes more accepted and the gaps narrow.
13. One experiences embarrassment when singled out for observable differences while attempting to fit in, yet one simultaneously gains important insights into the surprisingly acceptable value differences inherent in the host culture.
14. Predictable inquiries by local residents are an unavoidable pattern, yet with experience and understanding, acceptance emerges.
15. Being of similar faith accelerated acceptance by hosts, yet being categorized arose amidst feelings of misunderstanding.
16. One acknowledges that the preliminary routine of getting acquainted paves the route for deeper cultural interaction.
17. One feels offended with perceptions of discourteous behaviour based on one's own cultural norms, yet one learns what is an acceptable host cultural norm.
18. One marvels at, without understanding yet respecting, local medical practices amid the need for legitimizing practices through Western eyes.
19. One's home culture behaviour suddenly emerges and dominates during a crisis leading to submissiveness of the host culture.
20. One's doubt in alternative ways and beliefs shifts to feelings of wonderment and curiosity from witnessing events unexplainable by logical means.

Situated Structural Description for Martin Wyatt

Being immersed in another culture for Martin Wyatt arose when living and working in a community as a member of a local ‘family’. He compares the significance of ‘family’ in the host culture with ‘relatives’ in his home culture. Martin Wyatt feels political and religious underpinnings have had a significant influence on his experience of being immersed in another culture. At first, Martin Wyatt found his acceptance by host residents was accelerated through predictable inquiries and through being of similar religion. Yet the awareness of being categorized by faith complicated feelings of misunderstanding. However, Martin Wyatt acknowledges this preliminary routine of getting acquainted paved the route for deeper cultural interaction.

Martin Wyatt has come to appreciate that, although official community authority is apparent, authentic power is perceived to stem from one’s status in the community arising from wealth, respect for elders and military links. Martin Wyatt experiences the paradox of understanding/not understanding the workings of local politics making him contemplate the ostensibly enigmatic operations of local power brokers. Thus, he is intrigued and critical when viewing the mechanism for maintaining cultural norms despite inequalities and external forces. Martin Wyatt perceives the benefits of power, yet accepts this as customary in the host environment.

For Martin Wyatt, being immersed in another culture brings a different perspective of invisible values, such as distrust, which is heightened by others’ apparent dishonesty. He sees troubling practices emerge in the presence of external funding opportunities

exposing otherwise submerged complexities in the local community. Martin Wyatt surmises discomfort of local insiders when qualms surface through elusive responses on such sensitive matters.

Martin Wyatt experiences embarrassment when singled out for observable differences while attempting to fit in, yet, simultaneously he gains important insights into the surprisingly acceptable value differences inherent in the host culture. Martin Wyatt feels offended with perceptions of discourteous behaviour based on one's own cultural norms, yet he learns to recognize the behaviour as an acceptable host cultural norm. Feelings of being an outsider leaves Martin Wyatt perplexed and disconnected yet with persistence and time in becoming accepted the gaps narrow. Still, Martin Wyatt's home culture behaviour suddenly emerges and dominates during a crisis leading to submissiveness of the host culture.

Being immersed in another culture leaves Martin Wyatt marveling, without understanding, yet respecting local medical practices amid the need for legitimizing practices through Western eyes. Martin Wyatt's doubt in alternative ways and beliefs shifts to feelings of wonderment and curiosity from witnessing events unexplainable by logical means.

Pak Jasiento

Pak Jasiento - Meaning Unit 1

“Although we had been to ... cultural awareness session prior to our assignment in Indonesia, and we had read articles about Islam, my wife and I were not well prepared for our first Indonesian cultural experience, that of the wedding. In fact, during our three-year stay in Indonesia we never quite ‘got it’.”

Pak Jasiento - Focal Meaning 1

One experiences clear feelings that one can not really understand another world despite partaking in predeparture training, self-initiated training, and having actual experience living and working in a foreign environment.

Pak Jasiento - Meaning Unit 2

“We were in our first weeks in Indonesia at short-term language training in [large city] when we were first invited to a Javanese wedding. The invitation came from a language school teacher who was not at the school just then, nor had we any direct contact with this teacher. We were told by our teachers that we were invited because it was customary at the school and that the teachers and students were all ‘close’. In addition it was mentioned that we likely were not otherwise socially engaged and we might find it interesting. A good opportunity to learn about and engage in the local culture, we thought.”

Pak Jasiento - Focal Meaning 2

One is intrigued by unraveling mysteries of being immersed in another way of life, yet feelings of not understanding abound.

Pak Jasiento - Meaning Unit 3

“A fellow language student who we had come to know, was also invited. We discussed the possibility of, and settled on, buying a gift jointly for the occasion. We had no idea what was appropriate and seemed to get no help from instructors or others we consulted. We did not have access to the Internet at that time and so were not able to “google” this problem. Thinking back, I cannot understand why we did not press for more information about the couple, their families and weddings and marriage generally. We knew that the couple was not of the upper echelons of society and that their status as teachers perhaps reflected that. After some discussion and aimless wandering around a department store

we let our notions of practicality dictate and, given our perception of the economic situation of the couple, bought a rice cooker. In retrospect this was one of the least appropriate gifts we might have chosen. It was probably something that they already had, given that this appliance is to Indonesians what a cell phone is to current young people in North America or almost anywhere. They almost certainly already owned one each or their parents would be providing it as part of the dowry or basic 'set-up' requirements. We learned much later that foreigners would commonly be expected to present an 'envelope'. The amount therein reflecting the relative wealth of the giver based on some international scale which was never quite revealed to us even by Indonesians who we had come to know well and who had a good knowledge of our means and income distribution of foreigners generally."

Pak Jasiento - Focal Meaning 3

The confidence one gained from successful past experiences in home country is thought to be helpful in guiding behaviour in novel country yet it is not because of unspoken expectations.

Pak Jasiento - Meaning Unit 4

"That evening we arrived at the ceremony hoping that we could get "lost in the crowd" so that our cultural and social ignorance would not be too evident, not to mention our inappropriate dress. (None of us had taken a wardrobe to language school appropriate for a wedding, at least for a Canadian wedding)! We also assumed that the wedding would consist of a ceremony followed by a reception or social celebration, the latter to which we were looking forward. Much to our surprise we seemed to arrive late even though we had paid attention to the time on the invitation, and what was worse was the location to which we were ushered. There we were for all to see, sitting in the second row just behind one or other of the couple's parents and, we are sure, well in front of siblings, aunts and uncles! Little did we understand at the time that we were part of the family's way of demonstrating their social status, through their association with foreigners."

Pak Jasiento - Focal Meaning 4

Observable differences and status accelerate the process of receiving special treatment and being used despite one's wishes to remain anonymous.

Pak Jasiento - Meaning Unit 5

"The ceremony was exotic and much longer than we had anticipated, probably because some of it was also conducted in Javanese that we later understood was at a level that almost no guests understood, but yet considered it impressive. The gift giving and egg breaking were somewhat less mysterious. We quaked in our boots, hoping that we would

not be called upon to participate in some way – perhaps bringing blessings from foreign lands.”

Pak Jasiento - Focal Meaning 5

One experiences feelings of uncertainty and not understanding while constantly fearing the potential of looming scenarios which could cause personal embarrassment.

Pak Jasiento - Meaning Unit 6

“The end of the ceremony was punctuated by what we came to learn was a common feature of almost every social and business event – the sharing of ‘snacks’. We thought this a bit odd that we would have these in our seats at the open-air ceremony but happily indulged wondering when and if there was to be additional celebrations. If there were any we were not invited and it did not appear that any were to be held that evening. Like most events, when it’s over, it’s over. There was no hanging about making small talk about the weather (that unique Canadian custom) or the happy couple. Of course we had no idea how many ‘faux pas’ we may have committed but we came to know that while these would be easily forgiven, it is not the Indonesian way to be helpful in not repeating these indiscretions.”

Pak Jasiento - Focal Meaning 6

One compares home customs with host country customs knowing that making cultural errors is magnified while learning about a new culture.

Pak Jasiento - Meaning Unit 7

“Of course that was not the last Indonesian wedding to which we would be invited. Many elaborately engraved invitations to attend weddings at lavish [big city] hotel ballrooms would arrive at our home or small office from people that we barely knew or in some case did not know at all (a sort of nuptial SPAM). Our helpful local staff was able to advise us about the expectations and customs concerning acceptance or regrets for these invitations. To the best of our understanding some of these were to marriages of wealthy Indonesians who have adopted the practice and, a bit like the current trend in Canada toward hosting events that include significant financial presentations, expect thick envelopes. We were advised that there was no real expectation that invitations sent to ‘expats’, (in addition to thousands of their friends and relatives), would result in a high percentage of acceptance, but it was certainly worth a try. I think we accepted one or two from families whom we knew from project/business activity – attending only the ‘party’ as part of the decoration and without leaving fat envelopes.”

Pak Jasiento - Focal Meaning 7

Feelings of vulnerability enhanced by suspicious skepticism and mistrust of local persons' motivations leave one in need of cultural mentorship for actions to be taken.

Pak Jasiento - Meaning Unit 8

"The engagement or announcement of plans to marry also remains something of a cultural mystery. Our experience was with our housekeeper's daughter, who after showing signs of being a good student with plans for a career, suddenly announced an imminent but unspecified date for marriage to a short-term boy friend. Likely we were to have assumed some role or other as her mother's employer. Being party to certain other 'ventures' of the housekeeper and partly because this was the final months of our assignment, my wife hesitated to become overly involved. The young couple paid us an unexpected visit one Sunday when her mother was not present. The daughter who we had met only occasionally did most of the talking. We engaged in the usual questions about where they would live and what was his work – all of which seemed to us brought vague answers. In short no wedding took place in the coming months and we have often wondered whether the important announcement of the wedding was nothing more than an engagement announcement with perhaps enough innuendo to suggest an obligation on our part to make a financial contribution, preferably before we departed Indonesia. Again it was a case of less than clear advice and inadequate information concerning the cultural situation."

Pak Jasiento - Focal Meaning 8

With the impending end of one's assignment, suspicion of others' atypical actions arise, while thoughts of escaping the perplexing ambiguity of foreign living fortify one's decisions.

List of Focal Meanings for Pak Jasiento

1. One experiences clear feelings that one can not really understand another world despite partaking in predeparture training, self-initiated training, and having actual experience living and working in a foreign environment.
2. One is intrigued by unraveling mysteries of being immersed in another way of life, yet feelings of not understanding abound.

3. The confidence one gained from successful past experiences in home country is thought to be helpful in guiding behaviour in novel country yet it is not because of unspoken expectations.
4. Observable differences and status accelerate the process of receiving special treatment and being used despite one's wishes to remain anonymous.
5. One experiences feelings of uncertainty and not understanding while constantly fearing the potential of looming scenarios which could cause personal embarrassment.
6. One compares home customs with host country customs knowing that making cultural errors is magnified while learning about a new culture.
7. Feelings of vulnerability enhanced by suspicious skepticism and mistrust of local persons' motivations leave one in need of cultural mentorship for actions to be taken.
8. With the impending end of one's assignment, suspicion of others' atypical actions arise, while thoughts of escaping the perplexing ambiguity of foreign living fortify one's decisions.

Situated Structural Description for Pak Jasiento

Pak Jasiento is intrigued by unraveling mysteries of being immersed in another culture, yet feelings of not understanding abound. He has feelings of uncertainty and not understanding while constantly fearing the potential of looming scenarios which could cause personal embarrassment. These emotions exist despite partaking in predeparture training, self-initiated training, and having had previous experiences living and working

in another foreign environment. Pak Jasiento is aware that observable differences and status accelerate the process of receiving special treatment and being used despite his wishes to remain anonymous.

Pak Jasiento compares home customs with host country customs knowing that making cultural errors is magnified while learning about a new culture. However, the confidence Pak Jasiento gained from successful past experiences in home country is thought to be helpful in guiding behaviour in a novel country yet, it is not - because of unspoken expectations. This adds to feelings of vulnerability enhanced by suspicious skepticism and mistrust of local persons' motivations, leaving Pak Jasiento in need of cultural mentorship. With the impending end of Pak Jasiento's assignment, suspicion of others' atypical actions is increased while thoughts of escaping the perplexing ambiguity of foreign living fortify his decisions.

Powell

Powell - Meaning Unit 1

"It is ... very uncommon for a[n Indonesian] woman to borrow money without her husband's co-signature. In fact, the banks demand both signatures, based on Indonesian law. It is even more uncommon for women to borrow money, with by far the majority of credit extended to businesses in the name of men. In an attempt to level the playing field for women somewhat, the [NGO] intentionally designed the paperwork for this prototype lending program so that only the women's signatures would be required – in fact, the men aren't even invited to the inaugural ceremonies. In retrospect, thinking about it now, the really innovative move turned out to be the requirement that only women sign, on their own behalf, for their loans ----- and therein lies the story of this cultural immersion experience."

Powell - Focal Meaning 1

Challenging cultural norms that are perceived as inequality happen when one is immersed in another culture.

Powell - Meaning Unit 2

“When the six women assembled to meet the [NGO] representatives at the inaugural meeting for the Canang Sari [project], they were all dressed in their finest Balinese traditional costumes. The women ranged in age, probably from their early 30s to their late 60s [this is an estimate]. The two oldest ladies in the group of six were extremely shy, avoiding eye contact and sitting in very passive and humble postures in their stiff-backed chairs. However, their eyes were very active and they were obviously very excited by the whole process and the prospects of borrowing money for their businesses. All six of these women were from a relatively remote village, with little time spent in the big capital city of Denpasar [where the meeting was being held].”

Powell - Focal Meaning 2

One observes differences in how Indonesian women present themselves in appearance and through actions.

Powell - Meaning Unit 3

“The [project] is formed by each applicant presenting their respective business plans and their intentions for their loans, and then calling for a vote, which must be unanimous by the other would-be participants. In this case, with the women planning to pool their money, one group presentation was made and the voting was fundamentally anticlimactic. However, part of the process, and in fact, the key part of the process, involves a mass signing of, first, individual guarantees for the loans they are about to receive; and then, joint and several guarantees, whereby each participant provides a personal and collective guarantee for the other participants’ loans.

First, the personal guarantees were circulated. It quickly became obvious that not all of the women were filling out their own personal guarantees [which we generally complete, line by line, together]. The two older women [again, estimated to be in their 60s] were relying on their neighbours to complete their loan applications. Without much tact, I asked why they were not filling out their own forms, and after much ado, I was informed that these women could not write!! That being said, it was still necessary for these two women to affix some kind of personal mark to their personal guarantees, with a full understanding of what they were signing. To further complicate matters, these women did not speak Bahasa Indonesia, Indonesia’s official national language, but Balinese.”

Powell - Focal Meaning 3

Things taken for granted norms in one's home culture result in one questioning aspects of another culture.

Powell - Meaning Unit 4

"We proceeded with the two, fundamentally illiterate women observing the process of completing the personal guarantees. However, when we reached the bottom of the forms, where each woman was required to affix their signatures, I stood back and watched what would happen. It was revealed that these women had never, ever signed for anything before. I have no idea how a marriage license works in rural Bali, but both women were married and I was informed their husbands signed for anything and everything. Anyway, the solution was quickly found by this enterprising group. Their fellow participants and neighbours, sitting next to these two women, who had been completing their forms for them, as well as their own, simply held one hand of each of the two women, as they in turn held a pen, and helped them to inscribe their names [which amounted to signatures] to the paper. The two subject women looked very nervous and unsure of themselves.

The next step in the process was for each woman to sign six joint and several guarantees. This took some time to explain, and the first piece of paper in the process was signed by all six of the participants in a painstakingly slow and laborious process, but once the signatures were affixed and the process that was unfolding was understood by all, they eagerly looked for the next joint and several guarantees to sign. The two subject women were just as eager, if not more so than the other four, now that they had 'stepped out' and were signing their own names unassisted. It had all the earmarks of a debutante ball. By the time all of the collective guarantee documents had been circulated, all six women were very much into the process. The two older women, having emerged as signatories on their own behalf, were then very disappointed to find out that the signing procedures had been completed; so we quickly improvised some other 'placebo' forms for them to sign some more. Their smiles were bigger than their faces and I am disappointed to this day that the whole event was not captured on video tape."

Powell - Focal Meaning 4

Observing, not directing problem solving, reveals resourcefulness of community members and emerging enhancement of others while remorse that only memories remain.

Powell - Meaning Unit 5

"These two women gained so much in stature in the two-hours as they had emerged having gained the ability to not only sign for money for their businesses by themselves, but actually sign their names. The signature moment, and the evolutionary process were quite emotional and rewarding for all of the people in attendance. Not much was said in

the last 60 minutes we were together, as we shared some refreshments, but there was not a dry eye in the place.”

Powell - Focal Meaning 5

What may have appeared to be a seemingly simple undertaking in one's own culture became a moving and meaningful juncture with wordless emotional expressions.

List of Focal Meanings for Powell

1. Challenging cultural norms that are perceived as inequality happen when one is immersed in another culture.
2. One observes differences in how Indonesian women present themselves in appearance and through actions.
3. Things taken for granted norms in one's home culture result in one questioning aspects of another culture.
4. Observing, not directing problem solving, reveals resourcefulness of community members and emerging enhancement of others while remorse that only memories remain.
5. What may have appeared to be a seemingly simple undertaking in one's own culture became a moving and meaningful juncture with wordless emotional expressions.

Situated Structural Description for Powell

Powell believes that being immersed in another culture involves challenging cultural norms that are perceived as inequality. He considers that taken-for-granted norms in

one's home culture result in one questioning activities in another culture. Powell observed an interaction that would be considered a simple undertaking in his own culture; the event became a moving, meaningful juncture with wordless emotional expressions in the host culture. Through observing, not directing problem solving, Powel discovered, the resourcefulness in community members and emerging development of others. Today, Powell feels remorse that only memories remain of his experience of being immersed in another culture.

Prunes

Prunes - Meaning Unit 1

"I have spent more than 16 years working and living in various locations throughout the country. I continue to be surprised, alarmed, elated and frustrated by this multi-cultural nation."

Prunes - Focal Meaning 1

As an experienced long-term sojourner in Indonesia one still feels a wide range of emotions with much left to learn and understand about the country's complexities of culture.

Prunes - Meaning Unit 2

"I was living as a group leader for [an NGO] in a small farming village in [Indonesian province]. With my Batak counterpart, I was responsible for the well being of 14 young Canadian and Indonesian participants. [The small village] was a relatively well-off place with good sawah [wet rice field] and kebun [garden] lands. The village consisted almost entirely of farming families and was more or less homogenous in terms of ethnicity, religion (Islam) and living standards, The village lacked any kind of health services, the sub-district capital was a good hour drive away along a poorly finished road via an irregular mini bus service; the district capital (kabupaten [in Indonesian]) was a further hour drive away and visited only irregularly by village officials and a few of the more prominent villagers. There were no private cars in the village and only a couple of

dilapidated motorcycles were locally owned. There was no television, intermittent radio and no other media available.

We lived in [the small village] for 3 months and at the outset I spoke no Bahasa Indonesia at all and never had any idea of what was going on. My counterpart, Wibowo, made no effort to tell me what was happening, what was planned or what had happened. Perhaps this was out of spite for my unconscious neglect of him during our 3 months in [small Canadian town] prior to coming to Indonesia. Perhaps he just didn't know. The participants and the group leaders were paired off, one Indonesian and one Canadian and lived with families in the village. Our house, which was one of the better off, was located on the northwest corner of the *alang-alang*, a one-hectare grassy square in the middle of the village. On the north east corner of the *alang-alang* was the village head's house and beside that the mosque. An elementary school was on the south east corner and a rudimentary shop on the southwest. The participants were housed along the roads that skirted the *alang-alang*, the farthest perhaps a kilometer from the centre. All of the 2500 villages lived in wooden houses along these roads, with the poorest families usually located at the greatest distance from the field. To the south, about 500 metres away, there was a small river in which people bathed, fished for fresh water shrimp and washed clothes. We were instructed that we were not to bathe in the river in the late afternoon because of the 'gin' or spirits. I kept my mouth closed but smirked inwardly at this obvious peasant belief.

My house was quite lovely, if basic, with 3 bedrooms a living room a lean-to off the living room for eating and at the back a kitchen with a couple of stones and a grate for a stove. All food preparations were made crouching in that smoky, dark space which also had a small cupboard and a 30-litre earthenware pot for water. Rice was stored in the rafters above the 'stove' to protect it from rats and bugs. Outside the kitchen in the yard was a block for chopping wood (and chickens heads), a large pit for garbage, and, a recent improvement for our convenience, a well and bathroom. The squat toilet was 10 meters away at the back of the lot, also clearly a new addition. There was also at the front end of the yard towards the north, a small dwelling. It was months before I realized that the mother of the owner of the house was living her final days there, unable to walk. The main house, besides Wibowo and me, housed 11 people. WE were given a bedroom each to ourselves and the others – mother and father, 3 sons, 2 daughters-in-law, 2 daughters and 2 grandchildren. Where they all slept remains a mystery."

Prunes - Focal Meaning 2

Isolation from outside world and limited cross-cultural communication abilities

intertwined with lack of modern living realities and conveniences increased feelings of skepticism, separateness, and inscrutability.

Prunes - Meaning Unit 3

“In the afternoons, just before the rains started, a group of farmers would gather on our front porch. They would be served coffee by the one of the daughters and then roll cigarettes and proceed to talk. I hadn’t a clue what was being said, but there was lots of laughter and lots of obvious teasing. I would catch a word here and there and write in my book, then in the evenings I would look up as many new words as I could.”

Prunes - Focal Meaning 3

Observing and surmising what happens when standing back not knowing while later trying to catch up.

Prunes - Meaning Unit 4

“Meals were rice, rice and rice – with the fieriest sambal [hot chilli pepper sauce] known to humankind. Everyone thought it was terribly funny to have me eat some then gag, go red as the setting sun and finally break out in hiccoughs. I was totally embarrassed and couldn’t stand the attention. They thought my reaction was even funnier. I could have died.”

Prunes - Focal Meaning 4

Gaining new taste experiences is mixed with intense feelings of self-consciousness and humiliation when seen as source of humour and laughter for others.

Prunes - Meaning Unit 5

“I had done a lot of camping in Canada and had traveled the old hippy route across Asia in the late 70s so (Oberg, 1960) I was truly in heaven. I loved everything about the situation – the family, the work (what there was of it), the afternoon volleyball games (highly competitive, and very uncomfortable for me), the Friday development education sessions with the participants, the events – deaths, weddings and the like – I was exhilarated. I had never been so immersed in a culture before and I thought boy, I can get used to this.”

Prunes - Focal Meaning 5

Related past experiences and adjustments enhanced one’s fervor for everything happening during the honeymoon phase of the overseas assignment.

Prunes - Meaning Unit 6

“After a few weeks of this however, I began to feel less satisfied with myself. The routine was becoming boring and I never had a moment for myself. I tried going into my room and closing the door, but that just invited people to come in and ask if I was sick and needed to see a doctor. I couldn’t explain that I wanted to be alone – that I wanted privacy – the concept simply didn’t exist. I was frustrated, angry and constantly annoyed with everything. Simple things - like being burned with sambal with everyone laughing drove me mad. And there was no escape – for at least 8 more weeks. My language was coming along, but I couldn’t make a joke in Bahasa Indonesia and that left me feeling not quite me. In the local market, sitting in the mini bus, old ladies and some not so old would come up and touch the hairs on my arm and laugh – I wasn’t even human – I developed empathy for zoo animals I still carry to this day. I was a stranger and I felt like an alien – from somewhere in outer space.”

Prunes - Focal Meaning 6

Acute unhappiness arises as cultural novelty wears off while lack of freedom to be truly oneself emerges amidst strong feelings of alienation.

Prunes - Meaning Unit 7

“These feelings lasted for a couple of weeks and then, since I could see the end, I began to relax again and enjoy the language learning and the coping – trying to figure out what the hell was actually going on (I never really did!) and being a bit more myself. That seemed to be the key – not to lose myself in trying to be like everyone in the village, but to see myself as they saw me, take advantage of the situation and make peace with what I couldn’t understand.”

Prunes - Focal Meaning 7

Comfort with host culture increases when choosing to be oneself not someone else while accepting and appreciating one’s differences.

Prunes - Meaning Unit 8

“Then it happened. One of our participants came to see me to tell me she was going to stay in the village after the programme ended because she had fallen in love with a local boy. I panicked. My responsibility was to get all the participants home in good shape. I tried to convince her that this was a very bad idea but she was adamant. I asked her to reconsider and left it at that. I thought since we had 2 weeks left, she would come to her senses. She didn’t.

I discussed this with many people and especially with my counterpart. He called in the village elders and we talked it through. They had a very simple response: she was possessed. What? Yes, she had been seen bathing at the river in the late afternoon and she had obviously been occupied by a 'gin'. That explained it. They were satisfied and suggested that we call in a 'dukun' to exorcise the devil. I was flabbergasted – this was simply impossible. I couldn't agree. I couldn't even begin to fathom what they were saying – a witch doctor! To heal my participant? Oh my god. I ignored their advice and tried to coerce M to leave with us. I said she should go home for a few weeks, then if she were still convinced she could come back and all would be well. At least it wouldn't be on my watch.

The elders shook their heads and remained silent. I figured they had been convinced by me and my rational arguments. Was I wrong! On the day we were to leave, M came along reluctantly and participated in the goodbyes. Then as we were getting on the pickup to leave, she said she was staying. I cajoled, I argued, I was angry, but nothing worked. I was terrified at what might happen. I tried to force her on to the 'bus' and she fainted. The elders simply looked at me with the look of 'we told you so', saying nothing. I was in a complete panic mode. I told them to put her unconscious on the bus. We left but on the drive to the district capital, she didn't awake. Now I was worried. There was no medical centre in [small city] and we had to overnight before leaving for [provincial capital city] the following morning. Arriving in [small city], I was beside myself. The people from the village suggested that we call in the 'dukun' and I very reluctantly agreed. I was desperate."

Prunes - Focal Meaning 8

Taking an approach consistent with one's home culture during serious health crisis leaves one with feelings of being powerful yet powerless amidst scrutiny of others.

Prunes - Meaning Unit 9

"I was expecting the feathers, the rattles and the lot from my Tarzan watching days. In walked a civil servant in the ubiquitous khaki uniform. I thought he was gawking and told him rather curtly that we were waiting for the 'dukun'. He WAS the dukun. Now I was confused. He told us to put her on a rapidly-cleared table in the office. M was still definitely out of it. Her breathing was regular but her heartbeat was very slow but steady. The dukun ordered me to hold her feet and two others to hold her arms. I was skeptical to say the least. He began to mutter under his breath in a language that was not Indonesian, but god knows what it was. Nothing was happening with M. She lay still and limp on the table. Then the muttering grew more intense and he began to gesticulate towards her as if he were pulling something out of her. Still no response. I was feeling vindicated. Of course she wasn't possessed. How could that be? Ridiculous. The movements became more pronounced and the incantations a bit louder – no dancing, no chanting, no rattles. I was not impressed with this witch doctor.

Then she began to move. I held on to her feet as she began to bounce on the table. Her whole body began to leap off the table – literally. Not a bit, 10 cms, then 20 cms. Her whole body, bouncing off the table. The dukun was sweating now and the movements were stronger, the muttering stronger. Then M went limp. The dukun relaxed and turned away. He continued to mutter as he did.

Then M began to stir. Her eyes opened – this is after at least 3 hours of unconsciousness. She looked around and said “I’m hungry, let’s eat”. It was over. The dukun told me that, indeed, she had been possessed but that the gin was rather benign.”

Prunes - Focal Meaning 9

Persisting doubt in alternative ways and beliefs shift to utter disbelief in seeing something work that made no logical sense.

Prunes - Meaning Unit 10

“To this day, I don’t know what happened. At the time, I was simply dumbfounded. Everyone in the room thought the events were simply normal while I thought they were impossible. I felt like I was in suspended animation – not here, not anywhere. This event led me to suspend judgment – what did I know about reality – what could I know.”

Prunes - Focal Meaning 10

Seeing is believing, yet is not believing. Total lack of comprehension arises with unexplained mysteries experienced while one is immersed in another culture.

List of Focal Meanings for Prunes

1. As an experienced long-term sojourner in Indonesia one still feels a wide range of emotions with much left to learn and understand about the country’s complexities of culture.
2. Isolation from outside world and limited cross-cultural communication abilities intertwined with lack of modern living realities and conveniences increased feelings of skepticism, separateness, and inscrutability.

3. Observing and surmising what happens when standing back not knowing while later trying to catch up.
4. Gaining new taste experiences is mixed with intense feelings of self-consciousness and humiliation when seen as source of humour and laughter for others.
5. Related past experiences and adjustments enhanced one's fervor for everything happening during the honeymoon phase of the overseas assignment.
6. Acute unhappiness arises as cultural novelty wears off while lack of freedom to be truly oneself emerges amidst strong feelings of alienation.
7. Comfort with host culture increases when choosing to be oneself not someone else while accepting and appreciating one's differences.
8. Taking an approach consistent with one's home culture during serious health crisis leaves one with feelings of being powerful yet powerless amidst scrutiny of others.
9. Persisting doubt in alternative ways and beliefs shift to utter disbelief in seeing something work that made no logical sense.
10. Seeing is believing, yet is not believing. Total lack of comprehension arises with unexplained mysteries experienced while one is immersed in another culture.

Situated Structural Description for Prunes

Initially, while being immersed in another culture, Prunes surmised happenings when observing interactions and not knowing or understanding, while later he tried to catch up

on what had happened. Now, as an experienced long-term sojourner in Indonesia, Prunes still feels a range of emotions and considers he has much left to learn and understand about the country's complex culture.

Prunes' related past experiences and adjustments enhanced his fervor for everything happening during the honeymoon phase of his overseas assignment. However, his acute unhappiness arose as cultural novelty wore off, while lack of freedom to be truly himself emerged amidst strong feelings of alienation. During this time, the gaining of new experiences was mixed with intense feelings of self-consciousness and humiliation when Prunes was seen as source of humour and laughter for others. As well, isolation from the outside world and limited cross-cultural communication abilities intertwined with lack of modern living realities and conveniences increased feelings of skepticism, separateness, and inscrutability.

Prunes' comfort in the host culture later arose when choosing to be himself and not someone else and accepting/appreciating his own differences. Yet he found that taking an approach consistent with his home culture during a serious health crisis left him with feelings of being powerful yet powerless amidst the scrutiny of others.

A total lack of comprehension occurred when unexplained mysteries were experienced during Prunes' immersion in another culture. Prunes discovered that 'seeing is not believing' yet at the same time, 'seeing is believing' when his persisting doubt in

alternative ways and beliefs shifted when he saw something work that made no logical sense.

Sophia

Sophia - Meaning Unit 1

“I once lived in an isolated village on ... [an] island in ... Indonesia ... and living with the family I felt that I was beginning to understand and be understood. (Although from my eyes now, this was still a superficial acceptance and understanding). But at the time I felt that I was contributing to daily life there, carrying water, cooking in the kitchen, talking with the family for hours. I felt welcomed and a part of life there. I felt accepted because I could ask anything and perhaps in the simplicity of my language at that time, the answers were simple and I felt that I understood. People in the community were very welcoming at this simple level. We laughed a lot and this broke down many of the barriers. But as soon as I left the community, it was a rude reminder of my status as a foreigner. Once again I was seen as a foreigner. At this time, this was disturbing to me because it was the first point that I realized how superficial and how small reaching the acceptance (that I had built up in my head) actually was.”

Sophia - Focal Meaning 1

Feelings of fitting in with mutual knowing of others in a small circle of local acquaintances is interrupted when moving on, finding the need to start over amidst new acquaintances and venue.

Sophia - Meaning Unit 2

“However, even when I see with my eyes now (hindsight is so 20/20) that my immersion in life there was still very shallow (it was my first experience in Indonesia –I lived with a family for 5 months) I am grateful for the isolated time I spent there. It challenged me to know myself better. As well as all the laughter there were some very hard times. And in addition, it was the first introduction to Indonesian culture, which I now know to be very complex. Without this experience I would not be where I am now.”

Sophia - Focal Meaning 2

Being immersed in another culture brings enhanced self knowledge and ways of being.

Sophia - Meaning Unit 3

“Now, after my 9 years here I tend to look at acceptance and understanding, or being immersed in the culture in just moments of time. I don’t think there will ever be a time where I am completely immersed all of the time, or even in one situation if I can be completely immersed. What I mean by small moments are the times when people interact with you as a person in simple ways that seemingly bypass all the stereotypes and perceptions of being a foreigner, and I interact with them without any stereotypes and perceptions of my own. For example, I remember once I was at the post office in [a small Indonesian city] mailing a couple of letters. An Indonesian came up to me and asked the usual range of questions, where are you from, what are you doing here and why etc. I answered in Indonesian. After some time, they left and I got back to preparing my letters with that terrible glue they provide you at post offices here. Then a man who had been at the same table during the previous interaction, turned to me and asked in Bahasa Indonesia what the date was. Then he left. That was it. I was overjoyed. I told all my friends (Indonesian and foreign) about it. I had finally felt like a person, not an object of interest or curiosity. A simple question that a person would ask anyone else took on a whole new meaning. For a moment I felt accepted as just another person in Indonesia.”

Sophia - Focal Meaning 3

Although only temporary, instances of being received as just another human being in public result in intense feelings of jubilation and success unlike the usual outsider experience.

Sophia - Meaning Unit 4

“This is not to say I am accepted in all aspects ... an accepted Javanese is a person who knows that in Javanese culture it is important to be civilized, meaning being aware of yourself and others and on top of this having good manners and knowing social position. Offenses that put a person in the “not yet Javanese” category include unruliness, show of emotion, impulsive actions, disorder and strong drive for personal gain and ambitions. A child is *durung jawa*, not yet Javanese. Perhaps Javanese Indonesians also see foreigners (me) in this category (I cringe to think how many times I have fulfilled the above list).”

Sophia - Focal Meaning 4

Feeling knowledgeable about cultural norms, yet uncertain how one’s self might be judged by others, occurs when being immersed in another culture.

Sophia – Meaning Unit 5

“In summary, it is difficult to know exactly how accepted or ‘immersed’ we are from another’s point of view even though this is a vital element of being immersed in a culture. I think that there are so many layers of [Indonesian] culture it would be impossible to fulfill all of the criteria of being ... Indonesian and thus be fully immersed in culture.”

Sophia - Focal Meaning 5

Achieving success with the majority of norms is not attainable by a person from another culture, especially considering the multilayered reality of culture.

List of Focal Meanings for Sophia

1. Feelings of fitting in with mutual knowing of others in a small circle of local acquaintances is interrupted when moving on, finding the need to start over amidst new acquaintances and venue.
2. Being immersed in another culture brings enhanced self knowledge and ways of being.
3. Although only temporary, instances of being received as just another human being in public result in intense feelings of jubilation and success unlike the usual outsider experience.
4. Feeling knowledgeable about cultural norms, yet uncertain how one’s self might be judged by others, occurs when being immersed in another culture.
5. Achieving success with the majority of norms is not attainable by a person from another culture, especially considering the multilayered reality of culture.

Situated Structural Description for Sophia

Being immersed in another culture for Sophia brought feelings of fitting in and affinity with others in a small circle of local acquaintances, yet the positive feelings were interrupted when moving on. She found the requisite strength to begin anew amidst fresh acquaintances and a different venue. Still, although only temporary, Sophia's instances of being received as just another human being in public resulted in intense feelings of jubilation and success unlike the usual outsider experience she previously had experienced.

Sophia believes most cultural norms are unattainable by a person from another culture, especially considering the multilayered reality of the Indonesia culture. Further, feeling knowledgeable about cultural norms yet, uncertain how one might be judged by others, creates uncertainty for one being immersed in another culture. Nevertheless, Sophia has found being immersed in another culture has brought her enhanced self knowledge and diverse ways of being.

Thomas Austin

Thomas Austin - Meaning Unit 1

"I feel like I have been immersed in Indonesian culture since the day I arrived here more than 3 years ago. To this day I cannot say that a week goes by where something happens that doesn't leave me bewildered and confused. I'm not really sure why I seem to cling to my own cultural backpack so fiercely or perhaps these feelings are normal. Perhaps newcomers feel this even more strongly than I and I just don't seem to notice."

Thomas Austin - Focal Meaning 1

Being immersed in another way of life is a fully absorbing and perplexing process, yet holding on to one's own culture is a powerful unexplained requisite.

Thomas Austin - Meaning Unit 2

"The local [NGO] I worked for is a typical NGO in that it has received money from outside funders (i.e. [international NGO]) to carry out various activities in villages around [small city]. [Local NGO] does this by establishing working groups in the village and having field workers visit the working group once each month. In my first 3 months with [local NGO] I found myself visiting over 25 working groups in about 12 separate villages.

One of these villages that I visited in this time was the small island ... off the coast of [province]. The village is populated with ... fishermen After our meeting we were invited into the home of the group elder for dinner. A simple affair of fish and rice. Turns out there were two types of fish, fried and baked. As we ate I happened to be talking about how much of the food in Indonesia is fried and that I was not yet used to this as in Canada we don't fry and are more likely to bake than to fry. It came to the point where there remained one portion of fish left on the communal plate. Being a typical Canadian I declined to eat further thinking it polite to leave some food. When our hosts asked why I did not finish the food, my co-worker raised again the conversation we had just had and pointed out that the remaining fish was fried. It was then clear that I was not eating because I did not enjoy the food. Feeling a bit embarrassed but also misunderstood I blurted out that this was not the reason but that instead in my country it is polite to leave the last portion. The result was immediate, the group elder exchanged words with his daughter in law in the kitchen which brought about another fresh plate of fish. At the time I didn't really feel like delving into the topic further but stuffed myself silly thinking it would be rude not to eat when they had cooked the food just for me."

Thomas Austin - Focal Meaning 2

Confusion and misunderstanding arises when one's basic cultural beliefs and practices do not match in another culture.

Thomas Austin - Meaning Unit 3

"The event did not end that night, of course. [Indonesians] love to gossip and soon the story had spread to all of the [local NGO] working groups. Everywhere I went I saw the progress of eating and disappearing food being closely monitored as it was made sure that there was more than enough for me. Sometimes I tried to eat less and stopped when there was still enough left so they would not cook more. Sometimes I stuffed myself silly like the first night. Now that the story was out and communicated to everyone I seemed to be

stuck. What could the way out be? It seemed that really the only way out was time. Eventually the story was forgotten and my eating habits not so closely monitored.”

Thomas Austin - Focal Meaning 3

First impressions of one's behaviour may be erroneous; nonetheless are long-lasting in an hospitable host culture.

Thomas Austin - Meaning Unit 4

“The experience left me confused as in you're damned if you do and damned if you don't. In this case it was like I was offending people by them believing that I didn't like their fried fish and on the other side of the coin felt uncomfortable with a relatively poor family going out of their way to prepare more food than necessary. What was the correct thing to do? I feel like when I am in my own country everything is so easy. We all mutually understand what is happening and act accordingly. Here I don't understand what is happening and don't know how to act. It is the same with the Indonesians in that they don't understand me. At the time I was also annoyed at my co-workers' assumption without asking or understanding. This is not necessarily a cultural thing as this happens to me with other people that jump to conclusions and make assumptions without having the full information first.”

Thomas Austin - Focal Meaning 4

Losing all sense of cultural behavioural direction is frustrating, yet feels familiar when others interact while perceiving only a limited piece of the whole picture.

Thomas Austin - Meaning Unit 5

“As with everything in Indonesia it was a slow process ... but maybe an even slower process for me. Likely now all the parties involved have long forgotten this story, but it still lives on for me. Learning your way as a volunteer is a trial and error process. There are no rule books.”

Thomas Austin - Focal Meaning 5

Reminiscences of events live on as the breaking of cultural behavior norms is not recognized until after the event.

List of Focal Meanings for Thomas Austin

1. Being immersed in another way of life is a fully absorbing and perplexing process, yet holding on to one's own culture is a powerful unexplained requisite.
2. Confusion and misunderstanding arises when one's basic cultural beliefs and practices do not match in another culture.
3. First impressions of one's behaviour may be erroneous; nonetheless are long-lasting in an hospitable host culture.
4. Losing all sense of cultural behavioural direction is frustrating, yet feels familiar when others interact while perceiving only a limited piece of the whole picture.
5. Reminiscences of events live on as the breaking of cultural behavior norms is not recognized until after the event.

Situated Structural Description for Thomas Austin

Being immersed in another culture for Thomas Austin is a fully absorbing and perplexing process, yet holding on to his own culture is a powerful unexplained necessity. Thomas Austin's confusion and misunderstanding arose when his cultural beliefs and practices were viewed as 'faux pas' in another cultural setting.

Thomas Austin finds losing his sense of cultural behavioural direction is frustrating, yet feels familiar when others interact while perceiving only a portion of the whole picture. Thomas Austin also feels discontented with others' erroneous first impressions of his behaviour; they tend to be held for a long time in the hospitable host culture. The

reminiscences of such events live on in him, as it is a significant event for him to not know a cultural rule until it is broken.

Tristan Philips

Tristan Philips - Meaning Unit 1

“I think I am so totally immersed in this culture I can no longer recognize it. ... My Indonesian culture immersion ‘situation’ has been going on for the past 8 years – and there is nothing I can think ... that makes my situation unique ... I mean, don’t **all** expat field workers have the same situations?”

Tristan Philips - Focal Meaning 1

Believing one’s way of being has changed, yet recognizes that this is not unique; considers that others experience similar discontinuities.

Tristan Philips - Meaning Unit 2

“Trying to rationalize a bit, perhaps it has been due to my length of time in Indonesia that I would prefer to ‘dialog’ on this topic rather than write an essay. I find that is definitely the mode of choice in the current organization where I spend my days. Nothing much is written, but all is discussed informally over some good coffee in the common room or in one of the many nooks this office has. Even inter-division staff meetings fail to produce minutes of what was discussed, nor is an agenda distributed before the meeting – just a note on the whiteboard (at best one or two days in advance, more usually a couple of hours before the event).”

Tristan Philips - Focal Meaning 2

One reflects on ‘unwritten’ differences between host and home country office practices.

Tristan Philips - Meaning Unit 3

“It is during these staff meetings that the agenda is set – usually ending up into marathon sessions lasting hours, and almost as a rule never starting before 3 in the afternoon as the majority of staff roll in late morning or noon. [The local NGO] ... that is implementing in partnership the program of [International NGO] doesn’t pay by the hour, focussing on results instead. This attitude leads to much ‘over-time’ and perhaps a significant amount of under-utilized time during regular office hours. Perhaps that is by far the most

outstanding difference in this Indonesian NGO culture – that of time management. It is an office of idealists, who see the need for much to be done and recognize not many people are doing it, so they take it upon themselves and add yet another task to their list (mental list of course as hardly anything is written down for documentation purposes).”

Tristan Philips - Focal Meaning 3

Understanding that the management of time differs between host country organizational culture and Canadian norms and values.

Tristan Philips - Meaning Unit 4

“Inability to follow through on deadlines (whether given or self-imposed.) This does pose a dilemma. But I think it stems just as much from the fact that they are idealist and forever optimistic in their views as from their apparent aversion to committing thoughts/data to paper. Attention to certain details does not seem to be a priority (case in point – grammatical and typo mistakes in writing (both Indonesian and English). Although there are tools available to improve this, it does not seem to hold much weight with the NGO crowd as I have experienced from my time in [two different regions of Indonesia]. Emphasis is placed on ‘doing’, whereas ‘recording’ the event is more of an afterthought.”

Tristan Philips - Focal Meaning 4

One is aware of the discrepancies between first and third world ways of being when it comes to office practices and expectations.

Tristan Philips - Meaning Unit 5

“Little support/understanding among colleagues at the office unless one is fortunate to work in an office that has a pool of expats (I don’t, my office has 25 Indonesian staff of various ethnicities, with Indonesian as the language of choice for day-to-day operations, both in conversation and correspondence.) I find it difficult to differentiate between what would be classified specifically as Indonesian culture and what is merely office culture. Not having much exposure to office systems in Canada has me hesitant to label the situation I experience in this office as unique to Indonesia as perhaps it is a culture and management style shared by NGO offices worldwide.”

Tristan Philips - Focal Meaning 5

One feels alone/not alone, being the only sojourner in the workplace, yet ponders if this is so in other NGO offices around the world.

Tristan Philips - Meaning Unit 6

“Situations not specific to management issues, but nonetheless taking up a significant amount of time and mental effort:

Hassles regarding financial arrangements with the head office: The terms of the position I accepted were that I had a Canadian Bank account to receive biweekly paycheques. It is up to me to figure out how to live here and access that money. ATMs are one solution, though paying on average \$10-30CAD/month service charges doesn't seem like the best solution, until one researches the cost of bank transfers or other means of accessing Canadian funds from Indonesia.

Tax status as a deemed resident of Canada: – though I receive none of the benefits from those tax dollars.

Immigration/VISA issues: Due to a lapse in head office administration with official Government documents/agreements, I have been forced to find alternatives for a working visa that was guaranteed during the job interview.

Perhaps my situation is unique in that I am an expat working in [a large Indonesian city] in partnership with a local NGO at a management position from the Canadian Donor NGO. Except that my title is Coordinator – which I have come to understand means having little to no weight in management decisions of either the local implementing organization nor the donor organization in Canada.”

Tristan Philips - Focal Meaning 6

Lack of home country organizational support and understanding fuels one's feelings of helplessness and frustration.

Tristan Philips - Meaning Unit 7

“Another ... situation would be health insurance. During the interview process this was agreed upon that I would be covered under the Canadian NGO staff group policy. As it turned out, because I was hired locally (and have spent the majority of the previous years out of Canada, I am not insurable under the company policy – forcing me to find equivalent coverage for myself and my Indonesian wife. It goes without saying that the standards and services of Canadian Health Care that we as citizens have become accustomed to and expect, is very difficult to replicate overseas with local insurance carriers. Although contract/policies might be written in English, it is by no means the language of choice for staff. Some concepts that are considered a given in Canada are non-existent here: for instance 'life changes' clauses in Insurance (i.e. marriage or children). Local health insurance policies are made out yearly on a per person basis. With the upcoming arrival of our daughter I had enquired what forms were necessary to alter my policy so that she would be covered. It was only after I had committed to the insurance company that this fact was made apparent to me – policies are for 12 months,

non-refundable and children can not be insured under a separate policy. This left me with two options. Default my current policy with the birth of our daughter and taking out a new policy including her coverage, thereby paying the price of a full year policy and only receiving its benefits for approximately five months, or not have my child covered under any policy for the first 7 months of her life until my current policy expires in January. Health insurance for my wife was another matter. The policy does not include pregnancy related health concerns. If it did, the premium was double in price with the clause that she could not claim during the first year of the policy. Hmmmmm. These are two situations of living in a foreign country (not necessarily Indonesian specific) where I was acutely aware that I was no longer living under the social safety umbrella that Canada offers.”

Tristan Philips – Focal Meaning 7

Pre-employment expectations fall short on important personal and family matters.

Tristan Philips - Meaning Unit 8

“I must say there are leniencies I experience here that I imagine are the result of a value system different from that found in the common workplace in Canada. As I indicated earlier, [The local NGO] does not watch the clock, but focuses on results instead. This approach requires personal accountability. If one can handle that responsibility, one can enjoy much flexibility. Being absent from the office due to ‘keperluan keluarga’ (or family needs) is a common occurrence. It is not considered a sick day, nor is it counted against personal holiday time, but rather a note is made. If it is noticed that results are delayed questions are raised, but the focus of the questions are more on what has been done while the staff was present rather than the days absent. As family is highly valued here, it is rather expected that one would be absent from work in order to fulfil obligations of that nature. I have truly enjoyed this value system, allowing me to be present for my wife’s doctor appointments throughout pregnancy and delivery of our baby.”

Tristan Philips - Focal Meaning 8

One appreciates the compassion for family that is a component of the Indonesian culture, yet is not taken for granted.

List of Focal Meanings for Tristan Philips

1. Believing one’s way of being has changed, yet recognizes that this is not unique; considers that others experience similar discontinuities.

2. One reflects on 'unwritten' differences between host and home country office practices.
3. Understanding that the management of time differs between host country organizational culture and Canadian norms and values.
4. One is aware of the discrepancies between first and third world ways of being when it comes to office practices and expectations.
5. One feels alone/not alone, being the only sojourner in the workplace, yet ponders if this is so in other NGO offices around the world.
6. Lack of home country organizational support and understanding fuels one's feelings of helplessness and frustration.
7. Pre-employment expectations fall short on important personal and family matters.
8. One appreciates the compassion for family that is a component of the Indonesian culture, yet is not taken for granted.

Situated Structural Description for Tristan Philips

For Tristan Philips being immersed in another culture has involved changing his way of being yet he doesn't find it a unique experience. He wonders if others experience similar realities. He feels paradoxically alone/not alone being the only sojourner in the workplace, and ponders if this is so in other NGO offices around the world.

Tristan Philips reflects on 'unwritten' differences between host and home country office practices understanding that the management of time differs between host country organizational culture and Canadian norms and values. However, the lack of home

country organizational support and understanding fuels Tristan Philips' feelings of helplessness and frustration. Tristan Philips is aware of the discrepancies between first and third world ways of being when it comes to office practices and expectations yet he appreciates the 'compassion for family' that is a component of the Indonesian culture which is not the same in Canadian culture.

General Structural Description- Central Finding

The general structural description of being immersed in another culture was developed from the synthesis of the participants' situated structural descriptions. This general structural description, "leaves out the particulars of the specific situation and centers on those which, while not necessarily universal are at least trans-situational or more than specific" (Giorgi 1975 p.88).

The central finding of this research is the general structural description of being immersed in another culture emerging from all fifteen research participants as co-created by the researcher and related to the expatriate literature concepts as follows:

Being immersed in another culture involves living paradoxical ways of being.

- Feelings of Understanding/Not Understanding

Despite cultural training, previous experiences and feelings of cultural knowing and understanding, being immersed in another culture inevitably surfaces feelings of embarrassment, anxiety, and uncertainty with not understanding.

- Feelings of Discomfort/Comfort

When being immersed in another culture, one feels discomfort with the trial and error processes that enhance one's learning and avoidance of cultural errors. Adjustment and comfort occur amidst inescapable feelings of alienation, irritability and unhappiness. These feelings of discomfort are countered somewhat by cultural comfort and knowledge of 'going home'.

- Feelings of Powerfulness/Powerlessness

Foreigner status and feelings of powerfulness are present when one is immersed in another culture; however, observable differences give rise to feelings of powerlessness, vulnerability, self-consciousness and being judged by others.

- Feelings of Belonging/Not Belonging

Expatriates have dispiriting feelings of belonging, yet never really belonging, when being immersed in another culture. The feelings arise amidst the reality and contentment of special treatment by hosts and home when sought after for sharing one's opinion, *utilized* as a sounding board and mentored; yet, one knows and feels one will not ever truly belong.

- Feelings of Being Open to New Culture/Yet Holding on to Own Culture

When being immersed in another culture one experiences feelings of being open to new cultural experiences; yet one holds on to one's own national culture through comparisons while at work and in non-work situations.

- Feelings of Freedom/ Restriction

When being immersed in another culture one's feelings of freedom are restricted through lack of comprehension of unwritten, unpredictable, contradictory and mystical cultural practices of hosts. What emerges is a constant cautiousness for one's own personal security.

- Feelings of Being Supported/Not Supported

The deficiency of home country organizational assistance fuels ones' feelings of disappointment, and feelings of not being supported amidst the generosity, caring and community support from one's cultural guides and family in the new culture.

- Feelings of Being Unchanged/Changed

One's personal changes may not be recognized by others who perceive one as being unchanged; yet one's rewarding transformation of living and working while being immersed in another culture is cherished, shared with others and memorable.

In this chapter, the analysis/synthesis research processes involved in the utilization of the Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method (Giorgi 1970; 1985; Giorgi & Giorgi 2003) for the descriptions created by 15 research participants has been presented. The research process has provided the meaning of being immersed in another culture as it emerged from the lived experiences of the research participants in response to the research question: What is the general structural description (or meaning) of being immersed in another culture for expatriate managers? Discussion of the findings will be presented in Chapter Five, and suggestions for how this information could lead to an improved 'best-practice model' of, and support for, the expatriate experience will be discussed in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Overview

The current research study was carried out to answer the question: What is the general structural description (or meaning) of being immersed in another culture for expatriate managers? The answer to this question could lead to a better understanding of what it is like to be an expatriate manager immersed in another culture, as well as suggestions for an improved 'best practice model' of, and support for, the expatriate experience. Chapter Four presented the meaning units, focal meanings and situated structural descriptions for each research participant as interpreted from the research participants' own descriptions. For each research participant, the situated structural descriptions, then, were synthesized in the process of generating the general structural description (GSD), which also is considered in Giorgi's (1975) method to be the meaning of the phenomenon; in this case, living and working while being immersed in another culture. In this chapter, the findings that have emerged from this phenomenological study of lived experience will be discussed in relation to the meaning units from the research participants' own descriptions. As well, the components of the general structural description will be compared and contrasted with content from the literature review that was presented in Chapter Two. Also to be discussed are quality criteria for qualitative research and limitations of the study.

5.2 Discussion of the general structural description

Being immersed in another culture involves living new ways of being and experiencing paradoxical feelings. Living paradox occurs because expatriates are mediating between two different cultures and two diverse organizations. Barber (2004 p.1127) defined paradox as “a seemingly absurd or self-contradictory statement which, when investigated or explained, may prove to be well-founded or true”. It is noted that “paradoxes are not opposites, but are dimensions of the same rhythm lived all-at-once where one is in the foreground and one is in the background” (Parse 1998 p.30).

In this section, eight paradoxes (depicted in Table 5.1) and components of the general structural description (in italics for readability) as introduced in Chapter Four, are discussed individually in relation to the meaning units from the research participants’ descriptions and within the context of the literature review.

Table 5.1 - Eight Paradoxes from Components of the General Structural Description

Paradoxical Feelings of:
Understanding/Not Understanding
Discomfort/Comfort
Powerfulness/Powerlessness
Belonging/Not Belonging
Being Open to New Culture/Yet Holding on to Own Culture
Freedom/Restriction
Being Supported/Not Supported
Being Unchanged/Changed

- *Feelings of Understanding/Not Understanding*

The paradox of experiencing feelings of understanding/not understanding is portrayed in the following component of the GSD:

Despite cultural training, previous experiences and feelings of cultural knowing and understanding, being immersed in another culture inevitably surfaces feelings of embarrassment, anxiety and uncertainty with not understanding.

The research participants described how feelings of not understanding often occurred even though they possessed a sizable amount of knowledge as a result of cultural training and previous experiences. For example, Pak Jasiento, in his experiences with a wedding ceremony, described never fully understanding the cultural experiences notwithstanding significant cultural training, self-training, plus three years of experience living and working in Indonesia. As well, another research participant, Prunes, continued to be “surprised, alarmed, elated and frustrated by this multi-cultural nation” despite his 16 years of experience living and working in Indonesia. Justin Edwards credited past experiences in various developing countries and subsequent in-country cultural and language training in greatly enhancing his adjustment to the Indonesian context.

Kate Phelan and Martin Wyatt described experiences that left them not fully understanding the Indonesian culture, using such words as “puzzled” and “unseen communications” to convey their thoughts. Thomas Austin experienced embarrassment and anxiety when his actions were interpreted to mean something he did not intend, when in actuality he was simply describing an example of the differences between Indonesians and Canadians. Sophia used the word “cringe” to express personal feelings when

describing her uncertainty in not knowing for sure, but suspecting she had behaved inappropriately, despite possessing significant cultural knowing and understanding.

Table 5.2 - Linking Research Participants' Descriptions to Feelings of Understanding/Not Understanding and Component of GSD

Research Participant	Meaning Unit	'Clips' (Direct Quotations) from Research Participants' Descriptions of Thoughts and/or Experiences
Pak Jasiento	1	My wife and I were not well prepared for our first Indonesian cultural experience, that of the wedding. In fact, during our three-year stay in Indonesia we never quite 'got it'. [gaps in understanding]
Prunes	1	I continue to be surprised, alarmed, elated and frustrated [with lack of understanding] by this multi-cultural nation.
Justin Edwards	1	Without this in-country introduction, which included a number of field trips, my abilities to cope would have been greatly challenged. [understanding/not understanding]
Justin Edwards	3	The majority of our time was spent in developing countries ... This exposure gave me good experience into how to cope [with new cultural understanding].
Kate Phelan	2	I thought I had understood that Putu and Soki prayed here each year, but they were puzzled by which temple entrance to use and had to ask. [understanding/not understanding]
Martin Wyatt	7	An interesting part of living in [region of Indonesia] – [are] the unseen communications [which led to gaps in understanding].
Thomas Austin	2	Feeling a bit embarrassed but also misunderstood I blurted out that this was not the reason but that instead in my country it is polite to leave the last portion. [feelings of embarrassment]
Thomas Austin	4	What was the correct thing to do? I feel like when I am in my own country everything is so easy. We all mutually understand what is happening and act accordingly. Here I don't understand what is happening and don't know how to act. It is the same with Indonesians in that they don't understand me. [not understanding]
Sophia	4	A child is <i>durung jawa</i> , not yet Javanese. Perhaps Javanese Indonesians also see foreigners (me) in this category. I cringe to think how many times I have fulfilled the above list [through not understanding].
Archer	13	I can understand their world but they cannot understand mine. [understanding/not understanding]

Overall, these findings point to the fact that even research participants with considerable knowledge gained as a result of lengthy tenures still find themselves with paradoxical feelings of understanding yet not understanding including embarrassment, anxiety and uncertainty.

To delineate further, the paradoxical feelings of understanding/not understanding and this component of the GSD, selected ‘clips’ (or direct quotations) of the research participants’ descriptions of thoughts and/or experiences are presented in Table 5.2 to assist the reader in following the interpretive trail from the research participants’ words to the findings.

These findings are supported in the expatriate literature. For example, the literature confirmed that training, both cultural and language, is important as it serves greatly to assist an expatriate in successfully living and working in an otherwise unfamiliar cultural environment (Forster 2000; Mendenhall et al. 2002; Suutari & Brewster 2001). In particular, the literature indicated that pre-departure and early post-arrival training assists the expatriate in understanding the foreign environment (Hutchings 2005; Ircha 1999; Katz & Seifer 1996). However, at the same time, the literature reinforces the notion that there are deficiencies in training practices from the expatriates’ perspective (Suutari & Brewster 2001). This is congruent with the findings of the present study where, despite significant training, expatriates still do not fully understand cultural behaviours as experienced on an ongoing basis. This may be due partly to the reality that unique personal and professional challenges which expatriates experience are not well

understood by human resource managers (Black & Gregersen 1999) and, therefore, cannot be integrated into expatriate training programs.

The findings also point to the complexities of life in multi-cultured Indonesia. Thus, it appears that training could never be expected to do the complete job, leaving significant aspects to learning by actually living the experience. In fact, the existence of past and ongoing actual experiences of being immersed in another culture is valued by expatriates in their overall understanding of the cultural milieu. This is supported in the literature whereby past overseas experiences are beneficial and should be included as a criterion in the expatriate selection process (McDonald 1993 p.24).

A final point to be made here is that congruence also exists with the literature in that expatriates tend to be positive about their training (Bonache et al. 2001; Brewster & Pickard 1994; Prud'homme van Reine & Trompenaars 2000). The line of reasoning is that prior to departure, employees know that they are going to be placed in an environment that they do not understand so they are interested and believe that *any* training might be helpful (Brewster & Pickard 1994).

- *Feelings of Discomfort/Comfort*

The paradox of experiencing feelings of discomfort/comfort is portrayed in the following component of the GSD:

When being immersed in another culture, one feels discomfort with the trial and error processes that enhance one's learning and avoidance of cultural errors. Adjustment and comfort occur amidst inescapable feelings of alienation, irritability and unhappiness. These feelings of discomfort are countered somewhat by cultural comfort and knowledge of 'going home'.

The research participants described the process of trial and error as essential in learning how to participate appropriately in the new cultural environment. One research participant, Thomas Austin, described feeling uncomfortable with the necessity of learning as one goes, and that there was no rule book to use as a guide. Batik utilized the term “lessons learned”, which is common ‘lingo’ in NGO circles, to describe how she would build on her knowledge through actual experiences while at the same time she would seek cultural knowledge from cultural mentors in regards to getting comfortable in new situations. Batman described how his learning ‘on the fly’ led to a discomforting situation when participating in an inappropriate behaviour according to local religious customs.

Martin Wyatt described a humorous experience of feeling insulted by a comment from an Indonesian colleague that he perceived to be exceptionally unfriendly, yet later learning the intention was just the opposite. Justin Edwards described learning tolerance in relation to many cultural annoyances over time. He explained this tolerance only occurred *after* his recognition that his impatience and inappropriate behaviours did not work in the cultural environment but, instead, frequently made situations worse.

Being repatriated to Canada is a comforting thought that was described by Made, Prunes and Pak Jasiento. Prunes specifically described his discomfort at being laughed at (when he was burned by the hot ‘sambal’) and not being able to be himself (when he was unable to speak the language well enough to make jokes), while at the same time he took some comfort in his thoughts of home and his pending ‘escape’ which would happen “in eight weeks”.

Overall, these findings illuminated the reality that the research participants, while being immersed, learned about the culture by doing, and experiencing through what is commonly known as a ‘trial and error’ process. While learning in this manner, the research participants frequently described being upset and uncomfortable amidst feelings of annoyance and impatience. The notion of returning home was a comforting thought--a light at the end of the tunnel.

To outline further the paradoxical feelings of discomfort/comfort and this component of the GSD, selected ‘clips’ (or direct quotations) of the research participants’ descriptions of thoughts and/or experiences are presented in Table 5.3 to aid the reader in following the interpretive trail from the research participants’ words to the findings.

Table 5.3 - Linking Research Participants' Descriptions to Feelings of Discomfort/Comfort and Component of GSD

Research Participant	Meaning Unit	'Clips' (Direct Quotations) from Research Participants' Descriptions of Thoughts and/or Experiences
Thomas Austin	5	Learning your way as a volunteer is a trial and error process. There are no rule books. [trial and error]
Batik	5	Well, that was a 'lesson learned' so to speak ... in future, I would be sure to ask about local customs and traditions before making any assumptions. [learning and adjusting]
Batman	5	[Feelings of discomfort regarding acceptable behaviours arose when I hugged a woman....] Seeing me touch his wife upset the husband who pronounced some religious principle and stormed out.
Martin Wyatt	17	She walked up to me ... and said ... "Can I call you Mas Gendut". I responded with, "What does that mean". I was then told that means 'the fat guy'. I said "In my country that is rude" and I walked away ... a year to the day later we were married. [discomfort/comfort]
Justin Edwards	4	The reason for my change in tolerance is not entirely clear to me but I think it comes as a result of many experiences where impatience of my part, was found to be more counter productive and time consuming. [trial and error]
Justin Edwards	8	There are several things that are encountered that many foreigners find particularly annoying. There is little to do but tolerate it otherwise you would become an angry nervous wreck in no time. (feelings of irritability]
Made	8	Overall, however, I know I will miss the culture [because I was comfortable with it] once I return to Canada.
Prunes	6	Simple things - like being burned with sambal with everyone laughing drove me mad. And there was no escape – for at least 8 more weeks. [comfort in knowledge of pending repatriation] ...My language was coming along, but I couldn't make a joke in Bahasa Indonesian and that left me feeling not quite me. [comfort/discomfort]
Pak Jasiento	8	We have often wondered whether the important announcement of the wedding was nothing more than ... innuendo to suggest an obligation on our part to make a financial contribution ... before we departed Indonesia. [feelings of discomfort]

These findings are supported in the expatriate literature. Indeed, it is well documented that expatriates typically experience difficulties when moving across cultures (Jun et al. 2001). For example, according to Osland (1995a p.3), “many expatriates have to plumb the depths of their inner resources, first to survive the differences and changes, then to be effective”. A great deal of the extant literature relates to the challenges of the cultural adjustment process including the phenomenon known as culture shock (Oberg 1960). There is no doubt that feelings of discomfort/comfort are common during this adjustment process which may be a never-ending process given the already lengthy tenures of many of the research participants in this study.

As reinforced in the literature, performing or behaving appropriately while being immersed in another culture can be described as a trial and error process. Zimmerman et al. (2003 p.48) utilized the term “exploration” in describing how the expatriates gradually modify their inclinations and behaviours based on their experiences in the foreign cultural environment. The literature supports the fact that cultural errors in Indonesia by Westerners are common, and sometimes serious, as in the case of the unknowing manager who once fired an oil rig worker publicly instead of privately, the latter being the acceptable cultural norm. The manager recognized his mistake while being chased around the oil rig by the axe carrying ex-employee (Katz & Seifer 1996). This rather extreme example exemplifies the fact that one may not know the rule of a particular culture, until it is broken. However, in normal circumstances, one internalizes the ‘lesson learned’ and continues the process of adjusting to the new culture. Indeed, most often, adjustment is about “the gradual development of familiarity, comfort and

proficiency regarding expected behavior and the values and assumptions inherent in the new culture” (Black & Mendenhall 1990 p.118). This progression of reducing uncertainty, minimizing inappropriate behaviors and other errors or setbacks takes time.

The literature referred to psychological adjustment which deals with subjective well-being or emotional satisfaction including depression, anxiety, tension and fatigue (De Cieri et al. 1991) that occur during the expatriation cycle. This is congruent with the findings particularly in relation to the experience of culture shock (Oberg 1960). Sims (2004 p.74) said culture shock can be described as having a “creeping effect, evolving slowly as the expatriate experiences more idiosyncrasies of their host country’s culture”. Researchers (Black & Mendenhall 1990; De Cieri et al. 1991; Melles 2002) have confirmed that culture shock is about misinterpreting multiple cultural cues in the foreign country leading to inappropriate behaviours and subsequent anxiety that tends to increase with greater cultural distances between home and host cultures.

A last note to be discussed in relation to this paradox concerns the comforting thoughts of going home (or repatriation) which may also be considered a lived experience of expatriates. This finding is supported in the literature by the very nature of overseas assignments which normally involves expatriates having future plans that include returning to their own country (De Cieri et al. 1991).

- *Feelings of Powerfulness/Powerlessness*

The paradox of experiencing feelings of powerfulness/powerlessness is portrayed in the following component of the GSD:

Foreigner status and feelings of powerfulness are present as a result when being immersed in another culture; however, observable differences give rise to feelings of powerlessness, vulnerability, self-consciousness and being judged by others.

Several research participants described their elevated status as foreigners and the feelings of powerfulness or powerlessness it entailed. Pak Jasiento described being invited to numerous weddings for people they barely knew and in some cases invitations from people they did not know at all, simply because they were foreigners. Although Pak Jasiento just wanted to blend into the crowd at a wedding he attended, he described being *seated* in a prime location for all to see. This served to enhance his hosts' social status but left Pak Jasiento with feelings of being used, self-conscious and vulnerable. Prunes described feelings of self-consciousness and even humiliation when reacting to the physical assault of extra spicy food in front of Indonesians.

Prunes, although in a position of power, felt powerlessness amid the local cultural milieu and in dealing with what appeared to be a serious health issue of an Indonesian co-worker, and so he reluctantly agreed to engage in the services of a 'dukun' (witch doctor). On the other hand, when Martin Wyatt was faced with a serious health issue of a fellow Canadian expatriate he felt his status as foreigner led to increased powerfulness which was not typical for Indonesians of a similar age and experience.

In Indonesia, Canadians are generally a visible minority which provides for instant identification that one is a foreigner. In Kate Phelan's example, she described her self-consciousness at being the only foreign face among a large group of Indonesians during an annual religious pilgrimage. Batman described his feelings of being vulnerable to higher pricing of goods/services simply because of his status as a Westerner and knowing there is little that can be done regarding the reality of 'observable differences'. A final example is Justin Edward's feelings of powerlessness in relation to not having the capability to change cultural norms that have been in existence for hundreds of years.

Overall, these findings point to the fact that the expatriate managers' position as foreigner, readily identified through 'observable differences', brought the research participants power and status, but also made them feel powerless in certain situations. Feelings of vulnerability and self-consciousness were experienced frequently by the research participants.

To explain further the paradoxical feelings of powerfulness/powerlessness and this component of the GSD, selected 'clips' (or direct quotations) of the research participants' descriptions of thoughts and/or experiences are presented in Table 5.4 to support the reader in following the interpretive trail from the research participants' words to the findings.

Table 5.4 - Linking Research Participants' Descriptions to Feelings of Powerfulness/Powerlessness and Component of GSD

Research Participant	Meaning Unit	'Clips' (Direct Quotations) from Research Participants' Descriptions of Thoughts and/or Experiences
Pak Jasiento	4	There we were for all to see, sitting in the second row just behind one or other of the couple's parents and, we are sure, well in front of siblings, aunts and uncles! Little did we understand at the time that we were part of the family's way of demonstrating their social status, through their association with foreigners. [a position of status, value & power]
Pak Jasiento	7	Many elaborately engraved invitations to attend weddings at lavish [big city] hotel ballrooms would arrive at our home or small office from people that we barely knew or in some case did not know at all (a sort of nuptial SPAM). We were advised that there was no real expectation that invitations sent to 'expats', (in addition to thousands of their friends and relatives), would result in a high percentage of acceptance, but it was certainly worth a try. [feelings of vulnerability]
Prunes	4	I was totally embarrassed and couldn't stand the attention. [powerlessness with attention]
Prunes	8	The people from the village suggested that we call in the 'dukun' and I very reluctantly agreed. I was desperate. [powerlessness]
Martin Wyatt	19	I could not imagine any situation where a 25 year Indonesian villager would have convinced the people in that room to go see a doctor. ... In this case it was lucky that there was this kind of differentiation for foreigners. [feelings of powerfulness]
Kate Phelan	7	All around us, dozens of families were doing the same. I was the only foreign face. [observable differences leads to position of powerfulness-powerlessness]
Batman	3	Having spotted a foreigner too late, they must have regretted not having negotiated a higher price... I suppose it's the vulnerable exploiting the vulnerable. [feelings of vulnerability]
Justin Edwards	10	It is difficult for me to do anything about this as it is related to culture norms that have been established for hundreds of years. [feelings of powerlessness]

The findings serve to enhance overall knowledge in relation to the expatriates' feelings of powerfulness/powerlessness as a result of being recognized as 'foreigners' in the host culture. The current research is typical of the extant literature in that it concerns Westerners who have expatriated to other countries. Further, as is the case in the current study, these expatriates frequently are assigned to countries in the developing world where, often, they are a visible minority in addition to facing large cultural distances (Mendenhall & Wiley 1994). The findings refer to 'observable differences' which is similar to the literature reference of 'minority status' (Mendenhall & Wiley 1994). As seen in the findings, this 'minority status' awareness of oneself in combination with the large cultural differences between Canadians and Indonesians provides a potent and challenging lived experience for the expatriates.

The findings are supported in the literature by Osland's (2000 p.233) research. She described a phenomenon called a 'marginality paradox' where expatriates generally think well of the local persons while simultaneously being very cautious so not to be taken advantage of by these same hosts. Generally, a Western expatriate 'sticks out in the crowd' in Indonesia which often is associated with feelings of vulnerability, self-consciousness, and being judged by others. In reference to powerfulness, Osland (2000 p.233) identified a 'social acuity paradox' that has the expatriate possessing a great deal of power, yet not exercising this power in order to obtain full participation and mutual assistance from host nationals.

- *Feelings of Belonging/Not Belonging*

The paradox of experiencing feelings of belonging/not belonging is portrayed in the following component of the GSD:

Expatriates have dispiriting feelings of belonging, yet never really belonging, when being immersed in another culture. The feelings arise amidst the reality and contentment of special treatment by hosts and home when - sought after for sharing one's opinion, utilized as a sounding board, and mentored yet knowing and feeling one will not ever truly belong.

The research participants described experiences in which they had feelings of belonging, yet realized they were always going to be outsiders. Thus, the potential for belonging in a substantial way to the Indonesian cultural environment was limited or non-existent. This reality is illuminated by Made who stated, "While I have always felt comfortable with Indonesians around me and they have certainly made me feel at home, I cannot say that I have ever felt Indonesian".

Interestingly, Sophia described temporarily feeling very much like she belonged in one village. However, she found, upon leaving that particular small village for another, the belonging she had felt was actually superficial acceptance because she was again seen as an outsider (a foreigner) and thus had to start all over again. This is a similar experience as one described by Made who, because he had mastered the Indonesian accent, was able to experience true momentary feelings of belonging and being perceived as Indonesian while speaking on the telephone and not being seen.

Archer described his experience of receiving special attention, of being mentored by managers and being used as a sounding board by colleagues, which gave him a sense of belonging. Kate Phelan described significant feelings of belonging when invited by her Indonesian ‘family’ to participate in special religious pilgrimages that few Westerners attend. She described her feelings of belonging as being somewhat fleeting amid the full awareness of her own observable differences which, in turn, raised feelings of being an outsider or not belonging.

Imron pointedly wrote “I will always be an ‘outsider’” after believing he had understood all of the words during a discussion about the state of Islam in Indonesia but somehow he nonetheless completely missed the message. Further, Martin Wyatt felt that on certain matters there was no way that Indonesians would ever directly tell an outsider what is going on in sensitive issues no matter how accepted the outsider may have become at the family level in the community.

Archer described enjoying living in the small Indonesian city but also recognized he had a much wider view of the world and could not really belong amidst people who remain “parochial”. Another research participant, Tristan Philips, described the difficulty of fitting in when being the only expatriate in an office of twenty-five employees. He reflected that his sense of belonging would have been enhanced through collegial support and understanding that only other Canadians would have been able to provide.

Overall, these findings point to the fact that the research participants experienced feelings of belonging in the local cultural environment; however, these special feelings tended to be intermittent and superficial. Although the research participants wrote frequently of receiving special treatment, they also accepted that they will always be considered as outsiders in the eyes of the local people.

To explicate further the paradoxical feelings of belonging/not belonging and this component of the GSD, selected ‘clips’ (or direct quotations) of the research participants’ descriptions of thoughts and/or experiences are presented in Table 5.5 to assist the reader in following the interpretive trail from the research participants’ words to the findings.

There is scant literature describing the expatriate experience in relation to paradoxical feelings of belonging/not belonging which was identified as a finding in the current research. This dearth of literature may be attributed to the fact that other expatriation researchers have not previously engaged in a similar approach, utilizing a phenomenological methodology. In this method, the researcher was interested in describing the meaning of the expatriates’ experience to enhance understanding of what it is like being immersed in another culture.

Table 5.5 - Linking Research Participants' Descriptions to Feelings of Belonging/Not Belonging and Component of GSD

Research Participant	Meaning Unit	'Clips' (Direct Quotations) from Research Participants' Descriptions of Thoughts and/or Experiences
Made	2	While I have always felt comfortable with Indonesians around me and they have certainly made me feel at home, I cannot say that I have ever felt ...Indonesian. [feelings of belonging/not belonging]
Sophia	1	As soon as I left the community, it was a rude reminder of my status as a foreigner. Once again I was seen as a foreigner. At this time, this was disturbing to me because ... I realized how superficial and how small reaching the acceptance (that I had built up in my head) actually was. [belonging/not belonging]
Made	4	I have mastered the Indonesian accent, to the extent that over the phone many people have mistaken me for an Indonesian. These are perhaps the only true moments. [of feeling that I truly belong]
Archer	6	Quite often staff would come to me with their complaints... [sounding board] I had the impression he was grooming me. [mentoring]
Kate Phelan	1	Few Westerners take part in this ritual [so I felt a sense of belonging].
Imron	3	I will always be an "outsider". [not belonging]
Martin Wyatt	12	Would they tell someone from outside like me what is really going on with this? – No. [not belonging to the inside]
Archer	12	Many people have a very narrow view of the world and I found myself continually explaining the outside world, even to people I had known for several years. [not belonging in a parochial world]
Tristan Philips	5	Little support/understanding among colleagues at the office unless one is fortunate to work in an office that has a pool of expats. [feelings of not belonging]

One exception is the research of Osland (2000 p.233) which reinforces the study findings extremely well with her conclusion that expatriates experienced “feeling at ease anywhere but belonging nowhere”. In addition, there are references in the extant literature about the expatriate’s ability to ‘fit in’ which is comparable to ‘belonging’ in the new cultural environment given that Barber (2004 p.131) defines ‘belong’ as being

able to “fit a particular environment”. ‘Fitting in’ is referred to in the literature in relation to cultural adjustment which is a process that all expatriates find themselves engaged in upon arriving in a novel culture at their overseas destination. For example, it is well documented that there is a learning process whereby the individual’s ability to ‘fit in’ and negotiate challenging aspects of the new culture develops over a period of time (Mendenhall et al. 2002; Selmer 1999; Zimmerman et al. 2003). Further, Selmer (2000 p.73) referred to a concept called ‘sociological adjustment’ which is about cultural specific skills and the expatriates’ ability to fit in “as measured by the amount of difficulty experienced in the management of everyday situations in the host culture”. Indeed, it is a complicated process that implies expatriates reach varying levels of ‘fitting in’ or ‘belonging’ thus giving rise to the sense of fitting in/not fitting in or belonging/not belonging at any point in time during the expatriation experience.

- *Feelings of Being Open to New Culture/Yet Holding on to Own Culture*

The paradox of experiencing feelings of being open to new culture/yet holding on to one’s own culture is portrayed in the following component of the GSD:

When being immersed in another culture one experiences feelings of being open to new cultural experiences; yet one holds on to one’s own national culture through comparisons while at work and in non-work situations.

All research participants’ descriptions were interpreted as being open to the new (Indonesian) culture, yet they described everyday experiences in which they compared or judged the Indonesian culture against the Canadian culture, recounting similarities and differences. Further, there were descriptions that depicted the Canadian expatriates

promptly reverting to behavioural patterns that are typical within the Canadian culture when faced with highly stressful situations. For example, one research participant, Thomas Austin, wrote about “fiercely” clinging to his own “cultural backpack”. Certainly, Thomas Austin was open to fully experiencing the new culture but even after three years in Indonesia he described feeling ‘held back’ by frequent feelings of bewilderment and confusion about the host culture. Other research participants consistently described their openness to the new culture, yet often looked to their home culture as a standard or benchmark in making sense of particular aspects of the host culture. For example, Batman reflected on the attitudes of the health care providers in determining that they were very comparable to the Canadian situation. Similarly, Batik, when invited to an Indonesian wedding ceremony that was to take place in its entirety between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m., instantly recalled the numerous Canadian weddings which involved a much larger timeframe. Indeed, Pak Jasiento’s wedding experience confirmed the differences between the Canadian custom of discussing the weather or chatting about the happy couple which did not happen at the Indonesian wedding he attended.

In another context, Justin Edwards compared the personal characteristics of Indonesians to Canadians while Martin Wyatt did so similarly in his written thoughts of differences about what ‘family’ means in the two countries. Justin Edwards elaborated about the differences in sheer numbers of relatives coming and going in one’s home is very different in Canada as compared to Indonesia. Again this experience illuminated what constitutes members of a family in Indonesia which was constantly compared to the Canadian situation.

In another example, Powell described his surprise that there were functionally illiterate persons in the Indonesian business context as this was not typical with comparable situations in Canada. Finally, Tristan Philips also made comparisons when he described his Indonesian office environment. He shared his thoughts that norms relating to time management and written documentation in particular were very different as compared to the Canadian scenario.

Earlier in this chapter, it was noted that expatriates often live paradoxical experiences because they are mediating between two cultures. The findings in regard to this component of the GSD confirm that research participants continuously compare what they are experiencing in the Indonesian culture to the Canadian context. This rich experience is very evident as the research participants compared various non-work and work situations between the two countries (Indonesia and Canada).

To further explain the paradoxical feelings of being open to new culture/yet holding on to one's own culture and this component of the GSD, selected 'clips' (or direct quotations) of the research participants' descriptions of thoughts and/or experiences are presented in Table 5.6 to assist the reader in following the interpretive trail from the words of research participants to the findings.

Table 5.6 - Linking Research Participants' Descriptions to Feelings of Being Open to New Culture/Yet Holding on to Own Culture and Component of GSD

Research Participant	Meaning Unit	'Clips' (Direct Quotations) from Research Participants' Descriptions of Thoughts and/or Experiences
Thomas Austin	1	I'm not really sure why I seem to cling to my own cultural backpack so fiercely or perhaps these feelings are normal. [open to new/yet holding on to own culture]
Batman	1	I think the Indonesian medical staff did all they could for Hari. At the same time they employed a somewhat elevated stance towards Tuti and I. This was not unlike cases I can recall my parents discussing in Canada years ago. [same yet different]
Batik	1	My presence was requested from 5 – 7 p.m. Interesting! The time was certainly different from those [weddings] we attend in Canada. My mind recalled the numerous weddings I had attended back home, the social aspect of the evening, sharing drinks with friends, and dancing until all hours. [being open to new, yet comparing to own culture]
Pak Jasiento	6	[The wedding] like most events [in Indonesia], when it's over, it's over. There was no hanging about making small talk... (that unique Canadian custom) or the happy couple. [comparison of rituals in both countries]
Justin Edwards	5	People in general are very friendly, quiet in nature and over polite in contrast to western culture. [comparison between new and home culture]
Martin Wyatt	3	Family means different things in [Indonesia] than it does in Canada. [comparison of meaning of 'family']
Justin Edwards	11	One really annoying thing to Westerners married to Indonesian spouses is having what seems like 1000 relatives in your house at all times. [holding on to Canadian perspective-that includes less 'relatives']
Powell	3	The two older women were relying on their neighbours to complete their loan applications. Without much tact, I asked why they were not filling out their own forms... much ado, I was informed that these women could not write!! [unusual compared to Canadian businesswomen]
Tristan Philips	3	The most outstanding difference in this Indonesian NGO culture – that of time management. [comparing differences]
Tristan Philips	4	Emphasis is placed on 'doing', whereas 'recording' the event is more of an afterthought. [difference in the Canadian culture which values doing and recording]

The expatriates' feelings of being open to the Indonesian culture, yet at the same time holding on to the Canadian culture are a primary component of the findings. Aspects of this are supported in the existing academic literature. For example, although one may be open to a new culture, one's own culture has an all-encompassing power and grasp because "a person's perceptions, attitudes, motivations, values, learning experiences and personality are all, to a very large extent, shaped by culture" (Forster 2000 p.64).

Of particular interest in the current study is Forster's contention that, usually, we do not think consciously about our culture, nor are we even aware of it (Oberg 1960) until we are in circumstances such as living and working in a different culture. Indeed, in the findings, there is demonstrated a heightened awareness of one's Canadian culture by the constant comparisons to the Indonesian culture having been made by the research participants.

Congruency with the extant literature is seen in relation to participants' hasty reversion to their familiar Canadian culture in cases of serious health crises as depicted in the findings. Even in cases of much less urgency, it is only normal to gravitate to the familiar. One might rationalize that this is why many Canadians overseas often seek out other members of their own culture to socialize with or why they find themselves frequently eating lunch at familiar fast food restaurants (Black & Gregersen 1999 p.4). Clearly, behaviour most associated with the Canadian culture is not far removed from the surface.

The findings indicated that the research participants were open to the new culture. This fits well with the assertion by Bird et al. (1999 p.164) who wrote “expatriates should be open” to the new culture. In regards to the working environment , other authors contended that those expatriates who contribute the most value to their organizations are usually those most open to the host culture and are motivated to experiment with different customs (Andreason 2003b; Black & Gregersen 1999; Ferraro 2002; Rushing & Kleiner 2003).

- *Feelings of Freedom/Restriction*

The paradox of having feelings of freedom/restriction is portrayed in the following component of the GSD:

When being immersed in another culture one's feelings of freedom are restricted through lack of comprehension of unwritten, unpredictable, contradictory and mystical cultural practices of hosts. What emerges is a constant cautiousness for one's own personal security.

The research participants expressed thoughts related to situations of experiencing paradoxical feelings of freedom/restriction. For example, Archer's experience of being immersed in another culture meant being fully occupied at a time when his life was restricted to activities involving the adjustment to the new working environment and learning the Indonesian language. In fact, it was so restricting for him that he described the situation as leaving “the monastery” when he finally, after some time in Indonesia, was able to get his freedom upon renting his own house. Archer described this regained independence (or freedom) as “getting his life back” meaning it was more in line with

how it would have been had he been living back home in Canada. In a similar vein of thought, Prunes described his immersion in another culture as analogous to a zoo animal where freedom/restriction is a way of life for the animals. He also described feeling like a “space alien” thereby, as with zoo animals, was never free from inquisitive gawking and invasion of privacy. Prunes even described his anticipated end of the assignment departure date as when he would make his “escape” (from the restriction) by returning home to Canada.

Following a break-in of his home, Archer’s safety was threatened yet his sense of security was enhanced knowing that his maid and her husband engaged in protecting his property following the break-in until his return. Another research participant, Justin Edwards, described the propensity for Indonesians to anger quickly thereby losing all control. The unpredictability of such behaviour left him “being careful to avoid it” for his own personal safety reasons. This reality gave rise to what might be described as a more cautious approach to living and working while being immersed in the Indonesian culture.

Both Martin Wyatt and Prunes described experiences with a ‘dukun’ (witch doctor) that were exceedingly difficult to believe even though they had each witnessed the mystical events. Martin Wyatt described his experience as “bizarre” and concluded “there might be a supernatural” while Prunes witnessed an event where a person was said to be “possessed” which he described as “ridiculous”. Further, Martin Wyatt also had other experiences that he felt most Westerners would describe as “hocus pocus”. For both

research participants, these experiences are not easily explained in a logical manner within a Canadian perspective.

Overall, the research participants described experiences where they had paradoxical feelings of freedom/restriction. The utilization of powerful words including: 'monastery', 'zoo' and 'space alien' emphasized the feelings of experiencing a freedom that is significantly restricted. Furthermore, the research participants described experiences (house break-in, propensity for violence, and mystical events) that brought a level of cautiousness and mystery (or fear of the unknown) to everyday living and working in Indonesia.

To illustrate further the paradoxical of feelings of freedom/restriction and this component of the GSD, 'clips' (or direct quotations) of the research participants' descriptions are presented in Table 5.7 to aid the reader in following the interpretive trail from research participants' descriptions to the findings.

The extant expatriation literature supports the paradoxical concept of freedom/restriction which is a finding in this study. For example, Osland (2000 p.233) referred to being freed from many of one's own cultural rules, yet at the same time being restricted by certain host country cultural norms, which must be conformed with if one is to function well in the foreign environment. Osland labeled this expatriate experience a mediation paradox.

Table 5.7 - Linking Research Participants' Descriptions to Feelings of Freedom/Restriction and Component of GSD

Research Participant	Meaning Unit	'Clips' (Direct Quotations) from Research Participants' Descriptions of Thoughts and/or Experiences
Archer	9	I got my life back. I had left the monastery. [freedom/restriction]
Prunes	6	I developed empathy for zoo animals I still carry [to] this day. I was a stranger and I felt like an alien – from somewhere in outer space. [freedom/restriction]
Archer	10	Not knowing where to contact me, Imah and her husband mounted a round the clock guard on [my]house ... I was amazed and grateful. [feelings of security]
Justin Edwards	13	It is quite amazing actually. I do not try to understand it, but I am careful to avoid it. [cautiousness]
Martin Wyatt	20	One of the most bizarre things that happened to me ... I swear the story is true ... although it might be hard to believe. [mystical cultural practices]
Prunes	9	The dukun told me that, indeed, she had been possessed. [mystical cultural practices]
Martin Wyatt	18	The vast majority of foreigners write it off as hokus pokus ... However, it's very important to the social order of things in village life. [mystical cultural practices]

Also in the findings, there are descriptions of witnessed mystical events that defy all logic according to the eyes/perspectives of Westerners. There is congruence in the literature whereby expatriates originating from a developed country will find Indonesia to be a place where there often is no apparent 'logic' to explain things that happen (Bacon 1999 p.12).

The findings involving personal safety concerns reinforce the extant literature as well. In the literature, it is argued that organizations should do more to support and or protect their expatriates (Britt 2002; Hunt 1996; Sim & Dixon 2004). Current findings show the research participants exhibit cautiousness in being careful to avoid potentially unsafe situations while being immersed in another culture. Furthermore, in response to

increasing frequency of terrorism, Britt (2002 p.21) reported expatriates “want their companies to provide them with security bulletins, contingency plans and emergency guidelines to keep them up to date about potentially adverse conditions” but few are getting this material. The end result is that a paradoxical feeling of freedom/restriction is experienced by expatriates who are immersed in another culture.

- *Feelings of Being Supported/Not Supported*

The paradox of having feelings of being supported/not supported is portrayed in the following component of the GSD:

The deficiency of home country organizational assistance fuels ones' feelings of disappointment and feelings of not being supported amidst the generosity, caring and community support from one's cultural guides and family in the new culture.

Research participant Tristan Philips described feelings of disappointment he experienced due to the dearth of support from his home organization. For example, Tristan Philip's paycheques were deposited in his Canadian bank account which made accessibility cumbersome and expensive. His feelings of disappointment came as a result of receiving no support from the head office in determining the best way to gain regular and cost effective access to this money. A second example Tristan Philips described was lack of assistance from head office in regards to obtaining an Indonesian work visa despite being “guaranteed” this support during his job interview.

The research participants described various forms of support provided by local persons as helpful and meaningful experiences when being immersed in the Indonesian culture. For

example, Archer described appreciating being groomed by a local cultural mentor at the NGO where he was employed. Further, Batik wrote of having received generous cultural guidance from local friends who wanted to ensure she was properly dressed for an important cultural activity. She described the process of tailor-made clothes as significantly different when compared with simply buying clothing off the rack as is typical in Canada.

Batman described the “magical” appearance of community caring and prayer support in the aftermath of a funeral (for his close friend’s young son) including that food “appeared out of nowhere”. Another research participant, Luke Gerard, described his experience of being supported and protected by children in the community when they followed him around in his day-to-day activities. Additionally, Thomas Austin was the recipient of local generosity and caring actions from the hospitable culture as guided by hosts’ desires to make him feel supported.

As well, Tristan Philips described his personal experience and appreciation for the Indonesian value systems regarding the importance of family. He wrote of the significant expectations in Indonesia that one places a high priority on family care and Tristan Philips felt well supported by this actuality.

Overall, these findings point to the fact that the research participants received a significant amount of support, in the form of caring and mentorship, from various types

of local hosts and communities. At the same time, the level of support from home country organizations was described as disappointing despite promises of support.

To further delineate the paradoxical feelings of being supported/not supported and this component of the GSD, selected ‘clips’ (or direct quotations) of the research participants’ descriptions of thoughts and/or experiences are presented in Table 5.8 to assist the reader in following the interpretive trail from research participants’ words to the findings.

These findings are confirmed in the extant expatriate literature. For example, Hutchings’ (2002 p.32) work on expatriates located in China indicated a scarcity of in-post support by the employing companies, which may be surprising considering the growing importance of China in today’s world economy. Other researchers agreed that most companies do not pay sufficient attention to aspects of expatriation including in-post support (Ashamalla 1998; Ferraro 2002; Hutchings 2005; Varma 2003). In addition, the in-post support should be ongoing throughout the overseas assignment (Edkins 1995; Jassawalla et al. 2004; Shaffer et al. 1999). The current findings concur on the value of in-post support that is ongoing but described it primarily as stemming from the generosity and caring of the local cultural community. There is little indication of ongoing in-post support extended to expatriates by the home organization.

In relation to ongoing support in the case of an expatriate with an accompanying family, the findings are also confirmed in the literature. Many researchers agreed that additional support necessitated by the family is an employer responsibility and includes assistance with housing, children’s education, passports and visas, health insurance, taxes, banking

and dual career implications (Peppas 2004). As also seen in the findings, Hutchings (2005) noted that many expatriate managers emphasized the importance of in-post support and Edkins (1995 p.36) added that head office mentoring support was imperative.

Table 5.8 - Linking Research Participants' Descriptions to Feeling of Being Supported/Not Supported and Component of GSD

Research Participant	Meaning Unit	'Clips' (Direct Quotations) from Research Participants' Descriptions of Thoughts and/or Experiences
Tristan Philips	6	...hassles regarding financial arrangements with the head office. The terms of the position I accepted were that I had a Canadian Bank account to receive biweekly paycheques. It is up to me to figure out how to live here and access that money. [not supported by head office]
Tristan Philips	6	Due to a lapse in head office administration with official Government documents/agreements, I have been forced to find alternatives for a working visa that was guaranteed during the job interview. [not supported by head office]
Archer	7	I also liked the idea of being groomed. [support from local cultural mentor]
Batik	2	My friends decided that I should not attend in my Western clothes...measurements were taken, and a few days later, there appeared ... new Javanese clothing. [support from local cultural guides]
Batman	4	The focus was on helping Tuti get back to normal. (local community support, generosity and caring]
Luke Gerard	5	The number of children who faithfully trooped after me as I headed to the MCK -ostensibly to ensure my welfare. [local community support]
Thomas Austin	3	Everywhere I went I saw the progress of eating and disappearing food being closely monitored as it was made sure that there was more than enough for me. [local support and generosity]
Tristan Philips	8	As family is highly valued here, it is rather expected that one would be absent from work in order to fulfil obligations of that nature. I have truly enjoyed this value system, allowing me to be present for my wife's doctor appointments throughout pregnancy and delivery of our baby.[community support for family]
Pak Jasiento	7	Our helpful local staff was able to advise us about the expectations and customs concerning acceptance or regrets for these invitations. [support from local cultural guides]

While home organization support is important, the social and work relationships with local host nationals are also a central source of support for expatriates in navigating their way through an unfamiliar cultural environment (Shim & Paprock 2002). The findings clearly reinforce the existing literature in this regard. They also show that expatriates value non-work related support in addition to traditional work related support. This support is often supplied to expatriates by host country nationals or by fellow expatriates at the foreign location (Hutchings 2005). Further, Shaffer's (1998) research pointed to the need for HR practitioners to address non-work related aspects in addition to the traditional work-related aspects. The current research finding would also vouch for enhanced focus of support by HR practitioners.

- *Feelings of Being Unchanged/Changed*

The paradox of having feelings of being Unchanged/Changed is portrayed in the following component of the GSD:

One's personal changes may not be recognized by others who perceive one as being unchanged; yet one's rewarding transformation of living and working while being immersed in another culture is cherished, shared with others and memorable.

The research participants described uniquely rich and memorable experiences where they gained cultural knowledge and thus experienced feelings of being changed in meaningful ways. For example, Imron, from his experience of attending weekly religious meetings on Islamic philosophy, felt he had gained insight into dimensions of Islam which are rarely presented in conventional writings. He described his learning as being linked with enhancing understanding of Indonesian culture in a special way unique to and different

from other Westerners. It is interesting that Justin Edwards mentioned many negative aspects of living and working in Indonesia but still described himself as “lucky”.

Similarly, another research participant, Luke Gerard, wrote of his growth and the personal changes he experienced from living in a village where no one spoke English nor had ever seen someone like him, except on TV.

Another research participant, Powell, detailed the experience of witnessing two “fundamentally illiterate” older women learning the joys of signing their own name for the first time ever. Powell described this experience as having “all the earmarks of a debutante ball” with the women wearing smiles “bigger than their faces”. For Powell, this was a treasured and memorable experience that changed his perspective and stimulated his desire to share it with others. He described feeling “disappointed” that it was not “captured on video tape” so that he could share it with others. A strong desire to share experiences with others also was felt by Batik. She described how she could not wait until she was able to share (via writing) her Indonesian wedding experiences with her friends back home in Canada.

Luke Gerard’s pride in sharing his story is evident when he described his rewarding transformation resulting from being so completely immersed in the Indonesian culture and surviving it! Another research participant, Made, implied a sense of personal transformation whereby he had internalized the Indonesian culture leaving him changed, yet he was going to return to Canada where he may still be viewed by others as being unchanged.

Overall, these findings reveal participants' significant feelings of being Unchanged/Changed amidst treasured and memorable experiences while being immersed in the Indonesian culture. They wrote of their strong desire to remember personal experiences in order to share them with important others back home.

To explain further the paradoxical feelings of being Unchanged/Changed and this component of the GSD, selected 'clips' (or direct quotations) of the research participants' descriptions of thoughts and/or experiences are presented in Table 5.8 to assist the reader in following the interpretive trail from research participants' words to the findings.

Table 5.9 - Linking Research Participants' Descriptions to Feelings of Being Unchanged/Changed and Component of GSD

Research Participant	Meaning Unit	'Clips' (Direct Quotations) from Research Participants' Descriptions of Thoughts and/or Experiences
Imron	2	I felt that I was getting an insight/education about Islam as well as about Indonesia that very few Westerners ever experience. [being changed]
Justin Edwards	14	I feel lucky to be working and living in an Indonesian society, and I do not feel that my immersion has been a burden. [cherished]
Luke Gerard	1	I was entirely on my own – full-scale immersion in a village where no one spoke nary a word of English and where many people told me they had only ever seen a white person on the television. [transformation/changed]
Powell	4	I am disappointed to this day that the whole event was not captured on video tape. [memorable for sharing]
Batik	4	I could not wait to write and share this wedding experience with my friends back home. [sharing]
Luke Gerard	2	The feeling of 'if you could only see me now' was all but overwhelming. [change not recognized by others]
Made	6	... I know I will miss the culture once I return to Canada. Perhaps that is a sign of immersion as well: when its become a part of you. [unchanged/changed]

The current findings are supported in the extant literature. For example, most expatriates reminisce fondly about the cherished and memorable experiences of their life overseas (Richards 1996). Also, the fact that expatriates tend to be proud of their accomplishments is evident in the findings and supported in the literature. For example, Osland's (2000 p.228) research findings describe the expatriates' "pride in succeeding at difficult work assignments, making it 'on their own', feeling 'special', and taking pride in their ability to acculturate and adapt to change".

In the literature it was argued by Osland (2000, p.237) that "companies need to understand that living abroad may be the most significant experience of many expatriates' lives". The findings in the current research confirm the notion that expatriate life is a treasured and life-changing time for the expatriate. Indeed, the overseas experience changes the expatriate and organizations need to recognize this especially upon their return home (Osland 2000 p.237).

As indicated by the findings, there is little doubt the rewarding experience of living and working while being immersed in another culture will be missed and remembered fondly by expatriates upon their return home. This supports the work of Osland (2000 p.228) who stated: "the expatriate's return is often marked by a sense of loss at leaving behind the magical charm and fulfillment of the sojourn".

5.3 Other literature related to the findings

Despite the fact that earlier research on expatriation has been completed on a broad scope, the meaning of living and working while being immersed in another culture has not been studied to the extent that it has been in the current research. The study focused on the “whole” experience of what it is like for persons working and living as sojourners, away from their home country as opposed to focusing on portions of the experience as has been documented previously in the literature. The focus of the research was on uncovering the meaning of the lived experience of being immersed in another culture utilizing a phenomenological approach; a method not found in other studies on expatriates. Even though each research participant described seemingly unique experiences of their individual lives in Indonesia in response to the interrogatory statement, common themes were apparent. Bearing these factors in mind, the purpose of the following section is to elaborate further on significant aspects of the findings in relation to the existing literature as reviewed in Chapter Two.

The study findings must be considered through the lens of the demographic information which was collected from each of the research participants. Of particular note is the relatively lengthy period of tenure in Indonesia of the research participants as compared with existing literature that described expatriate assignments as being often of a short term nature (Katz & Seifer 1996; Sims & Schraeder 2004; Tung 1982). A long-term overseas posting has been described in recent literature as an assignment that is normally between three and five years in duration (De Cieri et al. 1991; Peppas 2004; Tung 1987).

Thus, the reader can readily ascertain that the research participants in the current study are well-seasoned expatriates.

In addition, the research participants, as employees of various NGOs, are generally less likely to have been ‘forced’ to their posting by transfer, which is common with multinational corporations. Instead, they may be considered to be “self-selecting” expatriates (Richardson & McKenna 2002). Thus, these expatriates may be more open to the experience of being immersed in another culture and the subsequent challenging adventures therein. Also, it follows that these research participants may be ‘self-selecting’ when it comes to returning home as compared to having had a definite timeframe for the overseas assignment which, frequently, also is the case of expatriates employed by multinational corporations. These realities are important considerations for reflection by the reader in relation to the overall research findings.

The majority of scholarly research on expatriation has been limited to numerous studies about the international human resources management function in relation to the individual components of the expatriation cycle including: selection, training, support, adjustment and repatriation (Bonache et al. 2001; Osland 2000; Shim & Paprock 2002; Tung 1988; Varner & Palmer 2002). In the present study, the research participants described personal experiences in relation to the training, support and adjustment components of the expatriation cycle which have been related to the literature. On the other hand, no references to ‘selection’ were made by any of the research participants. This is not surprising given the research participants went through the selection process

for their positions some time ago and, thus, now might be somewhat removed from that stage of their personal expatriation process. As well, there is little reference to the ‘repatriation’ component of the expatriation cycle. In fact, none of the research participants mentioned the word “repatriation”; however, there were references to ‘going home’. For example, leaving Indonesia was included in the written thoughts of Prunes who wrote “there was no escape – for at least 8 more weeks”. Similarly, Pak Jasiento mentioned leaving Indonesia while describing his experience about an “obligation on our part to make a financial contribution, preferably before we departed Indonesia”. The emphasis is placed on ‘leaving’ Indonesia but with no explicit thoughts or feelings about subsequent arrival in Canada and getting back into the Canadian way of life which is considered a critical portion of the repatriation process in the literature. Perhaps this came about because the interrogatory question which was the focus of the investigation was concerned with the experience of being immersed in another culture, not about what it would be like to go home. However, the topic could be a direction for a future study.

A well-known entry in the expatriate literature is that of the Black et al. (1991) model of international adjustment (Lee 2005). The model was established as a vehicle to predict the likelihood of successful expatriate assignments where one can look at separate concepts of the experience and use these concepts in predictions of success. There are examples in the findings that relate to the Black et al. model including explicit references by research participants in regard to previous experience, support, training and logistical assistance. Many of the research participants described their personal situations in terms similar to the four aspects of the Black et al. model but the focus was not on one or

another aspect separately. Hutchings (2002) said that support was perhaps the most important part of the expatriation process. Further, Andreason's (2003b) work referred specifically to the need for social support in learning appropriate behaviour for new cultural settings. Thus, it was noteworthy that support is prominent in the findings demonstrating congruency with the literature. Also, it is interesting to note that the majority of research participants in the present study more frequently chose to describe personal experiences of being immersed in another culture in relation to non-work situations. However, some research participants also described work-related experiences thus highlighting the significance of the "whole" (work and non-work) experience as lived by the research participants, not separate pieces of the whole.

Adler (1991) described cross-cultural adjustment as a four-phase process which is depicted by a u-shaped curve (Lee 2005) including: honeymoon phase, culture shock, adjustment, and mastery. This process is well documented in the literature (Deresky 2002; Ferraro 2002; Hodgetts & Luthans 2000; Montabaur 2002) and was supported by the research findings. For example, Prunes said "for the first few weeks, I was in heaven. ... I was truly in heaven. I loved everything about the situation ... I was exhilarated". This quotation is similar to what one might describe during the first phase known as the 'honeymoon' phase. The widely known phenomenon called culture shock (Oberg 1960) is the second phase. It is a significant concept in the expatriate literature and is recognized in the description of the research participant, Prunes, who said "after a few weeks of this however, I began to feel less satisfied with myself. ... I was frustrated, angry, and constantly annoyed with everything". The third stage, called 'adjustment'

could be identified in the following description by Prunes, “these feelings lasted for a couple of weeks and then ... I began to relax again ...”. Finally, the last stage is called ‘mastery’ and is simply the time in the cycle when the expatriate is well-adjusted in the new culture and can function on an even keel. Prunes indicated his feelings at this stage when he described enjoying the “learning and the coping”. So, one can see the depiction of the expatriation cycle in the words of the participants of this study.

The findings also add to the research completed by Osland (1995a; 1995b; 2000; 1999) who claimed that paradoxes were common experiences of expatriates although rarely have they been studied empirically. Four of Osland’s (2000) nine expatriate paradoxes were supported by the research findings. These similar paradoxes are presented in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10 - Similar Expatriate Paradoxes

(Osland 2000)	Similar	Current Research Findings
Powerful/Powerless	→	Feelings of Powerfulness/Powerlessness
Positive regard/Caution about being taken advantage of by host country nationals	→	Feelings of Freedom/Restriction
At ease anywhere/ Belonging nowhere	→	Feelings of Belonging/Not Belonging
Free/ Not free of cultural norms	→	Being Open to New Culture/Yet Holding on to Own Culture

Five additional expatriate paradoxes (Caught between headquarters/Host country demands; Perceiving both cultural stereotypes/Individual differences; Relinquishing/Strengthening values; Macro/Micro worldview; Representing the ideal/Reality of one’s company) identified by Osland (2000) were different from the

present research findings. However, four other expatriate paradoxes (Feelings of Understanding/Not Understanding; Feelings of Discomfort/Comfort; Feelings Supported/Not Supported; Feelings of being Unchanged/Changed) were identified in the current research but not found in literature.

It is important to note that, “the concept of balancing both worlds” is an experience discerned in the findings of a pilot study by Russell (2004) which spoke to the paradoxical experience of ‘being together/being apart’. In other words: being torn between family and friends who are at home while at the same time working and dreaming for the future at the overseas location. The concept of balancing both worlds in being together/being apart’, from the researcher’s perspective, is a powerful paradox lived all-at-once where one is constantly missing/not missing home. Thoughts are often of home. Finding foods or items reminiscent of home are welcomed as home is missed. Yet the reasons for choosing to be away from home are constantly reviewed, knowing the experiences gained from the international experience are those that one would never experience at home. It is a matter of living and choosing value priorities. Perhaps due to the inclusion of seasoned expatriates as research participants in the current study, this expatriate paradox was not explicitly expressed in the findings. However, an example in the findings which relates is Archer’s assertion that “one cannot get all Western commodities ... but the basics exist”. Further, the mention of friends back home such as “I could not wait to write and share this wedding experience with my friends back home” (Batik) could be taken as speaking to the concept of ‘balancing both worlds’.

In conclusion, there is reference in the extant literature of the multi-layered nature of another culture (Forster 2000; Peppas 2004; Trompenaars 1996). Researchers, in published articles, have utilized vivid illustrative terminology such as: culture is like ‘layers of an onion’ or ‘an iceberg’ to explain the surface and below-the-surface aspects of culture (described more fully in Table 2.6). This particular literature relates well to the experience described by research participant, Sophia, who wrote, “I think that there are so many layers of [Indonesian] culture. It would be impossible to fulfill all of the criteria of being ... Indonesian and thus be fully immersed in culture”. Similarities with the literature have been addressed, quality criteria for evaluation of qualitative research are also important to note.

5.4 Quality Criteria

Reliability and validity, as the quality criteria for *quantitative* research, are well established and accepted by researchers (Lincoln 1995). More recently, in qualitative research the question has been “How do we separate good research from poor research across disciplines and traditions?” (Lincoln 1995 p.276) “The goal of rigour in qualitative research is to accurately study research participants’ experiences” (Streubert & Carpenter 1999 p.28). Thus, establishing quality criteria for qualitative researchers in order to gain acceptance in the academic environment meant rigour in the work was important.

The development of quality criteria for qualitative research is associated with Guba (1992) who developed criteria based on credibility, dependability, confirmability and

transferability. These characteristics help to develop to establish rigour within qualitative research.

Credibility is a term that concerns the participants' realities and how well the researcher matches these realities. Streubert & Carpenter (1999 p.29) wrote: "one of the best ways to establish credibility is through [significant] engagement with the subject matter". It must be noted that the researcher has had previous experiences with being immersed in another culture in various countries and has been involved with developing a program of research in this area. Thus credibility of this research is assured.

Dependability relates to the appropriateness and quality of the research process. Buoy (2002 p.110) argued that dependability refers to "documentation of the logic of process and method decisions". Documentation is the best evidence that the criterion of dependability or consistency has been met because "qualitative research emphasizes the uniqueness of the human situation so that variation rather than identical repetition is to be expected" (Morse & Field 1995 p.144). The researcher carried out and has presented in this thesis a methodological process of data description collection, and data analysis/synthesis which ensures dependability and consistency.

Confirmability "is considered a neutral criterion for measuring the [rigour] of qualitative research. If a study demonstrates credibility, auditability and fittingness, the study is also said to possess confirmability" (Streubert & Carpenter 1999 p.329). It concerns the ability to track data sources and make use of such data (Guba & Lincoln 1999). In the

current study, confirmability was achieved as a result of the lengthy data collection process with each research participant. The reader saw demonstrated in Chapter Four and this chapter the interpretative trail from research participants' words to presentations of findings. As well the researcher received methodological guidance from a methodological expert and had consultation with other researchers in order to increase the certainty of achieving confirmability in the study.

Transferability is "a term used in qualitative research to demonstrate the probability that the research findings have meaning to others in similar situations. Transferability also is called fittingness" (Streubert & Carpenter 1999 p.332). Buoy (2002 p.110) said this relates to the "transferability ... [or 'applicability' using the term of Morse & Field (1995)] ... of judgments on the part of those who may wish to apply the study to their own situation". Other expatriate managers not involved in this study as research participants, were able to relate to the experiences of the research participants as well the findings have been related to the extant literature (fittingness). This strongly suggests that the criterion of transferability has been achieved in this study; therefore, quality criteria have been addressed and fulfilled yet one must always consider the limitations of the study as well.

5. 5 Limitations of the study

The researcher has considered the following limitations of the study. First, the findings may not be considered universal, as they represent the meaning of being immersed in

another culture for the participants of this research as interpreted by the researcher. However, the purpose of this research is descriptive rather than predictive so the results might be considered exploratory rather than transferable (Guba 1992). It is anticipated the research findings will resonate with, and interest, other expatriate managers of different nationalities living and working in various cultural environments around the world.

Depending on the paradigmatic perspective of the reader, another limitation of the study might be a concern that the researcher had previous professional acquaintance with many of the research participants. However, in line with Giorgi (1975), for the purposes of this study it was important for the researcher to have had this contact with the participants for it is helpful in identifying and gaining access to a sufficient number of research participants who fit the inclusion criteria. In Giorgi's (1975) phenomenological method, the researcher is encouraged to have prior association with the research participants as this acquaintance allows for purposeful sampling and, therefore, an effective selection process.

Another limitation of the study might be the fact that the data was gathered in the form of written descriptions via email rather than via qualitative interviews. However, this technique proved to be very effective in providing the researcher access to the research participants, who were half way around the world and for the research participants to respond at times convenient to them. This data collection strategy, enhanced the research participants' freedom and opportunity for preparation of well thought out and articulate descriptions. Further, it was not possible to do face-to-face interviews which would have

been very costly and a logistical nightmare with the researcher residing in Canada and the majority of the research participants living in various regions of Indonesia. The method of data gathering proved to be very conducive to accomplishing the research objectives in an efficient manner, which is certainly an important consideration given the time constraints associated with doing doctoral research. Thus, the limitations of the study have been considered and are not perceived to have impacted negatively on the method or findings of this research.

5.6 Summary

This chapter has discussed the findings presented in Chapter Four in light of the meaning units or actual words used by the research participants and in relation to the literature review found in Chapter Two.

As a main part of the discussion process, each of the eight components (paradoxes) of the central finding of the study (the general structural description) was reflected upon and significant aspects were addressed accordingly. In addition, findings identified from the research participants' descriptions, though not explicitly mentioned in the general structural description, were elaborated on in relation to the literature. Limitations of the study and quality criteria were also addressed.

Chapter Six follows and is used to present the conclusions of the research study and includes recommendations for future research, practice and education relating to expatriate managers.

CHAPTER 6

RECOMMENDATIONS, REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Due to a lapse in head office administration with official Government documents/agreements, I have been forced to find alternatives for a working visa that was guaranteed during the job interview.

(Research participant-Tristan Philips)

6.1 Overview

Chapter Six, the concluding chapter of this dissertation, begins with a review of the research and description of how the research purpose has been fulfilled. Contributions to the expatriate body of knowledge including recommendations for research, practice and education as well as reflections and conclusions are included.

6.2 Review of Research

The researcher was intrigued and inspired to complete this research after reading literature which described the reality that expatriate managers “have, and their management involves, issues and problems that go beyond those of most other employees ... yet we know less about expatriates and the management of expatriates than we do about other employees” (Brewster 2002 p.128). The lack of knowledge may be due partially to the fact that the subjective nature of the expatriate experience has not been researched adequately (Osland 2000), as scholars have relied on positivistic research methodologies (Landis & Wasilewski 1999; Mendenhall 1999). Further, a serious

concern of organizations and a reason for academic research attention as addressed in the current thesis, is the recognition that “ineffective expatriate performance and premature returns have been found to relate primarily to an inability to adjust to the foreign environment” (Andreason 2003a p.42). The statement brought the researcher to question, whether it was really the result of expatriates not being able to adjust (a victim-blaming approach), or whether the organizational managers simply do not understand what the experience is like for expatriates to be immersed in another culture (a blind-leading-the-blind approach); the latter being a case of organizational support inadvertently not being made available. Underlying the dilemma is the concern as to the degree to which organizational managers actually understand the ‘lived experience’ of expatriates. Further, the research topic was seen as an important area of inquiry because of the expanding growth in globalization; growth which requires an ever-increasing worldwide supply of expatriates engaged in international activities and overseas living experiences which increase contact between different cultures. The researcher’s intent in conducting this study was to contribute to the growing body of expatriation literature.

6.2.1 Research Purpose

Consequently, using Giorgi’s descriptive phenomenological method (Giorgi 1970; 1985; Giorgi & Giorgi 2003), the specific purpose of the research was to establish a general structural description (or meaning) of being immersed in another culture in an effort to enhance understanding of what the ‘lived experience’ is like for expatriate managers. The general structural description is the central feature of the research.

Table 6.1 - General Structural Description (Central Findings)

Feelings of Understanding/Not Understanding
Despite cultural training, previous experiences and feelings of cultural knowing and understanding, being immersed in another culture inevitably surfaces potential feelings of embarrassment, anxiety, and uncertainty with not understanding.
Feelings of Discomfort/Comfort
When being immersed in another culture, one feels discomfort with the trial and error processes that enhance one's learning and avoidance of cultural errors. Adjustment and comfort occur amidst inescapable feelings of alienation, irritability and unhappiness. These feelings of discomfort are countered somewhat by cultural comfort and knowledge of 'going home'.
Feelings of Powerfulness/Powerlessness
Foreigner status and feelings of powerfulness are present when being immersed in another culture; however, observable differences give rise to feelings of powerlessness, vulnerability, self-consciousness and being judged by others.
Feelings of Belonging/Not Belonging
Expatriates have dispiriting feelings of belonging, yet never really belonging, when being immersed in another culture. The feelings arise amidst the reality and contentment of special treatment by hosts and home when - sought after for sharing one's opinion, <i>utilized</i> as a sounding board, and mentored yet knowing and feeling one will not ever truly belong.
Feelings of Being Open to New Culture/Yet Holding on to Own Culture
When being immersed in another culture one experiences feelings of being open to new cultural experiences; yet one holds on to one's own national culture through comparisons while at work and in non-work situations.
Feelings of Freedom/Restriction
When being immersed in another culture one's feelings of freedom are restricted through lack of comprehension of unwritten, unpredictable, contradictory and mystical cultural practices of hosts. What emerges is a constant cautiousness for one's own personal security.
Feelings of Being Supported/Not Supported
The deficiency of home country organizational assistance fuels ones' feelings of disappointment, and feelings of not being supported amidst the generosity, caring and community support from one's cultural guides and family in the new culture.
Feelings of Being Unchanged /Changed
One's personal changes may not be recognized by others who perceive one as being unchanged; yet one's rewarding transformation of living and working while being immersed in another culture is cherished, shared with others and memorable.

Giorgi's concept, found to be a new methodology applicable to expatriation studies, was originally developed within the field of human sciences in the discipline of psychology.

When related to international human resource management generally, and the issue of

expatriates specifically, the methodology created a unique interpretative approach to investigating the research question; viz., what is the general structural description (or meaning) of being immersed in another culture for expatriate managers?

The purpose of the research was fulfilled utilizing Giorgi's data analysis/synthesis process in the development of the general structural description synthesized from 15 research participants' written descriptions. The general structural description was analyzed and the researcher identified paradoxical ways of being which may be experienced by persons as they are immersed in another culture. The central findings are presented in Table 6.1.

The existence and reality of paradoxical ways of being contribute to the everyday challenges faced in the lives of expatriates, however, the complexities are not understood by those who select, train and support them; so recommendations are in order.

6.3 Contributions and Recommendations

In an effort to enhance understanding, the study was designed to explore expatriate managers' perspectives of the phenomenon of being immersed in another culture by identifying the reality of people's lived experiences. The researcher expects that the understanding may lead to improvements in human resource management practices as well as strategies for facilitating and supporting the expatriation experience, thereby benefiting both the expatriate and the home organizations that employ them.

The research findings have implications which apply for a wide range of interests in the expatriation field including those of academic researchers and educators, human resource management professionals, senior managers and expatriates of the past, present and future. Included in the next section are contributions and recommendations for expatriate research, human resource management practice and education.

6.3.1 Expatriate Research

Mendenhall (1999), in noting that the expatriate literature was composed primarily of quantitative studies, called for other types of methodologies to be utilized in order to advance the literature. The approach undertaken in the current research has responded to Mendenhall's call and, in the process, has contributed a wide range of specific examples of expatriates' lived experiences.

The research contributes to the literature in the NGO sector by involving research undertaken with participants who are experienced employees of NGOs. Although Anderson (2001) studied expatriate managers working for NGOs, much of the extant literature that was found related to expatriates working for multinational corporations. Therefore, it is recommended that further research involving NGOs be pursued, especially considering NGOs have seen significant expansion in numbers of expatriates over recent decades. As well, NGOs arguably have the longest history in sending persons overseas (Suzuki 1998).

In the current study, the perspective was that all expatriate concepts are interrelated and, consequently, focus on the whole experience of understanding the ‘lived experience’ as opposed to breaking it into independent pieces for study. The researcher recommends that more studies on the lived experience of being immersed in another culture are necessary to further advance understanding about the phenomenon. One cannot know all there is to know about the meaning of individuals’ lived experiences as a result of one research study; meanings change for people from moment to moment and there will always be something new to uncover and practical models to develop.

The successful utilization of Giorgi’s descriptive phenomenological method has proven to be a significant qualitative methodological contribution to the field of expatriation research. The researcher was able to generate meaning of the thoughts and feelings of the research participants based on their personal descriptions of being immersed in another culture. Further studies could be undertaken using Giorgi’s method with expatriates of various other categories and organizations. Thus, it is recommended that more inquiry be undertaken with expatriates of various home and host countries and with different expatriating organizations (multinational corporations or public sector). Studies with these foci will assist in the emergence of additional findings by involving other nationalities and cultures. Further, the researcher suggests that further studies should be directed toward asking persons from developing countries (such as those in Asia and Africa) to describe situations they have experienced when living and working in developed countries. This is relevant research given that east-to-west expatriation is

becoming more common and the extant literature is almost entirely of the west-to-east category.

The research participants' demographic data implied the likelihood that many were 'self-selecting' expatriates as opposed to 'transfers-in' or 'forced transfers'. The latter occurs when individuals have little choice but to transfer overseas in order to maintain their careers with a particular company. With a dearth of literature regarding 'self-selecting' expatriates, a contribution by the current research was made in this respect. It is suggested that it would be useful to study further self-selecting expatriates, as these expatriates are likely to be motivated by "the search for adventure or excitement, or from the prospect of opportunities not available at home" (Richards 1996 p.562). Such expatriates may be more willing and prepared for the challenges involved in overseas assignments and, therefore, may report other aspects about the experience of being immersed in another culture which can illuminate the extant research.

The current research extends Osland's (2000) work with the emergence of additional paradoxical ways of being for expatriates immersed in another culture. A recommendation for future study is to focus specifically on each of the paradoxical experiences portrayed in the current research. The specific experiences are: Feelings of Understanding/Not Understanding; Feelings of Discomfort/Comfort; Feelings of Powerfulness/Powerlessness; Feelings of Belonging/Not Belonging; Feelings of Being Open to New Culture/Yet Holding on to Own Culture; Feelings of Freedom/Restriction; Feelings of Being Supported/Not Supported; and Feelings of Being Unchanged/Changed

while being immersed in another culture. Focusing solely on paradoxical experiences would enhance further the understanding of what it is like to live and work amidst contrary ways of being.

A contribution to the literature was made from the current research in relation to the expatriates' experiences in the non-work environment. Although not by design, they occurred because some research participants chose to describe their personal experience of being immersed in another culture in non-work situations instead of those from work situations. Further research should continue study in this vein, given the understandable importance of the non-work environment to the research participants in the current study.

Typically, the extant literature contains research relying on the perspectives of human resource professionals and senior managers in investigating, for example, such aspects as improving the recruitment and selection process. Neilson (2002 p.217) recommended in his thesis that research designed "to include expatriates themselves" would be useful. Thus, the current research contributes to the literature by involving the expatriates' perspective which provides new knowledge of what it is like being immersed in another culture.

It is well documented in the extant literature that family members of expatriates have a huge influence on the overseas assignment; an influence which when negative, frequently results in an early return home (Peppas 2004). Thus, it would be useful to do further research involving expatriate spouses and children as research participants. In fact,

focusing on teenaged children in senior high school might be useful particularly considering this age group tends to be a challenge to understand even in less stressful times and circumstances.

The research participants in this study were very experienced expatriates with an average of seven and half years of employment on overseas assignments. It is believed that many expatriates, perhaps the majority, work on short term assignments of approximately two years. Thus, a future investigation using the same methodology could be focused on expatriates who have between six months and two years of continuous overseas experience. What makes this potential study especially intriguing is that ‘culture shock’ is often experienced in the short term (Sims & Schraeder 2004 p.74) so a study including this demographic would be relevant.

In the current study, the research participants placed emphasis on ‘leaving’ Indonesia but there were no explicit thoughts or feelings about the overall experience of returning to Canada. This came about because the ‘interrogatory statement’ was focused on the experience of being immersed in another culture, not about what it would be like to go home or to repatriate. However, repatriation is a vital component in the expatriation cycle. It is often discussed in the expatriate literature (Ashamalla 1998; Hutchings 2002; Jassawalla et al. 2004; Zvara & Singh 2004)) as being as stressful as the overseas experience itself. There is an important role for organizations to play in ensuring that repatriation goes well for the expatriate which, of course, also benefits the organization. Thus, it is recommended that a research study focusing solely on returned expatriates as

research participants, including those who have prematurely returned, would be illuminating and may provide important new knowledge. It is proposed that studying the *lived experience of repatriates* utilizing Giorgi's phenomenological methodology would yield new and exciting findings that would enhance human resource professionals' understanding, and change practices relating to repatriation.

6.3.2 Human Resource Management Practice

International human resource management theory and management practices continue to develop as a critical profession in light of increasing globalization, especially when one considers the economic growth in huge countries like China and India. Combined with an increased understanding of lived experiences of expatriates, the growth and development of IHRM are an excellent opportunity for human resource professionals to assist expatriates who may be overwhelmed by the paradoxes and challenges involved in being immersed in another culture so different from their own.

The research findings have expanded on those of Osland (1995a p.211) who, over a decade ago, recommended that "HR departments should respond to expatriate questions and concerns immediately. Some departments ignore requests by out-of-sight expatriates until the volume is cranked up to howls of outrage". Indeed, one of Osland's research participants said: "Somebody at headquarters needs to know it's tough to work abroad" (Osland 1995a p.210).

Generally, current human resource practices relating to expatriation are centred on the selection procedures along with training activities for expatriates. However, it is apparent, that expatriates are left largely to their own means and devices during the overseas assignment itself and, in fact, seemingly are forgotten until repatriation time. This is not an acceptable situation. Thus, it is recommended that human resource professionals make frequent and regular contact with expatriates who are working overseas to find out what the experience is like for them. They need to listen and support the expatriates given the reality of extreme paradoxical experiences of those when immersed in another culture. Again, the recommendation reinforces Osland's (1995a p.211) view that "the only way to know who needs extra help or attention is to call and check on their progress. ... Companies should not assume that expatriates are doing well overseas". Yet it is not about 'seeking to find that someone is NOT doing well', but seeking to understand what the employee's experience is like and what would be helpful to make the extremes more manageable. All persons will know what is best for them and be more confident in their work because expatriates do not wish their experiences to be harshly judged or unnecessarily criticized, especially by others who are not living the experience or seemingly understanding the experience.

Frequently, it is only when the expatriate assignment ends in failure that a problem is recognized, let alone acknowledged. Furthermore, the expatriate is often blamed and the situation interpreted as a rationale for improving selection procedures. Instead, human resource professionals should learn from those living the experience and assist them with the needs as expatriates understand and articulate them rather than focusing on the needs

that human resource professionals themselves feel are important. Simply asking expatriates to share their experiences with fellow company employees will have a positive impact even if only because expatriates love to tell stories (Osland 1995a). In this way, human resource professionals will gain enhanced understanding of the expatriate experience which may serve to improve or alter their strategies in selecting, preparing and supporting expatriates during the overseas assignment.

The lived experience of being immersed in another culture is a highly individualistic experience and employees' experiences must be understood in order to enact change to enhance their lived personal and professional experiences in situations. Standardized strategies are often used at present; however, they may be studied more easily and improved by use of regular, qualitative research methods. Persons in the home organization need to become more understanding and more aware of their own shortcomings in their relationship with expatriates. Shaffer et al. (1999) recommended that a well-chosen mentor, who has experienced the phenomenon, can assist greatly in the overall well-being and productiveness of the expatriate. Thus, a mentor should be assigned to each overseas employee; a useful, practical and relatively cheap alternative to present-day practice.

What the current research did show is that, to feel understood, it is significant for the expatriate "to experience the fact that one's personal meaning is shared by another" (Howell 1998 p.15). Meaning takes place through entering into the world of the person and understanding that world (Howell 1998). Thus, in order to discover the meaning of

being immersed in another culture, with expatriate employees, the human resource professional may ask expatriate employees on a regular basis: “Please help me to understand what it is like for you. What strategies might we try to make things better for you?” The responses by the expatriates to these kinds of queries will guide in the provision of appropriate human resource practices for expatriates and the longer term development of the discipline. This supports and extends the IHRM processes, and fits with Osland’s (1995a p.221) argument that “if companies understand what the experience means to expatriates, they can select them more carefully, prepare them better beforehand, support them in a more effective manner while they are overseas”.

It is helpful to bear in mind that “most HR managers have never lived abroad, and some mistakenly treat expatriates as if they were no different from domestic employees” (Osland 1995a p.xv). Thus, it is believed by the researcher that enhanced understanding emerging from this research study has the potential to alter the way that human resource professionals choose to deal with expatriates.

6.3.3 Education

A review by the researcher of textbooks on international management (Deresky 2002; Hodgetts et al. 2006) and managing human resources (Evans et al. 2002; Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy 1998) resulted in significant sections dedicated to expatriation being found. Noteworthy is that much of the information supplied focuses on the employer’s perspective, concerns the expatriation cycle and factors related to predicting success in

overseas assignments. The literature also tends to stress the high cost of expatriate under-performance, and even failure of expatriates, in overseas locations. Clearly, there is a lack of educational material describing issues from the expatriate's perspective or recognizing that each individual expatriate experience is different. While better coordinated systems connecting selection, training, support, repatriation etc. are required in any expatriate program, it appears that there also is considerable value in listening and responding to the unique needs and issues of different expatriates as they deal with the ups and downs, the paradoxes, of being immersed in another culture. The perspective that everyone is different is important and, in fact, often what is needed is for someone within the organization to be responsible for listening to the expatriate's concerns and experiences: that is, acting as a sounding board. This person does not need to have all the answers: it is suggested that the majority of expatriates themselves have the answers within themselves and sometimes just 'hearing oneself' talk helps one to solve problems, challenges or concerns. As noted previously, a mentoring process would be beneficial if it is truly 'mentoring' as opposed to a more traditional supervisor-subordinate relationship where the supervisor is the 'expert'. In the current research study, it was interesting that not one participant referred to organizational mentors; they referred to important mentors as being among individuals from the host culture. Nevertheless, an assigned local 'social' mentor and a home organization 'professional' mentor, or a combined social/professional mentor in each country would be a valuable resource for all expatriates.

It is common for expatriates to believe that human resource professionals and senior managers do not fully understand what it is like to live and work while being immersed in

another culture. Therefore, the findings of this study may have implications for the education of students interested in professional careers in disciplines such as international human resource management. Indeed, from both an expatriate and methodological view the research is very suitable for being incorporated into various university courses required in a business administration degree, and possibly other disciplines that have international components. Thus, academic educators can benefit from the current research by obtaining an enhanced understanding of the lived experience of expatriates being immersed in another culture.

Sharing the research findings with students in undergraduate and graduate programs will enhance understanding of the lived experience and may assist these individuals in their present or future work and associations with colleagues, partners or customers in various business situations. This is important given the growth of internationalization of business and the trend for more individuals to have an international component in their careers.

In addition, educational sessions, especially those involving the paradoxical experiences as a focus, for current human resource professionals and other businesspeople working in various business settings, could enhance knowledge and understanding in relation to persons who live and work in a multi-cultural workplace as well as those being immersed in another culture. For example, learning about the paradoxical concept of understanding-not understanding as described in this research may help human resource professionals to incorporate activities to enhance the overall expatriation program.

Considering the potential value of education, the researcher has begun to discuss and present the research findings at professional conferences and with community groups. The research findings also will be integrated into future university courses to be taught by the researcher in several academic disciplines.

6.4 Reflections

During the course of the study, the researcher often reflected about the vast differences between the two countries involved in this research. In fact, Indonesia and Canada have been identified as having great dissimilarities in areas including customs, religion, language, climate, political structure, economic status, etc. Due to this reality, and as indicated by Gomez-Mejia (1998), Canadian expatriate managers need exceptional abilities to successfully live and work in the Indonesian cultural environment. With this in mind, it seemed likely the descriptions of the lived experience of being immersed in the Indonesian culture would be flush with exceptional richness (for example, more than in the case of Canadians working in Australia) and be more typical of expatriates in a range of South-East Asian countries. For these reasons, the study of Canadian expatriates in Indonesia was considered to be an ideal setting for initiating novel research about the lived experience of persons living and working while being immersed in another culture.

“Academic studies relevant to expatriates are limited primarily to selection, training, adjustment, effectiveness and repatriation, but there is more to the expatriate experience than commonly meets the eye” (Osland 1995a p.xiv). Much of the previous research on

expatriation was conducted within a quantitative methodology. Therefore, the current researcher utilized a phenomenological approach because it “presents a ‘new way’ of viewing what is genuinely discoverable and potentially there but often not seen” (Sanders 1982 p.357). The Giorgi (1975 p.100) view is that “it is precisely the subject’s viewpoint of the situation that provides the rich data which must be obtained”. As it turned out, the phenomenological methodology proved very effective in delving into the individual experiences of expatriate managers who have personally experienced the phenomenon of *being immersed in another culture*.

Phenomenology is an interpretative approach where the interpretivist believes that to understand this world of meaning one has to interpret it (Denzin & Lincoln 1998b). Giorgi’s phenomenological research method and the extant literature framework utilized for presenting selected key components of expatriation were successful in interpreting the research participants’ descriptions. Through well-articulated written descriptions in response to the interrogatory statement, each research participant described a range of unique experiences of their individual lives in Indonesia, yet similar themes were apparent. For example, a variety of paradoxical situations (Table 6.1) have been illuminated as part of the reality for persons who live and work while being immersed in another culture.

The synthesized findings were compared to the extant literature in order to determine similarities and differences. An important similarity had to do with the need for a local presence and some form of ‘support’ for the expatriate during the overseas assignment

(Hutchings 2005; Jassawalla et al. 2004). In the current study, the research participants described different examples of support, especially that which was generously provided by the local host nationals in various forms. Another important similarity of the literature to the current research was the existence of Osland's (2000) expatriate paradoxes that matched with approximately 50% of the expatriate paradoxes that emerged in the current research. The notable differences between the current research and the extant literature related to the alternative methodological approach taken in this study. In the current research, the qualitative method emphasized that the expatriate managers' perspective is very important for gaining insight and fuller understanding of the topic of expatriation. The methodology rarely has been utilized to study expatriation as there has been a traditional reliance on quantitative methodologies. In cases where analysis has occurred, quantitative studies tend to test existing theories, investigate cause-effect relationships, predict, control and/or measure.

Given that the researcher was located in Canada during the research process whereas many of the research participants were living and working in Indonesia, the email technique used for data collection (Giorgi & Giorgi 2003) proved to be ideal. Not only was email an effective and efficient tool for the researcher, it was extremely well accepted by the research participants. Living and working, while being immersed in another culture, has a way of filling the expatriates' days -- '24/7'. Additionally, the tropical climate, as in the case of Indonesia, can diminish substantially one's normal energy levels. With time and energy being so scarce, the use of email combined with an ample, flexible response time provided the opportunity for participants to respond in line

with their work schedule and personal convenience. These positive factors were reflected in the overall quality of the written descriptions. Further, the descriptions received from the research participants were already in electronic format thereby providing advantages of accuracy and time-saving compared with the demands of face-to-face interviews and subsequent transcribing costs. Most importantly, the written descriptions precisely represented the participants' viewpoints of situations experienced while being immersed in another culture. Thus, email technology proved to be an invaluable asset in the research study.

It is noteworthy that the study was focussed purposely on expatriates employed by NGOs. It is the case that expatriates employed by NGOs are more apt to be immersed in the culture at the village level because of the very nature of their jobs. Their work frequently is targeted at 'grassroots development' which normally brings them in regular, and sometimes continuous, contact at the village level where the local cultural experience may be not only encompassing but all-consuming. Furthermore, it is significant that many of the research participants resided in such villages. This may have led to a variation of the immersion experience as compared to other expatriates who experience life and work in large Indonesian cities where the cultural environment tends to reflect a greater familiarity with the experience of Western expatriates.

Overall, the current research method proved to be very effective in seeking non-prescriptive individual expatriate experiences, needs and issues. In fact, the research participants were given merely the interrogatory statement and asked to write about a

personal situation of their choosing that best described what it was like for them being immersed in the Indonesian culture, and requested to write until they had nothing more to write. This was a wide-open, exciting, and certainly unpredictable individualized approach with no pre-determined response categories. It was appropriate also, given the human science perspective, that it was not possible to break persons and their experiences into pieces and study them in a linear fashion because the lived experience for individuals happens all at the same time and, therefore, all research concepts are interrelated. In fact, the current phenomenological study may lead to enhanced human resource management expatriation strategies as a result of the interrelated new knowledge obtained by focusing on expatriate managers' perspectives of their experiences. Similarly, the current in-depth research findings from the perspective of participating expatriate managers may resonate with other non-participating expatriate managers.

6.5 Conclusions

The research purpose has been fulfilled. It has been accomplished by generating the general structural description, which provides insights to help organizations and expatriates find strategies for enhancing outcomes for both the individual and the organization. Indeed, the study sought to provide information and perspective to enhance the understanding of human resource professionals, expatriates, as well as academics in relation to expatriate managers' lived experience of being immersed in another culture. In the process, the research has explicated and shed meaning on the experience that is the

reality for expatriates as an essential precursor to describing methods for reducing its impact.

The “to enhance the understanding of human resource professionals who work with expatriate managers” and “to assist present and former expatriate managers make sense of their own experiences and to better prepare future expatriate managers through adding to knowledge and information to be used in educational endeavours” have been satisfied by this study. It is expected that the information will resonate with both human resource professionals and expatriate managers as they read the findings, and that it will enhance their understanding of the lived experience of being immersed in another culture.

In the world of today, many factors point to an ever-increasing number of persons living and working away from their home countries. The expatriates will have a wide variety of experiences and strong personal feelings during their time of being immersed in another culture. To help organizations and individuals understand the complexities of the phenomenon, it is important to continue to explore the experiences, feelings, and thoughts of expatriates through their descriptions of what it is like to be immersed, living and working, in another culture. These expatriates have a tremendous amount of knowledge to share with human resource professionals and academics. Both will be aided by a better understanding of the challenges associated with managing today’s global work force. Furthermore, the shared knowledge will help current and former expatriates to make sense of their experiences, and through education and training, provide future expatriates with valuable insights into the nature of overseas experiences.

Appendix A
INFORMATION AND CONSENT
Participation in Research Study

Dear Participant

As a doctoral student at Curtin University of Technology in Perth, Australia, I am inviting you to participate in my PhD research study. This research is about what it is like being immersed in another culture for those who have worked as expatriate managers for non-government organizations in Indonesia.

I am conducting the research under the supervision of Dr Laurence Dickie, the Academic Director of Teaching & Learning, Research at Curtin Business School- International Programs, Curtin University of Technology in Australia. He can be contacted at the email address: Laurie.Dickie@cbs.curtin.edu.au

Your participation will involve you writing about your overseas experience. You are asked to respond to the following statement: *Please write about an experience or situation that best describes what it was like for you to live and work as an expatriate manager in Indonesia.*

Once you have written all that you can write on the situation I would appreciate you emailing your written description to me at Roger.Russell@cbs.curtin.edu.au

It would be most appreciated if you do that within one month (by the end of May, 2005) of receiving the statement. I may contact you further by email should there be anything in your written description requiring clarification or elaboration.

It is very important that all information obtained will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. A pseudonym of your choice will be used so you will not be identified by name on any of the material collected or in any reports, presentations, or publications that come from this research. Similarly, the name of your organization and other potential identifiers including locations will be made anonymous or changed to protect your identity. Your emails will be accessible only to me and upon printing will be deleted from my computer. All printed emails and any other written material will be kept in a locked cabinet in a secure office for five years following the completion of the research and then destroyed.

There are no known risks to your participation and your participation is completely voluntary. If you decide at any time, for any reason, to withdraw from participating, your decision will be respected without penalty.

Please be aware that you are welcome to contact me at any time with questions, comments or concerns regarding this research at:

Email: Roger.Russell@cbs.curtin.edu.au

Telephone: 902-660-2065

Mail: 695 Southampton Road, RR6 Amherst, Nova Scotia, B4H 3Y4 Canada.

Thank YOU for considering participating in this research study.

If you agree to participate, please type your preferred pseudonym on the Participant Signature line, date your acceptance then email the complete document to me as soon as possible. By doing this, you are indicating that you fully understand the above information and you freely and voluntarily consent to participate in this research study about what it is like being immersed in another culture.

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Thank you again,

Sincerely,



Roger Russell, BSc (Agr) MBA

PhD (Candidate)

Appendix B

Basic Demographic Information of Participant

Note: For those participants no longer in Indonesia please backdate your answers to when you were most recently still there. Example- today my 2 daughters are 14/16 years old but since I last lived and worked in Indonesia in 2002 I would answer 11/13.

Name	
(please use your pseudonym)	
Age	
Gender	
Marital status	
Education level	
Number of children, age, do/did they reside with you in Indonesia	
Home city/town in Canada	
Location in Indonesia	
Number of years in Indonesia	
Please specify the years	
Name of Organization	
& head office location	
Position Title	
If you have had previous employers in Indonesia please list	
If you have had expatriate experiences in other countries please list	

Please email your completed form to me at Roger.Russell@cbs.curtin.edu.au

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