INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY: PERCEPTIONS ON IDENTITY AND CONFLICT

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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This thesis presents a comparative mixed methods study that addressed the broad question: Do internationally mobile individuals, often considered global citizens, identify differently with the dominant culture and possess unique conflict styles and perspectives on global conflict? The study set side by side five college-aged individuals who had grown up in one place in the United States and five college-aged US-born third culture individuals (TCIs), who had spent at least one year growing up abroad. Quantitative measures consisted of the *Inclusion of Other in Self* scale (Aron, 1992) coupled with the *PolVan Cultural Identity Model* (Van Reken, 1996), Rahim's *ROCI-II* measure (1983), and the *Automated Integrative Complexity* tool (Conway, 2014; Houck et al., 2014). Semi-structured interviews constituted the qualitative measure.

Findings showed that TCIs do not differ markedly in their identification with the surrounding culture from domestically brought up persons, and though interview responses revealed distinctive "distance creating elements," these all pointed to an underlying sense of not understanding and/or not being understood by members of the dominant culture, a sentiment shared by individuals in both groups. Additionally, it was shown that TCIs and

domestic individuals differed little on their preferred conflict style, with the exception of an elevated tendency of TCIs toward obliging, and an inclination to adjust conflict behavior when dealing with foreigners. Setting identity results from the *Inclusion of Other in Self* (Aron, 1992) measure next to preferred conflict style results (Rahim, 1983) yielded a very loose, similar pattern across groups. Further, there were similar perspectives on the US conflict style and actions it has taken/is taking in two particular world conflicts. A noteworthy distinction was uncovered in the higher average integral complexity scores of TCIs, supporting earlier research findings that integrative complexity is elevated in persons who have experienced unfamiliar environments and cultures. Overall, this study suggests that identification with the dominant culture, conflict styles, and perspectives on conflict are not delineating factors in the TCI population, and anyone from either population interested in solving problems peaceably could benefit from conflict resolution theory and practice.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The world is experiencing an unprecedented level of globalization as products, ideas, and people crisscross the globe in extraordinary numbers and at extraordinary speeds. We are living "a world full of movement and mixture, contact and linkages, and persistent cultural interaction and exchange" (Inda & Rosaldo, 2008, p.4). Take supply chains as one example. Apple Inc., following numerous international trade regulations, purchases raw materials from various nations, ships them for assembly in China, warehouses them in intermediate locations, and then distributes them to consumers all over the globe via its online as well as brick and mortar retail stores (SupplyChainOpz, 2013; Farfan, 2021). Globalization operates as institutions and agencies dispatch diverse teams of employees who, within a matter of hours or days, can start to collaborate with foreign counterparts on projects to address challenges affecting whole regions if not the entire planet. Globalization permeates educational webs allowing connections among students and teachers around the world to discuss solutions to real-world problems. Globalization operates in space where partners from 15 nations work in NASA's International Space Station (ISS; Wolf, 2014). With the ever-expanding networks, a vision of a human being who is adept at navigating the complexities, of which handling the inevitable frictions that arise in these multicultural spaces, has become more clear.

Enter the concept of the "global citizen." Global citizens have been described as individuals who operate with a multifaceted identity and possess a global mindset, i.e., a set of characteristics that allow them "to influence persons, groups, and organizations from diverse social/cultural/institutional systems" (Javidan et al., 2007, p. 2,3, as cited in Stokke, 2013). They are also described as "worldminded" in that they "favor a world-

view of the problems of humanity, whose primary reference group is mankind, rather than Americans, English, Chinese, etc." (Sampson & Smith, 1957, p. 99, as cited in Stokke, 2013). Thus, global citizens also carry a heightened sense of responsibility toward all people and planet; they are advocates for justice and activists for sustainability (Global Citizens' Initiative, n.d.). They are people who are open-minded, tolerant, able to handle ambiguity, diversity, or the "super complexity" in which we find ourselves (Lilley et.al., 2017, p. 15). Internationally mobile individuals are often thought of as "global citizens" par excellence and "prototypes of the 21st century citizen." By virtue of their multicultural lived experiences, they are thought to be better equipped to skillfully navigate the world (Ittel & Sisler, 2012). Indeed, these people, especially those who spent a considerable amount of time outside their nations of origin, exhibit several attributes of the global citizen (Lyttle et al., 2011). Stokke's (2013) research on individuals with international childhoods revealed that, as adults, they possess a global mindset and the potential to be global leaders. Presumably, the same attributes and skills would also make for better peacebuilders perhaps with unique perspectives and tools to apply to conflict resolution and transformation.

The goal of this paper is to examine some of the key characteristics of identity and approaches to conflict of a group often touted as the prototypical global citizens: Internationally mobile individuals. In particular, do they identify differently with the cultures in which they currently live (post-international experience)? Do they possess differing approaches to interpersonal conflict management? Do they have unique perspectives on global conflict and its handling by the United States? This exploratory study aims to tackle these questions by comparing two populations: American individuals

who have spent a portion of their childhoods outside of the United States, and individuals who experienced a more traditional, geographically and culturally stable upbringing in Oregon. Though identity in internationally mobile individuals has received a lot of attention, it has not been assessed by the measure used in this study. To the best of my knowledge, conflict styles and views on conflict have not yet been researched in this population. These are then the unique contributions of this study, which additionally provides a control group. The hope is to glean insights into the identities and the understanding and handling of conflict by those who are often considered global citizens. For a more detailed story about the beginnings of this research project, see Appendix A.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The background information for this study consists of literature related to individuals who were internationally mobile during their childhoods and have become more commonly known as "third culture kids," TCKs, or "third culture individuals," TCIs. The review also examines relevant theories and prior research on identity, conflict styles, and the intersections of these three. Much TCI research has focused on the unique components or aspects of TCI identity, and these will be juxtaposed against the more traditional concept of identity. Conflict styles have been investigated and compared across cultures and this might be useful information when thinking about any unique patterns among individuals who have experienced a cross-cultural upbringing.

Third Culture Individual (TCI)

Paula was born in Portland, Oregon, and at the age of 4, her diplomat parents accepted posts in Morocco and moved the family to Rabat. Paula had a Moroccan, French-speaking nanny from whom she learned French. Upon reaching school age, she was sent to an international school where she interacted with kids from many European, African, and Asian countries and where both English and French were spoken. Paula's parents were transferred to Austria when she was 10. Leaving behind her early childhood home, Paula continued her education in an international school in Vienna, again befriending kids from numerous countries, visiting neighboring countries on holiday, and interacting with a few expat Americans. During her internationally mobile childhood, Paula visited her grandparents in the United States several times but never

stayed longer than a few months. At 19, Paula moved to New York state to attend Cornell University with the idea of possibly settling in the US after receiving her degree.

Terms and Definitions

Paula's profile, a fictional composite, is a textbook example of a third culture individual, (TCI). While still very young, she might have been referred to as a "third culture kid," (TCK). As she matures, she may be called an "adult third culture kid," (ATCK; Lam & Selmer, 2004), or described as a *transcultural* (Willis et al., 1994) or a *global nomad* (McCaig, 1992). These latter three terms are used interchangeably throughout this paper.

"Third culture kid" originated with sociologists Ruth and John Useem (1963). The term initially pertained to a group of privileged migrants, and specifically, children of American foreign service, missionary, military, teaching and corporate employees living among and working with their counterparts in India. The job sponsorship, the Useems theorized, afforded a high social status, privileged lifestyle, along with a built-in support system, and for these reasons was an important element in the definition. Various unique aspects of social interactions were observed among these youths; they were not culturally American, nor were they Indian. Within this specific context, the Useems noticed distinctive "behavior patterns created, shared, and learned by men [*sic*] of different societies who are in the process of relating their societies, or sections thereof, to each other" (Cottrell & Downie, as cited in Pollock & Van Reken, 2017, p. 398). "Third culture" came to describe a "new type of self" arising from a partial integration of a host culture's norms for interpersonal behavior, codes of reciprocity, lifestyles, worldviews,

and communication into those associated with one's home culture (Useem, 1963, p. 170, as cited in Lyttle et al., 2011, p. 688). For example, an American child living in Peru may pick up new gestures or gift-giving norms, preferred leisure activities, priorities or personal values from their host culture and integrate these with corresponding norms, preferences and principles from the US culture as practiced by their parents. Another American child, living for instance in China will do the same, though because they are hosted by a different culture and also have unique parents, the "third culture" created within their family will differ from that of the youth in Peru. Yet the broad outcome is the same. Regardless of country of origin, host culture, or even parents' career, a new self emerges and inhabits a novel, third or interstitial culture which is said to be best understood by immediate family members who were part of the multicultural experience. Further, the very experience of having a third culture creates a special bond among all TCIs and is strengthened in association with similarly raised others (Lyttle et al., 2011; Moore & Barker; Tan et al., 2021). This may not be far from the understanding forged in the "international diplomatic culture," such as the one in the United Nations or multinational corporations, that "socialize their members into similar behavior" and thereby create social connections that others do not grasp or sense (Avruch & Black, 1991, p. 40).

If not yet obvious from the above description, it is important to clarify that "culture" in the context of third culture individuals stands apart from the more common concept of culture. Third culture individuals have been described as "an example of a people whose experience and cultural identity cannot be understood within the limiting [traditional] frameworks of culture" (Vidal in Pollock et.al, 2017, pp. 17,18). For one,

third culture is not associated with a set of specific beliefs and customs and is not passed down to the next generation (Heine, 2020). Further, third culture individuals challenge outdated notions of culture and belonging which in spite of high levels of movement and cultural mixing across the globe, continue to rest on norms of sedentarism and roots. Philosophers like Simone Weil (1943) wrote that "being rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul" (as cited in Remer, 2018, p. 17). Indeed, modern societies still imagine belonging as being "rooted in" one "home" culture, which calls to mind a set of relatively fixed customs and beliefs neatly bounded by national borders (Hofstede, 1980; Clifford, 1988, as cited in Malkki, 1992). One need only think of travel brochures enticing tourists to immerse themselves in the French, South African, Bolivian, Egyptian, or Chinese cultures, all contained in specific geographical locations demarcated by clear borders. Individuals with an international upbringing are considered examples of an emerging addendum to the traditional conceptualization of culture to "what we share experientially," which has been found to give rise to some level of shared psychological patterns (Vidal as cited in Pollock, 2017, pp. 17,18; Heine, 2020). This idea echoes an older perspective from the field of conflict resolution that "culture is closely related to consciousness" (Avruch & Black, 1991, p. 28). Though not taken up in this study, the argument that "culture" is not the most fitting term is worth acknowledging (Casmir, 1993, 1999 in Lyttle et al., 2011).

With diversity in cross-cultural experiences dramatically broadening and becoming more multifarious, an umbrella term, cross-cultural kid (CCK; Pollock et al., 2017), was eventually introduced to encompass both domestic and international individuals. A CCK is described as someone who "has lived in or meaningfully interacted

with two or more cultural environments for a significant period of time during developmental years" (Van Reken & Bethel, 2006, p. 3 as cited in Cottrell, 2000, p. 555). Among many groups regarded as CCKs are children adopted internationally, those with parents from two cultures, children of immigrants, and kids who grow up along national borders which they frequently cross. Individuals in these groups are categorized as CCKs even if they have never changed geographic locations while growing up (Pollock et al., 2017). The TCI population is one group under the CCK umbrella term and recognizable by virtue of its (often multiple) international residence(s) and parents' occupations (Tan et al., 2021). The most recent definition of TCK comes from Pollock et al. (2017):

> "a person who spends a significant part of his or her first eighteen years of life accompanying parent(s) into a country or countries that are different from at least one parent's passport country(ies) due to a parent's choice of work or advanced training" (p. 404).

There is some question as to the definition of "significant part of life," and Pollock et al. (2017) claim that, given myriad other important factors, one can identify as a TCK after living as briefly as one year outside of the parents' culture. Further, and as explicated in the above definition, a TCK need not have lived in multiple countries; one foreign residence can be sufficient to identify as a third culture kid/individual.

What the concept of third culture offers is three-fold: (1) a sense of continuity over time amid often repeated international moves that helps glue together bits and pieces of faraway experiences with very diverse people, (2) a sense of hybridity that encompasses an individual's fragmented identities (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1996, as cited in Tanu, 2015), and (3) a sense of mutual intelligibility shared by individuals who experienced international mobility while growing up (Tanu, 2015).

Key Attributes

There is certainly diversity within the third culture population and wide variation in personal experiences. Nations of origin, ages at which children are moved abroad and repatriate, number of moves, and parents' occupations, whether military, missionary, diplomatic, are a few of numerous distinctions (Cottrell, 2000). While recognizing the variation among TCIs, research suggests that there are commonalities. Individuals who have lived in different cultural environments are self-reflexive, pondering where they fit in (Cottrell, 2007). In an early study of more than 600 TCIs, Useem and Cottrell (1996) found that a vast majority, particularly of teenagers and twenty-somethings, reported feeling out of step with their American peers and being ambivalent about their goals and preferred lifestyle. Related, and as Pollock & Van Reken (2017) noted in their many interviews and observations of third culture individuals, TCIs feel ties to all the cultures in which they resided but "do not have full ownership in any" (p.6). For instance, in the sample profile at the beginning of this section, Paula is likely to feel connections to the United States, her passport country, but also to Morocco and Austria. However, because there are gaps in her cultural and/or linguistic knowledge related to all three places, she may not feel deeply invested in any of them. This is also related to another TCI characteristic of a diffuse sense of where home is (Nette & Hayden, 2007).

Research has uncovered that loss and grief are often experienced by third culture individuals as they move repeatedly and leave behind friendships and places (Gilbert, 2008). A mobile lifestyle can lead to the sense of rootlessness (Bushong, 1988; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999; Wertsch, 1999, as cited in Moore & Barker, 2012). Not being fully anchored may be associated with other attributes. For instance, the

results of Useem and Cottrell's (1996) study revealed TCIs' characteristic of prudence in unfamiliar social situations; they prefer to first observe and determine the expected behavior before deciding whether to participate or withdraw. Related, being children of diplomats, missionaries, military, or business professionals confers a representational role with certain expectations, which some said led them to develop a mixture of self-consciousness and circumspection in public (Cottrell, 2000).

Once they return to their passport nations, many global nomads experience reverse culture shock and feel alienated from their home culture (Hervey, 2009, as cited in Smith & Kearney, 2016). Though they appear and sound like Americans, they feel otherwise, and, to their dismay, their unique backgrounds go unacknowledged (Pollock et al., 2017). In this way, most TCIs either feel like they belong in multiple places, though incompletely, or else nowhere (Fail, 2004 in Moore & Barker, 2012). A study by Smith and Kearney (2016) which delved into the experiences of 20 repatriated US third culture college students confirmed this experience.

Useem and Cottrell (1996) also uncovered that an overwhelming majority of participants reported possessing a greater awareness and understanding of other cultures than their American peers, along with the ability and greater interest to interact with foreigners. Their worldview exhibits facets of both ethnocentrism, in that their third culture is seen as superior, and ethnorelativism, in that their own (third, etc.) culture is perceived as one of myriad others. Generally, these views together do not align well with those of people brought up in one place and one particular cultural milieu (Cockburn 2002; Peterson & Plamondon, 2009; Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999; Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009; Wertsch, 1991, as cited in Moore & Barker, 2012).

Due to their multicultural upbringing, many TCIs exhibit effective intercultural skills, the ability to easily adjust (Fail et al., 2004), interpersonal sensitivity (Lyttle et al., 2011), and open-mindedness (Dewaele &Van Oudenhoven, 2009). A study comparing over 2000 TCI and non-TCI respondents supported the notion that TCIs tend to have intercultural competence as well as a positive attitude toward diversity (de Waal et al., 2020). Global nomads show particular sensitivity toward others who seem unsure of themselves, particularly foreigners or those who do not speak English. In situations of discord, they report serving as mediators and being able to manage unexpected situations (Cottrell, 2000). Through their unique experiences, many global nomads are multilingual, resilient, creative, and aware of the complexity of issues (Moore & Barker, 2012; Haneda & Manobe, 2009). Their ability and willingness to recognize multiple perspectives is a type of thinking called integrative complexity, and has been associated, among other things, with experiences of living in unfamiliar environments and cultures (Suedfield, Tetlock, and Streufert 1992, as cited in Heine, 2020).

Overall, the literature portrays third culture individuals as cosmopolitans with international childhood experiences that enable many to perceive numerous points of view on all sorts of issues and to cross cultural lines skillfully, with ease and enthusiasm. At the same time, TCIs may feel unmoored, socially hesitant, and unsure of where they belong. This study focuses first on repatriated TCIs' identity as it relates to the dominant culture. While there are multiple theories of identity, personal and cultural identity, social identity, and self-categorization theory were selected for their relevance and are the first pieces to be examined in the literature review.

Identity

Personal and Cultural Identity

Identity and related constructs, such as the self and self-concept, are complex abstractions theorists and researchers have long grappled with, and ones that are commonly conflated in everyday usage. Generally, we think of identity as who a person is. More specifically, identity can refer to the set of characteristics and experiences that make an individual unique in their own eyes and in the eyes of others. A multitude of intersecting facets of identity are acknowledged, with the personal overlapping the national, religious, racial, ethnic, gender, and place aspects. Identity thus connotes both differences that render persons distinctive and similarities that may draw persons together.

Western developmental psychologist Erik Erikson (1902-1994), a pioneer of identity theory, described it as "a sense of who one is as a person and as a contributor to society," with this sense being consistent over time and across different social situation, though Erikson recognized that identity is nevertheless not fixed (Hoare, 2002, as cited in Sokol, 2009, p. 142). Theorists have isolated particular components of identity. Erikson's model, for instance, has a core ego identity encapsulated inside a personal identity, which in turn is surrounded by a social identity. The ego includes bedrock beliefs that very rarely change, while the personal identity, which shows beliefs and goals outwardly to others, is more malleable. Finally, social identity contains facets of one's sense of self that link to group memberships and is an inner-felt alignment with group ideals (Schwartz, 2001).

Additionally, Erikson acknowledged culture's impact on identity development and posited a cultural identity which, perhaps as an element of social identity, contributes

to one's sense of alignment with the cultural group(s) to which one belongs (Hoare, 2002, as cited in Sokol, 2009; Schwartz, 2001). Jameson (2007) describes cultural identity as "an individual's sense of self derived from formal or informal membership in groups that transmit and inculcate knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes, traditions, and ways of life" (p. 199, as cited in de Waal & Born, 2021, p.68). Cultural identity is an important piece of one's social or collective identity and is thought to become visible and especially salient when a transition occurs (Sussman, 2000, as cited in Moore & Barker, 2012; Tannenbaum & Tseng, 2015). Because third culture individuals frequently make multiple and quite dramatic transitions, cultural identity is amplified. Not only that, but personal identity is also continuously salient as TCIs continuously grapple with who they are.

Cultural identity has received much attention in the TCI literature. Some research suggests that third culture individuals possess a fluid, blended, or hybrid identity. One example is Moore and Barker's (2012) qualitative study involving 19 TCIs of six nationalities which found that some participants comfortably juggled a number of cultural identities and were able to switch and adjust to various settings. Nearly half considered theirs a single yet blended identity whose pieces they could deftly manage depending on the cultural situation. Only a few participants in this particular study felt uncertain about their identity. The results of this study also showed that having a multicultural or blended identity did not necessarily equate with a sense of belonging. Even though many TCIs have the skill to adapt, the sense of belonging to a particular culture or place is a separate issue (Moore & Barker, 2012).

With regard to identity development, according to Erikson (1968), this process occurs during childhood and adolescence, is connected to personality development, and lays essential groundwork for subsequent positive psychological growth. Successful identity formation Erikson (1968) claimed, bestows a "sense of well-being, a sense of being at home in one's body, a sense of direction in one's life, and a sense of mattering to those who count" (Sokol, 2009, p. 142). This is a challenging developmental task comprising a number of stages, with plenty of pitfalls. At certain points, an individual may stumble into what Erikson dubbed "role confusion," characterized by self-doubt, distress, and depression (ibid.)

Evidence of "role confusion," particularly in TCIs who lived abroad during their adolescence when important identity developments were happening, was found by Smith and Kearney (2016). It has been suggested that role confusion may also be associated with poor relationships or lack of active involvement with peers during adolescence, both not uncommon in global nomad youth who often create and sever social ties repeatedly (Pugh & Hart, 1999). As they move, TCIs' identities are on the move too, so to speak. Erikson's idea that identity is not fixed might reach an extreme in third culture individuals whose "identity is continuously constructed and reshaped during interaction with 'outsiders, strangers, foreigners, and aliens – the others'" (Cutcher, 2015, as cited in de Waal & born, p. 69; Hoare, 2002, as cited in Sokol, 2009). Role confusion may be akin to what Useem and Cottrell (1996) observed in transcultural individuals and termed "prolonged adolescence," or the extra time needed to organize the "chaotic nature of their [TCIs] lives" (p. 2). Other studies in fact suggest a hazy, muddled, or incongruent

identity as a consequence of a TCI's mobile lifestyle (Schaetti, 2000; Murphy, 2003; Grimshaw & Sears, 2008; Cottrell, 2006, as cited in Moore & Barker, 2012).

There are still other theories and research linking frequent cultural transitions with obstacles to identity formation in third culture individuals (Bennett, 1993b; Fail et al., 2004; Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011; Pollock & Van Reken, 2017; Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999, as cited in Moore & Barker, 2012). In children growing up in a geographically, culturally, and linguistically stable environment, identity can evolve in an anchored environment where a young person learns about routine socio-cultural patterns and develops what Pollock and Van Reken (2017) call a "cultural balance," a deep familiarity and know-how through repeated interactions with similar or predictable actors within a relatively fixed physical setting (p. 44). This stability can reinforce the sense of geographical, social, and cultural belonging or rootedness. Pollock and Van Reken (2017) posit that many mobile children lack this "cultural balance." Movement between cultures at a young age has been described by Anderson (1994) as situations in which "all the familiar underpinnings of one's sense of self are […] torn away, depriving persons of most of the familiar reference points that provide the cues for their behavior as well as the substance for their sense of identity" (as cited in Sussman, 2000, p. 294). This impacts the sense of belonging which Corrales et al. (2016) deem "a core component for young people to engage in meaning making and identity constructions" (as cited in de Waal et al., 2021, p. 68).

But the TCI identity picture is not entirely bleak. More recent research illuminates positive facets their identity development. Carroll (2019) in her survey of 110 TCIs from various nations, found that although TCIs identities may not follow a linear path of

formation, or a path perceived as normal, they do not necessarily come up against identity hardships. Her research revealed that rather than being hindered by their mobile and multi-cultural childhoods, TCIs have developed an "ever-growing and transforming identity" enriched by transcultural experiences. Contrary to much of the negative impacts other studies found, participants in her study reported a deep self-understanding, and based on results from an anonymous survey, Carroll (2019) concluded that TCIs possess a robust sense of identity, of being rooted in relationships, and a confidence in their unique perspectives and skills gained in their years abroad.

Social Identity Theory

Henri Tajfel's (1979) social identity theory was selected as another lens through which to view the results of this research study. Like Erikson (1968), Tajfel posited a personal identity, but placed greater importance on social belonging, a person's sense of who they are based on group membership. Tajfel (1981) explained the social self as "an aspect of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group(s) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (as cited in Sussman, 2000, p. 357). Social identity theory spotlights our natural desire to belong and links it to a positive self-concept. Alternately, Hogg (2000, 2007, as cited in Fisher & Derham, 2016) suggests in his identity-uncertainty theory that, more than stronger self-esteem, it is self-uncertainty that is the dominant driving force behind identifying with a group. We seek to belong to relieve the angst of not knowing who we are. Regardless of the motivation, Lewin (1984) linked personal and social identity, commenting that a feeling of well-being derives from a sense

of belonging to a group (as cited in Sussman, 2000). This well-being can be broken down into several aspects which have been recently recognized as components of social identity: cognitive (self-categorization or self-stereotyping), affective (self-esteem or satisfaction), and behavioral (group commitment or solidarity) (Ellemers, Kortekaas & Ouwerkerk, 1999; Leach, Ellemers & Barreto, 2007; Ouwerkerk, Ellemers & De Gilder, 1999, as cited in Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019).

Social identity, or the "who am I" related to surrounding social groups, may also be relevant in this study concerning third culture individuals. Due to a combination of factors, such as their country of origin, appearance, social status, language and/or cultural knowledge gap(s), and the schools they attend, transculturals feel they are perceived as "the foreigner," not part of the dominant group in their host cultures (Pollock et al., 2017). Yet, upon return to their passport nations, where they expect to fit in more naturally, TCIs' feelings of cultural marginality can be amplified; they are now too removed to be a part of the cultural mainstream of the society they grew up hearing was their own (Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999, as cited in Murphy & Barker, 2012). At this point, global nomads become "hidden immigrants" in their passport nations, a term Pollock and Van Reken (1996) coined to describe isolation and a lack of recognition as reported by many TCIs they talked with over the years (Cottrell, 2000). To illustrate, American peers assume that a global nomad grew up in the United States and is therefore fully versed in whatever dominant culture or sub-culture they currently inhabit, be it New York City or a small town in Washington state. The *PolVan Cultural Identity Model* (Van Reken, 1996) includes four categories: 1) foreigner, 2) hidden immigrant, 3) adopted, and 4) mirror, and these represent various identities that TCIs feel they shift among in relation to their

host and home cultures. The model was utilized in a descriptive qualitative study investigating the identity formation of a movie character (based on a real person) who had grown up partly in a jungle in Papua (Yuliani & Liyanti, 2021).

According to Sussman (2000), it is repatriation is enormously challenging for many individuals who have spent some part of the developmental years outside of their passport nation. For one, return can include a loss of status and uniqueness (Cottrell, 2007). Further, repatriation challenges TCIs to assess "their personal values, cognitive maps, and behavioral repertoires against the prevailing cultural norms at home" (p. 365). There are unfamiliar social cues, rules, and gaps in knowledge that impede participation in the culture (Sussman, 2000). To add, there is also a downgrading or loss of status and uniqueness (Cottrell, 2007). In her theoretical work, Sussman (2000) proposed a predictive repatriation model in which she identified cultural shifts commonly exhibited by global nomads upon return to their passport country. de Waal and Born's (2021) study used her model to investigate TCIs' sense of belonging. The study results supported her claim that individuals who had spent some portion of their childhood outside their passport country tend to manifest the subtractive cultural shift; often, a returnee's affect toward their home culture is negative. Furthermore, de Waal & Born (2021) examined the sense of belonging relative to people versus to places. Via poetry and interview responses of TCI participants from various countries, of different ages and genders, categories (sponsored diplomats, military, missionary, corporate), of both high and lower mobility, and all of whom had spent a minimum of 1 year abroad, they discovered that third culture individuals derive a strong sense of social identity and belonging from

immediate family members with whom the mobility experience is shared (de Waal & Born, 2021) or those who share similar childhood backgrounds.

In an early study of third culture individuals returning to attend college in the United States, Downie (1976) observed that they often felt misunderstood by peers who had no international experience. Later research found that those who failed to connect with their American peers or manage their social identity became socially marginal (Fail et al, 2004). This was seen again more recently in Kearney and Smith's (2016) work with repatriated US college TCIs who reported grief over loss of friendships in their host cultures and expressed sadness around the lack of their American peers' cultural understanding for TCIs. At the same time, TCIs themselves articulated confusion about their American peers, which negatively impacted the formation of deep relationships with fellow college students. Cultivating a sense of belonging in the home culture and its social groups is difficult and often leads to social withdrawal. As Fail et al. (2004) and others noted, TCIs perceive themselves as cosmopolitan people, comfortable in a range of settings but not truly belonging in any one.

Social identity salience is relevant. Social identity gains prominence in intergroup contexts, as when an American interacts with a Japanese in Japan. Personal identity, on the other hand, is salient in intragroup situations; an American living among other Americans will be aware of their unique differences perhaps in personality, history, and beliefs with some, but not all, fellow Americans (Turner et al., 1994; Sussman, 2000). To illustrate, let's look again at Paula from the start of the literature review. According to theorists, Paula would have been continuously aware of her "Americanness" while living in Morocco and interacting with Moroccans, for instance. Upon returning to the United

States, she would have likely discovered that she did not fit in either and might have found it most appropriate to self-identify as "in-between." Thus, her social identity may be chronically salient no matter where she is. In this way, cultural uncertainty can come about for TCIs because, though they may be surrounded by "similar" peers, their beliefs, feelings, views, and behaviors are distinctive (Hogg & Mullins in Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011).

Self-Categorization

John Turner's (1979) work on self-categorization, the cognitive aspect of the social identity perspective and a pillar of social identity theory, provides insights into how, when, and why individuals think of themselves as members of a group. This natural reflex to categorize self and others, is accompanied by the reflex to inflate differences between the in- and out-group while exaggerating similarities among members of in-group(s) in the interest of fulfilling the sense of belonging and igniting competition. This behavior was demonstrated by the famous Billig and Tajfel (1973) experiment in which strangers randomly assigned to groups immediately coalesced and showed a desire to amplify distinctions and succeed over the other group (Hornsey, 2008). If self-categorization operates based on as little as a flip of the coin, then a fortiori it functions when there are deeper similarities among individuals, such as an international upbringing and all that it carries with it.

Self-categorization views social identity as the basis for mutual social influence. If a person views themself as a group member, they actively try to coordinate their behavior to reflect that identity and try to reach agreement within the group. Ingroup

members, individuals who are considered similar to the self, can impact one's worldview, help construct social norms, and work together towards shared goals. In this way, shared social identity underpins fruitful social interactions. Since self-identified TCIs tend to perceive those who share an international background as members of their in-group, they are more likely to influence each other and in fact reinforce their "TCI-ness". Self-categorization predicts that self-identified third culture individuals especially those who report feeling marginal in any group due to their internationally mobile upbringing, can feel less motivated to collaborate, follow norms, reach agreement, and fully conform to the behavior of American peers (Turner & Haslam, 2001, as cited in Haslam et al., 2012).

Indeed, a problem that arises with self-categorization is that an individual can identify with a particular group and yet not be acknowledged as such by others (Reimer et al., 2020; Sussman, 2000). This incongruity aligns with the already mentioned cultural/personal identity concept of the "hidden immigrant" (Van Reken, 1996). The perception of her American college peers that Paula, from the start of the literature review, is one of them may clash with her self-categorization as a third culture individual. This incongruity is predicted to lead to a lack of engagement and interest in group membership (Sussman, 2000; Smith & Kearney, 2016). Further, based on their study of cultural homelessness and self-esteem in 475 participants who had spent a minimum of two years outside their parents' culture(s), Hoersting & Jenkins (2011) concluded that self-categorization as a TCI links to lower self-esteem, possibly due to a perceived negative connotation that participants had of being a third culture individual.

Related to self-categorization is social identity complexity which refers to a person's sense of the interrelationships among their multiple identities, such as being an

American who also identifies as a third culture individual, or a member of a religious group who simultaneously associates with a political group. Social identity complexity can range from low to high. Generally, people with low social identity complexity perceive their myriad social identities as intercrossing. In-group members are persons who share all group memberships; those who share only some are regarded as out-group members. On the other hand, persons with high social identity complexity realize that their group associations do not always intersect. In-group members do not have to share all group memberships (Roccas & Brewer, 2002, as cited in Reimer et al., 2020). Some studies have shown a positive relationship between social identity complexity and intergroup attitudes. Brewer and Pierce (2005) found social identity complexity to be connected to less intergroup bias, greater tolerance, and multiculturalism (as cited in Reimer et al., 2020). The latter two especially bring to mind some of the already discussed characteristics of third culture individuals which also coincide with those of global citizens.

Research into how people construct their subjective ingroup by combining multiple group memberships includes Van Dommelen et al.'s (2015) study which asked bicultural Muslims to distinguish "us" from "not us." A Turkish-Belgian Muslim may consider those who share all three memberships: nationality, ethnicity, and religion as ingroup members (intersection). Another person may think of anyone with the same nationality, i.e., Turkish, no matter their ethnicity or religion, as an ingroup member (dominance). Yet another person may recognize an individual with the same ethnicity or religion as an ingroup member (merger) (Reimer et al., 2020). This helps elucidate TCIs' social identity with its particular affinity toward those with similar backgrounds as it

suggests a dominance approach; it is a person's background, not their religion, country of origin, ethnicity, or anything else that determines the in-group membership.

Besides Erikson's (1968) identity theory and Tajfel and Turner's (1979) social identity and self-categorization theories, other facets of identity have received attention and been linked directly to third culture individuals. Place identity, defined as a person's construction of meaning and sense of belonging that connects to a particular geographical location has been mentioned earlier and is related to the sense of rootedness. It is another major ingredient in overall identity formation and can be dubious in persons raised in multiple nations (Easthope, 2009; Seamon, 2011; Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2017). Place identity studies abound from Picton and Urquhart's (2017) case studies comparing differences between TCI and non-TCI high school students' identification and attachment to place, to Nette & Hayden (2007) and Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk (2017) research addressing TCIs' complex and shifting sense of geographical home.

In sum, based on the literature on the nature and development of personal and cultural identity, social identity, and self-categorization, the third culture identity may be generally described as diffuse, continuously in flux, and tied strongly to immediate family and those who share an internationally mobile upbringing or, at the least, some international experience. High international mobility during childhood can weaken both relationships to places and the sense of ownership and belonging to cultures and societies (Tanu, 2015, p. 12). de Waal and Born (2021) suggest that "the cross-cultural experiences of TCKs can be defined as experiences of adversity while growing up" (p. 70).

This leads into the second research question about conflict styles. Again, identity attributes associated with transcultural youth such as open-mindedness, tolerance, ability

to deal with ambiguity, diversity, but also their sense of detachment and lack of ownership in any one culture may well make for unconventional conflict style preferences. Further, as TCIs are said to inhabit a third culture, which produces a unique amalgam of elements from the home and host cultures, it might be that a conflict style more common in a culture hosting a young American TCI somehow combines with the usual (and different) conflict behavior of the American home culture (Useem, 1963, as cited in Lyttle et al., 2011). The questions arose: Do global nomads possess different or unique styles to interpersonal conflict management?

To my knowledge, there has not been any research focusing this query. The closest was the earlier mentioned theme picked up by Useem and Cottrell's study (1996) in part of which TCIs indicated a special sensitivity toward foreigners and reported mediating in conflict situations (Cottrell, 2000). Without conflict styles research directly pertaining to this population, the next section of the literature review presents some literature on the styles themselves and ventures into cross-cultural or intercultural conflict styles which may help shed light on possible elements to keep in mind when interpreting the TCI conflict styles data.

Conflict Styles & TCIs

How one handles conflict, "a process that includes the perceptions, emotions, behaviors, and outcomes of two or more parties, when one party perceives that the other has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of the first party," (Thomas, 1976 in Kim & Leung, 2000, p. 231) is generally thought of as dependent on the situation, though personality, gender, and cultural factors in conflict styles also exist. There have been a

number of attempts to assess conflict management styles; many models were predicated on the dual concern theory (Blake & Mouton, 1964), which suggests that individuals consciously or unconsciously consider their desire to fulfill their interests and the desire to keep relationships intact when deciding how to approach disputes.

Based on the dual concerns, five different conflict resolution styles were extrapolated: smoothing (high concern for others; low for oneself); withdrawing (low concern for both others and oneself); compromising (medium concern for others and oneself); problem-solving (high concern for others and oneself); and forcing (low concern for others and high concern for oneself) (Devore, 2005, p. 167). Some prominent self-report instruments are Hall's (1969) Conflict Management Survey (CMS), Rahim's (1983) Organizational Conflict Inventories I and II (ROCI-I and ROCI-II), and Thomas and Kilmann's (1974) Management-of-Differences Exercise (MODE). Terminology for the conflict styles varies among the instruments, but the principles and descriptions are very similar (Devore, 2005). This study utilizes Rahim's Inventory (ROCI-II) in which the conflict styles have been renamed: from smoothing to obliging, from withdrawing to avoiding, from problem-solving to integrating, and from forcing to dominating; compromising remained unchanged.

Differences in cultural norms can lead to disparate conflict resolution styles. Unique norms suggest differences in goals in a dispute as well as differences in feelings about direct clashes between individuals (Brett, 2007, as cited in Gomez & Taylor, 2018, p. 34). Even more broadly, different cultures may conceptualize conflict differently, recognize unique cues that alert them of friction, have distinct expectations of conflict

behavior, and simply possess different "common sense" or "ethnoconflict theory" (Avruch & Black, 1991, pp. 31, 32).

Research on intercultural conflict has most frequently been carried out using the framework of individualism/collectivism (Miyahara et al., 1998; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000, Trubisky et al., 1991, as cited in Hammer, 2005) and of high/low context culture (Augsburger, 1992; Cohen, 1997, Putnam, 1994; Ting-Toomey, 1985, as cited in Hammer, 2005). Traditionally it is thought that in more individualistic cultures, the needs and autonomy of the individual are more important than those of the larger group, while in more collectivist cultures, the needs of the group tend to take precedence (Hofstede, 1980, as cited in Gomez & Taylor, 2018, p. 34). Results of Holt and De Vore's (2005) meta-analysis of conflict resolution styles across cultures showed that people in collectivistic societies, such as China, prefer to withdraw, compromise, or problem solve in contrast to persons oriented toward individualism. Forcing or dominating was more prevalent in individualistic cultures, like the United States or Germany. With regard to conflict styles with peers, it was found that once again avoiding and compromising approaches were most common (Holt & DeVore, 2005). Studies have addressed conflict style preferences in ethnic minorities within the United States, but results are inconsistent (Holt & DeVore, 2005). Based on the individualism/collectivism scheme, it may be that the generally more dominating conflict style of American individuals who spend time in a culture that tends toward collectivism might be tempered or impacted in still some other way.

Many intercultural conflict research conclusions are questionable because there is a vast array of variables that can affect how entire cultures handle conflict, as has already

been mentioned. Morris et al. (1998) contended that gauging conflict styles based only on the collectivism-individualism variables is limiting, as is describing entire cultures as individualistic or collectivistic. Cai and Fink's (2002) work, which measured individualism and collectivism on the level of the individual, challenged the categorization of whole cultures as one or the other. Using the individual as a unit of analysis revealed that regardless of individualistic or collectivistic tendencies, avoiding was preferred over dominating, and individualists favored avoiding more so than midrange and collectivistic persons. Collectivists leaned more toward compromising than did individualists and favored integrating more.

There are other challenges associated with investigating conflict styles on the level of whole cultures. Gabrielis et al. (1997, as cited in Gomez & Taylor, 2018) point out that the nature of collectivism in Asia differs from that in Latin America. There's also the finding that conflict styles can have distinct meanings in different cultures. Avoiding is perceived positively, for example, in Asian or Latin American cultures where saving face is highly valued (Cai & Fink, 2002). Investigating conflict behaviors across cultures using Hofstede's (2011) additional variables of power distance, masculinity vs. femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term vs. short-term orientation, and indulgence vs. restraint could produce more robust results. However, there are also studies on culture that report variations in conflict styles based on role, sex, and age (Tang & Bride, 1986, as cited in Gbadamosi et al., 2014). Differences in personalities not only linked to culture, but also associated with situational and psychological factors might impact the style of managing disputes (Wafa, 1997, as cited in Gbadamosi et al., 2014). It is possible that these differences are applicable in the research at hand.

All in all, though a considerable amount of research points to general tendencies in conflict handling across cultures, due to the numerous factors involved, it is difficult to extrapolate what effect residence during one's upbringing in a culture which favors unique approaches to dispute handling may have on conflict resolution behavior in American TCIs. The current research into the matter might provide a jumping off point for further investigation.

Work on TCI identity and cross-cultural research on conflict styles suggests another area of inquiry and the last that this study tackles: the intersection of TCI identity, conflict styles, and TCIs perceptions of global conflict management. Though Useem and Cottrell's (1996) research posed the broad question of how adult third culture individuals assess "major shifts in American life" and international events, including conflicts which transform former host nations into enemies of the US, that query was not clearly answered (p. 1). To my knowledge, there has been no other examination of transcultural individuals' conflict styles or views on handling of conflict on the international level. This is an area of particular interest for myriad reasons, one of which takes us back to third culture individuals as natural global citizens, who are thought to be inherently more adept at handling complexity. Third culture individuals' views on global conflict may offer insights not yet captured by conflict resolution or other TCI research.

The aim of this study is to explore the answers to three questions: Do internationally mobile individuals, here third culture individuals who are often considered global citizens, identify differently with the culture in which they currently live (post-international experience) from individuals who have grown up domestically, in one place in the US? Do these same individuals possess markedly differing or unique styles in

interpersonal conflict management? Do they have unique perspectives on global conflict and its handling by the United States? This study adds to the existing literature by measuring TCI identity in a novel way and beginning the discussion of conflict resolution in this population (Tan et al., 2021).

CHAPTER III: METHODS

Underlying Theory & Researcher Positionality

The foundation for the research study design is social constructivism which rests on philosophical assumptions that are subjective and interpretive (Adom et al., 2016). As an epistemological theory, constructivism posits that people are active agents who shape their personal understanding and knowledge and create meaning out of their experiences, interactions, and reflections (Prawatt , 1994; Educational Broadcasting Corporation, 2004). The participant interview method in particular aligns with the constructivist research model which asserts that individuals view reality in unique ways, and that it is affected by both context and experience (Ponterotto, 2005, as cited in de Wall & Born, 2021). Constructivism also acknowledges that interaction between researcher and interviewee itself plays a role in illuminating the participant's lived experience. In this study, interviewees were encouraged to reflect while the researcher helped to construct meaning of their experiences and ideas, as appropriate. A researcher's values and lived experience are part and parcel of this approach, and these unavoidably have an impact on the research outcome (de Waal & Born, 2021). Though not a traditional third culture kid, I, the researcher in this study, am an immigrant with childhood international mobility experiences which make relating to third culture individuals' stories familiar. This should be kept in mind when reading interpretations.

This is a mixed method study. The quantitative measures served as a basis for further collection of information via semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions. It should be noted that though the initial intention was to allow flexibility for

the participants to lead the interview in desired directions on the topics, a fear encroached early on that such an approach would be too time consuming for busy participants and would not yield consistent responses. Therefore, after the second interview, I decided to adhere to the series of queries created before the start of the research and curtail additional questions more than I had initially intended. In the end, this approach still qualified as semi-structured because supplementary questions were posed, but the greater emphasis was on sticking with structure. This resulted in greater consistency in the data across participants as well as a reasonable interview length in terms of duration.

Participants

Two contrasting groups of participants were enrolled in this study. The sampling method was non-random and purposive which allowed for selection of participants with experiences of mobility that aligned as closely as possible with the study's requirements. The researcher's original aim was to engage three to five participants from each population. As was hoped for, five participants were found, with a total number of ten individuals (n=10). The participants came from three sites: the University of Oregon; Lewis & Clark College; and Michigan State University. All participants were undergraduate students born in the United States and in their early to late 20s.

The domestic (non-TCI) cohort comprised three females and two males each of whom spent their first 18 years in one or two towns in Oregon. They attended local, private and public schools ranging from religious, to dual-immersion, and one that offered an international baccalaureate program. Three out of five participants in this

group grew up hearing a second language, though only two spoke it. Included were White Americans, a Mexican American, and a Southeast Asian American.

The internationally mobile cohort of US-born third culture individuals, included five females who had lived in one or two foreign cultures, ranging in duration from 1.25 to 14 years. The TCI participants attended a variety of schools, such as local (in a host culture), international, and boarding schools, or had periods of home schooling while outside the US. All five grew up around at least two other languages besides English, and two indicated fluency or near-fluency in a second language. All participants in this cohort were European-descended. An overview of the most prominent features of participants including their gender, race, geographic location(s) during developmental years, location they consider home, and languages with which they had contact are presented in Tables 1A and 1B.

Table 1A. Non-TCI Demographics

All University of Oregon undergraduates in their 20s, residing in Eugene, OR at time of study.

#/ Gender, Race	Birthplace(Oregon, US)	Place(s) lived	Language(s) besides English
1/F, Mexican	Portland	Salem*	Spanish
2/M, European-descended/SE Asian	Salem	Salem*	--
3/M, European-descended	Portland	Sublimity, Silverton*	Finnish
4/F, European-descended	Albany	Corvallis*	Spanish
5/F, European-descended	Central Point	Central Point* , Salem	--

The asterisk after the place(s) lived indicates the town each participant considered to be home

Table 1B. TCI Demographics

All undergraduates in their 20s.

#/ Gender, Racial background	Birthplace	International residences /duration & home*	Language(s) besides English
1/F, European-descended	Illinois	Kyrgyzstan*/ 14 years	Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Russian, Korean
2/F, European-descended	Alabama	Germany / 4 years Washington*	German, Dutch
3/F, European-descended	Oregon	Mozambique/ 7 months South Africa/ 7 months Oregon*	Spanish, Portuguese
4/F, European-descended	New York	Brazil, UK* / 6 years	French, Portuguese, Spanish
5/F, European-descended	Idaho	India, Cambodia / 7 years Colorado *	Hindi, Khmer, & others

Constructs & Measures

As an initial measure, participants completed a demographic intake form which captured information about their level of international mobility, and cultural, educational, and language environment during the developmental ages of 0 – 18. In responding to questions about themselves during the interviews, participants frequently included references to their gender, ages, and racial backgrounds (Table 1A and 1B).

Identity

The first construct, perception of identity, was captured using a preexisting measure, Aron's (1992) *Inclusion of Other in Self* scale. This pictorial measure, resembling Venn diagrams, captures the sense of closeness both in feeling and behavior. It was designed to allow straightaway recognition of one's perception of interpersonal interconnectedness with an "other." The IOS scale is based on a particular concept and

framework of closeness which asserts that in close relationships, individuals behave as if they partially share some or all of a partner's or some other's aspects, i.e., resources, perspectives, and attributes (Aron & Aron, 1986; Aron, Aron, Tudor & Nelson, 1991, as cited in Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992). The scale has shown alternate-form and test-retest reliability and is applicable to a wide range of research topics and populations (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992).

Completing the measure involves respondents marking the pair of circles, in this study representing the participant (You) and the dominant culture (DC), which they feel best illustrates the relationship. As shown below, the choices range from a pair of side-by-side circles that are not touching, to increasing degrees of overlap, and ending with two circles almost entirely overlaying one another. This measure provided a quick snapshot reflecting participants' positions.

Figure 1. The Inclusion of Other in Self Scale (Aron, 1992)

(Gächter et al., 2015, p. 2)

Identity was supplementally addressed by the *PolVan Cultural Identity Model* (Pollock &Van Reken, 1996) to further illuminate responses on the *Inclusion of Other in Self* scale (Aron, 1992). The identity model was devised especially for third culture individuals and is based on Pollock and Van Reken's interviews and subsequent insights

on the identity shifts that many of these individuals undergo as they interact with diverse cultures, including their own home culture (Yuliani, Y. Z., & Liyanti, 2021). Although this model is associated with global nomads, it was applied to both internationally mobile and domestic populations within this study because I thought it pertinent to both cohorts and helpful in elucidating their sense of their identity-culture relationship as presented in the IOS scale (Aron, 1992).

The model is frequently presented as a four-quadrant box, with the labels: foreigner, hidden immigrant, adopted, and mirror. Each label includes short descriptors: 1) Look different; think differently (foreigner), 2) Look alike; think differently (immigrant), 3) Look different; think like (adopted), 4) Look alike; think alike (mirror) (Pollock et al., 2017, p. 73). The wording can be slightly different, as seen in Figure 2 taken from Yuliani & Liyantis' (2021) study.

Figure 2. The PolVan Cultural Identity Box

The PolVan Cultural Identity Model
Cultural Identity in Relationship to Surrounding Culture

Foreigner Look *different* Think *different*	Hidden Immigrant Look alike Think *different*
Adopted Look *different* Think alike	Mirror Look alike Think alike

In this study, I removed the labels and turned the descriptions into declarative sentences. I also provided a blank in case a participant wished to compose their own more fitting description. The four statements were: 1) *I look different and think differently from most members of the dominant culture*, 2) *I look like but think differently from most*

members of the dominant culture, 3) *I look different but think like most members of the dominant culture,* and 4) *I look like and think like most members of the dominant culture*. Removal of the labels was thought to prevent emphasis on labels and their possible connotations and instead to focus attention on descriptions of the reality of lived experience. The use of the *PolVan Cultural Identity Model* (1996) was approved by my advisor for face validity.

Conflict Styles

The third quantitative measure directly addressing the construct of conflict management style was the *Styles of Handling Interpersonal Conflict* inventory, or ROCI-II (Rahim, 1983). This measure has a solid track record of testing conflict styles, especially in Western settings, and was therefore thought to be a suitable tool across both samples, as all participants were born and are now residing in the United States. Variations in conflict style preferences in the two samples would be captured in a sound manner (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955, as cited in Hattie & Cooksey, 1984).

Similar to Blake and Mouton's (1964) conflict model, Rahim's inventory envisions interpersonal conflict styles along the dimensions of concern for self and concern for others. One dimension illustrates the degree (high or low) to which an individual strives to fulfill their personal interest, while the second dimension refers to the degree (high or low) to which a person wishes to fulfill others' interests (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979, as cited in Rahim, 1983). These two dimensions form a matrix that incorporates five distinctive styles of handling conflict: integrating, dominating, compromising, avoiding, and obliging, which were of primary concern in this study. The

ROCI-II measure originally consisted of 35 items, later pared to 28, each measured on a 5-point Likert scale with "1" indicating unused or rarely used behavior, and "5" referring to a person's usual behavior. A few example items are, "I try to investigate an issue with my peers to find a solution acceptable to us," and "I give in to the wishes of my peer." Seven items correlate with the integrating style, six with avoiding, five with dominating, six again with obliging, and four with compromising. (See Appendix A for entire measure).

Semi-structured Interviews & Integrative Complexity

The final measure was a semi-structured interview. Several questions encouraged participants to reflect on their responses on the quantitative measures, while others asked for general views of the United States' conflict resolution approach and the nation's general handling of well-known international conflicts, specifically the Afghanistan and Ukraine wars. The questions were approved by two advisors for face validity. All participants answered queries, such as: To what extent does your upbringing inform your responses to the *Inclusion of Other in Self* (Aron, 1992) scale and the *PolVan Cultural Identity* descriptions (Van Reken, 1996), What do you think your predominant approach to interpersonal conflict is? What do you think is the US general approach to/in global conflict? What are your views about US involvement and handling of the Afghanistan and now the Ukraine/Russia conflict? As this was a semi-structured interview, the researcher asked for elaboration when appropriate or an occasional unscripted question, if it seemed pertinent (See Appendix A for interview questions).

Once transcriptions were complete, three responses from each participant (total of 30 responses) were identified for quantitative analysis. These were remarks explicitly addressing the exploratory research questions posed in this study: How do individuals of both cohorts identify themselves with regard to the dominant culture in which they live? What are individuals' interpersonal conflict behavior preferences? What are individuals' perceptions about the US handling of global conflicts?

The three answers were subjected to integrative complexity analysis using the Automated Integrative Complexity tool (https://www.distillanalytics.cutelab.com/upload/) devised by Conway (2014) and Houck et al. (2014) to measure cognitive complexity. Prior to being automated, this method had been used to score an array of topics, across time and languages, and its wide applicability motivated the construction of an automated version (Conway et al., 2014). While the automated version does not align perfectly with human-scored integrative complexity, it nevertheless correlates better with it than any other automated system (ibid.).

Integrative complexity is a linguistic variable and gauges degrees of, among other things, differentiation and integration in a text. Differentiation refers to the inclusion of different perspectives; integration signifies the synthesis of disparate views into a consistent whole (McCullough, 2019). This measurement offers "a potential window into the behind-the-scenes psychology of the human experience" (McCullough & Conway, 2017, p. 2). Based on certain linguistic markers, it can indicate multidimensionality and sophistication of one's thinking. The Automated IC system generates a score from 1 to 7, which I took at face value. Generally speaking, 1 denotes no presence of language markers that imply differentiation or integration, 2-3 signifies evidence of some

differentiation but none of integration, and scores between 4 -7 point to evidence for both differentiation and integration (Conway et al., 2014, p. 614). Thus, a reflection which addresses various perspectives on an issue and illuminates their connection will yield a higher IC score than a comment which does not.

Integrative complexity appeared earlier, in the literature review, and was there defined similarly as the ability and willingness to acknowledge a variety of different points of view on an issue. Additionally, it was suggested that individuals who have lived in unfamiliar cultures and environments are more likely to possess higher levels of this ability (Suedfield, Tetlock, and Streufert 1992, as cited in Heine, 2020). The Auto IC analysis, then, was a fitting means to substantiate this claim. Are there marked differences in integrative complexity between domestically and internationally raised individuals when it comes to their thinking about identity and conflict?

In addition to being examined quantitatively, interview transcripts were qualitatively investigated with attention to patterns and themes that would further this exploration into perceptions of identity and conflict in the two groups. After examining the comments associated with the three responses that had been quantitatively analyzed, I widened the lens to comments that seemed unique to each group, similar across both cohorts, or differed from individual to individual.

CHAPTER IV: PROCEDURES

This study required examination by the University of Oregon Institutional Review Board (IRB) as it involved human research subjects. After reviewing the necessary documents including an overview of the study, description of the measures, and a consent form, the IRB deemed this study of minimal risk.

Participant recruitment began via paper fliers advertising the study and providing the researcher's contact information. Besides an overview of the study, the flier stipulated criteria for the two groups: Participants could be US-born college students (any level) who had resided in at least two foreign cultures during their childhood, or they could be US-born college students (also any level) who had grown up in one state. The leaflets were distributed on designated bulletin boards in various departments and public spaces around the University of Oregon campus. A copy was also shared electronically on the Class of 2023 Facebook page. Two domestic (non-TCI) volunteers contacted the researchers via email. Three participants were classmates of the researcher and volunteered after hearing about the study in class. Meetings with all domestic participants were in-person held in study rooms at the Knight Library.

Third-culture individuals were more difficult to recruit, and after nearly a month of no TCI interest at UO, I submitted a modification to the study to allow for participant solicitation off campus and on social media. After receiving IRB approval for this change, I connected with one TCI via the Facebook group "Families in Global Transition (FIGT) Research Network." Some others came from a long-standing TCK group at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon. After gaining approval from the Lewis & Clark IRB and with the help of their faculty advisor who kindly disseminated my flier

and personally encouraged students to participate, I received a number of emails and was able to enroll three of the group's members in my study. I met with all third culture individuals, including the one at UO, on Zoom.

When individuals expressed interest, whether in person or via email, I first ascertained that their profile fits the required criteria for the relevant group. Once a meeting time and place were scheduled, the consent form was emailed to the participant. It was presented again at the start of the session, and time was allotted to clarifying issues and addressing any concerns. This minimum risk study required verbal consent only. Each participant completed all the measures and received a $10 Starbucks gift certificate for their time. No coercion of any kind was used. Sessions ranged from approximately 40 minutes to 1.5 hours.

After a short overview of the study components and some instructions, participants started by filling out demographics form, followed by the other three measures. These four items were handed out as hard copy materials or, in the case of Zoom sessions, were sent as an attached file to respondents' emails. Participants indicated their preferred set of circles in the *Inclusion of Other in Self* (Aron, 1992) measure with a pencil or via electronic highlighting. They did the same for the *PolVan Cultural Identity* statements (Van Reken, 1996). Likewise, participants ranked each item on the *ROCI-II* inventory (Rahim, 1983) on a 5-point Likert scale. Upon completion individuals kept the measures for reference to be used during the interview. The researcher followed the scripted interview questions and occasionally, as judged necessary and fruitful, asked additional relevant questions to gain a better understanding or access another facet of an interviewee's ideas or experiences. Interviews were

recorded on the researcher's personal, password protected iPhone using the Voice Memos app. They were later transcribed mostly verbatim, only skipping plentiful filler sounds, words, or phrases, such as "um" or "like" or "you know," as long as these did not constitute part of the substance of an utterance. Select responses were later uploaded to be analyzed using the Automated Integrative Complexity tool (Conway, 2014; Houck et al., 2014) as well as examined qualitatively.

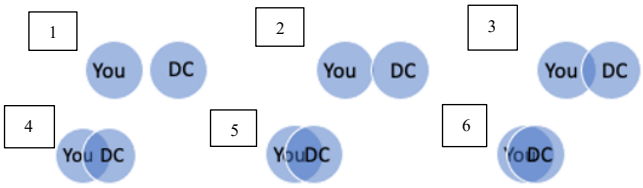
At the end of each session, I assigned a simple alphanumeric code to each participant. This code designates the group, non-TCI or TCI, gender, and participant number. For example, non-TCIM3 refers to the third non-TCI participant who was male (M); TCIF5 refers to the fifth TCI participant who was female (F). The hard copy data from in-person sessions were stored in a folder accessible only to the researcher. Electronically collected data along with transcribed interviews were stored on the researcher's personal and password protected laptop.

CHAPTER V: RESULTS

The aim of this study was to explore whether and how international mobility during the formative years impacts the relationship between identity and the dominant culture. The inquiry then extended to investigation of participants' interpersonal conflict styles and their general views on how the United States manages conflict around the world as well as in two specific conflicts, Afghanistan and Ukraine. The unique element in this study is the presence of a control group. The two groups compared were 1) undergraduate students who had grown up in one US location with its particular cultural milieu, and 2) those who had temporarily lived outside of the US, for a minimum of one year, in one or more foreign countries during the developmental ages of 0 – 18. Four measures were used to illuminate any similarities and differences between the internationally mobile and geographically stable cohorts.

Identity

First, the results on the *Inclusion of Other in Self* (Aron, 1992) scale (Gächter et al., 2015, p. 2) showed much variation inside but not between groups with regard to perceptions of identity as it relates to the dominant culture. The circle sets are numbered for easier reporting.



As shown in Table 2A, among domestic students, two individuals chose set #5. The remaining three each indicated a unique set: #2, #3, and #6. We can say that there's a concentration of domestic individuals on set #5. In the TCI sample (Table 2B), two students identified set #4. One indicated #2; another #3, and the last marked #5. In this cohort, the concentration is on set #4, just one removed from that in the domestic group's.

As far as overlapping responses across groups go, sets #2 and #3 were each marked by one domestic and one TCI student. Set #5 was marked by two domestic and one TCI individual. Sets with no overlap at all were #4 and #6. The former was marked only by two TCIs, and one domestic student chose the latter set. Set #1 was not marked. Set #5, indicating a close relationship between identity and the dominant culture, received the most overall selections (3).

Tables 2A and 2B also reflect results from the *PolVan Cultural Identity* model (Van Reken, 1996) which allowed participants to choose an appropriate identity description. Outcomes were more diverse within the domestic group. Two persons indicated that they "*look different but think like most members of the dominant culture*;" two highlighted "*I look like but think differently from most members of the dominant culture*;" and one composed their own statement, "*I look like and think similarly to members of the dominant culture.*" This variety contrasted with the TCI group all five members of which checked, "*I look like but think differently from most members of the dominant culture.*"

Table 2A. Relationship between Self and Dominant Culture Among Non-TCI Participants

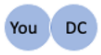
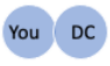
#/ Gender, Racial Background	Inclusion of Other in Self (Aron, 1992)	PolVan Cultural Identity (Van Reken, 1996)
1/F, Mexican/American	5 	I look different but think like most members of the dominant culture
2/M, European-descended/SE Asian	2 	I look different but think like most members of the dominant culture
3/M, European-descended	3 	I look like but think differently from most members of the dominant culture
4/F, European-descended	6 	"I look like and think similarly to members of the dominant culture" (participants' words)
5/F, European-descended	5 	I look like but think differently from most members of the dominant culture

Table 2B. Relationship between Self and Dominant Culture Among TCI Participants

#/ Gender, Racial Background	Inclusion of Other in Self (Aron, 1992)	PolVan Cultural Identity (Van Reken, 1996)
1/F, European-descended	4 	I look like but think differently from most members of the dominant culture
2/F, European-descended	5 	I look like but think differently from most members of the dominant culture
3/F, European-descended	3 	I look like but think differently from most members of the dominant culture
4/F, European-descended	2 	I look like but think differently from most members of the dominant culture
5/F, European-descended	4 	I look like but think differently from most members of the dominant culture

Qualitative Results: Relationship between Self and the Dominant Culture

Following are observations of the responses to the three questions that were first analyzed by the Auto IC tool. Reflections on the relationship between identity and the dominant culture yielded a variety of factors that were the source of the gap between identity and culture (as seen in the choice of IOS circle sets), what I will call the "distance creating elements." Knowledge of another language and racial background were two. For instance, one domestic participant described it as such:

> *"I guess I always felt kind of separated even in Salem in that I don't quite look white, but I don't quite look… I always had to explain, I'm half white and half Southeast Asian. I'm Thai, there's Laos, Cambodia, a little bit of Chinese in there too, and I also have those European Scandinavian genes and British, English, French, German and all that kind of stuff. I am like a weird melting pot."*

For European-descended participants in the non-TCI group, other elements created distance between their identity and the dominant culture. There were differences in thinking attributed to international travel (post 18 years old), active self-improvement work, different perspectives, and disconnects between academic life at the university and a participant's "real world" some 160 miles away.

> *"My ideas are definitely not…like they differ just a little bit just based on my own personal experience and how that differs from the think tank of a college campus 'cause a lot of my classes get really deep into theory while I am more focused on well, this is how the people where I come from think and how they are. I come at things from a slightly different perspective, and I just don't relate to a lot of the issues that have been discussed or that are really prevalent on campus."*

The domestic student who sensed the greatest distance between his identity and the dominant culture and marked the cultural identity statement "*I look like but think differently from most members of the dominant culture*" (Van Reken, 1996) is a European-descended male and described himself in the interview as looking

"*stereotypical"* and "*fit[ting] in perfectly*" into the dominant culture; hardly what one would equate with feeling peripheral. However, he later explained the sources of the considerable gap he perceives:

> "*I grew up way out, 12 miles out of an already rural town, and so until I was like 12, I mainly hung out with people in my class. So, it was teamed up with living out in a secluded area, going to a private [Adventist] school, where I was interacting with the same 20 kids every day. And so, I don't relate to the dominant culture where I reside [now] very much at all. There are some similarities, but for the most part, I find it very hard to talk to people, or to relate to things especially in the culture that I'm a part of. Mainly, a big aspect of that is wealth…"*

The same participant stressed another element which makes him feel removed from the dominant culture: " *I learned most of my lessons from nature because you know, in the private school as well, there wasn't a whole lot of social...it's like being homeschooled."*

This rural-urban divide as well as wealth disparity resulted in a perceived chasm between identity and the dominant culture that was wider on the *Inclusion of Other in Self scale* (Aron, 1992) than that of three out of the five third culture individuals. A related observation is the fact that this participant's definition of "dominant culture" was quite distinct. Where other students, both domestic and internationally mobile, conceived of dominant culture as the city they currently live in, or their campus community, this participant zeroed in on the fraternity community he had recently joined.

In the TCI cohort, comprised entirely of white European-descended participants, (all of whom, as stated earlier, selected the cultural identity statement "*I look similar but think differently than most members of the dominant culture*"), appearance did not factor in as a distance creating element between identity and the dominant culture in which they

now find themselves. One source of distance repeated by all five was their divergent thinking which all of them attributed, to varying degrees, to their international upbringing. For instance:

> *"I realize I have my own culture that doesn't exist outside of my family because it's a blend of different realities so I will always I think be that middle overlap kind of understanding and agreeing with sections of it [dominant culture] but then having my own perspective…and that contributes a lot you know that affected by the fact that I grew up overseas, so I have a different perspective. I grew up with my parents getting the American culture but then we worked with a lot of other missionaries. We had Koreans, Swiss, Germans, and Canadians."*

Another third culture individual explained:

> *"…at the moment, I'm living in a relatively affluent area and a lot of kids that I'm around never... they don't really understand what it's like to live in a third world country and they also don't understand what it's like to live in a third world country when the country is in the middle of a huge recession, there's lots of political problems, there are riots in the streets, and you have to drive around in bullet-proof cars and live in a neighborhood with armed guards. I do think that I have a different perspective because of that."*

Furthermore, the very same two TCIs quoted above also made comments that align with the notion of the feeling unrecognized and alienated that third culture research often reports and create distance between themselves and the dominant culture (Pollock et al., 2017).

> *"In some ways, I'm jealous of the people who don't look American, the people who do stand out because people ask them questions… people just assume I grew up in America, they shrug it off, they ignore it… 'cause they can't process it as much 'cause you look like us how can you be different? So, in that way, I feel like I'm overlooked…"*

> *"...in Brazil, I looked and thought differently from most members of the dominant culture and then I go back to the US, and I find that I look like but think differently, so it's a different kind of alienation."*

Other distance-creating elements TCIs brought up were their early awareness of embedded assumptions about different cultures, including their own passport culture, early exposure to an array of lifepath and lifestyle possibilities, exposure at an early age to contrasting values which they felt they later at least partly integrated with their own, lack of knowledge about US culture, and for those who had lived in a location where European-descendeds were the minority, the powerful experience of being seen as a privileged "foreigner," "*looking different and thinking differently while in their host culture(*s)" (Van Reken, 1996). These five distance-creating elements were unique to the internationally raised population.

Another observation related to the identity – culture relationship concerns the variation in weight participants assigned to the distance-creating elements or misalignments. To illustrate, consider an outlier in the domestic group. One participant marked the last circle set in the 2nd row which represents the closest possible distance between identity and dominant culture. She also composed her own descriptor for the PolVan cultural identity: "*I look like and I think similarly to most members of the dominant culture.*" In the interview, she reflected:

> "*I've done a lot of education of my own within the university, but I've also done a bunch of study abroad… I haven't lived abroad, but I've been, and I think that changes my perception enough… I do think that I've done a lot of work to try to be more globally minded and aware of what culture difference is. I've done a lot of skill building in understanding different cultures and understanding how to navigate situations like that, so I think in that I'm slightly different, but I don't think enough that I'd put [think] 'differently'."*

Her international experience and global mindset (as well as her attendance at a dual-immersion school) did not prompt her to mark circles that were farther apart. In contrast, the previously described domestic male participant who indicated circles that were barely

touching felt vastly different even though he lacked, to the researcher's knowledge, any international experience and did not indicate any interest in enhanced intercultural sensitivity. These two participants appear to value their experiences differently. There was also a case that exemplified difference in weight assignment to one's experience in the TCI group, where a participant who had spent 7 years growing up internationally, and in the quite different (from US) Cambodian and Indian cultures, contemplated:

> "*I picked the second row the first set [of circles]. My first instinct was actually a different one, it was the third one on the top row, but when I thought about it some more, I do think I have more in common than I usually tend to say with US culture. I look the same as the people with whom I'm living now in the US, but I do feel that a lot of, especially my core values, are different from the rest of my peers, people my age, who I would say are monocultural, have only lived in the US*."

Her overseas childhood distanced her from the dominant culture, but perhaps not to the extent one might expect. She explained that overlaps, such as her appearance and "*knowledge of pop culture, where my family has come from or my heritage or even my early upbringing or like going to US college and graduating from high school in the US*" are important, and these played a decisive role in her circle selection.

To summarize, results on the *Inclusion of Other in Self* scale (Aron, 1992) coupled with the cultural identity statements show more diversity in the domestic than the TCI group. In terms of reflections shared in the interviews, we can see that distance-creating elements differ between the groups, with international experience and related aspects being named as a primary contributor to the gap sensed between identity and dominant culture.

Conflict Styles

Conflict styles were tabulated based on participants' responses to the *Styles of Handling Interpersonal Conflict* ROCI-II inventory (Rahim, 1983). Guided by the association of items as to the different styles of integrating, avoiding, dominating, obliging, and compromising provided in Table 1 in "A Measure of Styles of Handling Interpersonal Conflict" (Rahim, 1983, p. 371, 372), I averaged individuals' scores for each style. Within the group of participants raised exclusively in the US, two scored highest on integrating, one on compromising, and one on dominating. One student preferred avoiding. Results in the TCI group were similar. Two participants scored highest on integrating, two on compromising, and the score for obliging and avoiding were tied in the case of one person. The main difference is that no one in the TCI group had dominating as their top tendency, while nobody in the non-TCI group identified obliging as their highest inclination.

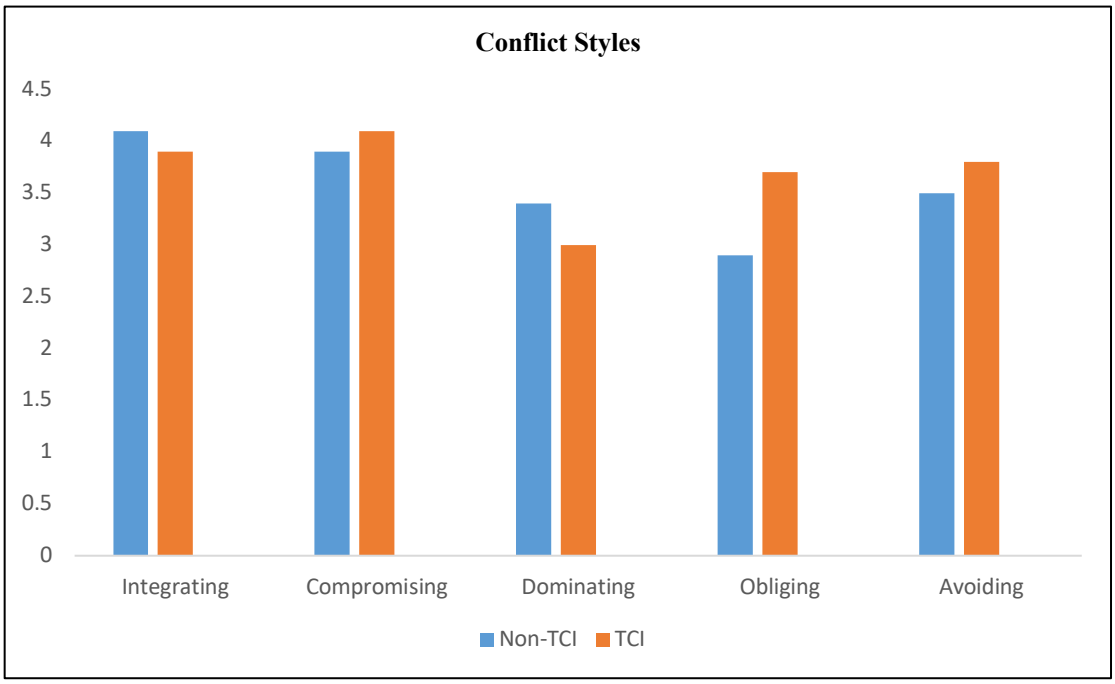
An additional step was calculating the average for each style within the samples in order to facilitate cross-sample comparison. The averages between cohorts with regard to integrating, compromising, dominating, and avoiding differ by no more than .4: on integrating non-TCI's average was 4.1 and TCIs' 3.9. Those exact averages were flipped for compromising. Non-TCIs averaged 3.4 and TCIs 3.0 on dominating. Avoiding averages were 3.5 for non-TCIs and 3.8 for TCIs. The smallest divergence is a .2 difference in averages for the use of integrating and compromising style. The largest contrast is in the use of the obliging style, where domestic students averaged at 2.9 and TCIs 3.7. Both individual and group averages results are presented in Table 3A and in

graphic form in 3B. The latter renders clearly visible the slight differences in averages between the two samples and the single more pronounced contrast in the obliging style.

Table 3. Conflict Styles of Non-TCI and TCI Participants

Non-TCI	**Integrating**	**Compromising**	**Dominating**	**Obliging**	**Avoiding**
1/ F	4.4	4.0	2.8	2.2	2.0
2/ M	2.9	3.5	1.8	3.6	3.8
3/ M	4.6	4.8	3.6	2.5	4.5
4/ F	4.3	3.8	3.6	3.8	3.0
5/ F	4.1	3.3	5.0	2.5	4.3
Group average	**4.1**	**3.9**	**3.4**	**2.9**	**3.5**
TCI					
1/F	4.6	3.8	2.2	3.8	4.5
2/F	3.6	4.5	2.2	3.8	4.2
3/F	3.3	3.3	3.6	3.7	3.7
4/F	5.0	4.8	4.2	4.0	2.5
5/F	3.1	4.3	3.0	3.0	4.0
Group average	**3.9**	**4.1**	**3.0**	**3.7**	**3.8**

Figure 3. Conflict Styles of Non-TCI and TCI Participants



Qualitative Results: Conflict Styles

With regard to the noted discrepancy in the use of the obliging style, where domestic students' average was appreciably lower than the internationally mobile students', a few relevant remarks from the interviews illumined that unfamiliar norms and a language barrier may have been possible reason the TCI obliging average was higher:

> *"…I didn't know the language fully, so I couldn't communicate fully so I learned to just go along with things, do this you don't argue, it's just the way it is. I tend not to push my view or argue because I spent my whole life just going along 'cause it's just easier to listen especially when I'd be taking classes 1st grade 2nd grade and the gym teacher would say do this and I'd be like I don't get what that, I only understood half of what you said but ok, just go along with that what other people do and how they do it."*

> *"…there were so many times where I didn't have the right answer growing up because I was there to learn whereas in the US it's kind of weird being like oh,*

I'm supposed to know what this culture is, so I wonder if I do maybe concede more because I was raised in this way where I'm not in charge here because I don't always know what I'm doing and also, I was a child…"

Although the two individuals quoted above were the only ones who valued obliging as an appropriate response, their individual obliging scores on the ROCI-II (Rahim, 1983) were not in their top two. Scores on Rahim's (1983) inventory and responses about which conflict style participants thought is their most usual, did not necessarily line up. For instance, the transcultural participant whose obliging score was highest in the TCI group, never spoke about this style in the interview.

A second observation was made based on responses to the question: How do you feel that your internationally mobile upbringing or the culture you grew up in (for non-TCIs) affected the way you handle conflict? Several participants from both groups attributed their preferred style to a mixture of their own personality and life circumstances. Here's a TCI describing this combination of influences:

"*I've always been pretty aggressive when I deal with conflict. I do think that living in Brazil made me just even more assertive because I don't like if I …for example, I spent a lot of time in Brazil being treated pretty badly 'cause I was an outsider. I went to school in an international school, but I was the only American in the entire school…I don't ever really shy away from conflict just because I have [specific] experiences and I also have a very strong perspective on the way I'd like to be treated in the world…"*

The above speaker recognized an innate tendency to be more assertive and that living abroad and under certain circumstances augmented that proclivity. Another TCI echoed the mixture of personality and overseas experience effects on conflict handling, which in her case, made her more meek:

"I feel there's a balance between my personality. I'm very quiet and keep to myself, but growing up overseas made that more extreme, so I had a thing where I

actually didn't talk much for at least a couple of years because I got sick of people making fun of me and my Russian skills…. I'm introverted…just how much the humiliation, not being able to fit in completely, drove me to an extreme. I couldn't communicate fully so I learned to just along with things. It even affects me here in America. I might know English well, but occasionally they'll say phrases or references I don't know what that means. Just observe what everybody else does and go with it. They say something, they say it's a bad idea, I'm like ok, who am I to know better?"

A few domestic students also recognized the combination of temperament coupled with a perception of being made fun of, bullied, or even witnessing that behavior in others as factors that impacted the way they prefer to handle conflict. For instance,

"Well, I've always kind of known that I've really tried to avoid conflicts. I would see my peers [at school] would get bullied and it would almost always end not good. They would always end up in tears or stressed out. I had one friend who pretty much dropped out of school and was homeschooled because he had so much grief against him. He would always try to stand his ground in arguments, but I probably figured that "Oh, if I could just avoid poking the bear, so to speak, I could avoid conflicts."

To summarize, the results on the ROCI-II inventory showed little difference between the two cohorts except in the obliging conflict style, which averaged higher in the TCI group. The higher value on obliging might be at least partly explained by a young person feeling linguistically and culturally distant in their surroundings. The second observation about how a mobile vs. a stable childhood affects conflict style was that members in both samples recognized the combined influence of personality and culture on their conflict style.

Identity & Conflict Styles

Quantitative results from the *Inclusion of Other in Self* scale (Aron, 1992) and the *ROCI-II* inventory (Rahim, 1983) could be placed side by side to determine what links, if

any, may exist between individuals' perceptions of identity and their preferred choice of interpersonal conflict management styles (see Tables 4A and 4B). To extend the comparison, I added the dual dimensions of concern associated with each conflict style.

The results showed some degree of order within the domestic cohort. Participants #1 and #4, both of whom indicated close relationships between identity and the dominant culture, circle sets #5 and #6, respectively, favored the integrating style of conflict resolution, which is associated with a high concern for self and for others. Participants #2 and #3, who chose circles set farther apart, sets #2 and #3 (respectively), scored highest on avoiding and compromising. Avoiding links to low concern for self and other, while compromising is average on both. Finally, participant #5, having identified the close circles in set #5, had their strongest score in dominating, with high concern only for oneself.

Results in the third culture individual group were ordered to a similar degree. Participants #1, #2, and #5, who selected closely overlapping circles, sets #4 and #5, scored highest on integrating and compromising, again associated with high to average concern for self and others. Participant #3 with circle set #3, depicting a farther relationship of identity to dominant culture, had equally high scores for obliging and avoiding, both of which are associated with low concern for self. Participant #4 who chose set #2 with barely touching circles, associated most strongly with integrating.

Comparing the groups in terms of dimensions of concern only, the non-TCI cohort included three individuals with conflict styles that correspond to high concern for self and other, one with a style associated with average concern for self and other, and one that preferred a conflict style linking with low concern for self and other. The results

for the TCI cohort were similar, with two participants indicating a high concern for self and other conflict style, two with average concern, and one whose conflict style scores were equivalent for obliging and avoiding, low concern for self and high for other or low concern for both, respectively.

Zooming out to view this data in a broader fashion and across both groups yields the following. First, in individuals who chose *Inclusion of Other in Self* (Aron, 1992) circles depicting a strong to relatively strong overlapping relationship of identity to dominant culture (sets #4, #5, and #6) had scored highest on conflict styles that are associated with high to average concern for self and other (Rahim, 1983). Second, individuals who selected circles that were farther apart (sets #2 and # 3) preferred conflict styles that ranged from average concern to low concern for self and other. Both samples had one outlier. In the non-TCI cohort, participant #5 who chose a circle set #5 favored a style with high concern for self and low for others; in the TCI cohort, participant #4 who selected circle set #2 preferred a style connected with high concern for self and others.

Table 4A. Identity and Conflict Style Preferences Among Non-TCI Participants

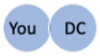
#/ Gender, Racial Background	Inclusion of Other in Self (Aron, 1992)	ROCI-II Conflict Style (Rahim, 1983)	Dimensions of Concern
1/F, Mexican/American	5 	Integrating (4.4)	High for Self & Other
2/M, European-descended/SE Asian	2 	Avoiding (3.8)	Low for Self & Other
3/M, European-descended	3 	Compromising (4.8)	Average for Self & Other
4/F, European-descended	6 	Integrating (4.3)	High for Self & Other
5/F, European-descended	5 	Dominating (5.0)	High for Self & Low for Other

Table 4B. Identity and Conflict Style Preferences Among TCI Participants

#/ Gender, Racial Background	Inclusion of Other in Self (Aron, 1992)	ROCI-II Conflict Style (Rahim, 1983)	Dimensions of Concern
1/F, European-descended	4 	Integrating (4.6)	High for Self & Other
2/F, European-descended	5 	Compromising (4.5)	Average for Self & Other
3/F, European-descended	3 	Obliging & Avoiding (3.7)	Low for Self, High for Other/ Low for Self & Other
4/F, European-descended	2 	Integrating (5.0)	High for Self & Other
5/F, European-descended	4 	Compromising (4.3)	Average for Self & Other

Integrative Complexity

The results of the analysis of three interview responses using the Automated Integrative Complexity tool are the following. The domestic participants' responses to the identity question ranged in integrative complexity from 2.0 to 2.6, with an average of 2.3. Their interpersonal conflict style answers varied more, from 2.1 to 3.0, with 2.4 as the average; and their remarks on how the United States handles global conflicts displayed the greatest variance extending from 1.0 to 2.7, with an average of 2.0. This group's highest IC average is associated with reflections on personal conflict management behaviors, and the lowest corresponds to their answers to the broader question of the United States' conflict management approach.

In the case of third culture participants, identity responses started at an IC score of 2.2 and extended to 3.3, with an average of 2.7. Interpersonal conflict style replies ranged between 2.0 and 6.0, with an average of 4.0, and comments on the United States' approach to managing global conflict spanned the greatest distance, between 1.8 and 7.0, with a 3.3 average. Overall, replies to all three queries in the TCI group revealed a wider range of integrative complexity and higher group averages as compared with the domestic group. The highest IC average, as in the case of non-TCI students, was on responses about participants' own conflict resolution styles; the lowest average, and in contrast to the domestic cohort, was on remarks about identity and dominant culture. Individuals' scores and averages for each question in both samples can be viewed in Table 5 and are also presented in Figure 1, which illustrates the amount of variation in IC scores across the two groups. The highest IC score on the response about identity was 3.3 and came from TCI participant #5; the highest IC score on interpersonal conflict style

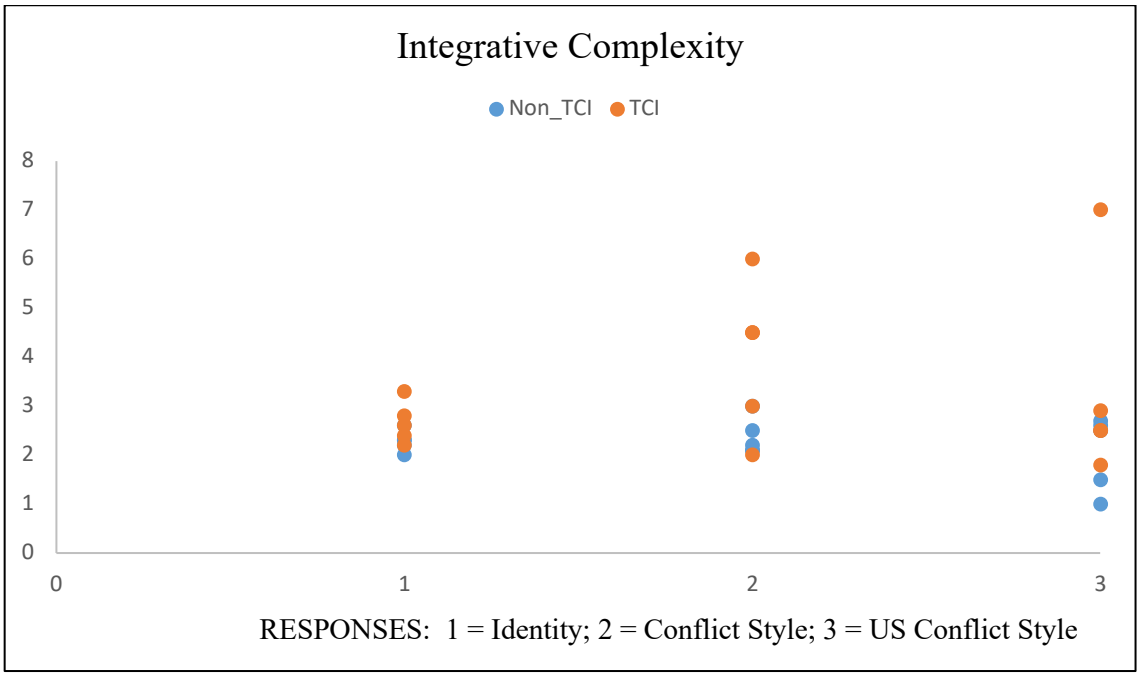
was 6.0 and came from TCI #3; 7.0 was the top IC score on the response about US conflict style and came from TCI #1. It was not the same TCI participant who consistently scored highest. At least two global nomads' IC scores were higher than domestic individuals' on each question.

Table 5. Integrative Complexity Scores* for 3 Interview Questions
(Rounded to nearest tenth)

Non-TCI	**Response re identity & dominant culture**	**Response re interpersonal conflict style**	**Response re general US conflict style**
1/F	2.3	2.1	2.5
2/M	2.3	2.1	2.7
3/M	2.2	2.2	2.6
4/F	2.0	3.0	1.0
5/F	2.6	2.5	1.5
Group Average	**2.3**	**2.4**	**2.0**
TCI			
1/F	2.6	3.0	7.0
2/F	2.8	4.5	2.5
3/F	2.2	6.0	1.8
4/F	2.4	4.5	2.5
5/F	3.3	2.0	2.9
Group Average	**2.7**	**4.0**	**3.3**

**IC scores reflect those calculated in the document format. Scores from the paragraph format were compared, and there was no substantive difference.*

Figure 4. Integrative Complexity



Additional Qualitative Results

Other than reflections related to identity-culture relationship and conflict style, three other sets of responses showed noteworthy patterns which may offer insights to this exploration: one regarding adjustment of personal conflict behavior, views on the United States' conflict resolution approach, and thoughts on the US's management of the wars in Afghanistan and in Ukraine.

Adjustment of Conflict Behavior

Overwhelmingly, the internationally mobile cohort members answered "yes" to the question: Do you adjust your behavior in conflict with individuals from other cultures? One domestic student also affirmed; she had had international experience. The other four brought up contextual and age distinctions that elicit an altered conflict approach, for instance, in frictions at home or school, and with an older person or a peer.

Though these aspects were also broached in the TCI cohort, the TCIs predominantly reflected on situations involving American peers who do or do not share overseas childhood experiences and how conflict handling shifts for them accordingly. For example, these two participants explained their behavioral differences in arguments with US peers who had lived abroad vs. those who had not:

> *"I enjoy having arguments with them [people with international experience] 'cause it's easier to argue about things in another country that someone's actually been to. People who haven't moved at all when they try to speak on other people's experiences in different cultures, I don't… it's not that I don't like it, it's just I don't feel as though they're as valid because they're not their own experiences and I feel like thy could be skewing the experience and they can be skewing the situation and so I don't always take those arguments as seriously... I'll avoid it if I can."*

> *"I think I do respond differently you know. I would maybe, this is where the power thing comes in, I would use my international experience as an advantage in a confrontation or any kind of conflict with somebody who's only lived in the US, like maybe I do sometimes think, 'oh, I think I know a little bit more than you do because' I've had these experiences whereas with my other international friends, it's like no, we're all on the same playing field, we all have different cultural backgrounds."*

Another TCI explained that she readily challenges people from the US on their claims and ideas. In contrast, she uses a lighter touch with people from a foreign culture, whom she questions more deeply and is slow to judge in a disagreement. A similar sentiment was echoed by another TCI:

> *"So, generally with Americans, I'm extremely direct, I'm like a rhinoceros. I go barreling into a situation. I'm like, well this what I want, this is what you want, let's figure out a way, and I don't like what you're doing, and I don't like what you're doing. But when I'm talking to someone in another culture, I think I can address it differently depending on what I know about the way they're going to react, so I can be more tentative. I'm a little bit more delicate when I talk to people from other places."*

On the side of the TCIs, there is evidence for different treatment and conflict behavior with American peers, depending on their international experience. Those who had lived or traveled abroad seem to be considered members of the TCI culture; those who had not belong to a different culture. Related, there is a particular attunement toward people from foreign cultures and adjustment of behavior in conflictual situations.

United States' Conflict Style

When asked, what do you think has been the United States' approach to handling global conflict? members of both cohorts categorized it as dominating or very close to dominating. A few of the strongest comments from the domestic group are exemplified here:

> *"Terrible. Horrible. I think domination for sure, and at least it was very much so… we kind of act as the police of the world, like we kind of set the standard of how people should live, people should experience life."*

> *"Dominating. Immediately. I hate the United States. I just, we just go in and we push our culture."*

Here are two examples from TCIs :

> "*Dominating. I think the countries would like to say that they're compromising, but I feel like in a lot of situations it's dominate because they don't take the time to understand what would be a true compromise…"*

> *"Dominating to genocidal proportions."*

The pattern of responses to this question was the same; all participants viewed the United States role in conflict handling as negative.

US Management of Conflicts in Afghanistan and Ukraine

The last question to yield a noticeable response pattern was the inquiry into participants' broad views of the US' handling of the 20-year conflict in Afghanistan and the current war in Ukraine. Once again, as in the general question about the United States conflict style, the opinions about Afghanistan were very similar within and across groups. It may be important to keep in mind that although the Afghanistan conflict lasted for all the participants' lifetimes, there was discrepancy in the amount of knowledge each person felt they possessed about this war. Nevertheless, all deemed the United States' role there as ineffective, insensitive, and misguided as exemplified by the following excerpts:

> "*It just seems like that war lasted far longer than it should maybe you know needed to, but I definitely think that was just domination or protection of you know our interests as a result of 9/11*." (non-TCI)

> "*I don't know how we would've handled that better because I also don't think there was a need for us to be there. I don't think it's really our fight. I know that 9/11 happened, which is a big deal but was it ok for us to spend 20 years there?"* (non-TCI)

> *"...it felt like the whole situation didn't result in anything either good or bad; it just didn't do anything in the long and so I feel like it was just a mess of a situation. I feel like the US tried to go in and do the dominance thing, and it didn't work quite exactly in their favor, and I mean it shouldn't always work exactly in their favor 'cause it's not always the best thing for other countries."* (TCI)

> *"...it's a waste of resources for a show of power in a place that technically wasn't involved in… I would think it's just emblematic of the way we dominate for the sake of a power show, power trip, for the sake of showing the world like we will keep you destroyed, like not even destroy you, we will keep you destroyed so that you can't even recover well, or if you can it's not going to be for decades."* (TCI)

The Ukraine conflict management drew a diverse set of reactions, from cautious praise to criticism, and there was some overlap among opinions across the two groups.

Two domestic students and two TCIs expressed that the United States is not doing enough, especially given that Ukraine has repeatedly asked for assistance. Two domestic students praised the US for its restrained and more humanitarian-centered approach, and although one TCI supported the humanitarian effort, they also criticized it as "just another show." Finally, one student from each cohort spoke about the detrimental vilification of Russia and referred to US history, which is replete with instances of United States' unprovoked aggression toward smaller and weaker states. Thus, there was at once diversity in the comments but also several similarities across groups so that it would be difficult to say with any certainty which remarks were made by which individual.

CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION

The aims of this study were to explore how international mobility relates to identity, conflict styles, and views on international conflicts and their management by the US. A mixed methods approach was applied to examine two samples: US-born third culture individuals who have lived some part of their childhoods outside of the US, and individuals who experienced a more traditional, geographically stable upbringing in Oregon. The research questions were: Do internationally mobile individuals (here TCIs), often considered "global citizens," identify differently with the cultures in which they currently live (post-international experience) from individuals who have grown up domestically, in one place in the US? Do they possess markedly differing styles in interpersonal conflict management? Do they have unique perspectives on global conflict and its handling by the United States? The data also allowed for comparison of identity and conflict styles, thus some insight regarding that relationship could be gleaned.

Broadly, results of the four measures applied in this study point to more "no's" to the above questions indicating more similarities than differences between the two groups. At least in the areas of identity-dominant culture relationship, conflict style, and views of international conflict, it is difficult to draw a definitive line between a third culture individual and one that has been raised in a single place. However, the overall higher integrative complexity averages for the TCI group suggest some contrasts.

First, results from the *Inclusion of Other in Self* (Aron, 1992) measure, with broad variation within both cohorts suggests that individuals, whether growing up partly outside of the United States or in one place within the country, can view their identities at similar distances in relation to the dominant culture. Thus, although an international childhood

can contribute to a sense of distance between identity and the dominant culture, it appears to be one of myriad factors. The amount of significance one gives to a "distance-creating element," which is another way of saying that individuals bestowed more or less significance on certain group memberships, came into play (Tajfel, 1981). Some TCIs identified more with their American identity (dominant culture) than did others; some domestic students identified more with their academic university identity (dominant culture) than did others (Reimer et al., 2020; Turner & Haslam, 2001, as cited in Haslam et al., 2012). Suffice it to say that at the core, much of the perception of disconnect from the dominant culture appeared to stem from a sense of not understanding and not being understood by "the other," an attribute frequently associated with third culture individuals but one that was seen in this study to apply equally well to those raised in one place (Moore & Barker, 2012).

Similarly, results from the *PolVan Cultural Identity* measure (Van Reken, 1996) with additional information offered in the interviews, supports a conclusion that both domestic and internationally mobile persons can feel out of step or "culturally peripheral and excessively unique" to similar extents, though for different reasons (Schaetti, 2000; Murphy, 2003; Grimshaw & Sears, 2008; Cottrell, 2006, as cited in Moore & Barker, 2012). The *PolVan Cultural Identity* (Van Reken, 1996) statements sans their labels of hidden immigrant, foreigner, adopted, and mirror proved just as applicable to third culture individuals, for whom they were originally devised, as to the domestic students. Recall from the literature review that "*I look similar but think differently than most members of the dominant culture*" corresponds to what Pollock and Van Reken (1996) classified as a "hidden immigrant." Three non-TCI respondents chose this statement, and

this calls into question the boundary between TCIs and people who grew up in one place. Both domestically brought up and internationally mobile participants either explicitly or implicitly expressed misalignments between their values and those present in the dominant culture (Hoare, 2002, as cited in in Sokol, 2009; Schwartz, 2001). Hence, the data show that it does not take an internationally mobile childhood to lack a sense of fitting in inside one's passport country and home culture.

Conflict style results from the *ROCI-II* inventory (Rahim, 1983) varied little between the groups, with the exception of the use of the obliging conflict style, which was higher in the TCI population. Yet, overall, an international upbringing did not link convincingly with any particular conflict style. As noted in the literature review, management styles in the United States tend to generally be more assertive; these are represented in the dominating conflict resolution style. However, problem-solving (or integrating) and compromising are also valued (Holt & Devore, 2005). In this study, the participants in both groups largely supported this pattern, with two in each cohort scoring highest on integrating; again, two in each on compromising; and one in the non-TCI group on dominating. One non-TCI and one TCI student preferred avoiding but that too is not a deviation if we consider Cai and Fink's (2002) finding on the level of the individual where avoiding was equally common in both persons who lean toward collectivism and individualism.

With regard to the elevated average in obliging for the TCIs, one possible inference that is supported by several interview responses, is that a wholly unfamiliar environment may naturally encourage obliging, especially in children who have less power than adults. It is interesting that the two individuals who spoke about obliging had

lived in Kyrgyzstan, Cambodia, and India, all of which are considered collectivistic cultures, where group needs and harmony are emphasized (Hofstede, 1980, as cited in Gomez & Taylor, 2018). It is plausible that collectivistic values exerted added pressure to oblige. If nothing else, the data in this study support Wafa's (1995) contention that there are personality and psychological factors which exert influence on what conflict style one uses (as cited in Gbadamosi et al., 2014). To sum up, neither the quantitative nor the qualitative results led to a conclusion that conflict styles were strongly affected by an international childhood. Thus, though a new self and an interstitial culture may arise during an international upbringing, conflict styles do not appear to be a part of the "third culture."

The additional juxtaposition of data on identity and conflict styles yielded similar results in both samples, in each of which four individuals followed one of two patterns. Either they identified closely or relatively closely with the dominant culture and preferred a conflict style that is associated with at least an average concern for self and other, or they indicated a more distant relationship with the dominant culture and favored a conflict style that showed at most average concern for self and other. Both groups also had one outlier each. The pattern across groups suggests that feelings of a tighter relationship with a group, irrespective of upbringing, may elevate one's desire to work out disputes in a way that involves at least a 50/50 give and take, compromising. On the other hand, the perception of a looser, more distant relationship to the dominant culture, again regardless of the level of mobility in one's childhood, might encourage conflict management that caps at compromising. This results appears to illustrate, once more, Tajfel's (1968) notion that the social self includes not just group membership per se, but

the "value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (as cited in Sussman, p. 357). Closer group membership links with conflict styles that tend in the direction of mutual enhancement.

Interestingly, though self-identified third culture individuals often report feeling marginalized, unacknowledged, and lacking the motivation to collaborate and reach agreement with American peers (Reimer et al., 2020; Sussman, 2000; Turner & Haslam, 2001, as cited in Haslam et al., 2012; Van Reken, 1996), the TCI outlier whose identity, distant to dominant culture, lined up with their preferred conflict style, integrating, challenges these findings because this pairing suggests that perceptions of marginalization can co-exist with collaboration in conflict situations. This TCI's sense of being different and removed, common to many global nomads, loosens their allegiances yet simultaneously may help their ability to see a bigger picture and seek a fair resolution for all involved (Sussman, 2000; Smith & Kearney, 2016).

To some extent, the results of the final quantitative measure, the *Automated Integrative Complexity* tool, was one that hinted at a distinction between the two samples in this study. Recall that TCIs aggregate integrative complexity scores on the three interview responses analyzed using the Auto IC tool were consistently higher. Especially in remarks about their identity and even more so about their own conflict styles, the TCI cohort's higher IC averages are in line with Suedfield, Tetlock, and Streufert's (1992) claim that integrative complexity is higher in individuals who have lived in unfamiliar cultures (as cited in Heine, 2020). The early exposure to sometimes vastly different behaviors, sounds, smells, and atmospheres, not to mention the sense of perpetually being a foreigner, might be a driver for developing more complex thinking about one's identity

during the developmental years. Indeed, as Cottrell (2007) explained, those growing up in different cultures are often particularly self-reflective. The IC average on the responses to the question about the US' handling of conflicts was also higher than the average in the non-TCI cohort, although it was skewed upward by one TCI's individual score. Therefore, on this particular question at least, we cannot say that even a majority much less the whole group had higher marks. The topic of US conflict style is rather far removed from childhood experiences, unless a third culture individual was raised by diplomat parents, which none of the TCIs in this study were. Whether international mobile or not, the complexity of responses to this question more likely depends on a person's interest in and awareness of history, politics, and access to news.

Discussion of Additional Interview Contents

Here, I turn my attention to the qualitative analysis of three additional responses which were not analyzed by the Auto IC tool. With regard to responses about conflict style adjustment, we can say that childhood international mobility does appear to connect, with global nomads showing an increased tolerance and patience for foreigners and nationals who share international experience. This appears to align with Sussman's (2000) claim that repatriated TCIs display a less favorable affect toward their home culture. Indeed, some interview data further strengthen this assertion. TCIs tended to be somewhat critical of American peers who lack international experience unlike peers who share a mobility background, whom transcultural individuals also find more credible and engaging. This supports Pollock et al.'s (2017) observations that TCIs naturally feel more connected to those who have had similar international experiences and conforms with

deWaal and Born's (2021) study findings that TCIs feel greater affinity toward those who have moved and lived abroad. And with this greater affinity comes greater cultural sensitivity (Useem & Cottrell, 1996; Fail et. al, 2004, Pollock et al., 2017).

The fact that both domestic and internationally raised participants had nearly identical reflection about the manner in which the United States deals with global conflict is very interesting. On the one hand, these findings match once again with recent research by de Waal and Born (2021) suggesting that third culture individuals show a subtractive cultural shift. However, domestically raised students shared these strong opinions. This invites speculation about other elements besides international residence during formative years that shapes views about one's home country and its behavior in the international arena. One possible element might be a liberal college education itself, in which all of the participants in this study were engaged. Critical analyses of United States' actions in the world as presented in global studies or anthropology classes, which several participants had taken, can play a role in students' construction of negative views about the nation's conflict handling across the globe.

Lastly, on the question about the US' handling of conflict in Afghanistan and Ukraine, the responses across groups were also very similar. Everyone disparaged the US' role in Afghanistan, and there was a balance of praise and mixed feelings about the approach to war in Ukraine across groups. No outstanding differences in views indicates that an international upbringing did not provide TCIs with perspectives that are markedly different from those of individuals who grew up in the US. Asked whether there is a different or better way that these conflict could have/could be handled, respondents in both cohorts mentioned better communication, listening to what those on the ground

need, and more collaboration with other nations. Neither group distinguished itself by suggesting unique approaches or conceptualizations of these conflicts, though one TCI and one domestic student stood out in their depth of knowledge about the Ukrainian war. Third culture individuals are said to be creative, possess a broader worldview, and have a heightened awareness of the complexity behind problems (Moore & Barker, 2012; Haneda & Manobe, 2009). Though this may be true in particular contexts, when it comes to the question regarding the US' handling of global conflicts, it can be inferred that an internationally mobile childhood is not necessarily correlated with a broader or deeper view of global conflict issues.

CHAPTER VII: IMPLICATIONS

The conclusions based on the results of this small exploration lead to some thought-provoking implications. First, we must be careful when assuming that a person who has experienced an international upbringing necessarily feels more removed from the dominant culture; it is likewise erroneous to suppose that someone brought up in one place with its particular culture automatically feels close to the dominant culture in a place no more than 100 miles away from their hometown.

The finding that third culture individuals view foreigners or those who share international experience differently, more favorably, in dispute situations, invites a reexamination of the association of cultural sensitivity with global nomads. Perhaps this descriptor overemphasizes "foreign culture sensitivity" and overlooks one quite large sub-culture within the United States? After all, when it comes to being a global citizens, it seems equally important to exhibit sensitivity toward those with diverse backgrounds as toward compatriots, including those with more traditional childhoods. Thus, this finding further implies that TCIs, just like non-TCIs, harbor certain prejudices; everyone can benefit from working on raising them to awareness those in order to reach common understanding and better conflict outcomes.

No marked differences in preferred conflict styles between those who were raised internationally and those raised domestically (in one place) leads to the conclusion that individuals in this study operate similarly, within the bounds of the five conflict styles on the inventory, when confronted with frictions. Though some TCIs were sensitized to concepts such as saving face, there was no evidence to suggest that they had created a new unique style of handling conflict that might be considered an element of the "third

culture." Further, the loose pattern identified in pairing the IOS results with preferred conflict styles very generally implies that strengthening the link between identity and dominant culture may effect conflict style in the direction of compromising or integrating. In the reverse direction, it is also plausible that learning about and working on one's conflict style may close the distance between identity and culture.

Though a couple memorable conflict-related practices witnessed in their host cultures were mentioned by TCIs, such as saving face or shaming students in front of a class, it appears that these approaches did not so much change as strengthen whatever innate tendencies were already in place. This effect was also described by a few domestic students. Witnessing bullying only reinforced one respondent's propensity to avoid friction, whether culturally different or not, conflict behaviors of others do exert influence on our own proclivities.

Finally, even though other measures and many of the interview responses did not show large differences between the samples, the elevated integrative complexity averages for the TCI group imply that, all other measures aside, there is something qualitatively unique and profound about experiencing one or more entirely unfamiliar environment(s) during one's developmental years. This, along with the affinity toward foreigners, reinforces the existing notion that third culture individuals are strong candidates for global citizens. And if we take that a step farther, we may say that TCIs' identity to dominant culture relationship and conflict style preferences, which closely adhere to those in the non-TCI group, point out that a global citizen does not (have to) possess a specific identity-dominant culture configuration or wield a specific conflict resolution approach.

CHAPTER VIII: LIMITATIONS

There are a number of limitations to acknowledge. First, this study did not follow an experimental design, and therefore no cause-effect can be established. With a small sample size of only five individuals in two groups (n = 10), conclusions should be understood as an initial temperature check on this topic and care should be taken with generalizations. Given the project's time constraint as well as the unforeseen obstacles in finding third culture participants, not all individuals fit the aspirational criteria presented on the flier. For example, though I hoped to find participants who had spent time in at least two foreign culture, two TCIs had lived in only one foreign culture. Fortunately, their residence in a single foreign culture still aligned with the accepted definition of a third culture kid/individual (Pollock, et al., 2017).

Three of the five global nomads were members of a third culture university campus group and therefore clearly aware of the TCI profile. Another participant, whom I found on a TCI-related Facebook page, was likewise aware of the term "third culture kid." According to social identity theory, self-categorization can promote self-stereotyping so that these respondents in particular may have exaggerated aspects of their TCI identity (Shih et al., 1999). Participant bias may have played a role as well.

Several potentially significant variables were not taken into account. Gender was not considered, nor was time spent abroad. Additionally, cultural distance was not actively addressed in the TCI group. It may be expected that a US-born TCI residing in a western nation where cultural differences may be fewer, even for a period of several years, may not have been as deeply impacted as an American child who spent even one

year in an African or Asian nation. There is an incredible diversity among global nomads, and it was not the intention to essentialize the entire population (Danau, 2015).

The *Inclusion of Other in Self* (Aron, 1992) scale captures both feeling and behaving like some "other," (in this case dominant culture) and making explicit which of these is being targeted may have yielded different and more consistent results. More finely tuned even, the recent conceptualization of social identity which recognizes cognitive, affective, and behavioral components could have been addressed and the IOS scale could have served to measure one of those (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019). I sensed that some participants marked a particular set of circles because they rationally weighted the similarities and differences between their identity and the dominant culture and "confessed" to "being" more similar than they cared to "admit" (one participant said this), which potentially implied a cognitive and/or affective disconnect. Others did very little cognizing and leaned mostly on affect to select the circles; this left out behavior, for instance.

There was also an issue with the definition of the concept of culture, which I did not explain to the participants; rather, on the demographic intake form, there were a few examples provided for the question about the culture(s) in which individuals had grown up in. In the *Inclusion of Other in Self* (Aron, 1992) exercise, they were directed to identify "dominant culture" according to their experience with an example offered, like "the city of Eugene" or "campus." Still, the broad concept of culture is understood differently, and the varied interpretations may have affected the participants' selection of circle pairs and skewed the results.

CHAPTER IX: FUTURE RESEARCH & CONCLUSION

The points made in the limitation section point us forward to an array of aspects to be improved and paths to be taken in future research. Besides enlarging and diversifying samples and taking additional variables into consideration. For example, are there differences in the sense of identity and/or conflict styles among third culture individuals of various genders or racial and ethnic backgrounds? There are additional lenses to utilize. What about parents' role in shaping TCIs' conflict styles and views about global ? And what of similarities and contrasts between siblings who have experienced an international upbringing? The notion of "distance creating elements" introduced in this study allows us to acknowledge alienating factors across myriad populations. Future research may use this notion to guide a deeper dive for firmer boundaries between TCIs and non-TCIs.

Future work might also seek a greater contrast between samples. For instance, a study of individuals who had never left their hometown and persons who had been raised internationally might yield rather contrastive results. However, the findings about those who move only short distances within their home state is still informative because it suggests that strong perceptions of not fitting are rather ubiquitous. In general, more comparative studies could be undertaken as they would help better delineate the boundaries among third culture individuals, other cross-cultural individuals, as well as people who do not fit these categories at all. Finally, to get a better sense of the extent to which internationally and domestically raised individuals differ in their approaches to conflict and actual conflict resolution practices, both on the interpersonal and global

levels, a study which includes a performance task, perhaps involving a simulated conflict resolution project, would be most informative.

Conclusion

This mixed methods study aimed to provide insights about the questions: Do internationally mobile individuals, here TCIs, often considered "global citizens," identify differently with the cultures in which they currently live (post-international experience) from individuals who have grown up domestically, in one place in the US? Do they possess markedly differing styles in interpersonal conflict management? Do they have unique perspectives on global conflict and its handling by the United States?

The results show that, in these areas at least, individuals who have had multicultural experiences during childhood are not so different from ones who grew up in one place and within one cultural milieu. We cannot draw boundaries between the two groups in these regions. Both expressed identity to dominant culture relationships within a similar range, handle interpersonal conflict and adjust styles when dealing with different people, and they exhibit nearly identical views on the United States' management of conflicts in the international arena. Third culture individuals and those raised in one place appear to be on the same footing. Yet, the fact that the latter is better traveled and more knowledgeable about one or more foreign culture(s) than the former does hint at a border. The internationally mobile childhood experiences in themselves appear to be more profound than the identity-dominant culture relationship, conflict styles, and perceptions of global conflict. These experience link with some select

attributes of global citizens, among them complex thinking, and awareness of and insights into distinctive ways of living life, so necessary in our interwoven world.

In the end, the query of whether third culture individuals as representative global citizens, may naturally possess unique conflict handling skills or perspectives on international conflict was not supported in this study (Lilley et.al., 2017). Novel perspectives on and approaches to dispute handling do not arise as a matter of course in persons who have had an international upbringing. This means that although a large set of the characteristics of a global citizen imply conflict resolution skills, we should stop short of assuming that this is the case. Whether the description of the global citizen ought to include some words about conflict resolution is an issue that some may wish to address. In the meantime, there is work to be done on building bridges of understanding and increasing cultural sensitivity, in fact, between people who experienced an internationally mobile childhood and ones who did not. And for anyone interested in building a more peaceable world or community, global citizen or not, international childhood or not, training in conflict resolution and transformation skills is elemental.

APPENDIX A: Context of Discovery

Last fall (2021), I read for the first time about a population called "third culture kids" in a Cultural Psychology class. The short textbook section's content struck me immediately and powerfully. The book described these privileged individuals as "global citizens," young people who spend part of their childhoods growing up outside of their parents' passport countries and due to their multicultural upbringing, develop a host of unique attributes. Though this profile did not entirely fit my own immigrant story, enough of it did to spark an aha moment that led me to start exploring the literature. The more I learned, the more commonalities I discovered; research findings on their personal and socio-cultural identities, their strengths and challenges resonated deeply.

While learning more about third culture kids, ideas from various related CRES courses floated to the surface: foremost was the notion of a global citizen (which became central), but besides that, there were social science theories like contact theory, social identity & self-categorization theory. There were also philosophical ideas about belonging, rootlessness, culture, and cultural differences in resolving conflict. From the mediation course, characteristics of effective mediators and peacebuilders came to mind; and from an anthropology elective, notions of privileged classes of migrants, and culture as portable and dynamic. So many links! It became clear that third culture kids was to be my project topic.

Since my time in the CRES Research Methods class, it had also been clear (though I tried to talk myself out of it a few times) that I wanted to conduct original research, and once I accepted this doom, other elements started lining up. For instance, Prof. Girvan's suggestion to use the *Inclusion of Other in Self* scale (Aron, 1992) was

exciting because, to my knowledge, that scale had not been used with this population and could potentially contribute something new to the discussion.

Furthermore, and of special interest as a CRES student, was my observation of the lack of research into conflict styles or perceptions of global conflict in this population. Why not investigate if these internationally savvy individuals approach conflict differently, and whether there is something novel in the way they perceive the US in global conflict?

So altogether, I had the makings of my project: here was an opportunity to dive into a topic of personal significance and simultaneously satisfy a long-standing desire to do research and apply the lens of CRES-related theories and concepts I had studied in the program.

Based on my then-nascent knowledge of third culture individuals combined with my personal experience, I made a number of assumptions, (some of them contradictory), such as:

1. Third culture individuals' identity is generally more detached from the surrounding culture – and this distance may link to a greater objectivity in conflict, perhaps some greater desire and ability to help resolve issues.

2. Third culture individuals' identity is generally more detached from the surrounding culture – and this distance may link to disinterest or greater avoidance of conflict.

3. Third culture individuals will likely have unique conflict styles other than the conventional integrating, compromising, obliging, avoiding, and dominating.

4. Due to their experience, they are likely to have broader and more complex perspectives on the US's handling of global conflict.

These assumptions went directly into formulating three questions and pointed me toward including a comparative group of non-TCIs for comparison. The study results challenged all these assumptions to varying degrees.

APPENDIX B: Participant Measures & Interview Questions

Background Information

1. Place of birth: _____

2. Passport country(ies) (if different from place of birth): _____

3. Parents' work: _____

4. Place(s) where you grew up (1 – 18 yrs.) & how long you were in each place:

5. Dominant culture(s) in which you grew up (e.g., *US urban, US rural, US-Mexican, US mainstream White, Chinese, Italian.)* :

6. Languages (besides English) that you grew up speaking and/or hearing:

7. Number of schools you attended (K -12): _____

8. Type(s) of school(s):

international local (public or private) school offering int'l baccalaureate religious boarding school home school

9. With whom did you primarily interact growing up?

Locals in my home community Expatriates or people from my own/parents' culture(s)
Host nationals Other: _____

10. If you are a TCI, how many times did you return to the US (for vacations, e.g.)?
_____

11. Place you now reside: _____

12. Place(s) you consider home: _____

==========

Inclusion of the Other in the Self Task

Part 1. Select the pair of circles that best describe your perception of how you relate to the dominant culture (DC) in which you now reside (Gächter et al., 2015, p. 2).

Part 2. Which statement below best describes you in relation to the dominant culture in which you reside? Highlight or circle one, or add another that fits better:

1. I look different and think differently from most members of the dominant culture
2. I look like but think differently from most members of the dominant culture
3. I look different but think like most members of the dominant culture
4. I look like and think like most members of the dominant culture
5. Other:
_____

(PolVan Cultural Identity Model, Pollock & Van Reken, 1996)

Styles of Handling Interpersonal Conflict (Rahim, 1983)

Highlight or circle the most appropriate number for each item, with 1 indicating "I do this rarely or not at all" and 5 indicating "I do this regularly." Consider how you behave most frequently and what your tendency is in most situations with your peers.

I try to investigate an issue with my peers to find a solution acceptable to us	1	2	3	4	5
I generally try to satisfy the needs of my peers	1	2	3	4	5
I attempt to avoid being "put on the spot" and try to keep my conflict with my peer to myself.	1	2	3	4	5
I try to integrate my ideas with those of my peer to come up with a decision jointly.	1	2	3	4	5
I try to work with my peer to find solutions to a problem which satisfy our expectations	1	2	3	4	5
I usually avoid open discussion of my difference with my peer	1	2	3	4	5
I try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse	1	2	3	4	5
I use my influence to get my ideas accepted	1	2	3	4	5
I use my authority to make a decision in my favor	1	2	3	4	5
I usually accommodate the wishes of my peer	1	2	3	4	5
I give in to the wishes of my peer	1	2	3	4	5
I exchange accurate information with my peer to solve a problem together	1	2	3	4	5
I usually allow concessions to my peer	1	2	3	4	5

I usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks	1 2 3 4 5
I negotiate with my peer so that a compromise can be reached	1 2 3 4 5
I try to stay away from disagreement with my peer	1 2 3 4 5
I avoid an encounter with my peer	1 2 3 4 5
I use my expertise to make a decision in my favor	1 2 3 4 5
I often go along with suggestion of my peer	1 2 3 4 5
I use “give and take” so that a compromise can be made	1 2 3 4 5
I am generally firm in pursuing my side of the issue	1 2 3 4 5
I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way	1 2 3 4 5
I collaborate with my peer to come up with decisions acceptable to us	1 2 3 4 5
I try to satisfy the expectations of my peer	1 2 3 4 5
I sometimes use my power to win a competitive situation	1 2 3 4 5
I try to keep my disagreement with my peer to myself in order to avoid hard feelings	1 2 3 4 5
I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with my peer	1 2 3 4 5

I try to work with my peer for a proper understanding of a problem	1	2	3	4	5

(Rahim, 1983, pp. 371, 372)

Semi-Structured Interview Questions [Audio Recorded]

1. Look back to the pair of circles indicating yourself in relation to the dominant culture. Do you think your past experiences of international mobility (or the culture you grew up in, in Oregon) relate to your perception of yourself? If yes, how?

2. Can you say something about how your response to the PolVan Cultural Identity model relates to your mobile (or non-mobile) childhood experience (of growing up where you did)?

3. Look back at your responses to some of the statements about conflict handling, whether you do some rarely or regularly. Do you think your past experiences of international mobility (or the culture / place where you grew up) relate to the way you handle conflict or behave in a conflict? If yes, how?

4. Do you adjust your conflict behavior if you are dealing with people from other cultures? How?

5. There are different styles of conflict management [researcher describes: *obliging, dominating, compromising, avoiding,* and *integrating*]. Which do you think describes you best when it comes to handling interpersonal conflict? Do you view any of these styles as more or less positive or more or less negative [this might give insight into whether they interpret styles the same way as a mono-cultural person might].

6. In global conflicts, in general, which of the five styles do you think most closely describes the US approach? Why do you say that?

7. The US was involved in Afghanistan for a long time and pulled out in late summer 2021. What is your general view of the US-Afghanistan conflict and how it was handled by the US? Should it have been managed another way? Why, why not? What about Ukraine? Is there some other way this conflict ought to be handled, do you think?

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